

Leader urges officials to do whatever necessary to contain Covid-19

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STAY UPDATED #COVID19

President Raisi releases list of his proposed cabinet ministers

TEHRAN – President Ebrahim Raisi released the names of his proposed cabinet ministers to the Majlis (Parliament) on Wednesday.

This is the list of proposed ministers:

Agriculture and Jihad Minister: Javad Sadatinejad
Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister: Mohammad Mehdi Esmaeili

Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Minister: Ezzatollah Zargami

Communications and Information Technology Minister: Issa Zarepour

Defense Minister: Amir Mohammadreza Ash-tiani

Economy and Finance Minister: Ehsan Khandouzi

Education Minister: Hossein Baghgoi

Energy Minister: Ali Akbar Mehrabian

Foreign Minister: Hossein Amir Abdollahian

Health Minister: Bahram Einollahi

Justice Minister: Amin Hossein Rahimi

Industry, Commerce and Mining Minister: Reza Fatemi

Intelligence Minister: Esmail Khatib

Interior Minister: Ahmad Vahidi

Labor and Social Welfare Minister: Hojat Abdolmaleki

Oil Minister: Javad Oji

Science, Research and Technology Minister: Zolf-igol Mohammad Ali

Sports and Youth Minister: Hamidreza Sajadi

Transport and Urban Development Minister: Rostam Qassemi ▶ Page 2

Report

Caspian seals awaiting protection plan to survive extinction

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – The endangered Caspian seals, the sole marine mammal inhabiting the Caspian Sea, do not have suitable breeding grounds, so it is necessary to develop and implement a protection plan as soon as possible.

“The Caspian Sea condition is not appropriate for species such as the Caspian seal, because in the breeding season it needs to migrate to the northern parts to give birth to its offspring on floating ice, but warming has caused the water to freeze less. And shrinking seawater reduces seals’ access to suitable breeding grounds.

The situation has caused the Caspian Seal Conservation Center to register the birth of seal pups on the shores of Iran for the first time in the last one or two years; Where it is not suitable at all. This shows that the northern regions do not have the security and conditions necessary for the reproduction of Caspian seals, and seals have inevitably chosen other places for reproduction.

If this situation is to continue, the issue should be considered in the Caspian seal protection plan and protected areas should be defined for the species breeding, Amir Sayad Shirazi,” Director of the Caspian Seal Conservation Center said.

Regarding the latest statistics on the population of Caspian seals, he stated that the latest statistics are related to 2015 when the population of Caspian seals is estimated at 70,000, showing more than 95 percent decline. ▶ Page 7



What is Iran’s plan about Palestine?

Find out the answer in the video by scanning the QR code.



CIA chief William Burns, left, meets with Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in Jerusalem, August 11, 2021.

CIA chief meets grumbling Israelis ahead of Vienna talks

TEHRAN – The director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, William Burns, met with Israel’s leaders to discuss a variety of issues, including Iran, amid growing tensions between Iran and Israel in the wake of a suspicious attack on an Israeli-operated oil tanker near the United Arab Emirates.

The U.S. spy chief met with the head of the Mossad spy agency David Barnea on Tuesday night. During the meeting, the two sides discussed “the Iranian nuclear issue and additional regional challenges about which the organizations intend to cooperate,” according to a statement by the Israeli premiership.

On Wednesday, Burns met with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in Tel Aviv. “The two discussed tightening intelligence and security cooperation between Israel and the U.S., as well as the situation in the Middle East, especially Iran, and possibilities for expanding and deepening regional cooperation,” the premier’s office statement added. ▶ Page 3

President forwards budget bill amendments for execution

TEHRAN – Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi has announced the current Iranian calendar year’s (started on March 20) amended national budget bill to be implemented by the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO), IRNA reported.

President Raisi sent the approved amendments to PBO on Wednesday, according to Article 123 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Majlis (Iranian parliament) had approved the amended national budget bill for the current calendar year in mid-March.

The amended bill amounted to about 28.823 quadrillion rials (about \$686.261 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

The proposed bill, first submitted to Majlis in early December 2020, was 24.357 quadrillion rials (about \$579.928 billion), with a 20-percent rise from the current year’s approved budget.

The bill estimated the government’s budget at 9.298 quadrillion rials (about \$221.38 billion), while the amended figure is 13.733 quadrillion rials (about \$326.976 billion).



Iraq officially invites Raisi to Baghdad summit

TEHRAN — Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has been invited to a planned regional summit in Baghdad, Raisi’s office said on Tuesday.

The invitation was officially delivered by Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, a day after Baghdad announced the summit set for

later this month.

French President Emmanuel Macron has confirmed he plans to attend, while Iraq has said Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Saudi Arabia’s King Salman have also been invited. ▶ Page 2

Kashan: a living piece of history on the edge of harsh desert

TEHRAN – The oasis city of Kashan is regarded by many as a living piece of history in the heart of Iran. It offers visitors an explosion of culture, scenic places, and genuine Persian architecture.

Kashan is home to many historical places, photogenic bazaars, mosques, madrasas, caravansaries, and centuries-old houses some of which transformed into cozy boutique hotels where you could experience the traditional life. Rosewater distillation festivals, handwoven textiles, rugs, and famed local dishes are some other famous examples to describe the ancient city.

Tabatabai, Brujerdi, Ameri, and Abbasi houses are of the most famed in Kashan, featuring incred-

ible architecture, which certainly will enchant you!

Furthermore, Sultan Mir-Ahmad bathhouse is a recommendable place to see. Its fine tile work, stucco, and lights are breathtaking. Also don’t forget the main bazaar, where you can find typical Kashani souvenirs, like the rosewater which is ubiquitous.

Need some rest? Escape the city and go to the Fin Garden, which is registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The UN cultural body asserts that the flawless design of the Persian Garden, along with its ability to respond to extreme climatic conditions, is the result of an inspired and intelligent application of different fields of knowledge,

i.e. technology, water management and engineering, architecture, botany, and agriculture.

The Agha Bozorg Mosque is one of the best examples of Islamic structures to visit in Kashan. The relatively modest mosque is famous for its symmetrical design. Next for being in use as a place of worship, it is a madrasa too! To be specific, a theological school.

Make also a day trip to the scenic Maranjab desert. One of the best reachable deserts in Iran to get into. Explore the high dunes by camel, your camera, and just wander around. Watch the sunrise, or wait till sunset and the hereinafter star heaven. The desert inspires everyone! . ▶ Page 6

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Interview

U.S. influence in West Asia has declined: Oxford professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – A professor of international relations at the University of Oxford says that the U.S. has yielded the initiative in West Asia.

“U.S. influence in the Middle East (West Asia) has declined. Having failed to lead on Syria, it has yielded the initiative there to Russia, Iran and Turkey,” Richard Caplan tells the Tehran Times.

As the United States is completely withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, it is important to reflect on the broader and longer-term reverberations of that withdrawal.

Some observers are of opinion that the U.S. defeats in Afghanistan and Iraq show that the era of a unipolar world is coming to an end.

“In the Israel-Palestine conflict, it long ago ceased to be an honest broker and its influence over Israel has diminished,” the Oxford professor adds.

“Having withdrawn from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) under Trump and failed in its attempts to apply ‘maximum pressure’ on Iran, it finds little scope for diplomatic action there, especially now that Iran has hardened its attitudes towards the United States,” the Oxford professor remarks.

Regional powers have been and are likely to continue to take advantage of U.S. waning influence in West Asia.

Following is the text of the interview:

What is your prediction about the future of world order? Will the world witness a continuation of a unipolar state, or bipolar (U.S.-China) or multipolar?

It is unwise to attempt to predict the future, especially with respect to world politics. However, it is fair to say that while the ▶ Page 5

Rudaki Open-Air Theater hosts tazieh performances

TEHRAN – Tehran’s Rudaki Open-Air Theater is playing host to performances of tazieh, Iranian passion play, during the first ten days of the lunar month of Muharram.

The Seyyed ush-Shohada Tazieh Group directed by Ahmad Azizi performed “Shah Cheragh (AS) Tazieh” on the first night on Tuesday.

The tazieh is about the martyrdom of Hazrat Ahmad ibn Musa (AS) who, along with his brothers, including Seyyed Alaeddin Hossein (AS), embarks on a journey to visit their brother, Imam Reza (AS), in the Khorasan region. ▶ Page 8

Military official: Enemies invite us to negotiation out of desperation

TEHRAN — General Mohamad Hossein Dadras, the deputy commander of the Army, told a military gathering on Wednesday that the enemies are inviting Iran to the negotiation out of a sheer desperation.

Referring to the Ashura incident, Dadras said, the Islamic school of thought enjoys great role models such as Imam Hussein (AS), a great figure who is the manifestation of endurance and resistance against arrogance and oppression.

The relations of the countries have been influenced under the heavy shadow of the realism, which is based on arrogance and hegemony, Brigadier General Dadras commented.

"We also obey such a school of thought and consider this great figure as a role model," the Ar-



my's second-in-command noted.

Today, the thought of Imam Hussein (AS) has doubled the pride of the Iranian nation in the world, Dadras said, adding that the enemies are desperately inviting Iranians to come to the ne-

gotiation table.

"On the other hand, some regional countries, supporting their American allies to achieve their interests, are weak and they are being humiliated by the United States", he added.

Iran bans indoor Ashura rituals



TEHRAN — In a press conference on Wednesday, outgoing Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said Ashura rituals are banned in closed places.

Rahmani Fazli said in the meeting of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, held on Wednesday to implement the order of President Ebrahim Raisi, the president was briefed about the current status of provinces in regard to the Coronavirus.

Reports were presented by the governors and heads of medical universities, as well as the performance of various departments during the last 18 months.

The interior minister said all of these issues will be discussed at Saturday's meeting of the headquarters.

Pointing out that the most important issue in controlling Covid-19 diseases is the maximum observance of health protocols, the interior minister said that in the meeting all officials and representatives of the different related bodies emphasized that health protocols should be observed seriously.

Iran made mask wearing mandatory in public in Tehran on October 10, 2020. It was decided to fine the violators.

"The proposal to increase the fines will be given

to the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, and also the law enforcement forces and related agencies were notified to speed up the process of fining the violators," Rahmani Fazli said.

Referring to the lockdown proposal, the interior minister said that due to the raising of the issue in Tuesday's meeting at the presence of the president, the preparations and conditions necessary for the lockdown to be effective were discussed.

The matter will be reviewed and decided in the next meeting of the headquarters, he added.

"While thanking all those who observe the protocols in full during Muharram mourning rituals, it should be noted that non-observance of health protocols, especially in closed places, makes the issue of disease control in the country difficult," Rahmani Fazli stated.

The minister said, "According to the new conditions and the new proposal presented by the Ministry of Health in the meeting, it was approved not to hold mourning rituals indoors from Wednesday night, and it is definitely forbidden to hold walk-in mourning rituals in the streets and this issue was announced to the representative of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization."

The head of the coronavirus operations base stated that "we really desperately ask all organizers of the mourning rituals and mosques to observe the issues related to the health protocols and warnings issued by the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control and the Ministry of Health.

Asking the people to observe the health protocols in full, the interior minister noted that some meetings are held inside houses.

"We ask that these issues (health protocols) be taken into account (in houses)."

President Raisi releases list of his proposed cabinet ministers

From page 1 ► Now the MPs have to study the qualification of the proposed ministers in related parliamentary committees. After assessing their competence, the MPs will begin talks in favor or against the nominated ministers in an open session of the parlia-

ment in two consecutive days for a vote of confidence.

In a decree released on Wednesday, President Raisi has also named Masoud Mirkazemi as chief of the Planning and Budget Organization.

Mirkazemi served as oil and commerce ministers in the Ahmadinejad administration.

Raisi had previously appointed Mohammad Mokhber and Gholam Hossein Esmaeili as first vice president and presidential chief of staff respectively.

Iraq officially invites Raisi to Baghdad summit

From page 1 ► The invitations have been delivered on behalf of Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi.

Prime Minister al-Kadhimi appointed a committee, headed by Senior Undersecretary Nizar Al-Khairallah, to work on preparations for the summit, which sources said will be held in Baghdad at the end of August or the beginning of September and bring together representatives from Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Jordan, in addition to Syrian officials and representatives of the European Union.

Al-Kadhimi recently told a group of journalists in Washington that Iraq will seek to play a bigger role in bringing regional powers together.

The office of the president did not confirm whether Raisi would accept the invitation, but a statement after his meeting with Hussein quoted him welcoming the Iraqi initiative.

"Cooperation between the region's countries without foreign interference is the necessary condition for stable security in the region," Raisi said in the meeting, according to the presidential media office.

The Islamic Republic considers the interference of foreigners in the affairs of the region as a source of tension and threats, just as it considers dialogue between the regional countries to resolve issues as a groundwork for building security and creating stability, Raisi noted.

"Cooperation and synergy among the countries of the region, without the intervention of foreigners, are a necessary condition for the stability of regional security, as well as the establishment of peace in the countries of the region and the provision of welfare for the nations of the region," the new Iranian president asserted.

In the meeting, Raisi also said Iran has always been concerned about resolving problems in Iraq.

"Iran considers the growth and development of Iraq as its own growth and development," the president remarked.

Hussein who visited Tehran on Tuesday met outgoing Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council prior to his meeting with President Raisi.

In our Wednesday issue the photo of Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi was wrongly printed. Unfortunately, photo of the former Japanese foreign minister was published. The mistake is regretted.

Editor

Leader urges officials to do whatever necessary to contain Covid-19

TEHRAN — In a televised message delivered on Wednesday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei suggested that containing the rapidly increasing wave of the Coronavirus is the first and foremost issue of the country.

Placing great emphasis on the fulfillment of duties and the implementation of decisions regarding the Coronavirus pandemic, Ayatollah Khamenei issued important pieces of advice to officials and the people.

"The vaccine, whether imported or domestically produced, must be provided with double effort and in any way possible made available to all people," the Leader said.

The new variant of Covid-19 disease called Delta is taking heavy tolls in Iran.

The number of people dying from the deadly virus has surpassed 500 in the last few days.

The Health Ministry announced on Wednesday afternoon that 536 people have died from the deadly virus over the past 24 hours.

The Leader also admired the decision by President Ebrahim Raisi who has given a 7-day deadline to all government bodies to do what is necessary to combat the Coronavirus variants.

"President Raisi's deadline is very good, and all the officials must take decisive action in this regard," Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

The Leader also sympathized with the families of the victims, saying, "The number of victims is really painful."

He advised officials to take the Covid-19 testing seriously.

"It is better that officials help conduct a free and comprehensive testing to detect the virus."

"Fortunately, with the production of the domestic vaccine, its foreign import route is also paved, while before that, despite the payment for the vaccine, foreign sellers failed to fulfill their com-



mitments," the Leader said, urging officials to take importation and production of vaccine seriously.

Th Leader asked the people to observe the health protocols, saying, "Exactly like in the first days of Covid-19 pandemic, people must fully follow the instructions and guidelines."

The Leader also called on officials to seriously fix the drug distribution system.

"Stop the disruption of the drug distribution network. Medicine must be made available to the public," he highlighted.

The Leader also said that he will leave a decision-making on lockdown to the officials, saying, "I do not comment on the necessity or non-necessity of closing the cities, but the officials should take and implement any decision seriously."

He also advised people to remember Imam Hussein (AS) in their hearts and minds and hold Ashura

ritual ceremonies by obeying health protocols.

"Never let the Muharram mourning at Hussainiyah lead to spread of the disease and make enemies happy," the Leader pointed out.

All capacities must be used for importing vaccine

After the Leader's speech, Alireza Zali, head of the Tehran branch of the National Headquarters for Combating Coronavirus told reporters on Wednesday that all capacities must be employed to import vaccine.

"In order to import the coronavirus vaccine, round the clock collective work must be done and all capacities, including diplomacy, must be used," he said.

He stressed that the standard COVID-19 vaccine should be obtained from the global market by any means possible.

Iran to join Shanghai Cooperation Organization

TEHRAN — The Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Nikolai Patrushev made a phone call with his Iranian counterpart, Admiral Ali Shamkhani, discussing Afghanistan, Syria, and Persian Gulf on Wednesday afternoon, as well as the news that Iran will soon join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Patrushev and Shamkhani discussed continuous Russian-Iranian cooperation in the field of security.

Shamkhani also wrote on his Twitter account on Wednesday, "An hour ago, in a phone call with my friend and colleague Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary of the Russian National Security Council, we examined the developments in Afghanistan, Syria and the Persian Gulf."

The secretary of the Supreme National Security Council stated, "Fortunately, the political obstacles to Iran's membership in the Shanghai agreement have been removed and Iran's membership will be finalized through technical formalities."

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is the continuation of Shanghai 5 Organization.

Shanghai 5 was a five-member organization founded in 1996 with primarily military and security objectives. Since then, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has evolved, both in terms of increasing the number of members and in terms of the mechanism and scope of activities and goals.

According to available sources, in June 2002, during a meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia, the leaders of the

organization's member states signed the SCO charter, which provided detailed information on its objectives, principles, structure and operation, and thus the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was formally established under international law.

In 2005, three countries, Iran, India and Pakistan, joined the organization as observer members, and India and Pakistan became permanent members in 2017. Iran also applied for permanent membership in 2006 and 2015. Since accepting any country's application requires the consent of all members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Iran has so far been unable to join due to opposition from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Without Iran's active presence and its role as the link between East and West in China's plan, it will be difficult to achieve the goals of reviving the Silk Road, and China is well aware of this. Because in both land and sea routes, Iran's geopolitical position on the Silk Road is vital.

The plan, which includes two trade routes, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, involves investing in the economic infrastructure of more than 65 countries.

The "economic belt", which covers the land route of the Silk Road and is the ancient route of the Silk

Road, connects China to Eastern and Western Europe through Central Asia and West Asia, and the countries of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Turkey, Ukraine. It includes Poland, Belgium, France and finally Italy.

The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road also connects China to Southeast Asia, Africa, and even Europe, such as Greece and Italy, north of the Mediterranean Sea by sea.

Many countries that are in the path of China's economic belt and are also members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are in the perspective of Iran's trade relations. Experts believe that Central Asia is one of the potential regions for export development.

Also, the Islamic Republic of Iran has placed the perspective of the country's economic position on the horizon of 1404 at the top of the countries of the Southwest Asia region and has divided this region into four subdivisions "Central Asia", "Caucasus", "Middle East" and neighboring countries.

The Central Asian region includes five countries: Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This area covers about 34% of the total area of the landscape document and about 13% of the total population of the said document area.

A study of the level of development

of the countries in this region shows that they provide good opportunities to advance Iran's export goals. Although after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new countries, a lot of efforts were made by Iran to enter the markets of these countries, but the desired result was not achieved.

According to the latest statistics of the Trade Development Organization, unfortunately, except for Turkmenistan, none of these countries are among the most important target markets for goods in 1396 and 1397. In 2017, Iran's exports to Turkmenistan reached \$418 million and in 1397, it decreased by about 4% to \$400 million.

Meanwhile, Iran can expand its exports to these countries in various fields, including energy (including oil, gas and electricity). Iran's role in economic relations, the geopolitical situation of the region, the transportation route of Central Asia out of the impasse, facilities and infrastructure such as Sarakhs-Tajan-Mashhad-Bandar Abbas and the ports of Chabahar and Bandar Abbas, can be very effective.

Central Asian countries do not have access to open waters. Therefore, in the economic plan of one Belt-One Road, China will inevitably be one of the access routes of these countries to the open waters of Iran. Therefore, Iran can provide better transportation, better and more access to the Persian Gulf by strengthening and developing communication infrastructure. In other words, Iran is their connection point to open waters.

Iranian diplomat urges Europe to act swiftly to establish peace in Afghanistan



TEHRAN - Director general of the South Asian Department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry has urged Europe to act now to establish peace in Afghanistan before it becomes too late.

"If Europe wants to do something for achieving peace in Afghanistan, it must act today, because, it will be too late tomorrow," Rasoul Mousavi tweeted on Wednesday, Mehr reported.

Mousavi made the tweet after a meeting with European ambassadors in Tehran.

Effective steps must be taken for peace in Afghanistan before collapse of all structures, the Foreign Ministry official added.

Iran air defense won't overlook slightest act of aggression: commander

Commander of Iran's Air Defense Force Brigadier General Alireza Sabahi-Fard says the force is keeping "a watchful eye" on Iran's strategic regions and will not allow any act of aggression by the enemy to go unnoticed.

While visiting the air defense center in the southeastern port city of Chabahar on Wednesday, the senior commander said that committed and expert personnel of air defense defend the country with a watchful eye, stressing, "We will not allow any mistake by the enemies for the sake of our authority and dignity."

"The units of this force, by [exercising] intelligence, vigilance and [keeping a] watchful eye, will not allow any aggression by outsiders," he added.

He noted that the northern Indian Ocean and the strategic region of southeastern Iran are under full surveillance of the air defense, stressing the region enjoys complete security.

Sabahi-Fard said the Chabahar air defense center is in charge of monitoring the sky of a part of the country where there is a lot of air and sea transportation to the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf, as well as to East Asia and Central Asia, adding that various types of surveillance equipment are deployed to the region to monitor any moves.

"All kinds of completely indigenous electronic interception, radar and missile systems, which are

the result of round-the-clock efforts of the youth of this border and region, are deployed in this area, and the enemies know that we are very close to them in the region and we even monitor their breathing," he added.

The senior commander said Iran's air defense has long been capable of detecting and monitoring any flying object with any radar cross-section and uses powerful systems and weapons for tactical and defensive actions against offensive forces.

The remarks come as tensions have simmered in the region after a suspected drone attack late last month on an Israeli-managed tanker off the Omani coast. Two crew members were killed in the attack, which was blamed on Iran by the United States, Israel and Britain. Iran categorically denied the accusation.

Earlier this month, a Panama-flagged asphalt/bitumen tanker was also seized off the coast of the United Arab Emirates at the opening of the Strait of Hormuz — one of the world's busiest waterways. Maritime sources accused Iran of being behind the potential hijack, which ended a day after the incident.

Iran has denied the accusations, warning against any attempt aimed at setting the ground for new adventurism.

(Source: Press TV)

From Page 1 ► A number of other senior intelligence, military, and political officials such as Barnea, incoming National Security Council head Eyal Hulata, the Prime Minister's Military Secretary Maj.-Gen. Avi Gil and diplomatic adviser Shimrit Meir also attended the meeting.

Burns is slated to pay a visit to Ramallah in the West Bank to meet Palestinian leaders, something that suggests the U.S. spy chief's visit is not focused on one single issue. However, Israeli media outlets highlighted the Iran issue in the talks Burns held with the Israeli officials.

These outlets even resorted to unsourced reports to libel the new Iranian president, Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi. Israel's Channel 12 claimed in an unsourced report that the Mossad chief presented Burns with information allegedly indicating that the Iranian president is untrustworthy and incapable of negotiating a new nuclear deal or sticking to his commitments, according to the Times of Israel.

This came at a time when the U.S. government has largely remained silent on the agenda of the CIA director during his visit to Israel.

The Israelis feel increasingly isolated on Iran as Washington and Tehran prepare to return to Vienna in the coming weeks to overcome the remaining issues relating to the process of resuscitating a 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The last round of JCPOA talks was held before Iran's presidential elections in June with some key differences remained unresolved. The Vienna talks were stalled due in part to the transition period in Iran. The U.S. continued insistence on the preservation of sanctions and its refusal to give guarantees that it will not withdraw from the nuclear deal



CIA chief meets grumbling Israelis ahead of Vienna talks

again were among the reasons for the stumbling of the talks.

A few weeks after the conclusion of the sixth round of talks, the U.S. and its European allies began pressuring Iran to return to Vienna. But Iranian diplomats have asked for more time until after the transition.

With the transition period is almost done, Iran seems to be poised to resume the Vienna talks. In a recent phone conversation with French President Emanuel Macron, Ayatollah Raisi implied that there would be another round of negotiations. "In any negotiation, the

rights of the Iranian people must be upheld and the interests of our nation must be ensured," he told Macron.

Iran is also in the process of recalibrating its negotiating strategy, with a reconsideration of the outcome of the previous rounds of talks looming large on the horizon. And this is of much concern to Israel, which is using everything in its power, from orchestrating false flag operations on the high seas to intensifying tensions with Lebanon's Hezbollah, to cajole the U.S. into giving up on diplomacy with Iran.

The Israelis seem to be concerned about the resumption of nuclear talks. They are seeking to persuade the U.S. that it's of no use negotiating with the new president of Iran. "Israel warned the American visitor that Iran's strategy now is to place obstacles on the path to diplomacy with endless plays so as to play for time to consummate its nuclear weapons program," Israel's DEBKAfile website, known for its closeness to the Israeli intelligence community, said of Burns' visit to Tel Aviv.

Over the past few weeks, the U.S has enlisted the help of Israel in ramping up pressure on Iran in a bid to make it return to the Vienna talks. This included American corroboration of Israel's unfounded claims that Iran attacked the M/V Mercer Street ship and attempted to hijack a number of commercial ships in the Gulf of Oman.

Iran strongly denied any involvement in all of these alleged incidents.

During the hiatus in the nuclear talks, a sort of convergence emerged between Tel Aviv and Washington. But once the talks are resumed a divergence would be in the cards. Because the U.S. stated goal is to get the JCPOA revived in the near future while Israel works to prevent any deal between Iran and the U.S. And this is all the more reason why the U.S. needs to be careful about Israeli sabotage.

Wheelchair basketball captain Bagzadeh says Iran ready for Tokyo 2020

TEHRAN — Iran wheelchair basketball captain Iman Bagzadeh says that they are capable of qualifying for the next stage of the 2020 Paralympic Games.

Iran have been drawn in Group of Death in the men's wheelchair basketball along with reigning world champions Great Britain, 2016 Paralympic champions US, world bronze medalists Australia, Germany and Algeria in Group B.

Group A consists of hosts Japan, Rio 2016 silver medalists Spain, Paralympic bronze medalists Turkey, Canada, South Korea and Colombia.



The top four in each group will qualify for the quarter-finals.

"We are drawn in Group of Death but I think we can advance to the next stage with cooperation. Our players are ready physically but we need several tune-up matches ahead of the Games," Bagzadeh said.

"We will be in training camp until our departure. I hope we can get good results in our difficult group," he added.

Wheelchair basketball events at Tokyo 2020, postponed to this year because of the coronavirus pandemic, will be held from August 26 to September 6.

Musashino Forest Sports Plaza is set to stage the group matches, while Ariake Arena is set to host the finals.

Mehdi Tartar named Zob Ahan head coach

TEHRAN — Mehdi Tartar was appointed as Zob Ahan football team head coach on Wednesday.

The 49-year-old coach, who has most recently coached Paykan in Iran Professional League, penned a one-year contract with Zob Ahan.

He replaced Mojtaba Hosseini who parted company with Zob Ahan last week.

Zob Ahan avoided relegation last season due to a better goal difference than Saipa.

Tartar started his coaching career in 2009 in Rah Ahan and has also coached Saba, Damash, pars Jonoubi and Naft Masjed Soleyman.

Para powerlifting reach full gender parity in Tokyo

Para powerlifting will make history in Tokyo as the sport will have an equal number of female and male athletes competing at the Paralympic Games for the first time.

A total of 180 Para powerlifters, 90 females and 90 males, will take part in the Games across 10 bodyweight categories for women and men, respectively, Paralympic.org wrote.

The number of athletes competing in women's events has increased significantly in the last two decades – from 36 percent at the Sydney 2000 Paralympics to 44.6 per cent at the last Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

Para powerlifting at Tokyo 2020 will have gender balanced representation across all participant continents. In fact, Africa and Europe will be represented by more female than male athletes in Japan.

"We are not only looking at statistics when we talk about gender parity in our sport," Jorge Moreno, Head of World Para Powerlifting, said.

Mohammad Naderi linked with Turkey's Altay

TEHRAN — Mohammad Naderi from Iran has been linked with a move to Turkish top-flight football team Altay.

The winger parted ways with Esteghlal after Iran's Hazfi Cup final. Altay are headed by former Persepolis and Tractor coach Mustafa Denizli.

The 24-year-old winger joined Esteghal from Persepolis for the 2020-21 Iran Professional League season but failed to win the league and Hazfi Cup with the Blues.

Altay Spor Kulübü are a Turkish professional football club based in the city of Izmir. Formed in 1914, Altay are nicknamed Büyük Altay.

Naderi started his playing career in Tractor in 2016 and joined Belgian team Kortrijk two years later.

Saket Elhami remains as Nassaji coach: IPL

TEHRAN — Saket Elhami extended his contract with Iran's Nassaji for the 2021-22 Season of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Wednesday.

The 50-year-old coach replaced Majid Jalali in the Gahemshahr-based club in March.

Now, Nassaji officials have extended Elhami's contract for one more year, Tasnim news agency reported.

Elhami had a difficult task in the previous season and kept a relegation off his resumé.

Sayyadmanesh receives interest from Belgian,Ukrainian clubs: report

TEHRAN - Ukrainian and Belgian clubs have shown interest in the Iranian striker Allahyar Sayyadmanesh.

Two representatives of the Belgian championship are reportedly interested in Fenerbahce's forward Allahyar Sayyadmanesh, who is currently on loan at Zorya Luhansk.

According to 90min with reference to Turkish journalist, Yagiz Sabunchuoglu, Club Brugge and Anderlecht are claiming an interest in the Iranian youngster.

In addition to the Belgian clubs, local sources have reported that interest has been received from Ukrainian giants, Dynamo Kyiv and Shakhtar Donetsk.

Ali Karimi joins Kayserispor

TEHRAN — TFF Super League team Kayserispor officially announced that they have signed Ali Karimi.

The club announced the unveiling of the Iranian midfielder with a video post.

The 27-year-old, who signed from Qatar SC, scored one goal and four assists in 26 games last season.

This season, Karimi has played in six games and had one assist. The Iranian player has also played for Dinamo Zagreb, Lokomotiv Zagreb, Al-Duhail, Esteghlal, and Sepahan.

Azmoun waits for Zenit's decision

TEHRAN — Iranian forward Sardar Azmoun says that he is waiting on the club to make a decision about his future.

Roma are evaluating options in attack due to Edin Dzeko edging closer to a departure from the club.

The Giallorossi have been linked with a host of players, but one name that has gained traction in recent days is Zenit's Sardar Azmoun.

The Iran international has been tipped to leave the Russian side this summer since his contract with the club expires next June. To avoid losing him for free, Zenit are widely expected to cash-in on the attacker before the end of the transfer window.

Azmoun discussed the transfer speculation surrounding his future this past weekend following his team's victory over Krasnodar, admitting that everything is still up in the air.

"My only focus right now is Zenit and the matches I have to play in," he said during a post-match press conference.

"I'm waiting on the club to make a decision on my future. They will decide what happens. Until then, I'm going to keep working, but right now, I am waiting on them."

Iran cannot be subject of negotiations: embassy



TEHRAN — The Iranian embassy in the United Kingdom has reacted to a tweet by the top diplomat of the United States saying that he conducted talks with his Saudi counterpart about Iran.

"All must learn that Iran cannot be the subject of their negotiations. This way proved to be fruitless," the Iranian embassy said on Twitter on Tuesday, hinting that the U.S. diplomatic push to coordinate positions of allies on Iran has struck a raw nerve in Tehran.

It added, "Rather she would be the powerful party of any negotiations. Provided her potency is recognized as the pillar for regional security and its interests are respected accordingly."

The embassy was commenting on a tweet by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken who said he spoke with Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan about an alleged attack against an Israeli-operated oil tanker off the coast of the United Arab Emirates. Washington, London, and Tel Aviv have pointed the finger of the blame at Iran but Tehran strongly rejected any involvement in the attack.

"Spoke again today with Saudi Foreign Minister @FaisalbinFarhan about the recent Iranian attack in the Arabian Sea and our ongoing security cooperation. We also discussed support for a ceasefire in Yemen and the need for progress on human rights," the U.S. top diplomat said on Twitter.

The U.S. State Department also put out a statement confirming that Blinken broached the subject of Iran in his discussions with bin Farhan. "Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken spoke today with the Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud. The Secretary and Foreign Minister discussed regional security and the Iranian attack on the M/V Mercer Street in the Arabian Sea," the Department said in a statement. "They also discussed other regional issues, bolstering security cooperation, Saudi support for a comprehensive ceasefire in Yemen and the need for immediate steps to mitigate Yemen's humanitarian crisis. Secretary Blinken emphasized the need for progress on human rights."

This seems to have aroused concerns in Iran, a country historically known for its sensitivity to foreign scheming and machinations.

The United States has launched a diplomatic campaign

to build a united front against Iran in the wake of the late July attack on the M/V Mercer Street.

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 and the U.S. 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. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has responded to allegations by the U.S. and UK against Iran about the attack on the oil tanker.

Khatibzadeh said the statements issued by the 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.

An Iranian diplomat at the United Nations Security Council has criticized Israel for playing victim to divert the

attention of the public away from its crimes in the region.

"We just heard a distorted statement about the Mercer Street vessel incident. Let me say a few words about it. First, our thoughts are with the families of those who have lost their loved ones in that unfortunate incident. Immediately following this event, Israeli officials accused Iran of the incident. This is what they usually do. It is a standard practice of the Israeli regime. Its aim is to divert the attention of the world public opinion from the regime's crimes and inhumane practices in the region," said Zahra Ershadi, ambassador and Charge d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations.

She added, "To that end, they accuse others of wrongdoing. In almost all incidents in the Middle East, Israel accuses Iran. They do it immediately and provide no evidence."

In a separate statement to the UN Security Council on Monday, Ershadi rejected Israel's allegations concerning the maritime threats allegedly posed by Tehran and called on the United Nations Security Council to address Israel's malign activities on the high seas.

The diplomat called on the UN Security Council to be aware of the traps set by Israel and take action on Israel's destabilizing activities.

"The Security Council must live up to its charter-mandated responsibilities, put an end to its longstanding inaction and procrastination with respect to the systematic violation of international law by the Israeli regime and its criminal and destabilizing activities, and hold the regime accountable for all its unlawful practices that include committing four core international crimes. The Council must also remain fully vigilant and avoid being trapped by the fabrications of the Israeli regime – which, as usual, are blindly supported by certain Western countries in the Council; those who have prevented the Council in the past seven decades from taking any action against the criminal acts of the Israeli regime, emboldening it to commit, with total impunity, more crimes with more brutality," Ershadi stated.

She also underlined Iran's determination in ensuring maritime security. "In conclusion, I reiterate the principled policy and resolute determination of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as in the past, in maintaining and promoting maritime security in the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Hormuz Strait and the Oman Sea as well as contributing to maritime security, ensuring freedom of navigation and combating maritime crimes including piracy in the Indian Ocean and the adjacent areas. We also stand ready to actively and constructively cooperate with the littoral States of the aforementioned areas to promote regional peace and security," Ershadi noted.



Culture and Guidance)

15- Dr. Ahmad Vahidi (Interior)

16- Mr. Seyyed Ezzatollah Zarghami (Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism)

17- Engineer Javad Oji (Petroleum)

18- Engineer. Ali Akbar Mehrabian (Energy)

19- Dr. Seyyed Hamid Sajjadi Hazaveh (Sports and Youth Affairs)

Medical Education)

6- Dr. Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki (Cooperation, Labour and Social Welfare)

7- Dr. Seyed Javad Sadati Nejad (Agriculture Jihad)

8- Dr. Hossein Amir Abdollahian (Foreign Affairs)

9- Dr. Amin Hossein Rahimi (Justice)

10- Brigadier General Dr. Mohammad Reza Ashtiani (Defense and Armed Forces' Logistics)

11- Engineer Rostam Ghasemi (Transport and Urban Development)

12- Dr. Seyyed Reza Fatemi Amin (Industry, Mining and Trade)

13- Dr. Mohammad Ali Zolfigol (Science, Research and Technology)

14- Dr. Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili (Islamic

committees, the vote of confidence for ministers will begin in open meetings of the Majlis starting on Saturday, August 21.

In a letter to the Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly on Wednesday, President Raisi introduced the list of ministers of his government for a vote of confidence in the parliament, the presidency said in a statement.

According to this statement, the proposed ministers are as follows:

1- Dr. Issa Zarepour (Communications and Information Technology)

2- Hojjatoleslam val-Moslemin Seyyed Esmail Khatib (Intelligence)

3- Dr. Ehsan Khandouzi (Economic Affairs and Finance)

4- Dr. Hossein Baghghi (Education)

5- Dr. Braham Einollahi (Health and

Iran Majlis to review cabinet lineup next week

TEHRAN — The Iranian Majlis will start reviewing the proposed cabinet nominees of the new president next week, a lawmaker said, hours after President Ebrahim Raisi officially submitted a list of his ministers to Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf on Wednesday.

The lawmaker, Nezamuddin Mousavi, told media outlets that next week, the discussion of the plans of ministers nominated for the thirteenth government will begin in the specialized committees of the Islamic Consultative Assembly.

He added that next week, the specialized committees will study the plans of the nominated ministers on two daily morning and evening sessions.

The lawmaker noted that after completing the study of the programs of ministers nominated in the specialized parliamentary

President forwards budget bill amendments for execution

From page 1 ► and submit it to the parliament again; after making the necessary amendments, the government resubmitted the bill to the parliament, and Majlis approved the amendments of the national budget bill in mid-February.

After approving the general outlines, the budget review committee held several sessions for reviewing the details of the bill.

The first session of the budget review committee was held on February 20 in which the parliament determined the share of the National Development Fund (NDF) from the country's oil and gas export revenues in the newly amended budget bill.



Majlis continued to review the details of the national budget bill for the year 1400, in an open ses-

sion on February 28. This session was mainly focused on the expense aspects of the national budget bill.

Raisi appoints Masoud Mir-Kazemi as new PBO head



TEHRAN – President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi has appointed Masoud Mir-Kazemi as his vice president and the new head of the country's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO), ILNA reported on Wednesday.

Mir-Kazemi, who was a member of the Parliament from 2012 until

2016 and also served ministerial post in the cabinet of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, replaced Mohammad-Baqer Nobakht who was the PBO head for the past eight years.

Kazemi has previously served as Iran's Oil Minister and the Minister of Commerce.

Iran ready to export laboratory engineering services

TEHRAN – Managing Director of Iran's Technical and Soil Mechanics Lab Company (TSML) has said his company is ready for the exports of engineering-related laboratory services to foreign markets especially neighboring countries, IRIB reported on Wednesday.

"In collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Technical and Soil Mechanics Lab Company is ready to enter new international markets to provide technical and engineering services," Majid Kianpour said.

Kianpour pointed out that his company's motto for the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) is "entering new markets and exporting technical and engineering services", adding: "Since the beginning of this year, we have been taking new measures to enter international markets, especially in neighboring countries and the region, and the efforts are increasing in this regard."

"Plans have been carried out for presence in the countries of the region, especially Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, UAE, Armenia, Qatar, and Oman, in cooperation with the joint chambers of commerce with these countries and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," he explained.

Some proposals have also been prepared for cooperation with some European countries, he stated.

He noted that currently, TSML's specialized services are exported to several neighboring countries through Iranian contractors that are active in international projects.

"Providing services and studies in Garmsar-Inchah Borun and Khaf-Herat railway projects, the Friendship Dam, Shah Arous Dam, and several other important projects are among the cases that have been done in partnership with domestic and foreign contractors that have had experience in international markets," Kianpour said.

The official further noted that TSML is ready to sign memorandums of understanding with the Iranian Society of Consulting Engineers and the Association of Contractors to start extensive and joint cooperation for the export of technical and engineering services.

Stating that TSML has valid domestic and foreign certificates and qualifications, Kianpour added: "Benefiting from specialized and capable personnel and using the world's latest standard equipment TSML has the ability to perform more than 500 different engineering tests and can have a reliable

“Entering new markets and exporting technical and engineering services”

Canned fish export stands at \$24m in a year



TEHRAN– Iran exported 6,210 tons of canned fish valued at \$24 million in the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20), according to an official with Iran Fishery Organization (IFO).

Iisa Golshahi, IFO's director-general for quality improvement, processing, and market development, said that the country's canned fish export was 3,115 tons worth \$15 million in year 1399.

Canned fish is exported from Iran, which can help factories, especially for those that use imported fish, the official said.

He said that Iran's canned fish is mainly exported to Iraq, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Persian

Gulf littoral states, and Armenia.

Fishery production has increased noticeably in Iran in recent years.

Enjoying high quality, Iran's fishery products were sold easily in the export markets, and also some new export destinations welcomed these products in the past two years; as new markets including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations opened up for Iranian fishery products.

As announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past year.

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi also 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.

Among the country's non-oil export destinations, China was the first, with importing \$8.9 billion worth of products, Iraq was the second with importing \$7.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates the third with importing \$4.6 billion, Turkey the fourth with importing \$2.5 billion, and Afghanistan the fifth with importing \$2.2 billion, Mir-Ashrafi announced, and named gasoline, natural gas, polyethylene, propane, and pistachio as Iran's major exported products during the past year.

He further named Iran's top sources of non-oil imports in the said time, as China with exporting \$9.7 billion worth of products to the Islamic Republic, the UAE with \$9.6 billion, Turkey with \$4.3 billion, India with \$2.1 billion, and Germany with \$1.8 billion, respectively, and mentioned corn, cellphone, rice, oil meal and oil seeds, wheat, and raw oil as the major imported items.

Renewable energy development behind schedule

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN– Renewables, including hydropower, account for about seven percent of Iran's total power generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

Based on Iran's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), the country was aiming for 5,000 megawatts (MW) increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

But in the final year of the plan, only one-fifth of the figure has been achieved.

Iran was supposed to become a regional hub in the field of energy in the past Iranian calendar decade (March 2011-March 2021), but evidence shows that the country is facing a shortage even in the supply of electricity inside the country, an issue that many believe that could be achieved by developing renewable energy and increasing efficiency of the thermal power plants.

After the Joint Comprehensive

Plan of Action (JCPOA), known commonly as the Iran nuclear deal, in July 2015, many foreign delegations came to Iran for making investment and constructing renewable power plants in the country.

One of the major projects implemented in this due was a solar farm with a generation capacity of 20 megawatts which was inaugurated in the southern Kerman province in July 2017.

In the inauguration ceremony of the mentioned solar farm, the ground was also broken for another solar farm with 100 MW capacity, when Iran took a big step toward harnessing renewable energies.

Covering 44 hectares of land, the farm includes 76,912 solar panels, each having a generation capacity of 260 watts of electricity.



The project to build this farm was jointly implemented by Iran's Mokran Solar Energy Company, as the general contractor, Germany's ADÖRE GmbH Company, as the program manager, and Switzerland's DURION AG Company, as the main investor that invested \$27 million.

Lack of financial resources and problems in the way of investors preventing the development of renewable energy

According to the data provided by Mokran Company, it was the largest solar farm in Iran.

With the non-implementation of the JCPOA, and re-imposition of the sanctions, the presence of foreign companies in Iran diminished and since then, the pace of development of renewable energy in the country has been significantly slowed down.

While Iran enjoys some proper condition for the development of renewable energies, unfortunately the country's lagging behind its plan in this due.

Lamenting this situation, the vice chairman of Iran Electrical Industry Syndicate (IEIS) told IRIB on Wednesday that there is only 800 MW installed capacity of the renewable power plants in the country.

Noting that the uneven economy of the electricity industry has hindered development in this sector, Payam Baqeri said: "Lack of financial resources and problems that we put in the way of investors are two important factors preventing the development of renewable energy and reducing the acceptance for investment in this sector."

Releasing of resources and sustainable income in the electricity industry will greatly contribute to the development of power plant capacities, he said, adding, "According to the plans, we should have up to 100,000 MW of installed power plants in the country this year, but the limitations in financial resources have led to a decrease in investment and a shortage of 15,000 MW of electricity compared to the needs in the country".

TEDPIX gains 30,000 points on Wednesday



and wide presence in domestic and foreign markets."

According to the Head of the Association of Iranian Exporters of Technical and Engineering Services Bahman Salehi, 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.

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 has 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 stated earlier this month.

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 30,778 points to 1,484 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 11,147 billion securities worth 98.81 trillion rials (about \$2.352 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.

The first market's index gained 24,172 points, and the second market's index rose 56,942 points.

TEDPIX rose 90,000 points, or 8.5 percent, in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

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.

As forecast by a capital market analyst, TEDPIX is going to improve in the second half of the current Iranian calendar month (ends on August 22).

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



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 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."

Domestic producers can supply cement for 1m housing units a year

TEHRAN – The Chairman of the Cement Industry Employers Association (CIEA) has said domestic cement producers are completely ready to supply the cement required for the construction of one million housing units a year, IRNA reported.

"The annual construction of one million housing units in the country is equivalent to 75 million square meters of construction, and each square meter requires about four bags of cement," Mohammadreza Salimian said in a press conference on Wednesday.

According to Salimian, constructing the mentioned housing units will eventually require 20 million tons of cement, and considering the country's current production capacity which is about 85 million tons, there would be no problem for implementing this project in terms of cement supply.

At present, 65 million tons of the country's total annual cement production is consumed domestically and 12 to 13 million tons are export-



ed, the official said.

Earlier this month, Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Mahmoud Mahmoudzadeh announced that planning has been made and preparations have been done to start a project for constructing 1.3 million affordable housing units across the country.

Mentioning the plan for the construction of one million affordable housing units per year by the new government, Mahmoudzadeh said: "allocating land and financing are

two important factors for the successful implementation of any housing project, and if these two are provided, building one million housing units per year will be easily possible."

Referring to the recent rise in the prices of cement and steel as main items used in construction, he said: "The rise in the prices of cement and steel is one of the obstacles in housing production that the government must address; the government has provided all the necessary

facilities including cheap energy for the cement and steel production units, but we see that such products are exported instead of being supplied to the domestic market."

Mahmoudzadeh said the required regulations have been prepared and facilities have been created to provide land for the mentioned housing units by the next government.

"With the measures taken, the conditions are more favorable for the new government to begin the work," he noted.

Iranian Transport and Urban Development Ministry is currently implementing a program called the National Housing Action Plan, which includes the construction of 400,000 small and medium-sized apartments (70-100 square meters in size) across the country and particularly in Tehran, where housing prices have risen most sharply.

The mentioned program is going to be pursued in a bigger scale by the new government which officially took office last week.

Industry ministry approves plan for developing food industry

TEHRAN – Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki has announced the approval of the draft of the operational plan for the development of the country's food and beverage industry chain, IRNA reported.

The draft was approved on Wednesday in a meeting attended by Sadeqi Niaraki and Ali Agha-Mohammadi, head of the economic group at the office of the Islamic revolution's leader, as well as the representatives of specialized organizations and executive bodies.

Speaking at the meeting, Niaraki mentioned the Industry Ministry's plans for developing the country's major industries, saying that the plans to develop the production chains of clothing and footwear, precious metals, food and beverages, and home appliance industries have been prepared and approved by the industry minister so that necessary measures be taken in this regard as soon as possible.

According to the official, the development plan for the food and beverage industry has been pre-

pared, focusing on four major axes with a four-year outlook.

Forming a consortium for the production and export of food and beverage products, organizing and empowering active and semi-active small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in this industry, promoting, developing, and strengthening halal brands, and completing and developing value chains in the food and beverage industry are the four major axes of the mentioned program, Niaraki explained.

U.S. influence in West Asia has declined: Oxford professor

From page 1 ► United States occupies a pre-eminent position in global affairs, the 'unipolar moment' of the early post-Cold War era, as the political analyst Charles Krauthammer called it, was just that – a moment. The United States now faces serious competition, from China especially, but it remains a dominant power.

An article in National Interest claims that “from the beginning of the twenty-first century, though, the ability of the United States to act as a unipole was challenged by several factors” including America’s inability to prevail in its large-scale, long-lasting military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, and U.S. ineffective response to Russia. Do you think the U.S. will manifest a weak role on the international stage?

It depends on what one means by a ‘weak role’. The United States, under Biden, is seeking to regain the mantle of global leadership following the U.S. retreat from multilateralism under Trump. Whether it can succeed is another question: the experience of the Trump administration has raised doubts, even among America’s closest allies, about the reliability of the United States.

If by a ‘weak role’ one means less interventionist militarily, that was already the case (to a degree) under Obama, who ‘led from behind’ in the NATO operation over Libya in 2011, and who was reluctant to engage militarily in Syria subsequently.

The U.S. has been chastened by its experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan and has no appetite for ‘wars of choice’ at this time. The United States under Biden will rely more



heavily on multilateral diplomatic approaches to global governance and will seek to play a major role in those approaches.

How could regional powers like Iran, and Turkey curb the U.S. influence in West Asia?

“The U.S. has been chastened by its experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

U.S. influence in the Middle East (West Asia) has declined. Having failed to lead on Syria, it has yielded the initiative there to Russia, Iran and Turkey, as you point out. In the Israel-Palestine

conflict, it long ago ceased to be an honest broker and its influence over Israel has diminished. Having withdrawn from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) under Trump and failed in its attempts to apply ‘maximum pressure’ on Iran, it finds little scope for diplomatic action there, especially now that Iran has hardened its attitudes towards the United States. Regional powers have been and are likely to continue to take advantage of U.S. waning influence in the Middle East (West Asia).

How do you assess Trump’s presidency in U.S. history? As an initiation of decline or just an exception period that can be repaired?

It is too early to judge the long-term effects of Trump’s presidency. Take the question of the U.S. standing in the world. While Biden is seeking to restore U.S. stand-

ing, it is too early to say whether the damage Trump caused will be short-lived or long-lasting. Independent of the Trump effect, China’s growing influence, in Africa for instance, represents a distinct challenge for the United States which would have emerged without Trump’s self-inflicted wounds.

On the ‘plus’ side of the ledger, Biden’s massive effort to rebuild America’s infrastructure, which has deteriorated badly after many years of neglect, may also create a serious uplift for the U.S. economically, with consequences for the U.S. position on the global stage.

What are the implications of U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan for the world? Irresponsibility or failure of U.S. policies in West Asia? Why didn’t the U.S. try to collaborate with its foes like Iran to advance its plans?

Even before Afghanistan, with the U.S. retreat from multilateralism under Trump, U.S. allies and other countries have had reason to be concerned about the seriousness of U.S. commitment. While one can understand the U.S. frustration with ‘forever wars’, the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan will surely raise questions about its reliability as an ally.

Success in Afghanistan would have required, among other things, a concerted regional approach—especially with Pakistan, whose continued support of the Taliban ensured that they would remain a potent force. Iran and the United States, which are divided over so many other issues, do have common interests in Afghanistan: it would have made sense for them to work together. That is just one manifestation of the tragedy of this long-broken relationship.

More than %70 of the Yazidis are still displaced: Iraqi writer

By M. A. Saki

TEHRAN – A member of the Union of Iraqi Writers says that most of Yazidis are still displaced and are living in camps despite the declaration of victory over ISIS.

“More than 70% of the Yazidis are still displaced and living in camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and they have not been able to return to their areas due to the bureaucratic, security and service problems that the Sinjar district suffers from,” Hamad Shehab Ahmad tells the Tehran Times.

“Seven years have passed and the genocide against the Yazidis is still going on, as the chances of finding the kidnapped are diminishing day after day after declaring victory over ISIS and its defeat in Iraq and Syria and the retreat of its elements in desert areas and the escape of others to neighboring countries after the Yazidi captives were taken with them, and families, including Yazidi children, were adopted,” Shehab Ahmad adds.

Yazidis, an ethnoreligious minority group of about 550,000 people, mostly reside in northern Iraq, an area also populated by Kurds and Arabs.

ISIS regards the Yazidis as “devil worshippers” who must either renounce their religious views or die.

According to international organizations, ISIS was responsible for the killing and abduction of roughly 9,900 Yazidis and destroying 68 Yazidi shrines in 2014.

When the terrorist group entered the Yazidi ancestral city of Sinjar on Aug. 3, 2014, they murdered roughly 5,000 men and boys and enslaved thousands of women and children.

“The kidnapped children were given Islamic names in a move that will keep them for life and not hand them over to their relatives if they exist,” the Yazidi writer explains.

Following is the text of the interview:

What is the meaning of the word Yazidi? Is it true that the beliefs of this sect are descended from ancient Persian religions such as Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism? Is there a common ritual between Yazidism and Zoroastrianism?

It comes from the Sumerian word “Azi Da”, which means the right path or the correct direction.

Likewise, the Yezidis mean “worshippers of God,” which is derived from the Persian word “Izad,” which means angel or deity, and the same word in Zoroastrianism means “the holy god,” according to the writer Radwa al-Aswad in her book “Unknown Religions and Sects.”

The Yazidis are one of the oldest religions in Mesopotamia, which is associated with nature in most of its rituals; it dates back thousands of years. The writer Shukr Khedher Murad Al-Bazu says in his book (The Ancient History of Shingal) for the year 2017, page 28: “The Yazidis are the remnants of the Babylonian state and there is evidence indicate that, such as their feasts, rituals and traditions inherited from their Babylonian ancestors so far, especially the New Year’s Day festival on the first Wednesday of April of each year, i.e., in the middle of spring.

And the writer Badal Fakir Hajji goes further and says in his book (Laleh Nameh: First Edition Tehran 2019 p. 190): “The Yazidis are an extension and continuity of some Indo-Iranian reli-



gions mixed with Mesopotamian beliefs, meaning that the rituals and texts of this religion are based and focused on a philosophy that its roots go back more than six thousand years.

Can you update us about the crimes ISIS committed against the Yazidis in Iraq and Syria?

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, known as (ISIS), under the leadership of Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, launched an attack on the district of Sinjar, which has a Yazidi majority in Nineveh Province, in the far northwest of Iraq, along the Iraqi-Syrian border, about 120 kilometers away from the city of Mosul, the center of Nineveh Province. That was on the night of Saturday on February 2nd, 2014.

Despite the light weapons that the people had and their resistance to the enemy especially in the southern area of ??Sinjar (Al-Jazirah and Al-Adnaniah complexes) until sunrise, ISIS elements succeeded to extend their full control over the area at around ten o’clock in the morning after the withdrawal of all security and military forces charged with protecting the area without any fight or resistance.

After the Yazidis were left easy prey in their (ISIS) hands while some Sunni Muslim neighbors (Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen) cooperated with ISIS elements, the Yazidis had to flee towards Mount Sinjar (Shingal), which is 80 kilometers long, 21 kilometers wide, and the highest point is 1462 meters above sea level with an area of ??432 square kilometers.

The Kidnapped Yazidis Rescue Office based in the Kurdistan Regional Government issued a report on February 9, 2020, revealing more than 310,000 Yazidis were displaced on March 8, 2014, before ISIS takes control of the region. 1,293 people were killed in the first days and thousands of various ages were kidnapped after the region fell into the hands of the terrorists.

Those who were arrested were forcibly converted to Islam at gunpoint after being subjected to the threat of death with death; that is all because they were infidels in the eyes of ISIS and it is necessary to convert them to Islam and to kill their men if they refuse to adopt Islamic faiths and to take their women captive. This happened

according to what was circulated in videos ISIS posted on its websites and testimonies of Yazidi female and male survivors from the grip of ISIS.

Can you tell us about the current conditions of the Yazidis after the defeat of ISIS in Iraq?

Seven years have passed and the genocide against the Yazidis is still going on, as the chances of finding the kidnapped are diminishing day after day after declaring victory over ISIS and its defeat in Iraq and Syria and the retreat of its elements in the desert areas and the escape of others to neighboring countries after the Yazidi captives were taken with them and families including Yazidi children were adopted. The kidnapped children were given Islamic names in a move that will keep them for life and not hand them over to their relatives if they exist!

Also, more than 70% of the Yazidis are still displaced and are living in camps in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, and they have not been able to return to their areas due to the bureaucratic, security and service problems that the Sinjar district suffers from.

How would you describe the performance of the international community in shedding light on what happened to the Yazidis?

The international community showed sympathy towards the Yazidis the Security Council and its member states condemned ISIS. Also, international and human rights organizations denounced what ISIS committed against Yazidis especially officially recognizing the crimes that were committed as genocide.

Some countries provided aid to displaced Yazidis by receiving ISIS victims and granting them asylum opportunities among those countries is Germany, Australia, Canada and France.

Despite declaring the final victory over ISIS, there are still thousands of Yazidis kidnapped with an unknown fate and no trace of them, and day after day their families lose hope of their return because there is no serious effort by the responsible authorities to liberate them despite repeated demands by their families.

Add to this a clear failure to hold the perpetrators of crimes accountable especially those who participated with ISIS: Nobody is prosecuted few people that are counted on the fingers of one hand!

Brazil’s Bolsonaro denounced for rare military parade

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro’s decision to send combat vehicles to the streets of the capital for a military parade has been condemned by his opponents.

Opposition lawmakers from left and right condemned the spectacle.

The head of a congressional probe into the disastrous mishandling of the coronavirus that has killed over half a million Brazilians agreed with others who say Bolsonaro is trying to portray an image of power at a time when his popularity is plunging.

Omar Aziz says “Bolsonaro thinks this shows strength, but it’s actually just evidence of the fragility of a president who is cornered by corruption investigations ... and the administrative incompetence that has caused death, hunger and unemployment in the midst of an uncontrolled pandemic.”

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo resigns after harassment report

Cuomo has stepped down following pressure from fellow Democrats in the wake of an inquiry that found he harassed multiple women.

Despite continuing to deny the claims, he said “the best way I can help now is if I step aside. “

The resignation will take effect in 14 days.

Cuomo is the third New York governor in a row to leave office on the backdrop of a scandal.

The independent investigation by the New York Attorney General’s office found that Cuomo sexually harassed 11 women, including state employees.

9/11 families say offer to release some Saudi files not enough

Families of 9/11 victims are demanding a thorough declassification review of all documents, particularly on Saudi Arabia’s role.

On Monday, the FBI offered to release some documents following a call by victims’ families and first responders for President Joe Biden to stay away from ceremonies marking the 20th anniversary of the attacks next month.

The 9/11 families want the president to honor a campaign pledge to lift the secrecy surrounding the multi-agency investigations.

The co-chair of families and survivors’ group, 9/11 Community United, Terry Strada, says the offer was of little value and does not go far enough in providing transparency.

She added “the FBI came out and said they’re going to start to dribble this out and piecemeal this as much as they possibly can to try to appease us, and it’s just not good enough. It’s a half measure.”

The families want to know who financed and supported the attacks and have filed a lawsuit against the Saudi Arabian monarchy.

U.S. Senate committee debates arms sales to West Asia

During a hearing at the United States’ Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee, senior officials exchanged views on arms sales to Washington’s allies in West Asia with poor human rights records.

From the Biden administration itself, Mira Resnick of the Department of State and Dana Stroul from the Department of Defense gave testimonies, with Egypt taking center stage.

The two officials defended American assistance to Egypt despite the country’s heavy-handed crackdown on dissidents and the country’s detention of as many as 60,000 political prisoners.

Mira Resnick, deputy assistant secretary for regional affairs in the State Department’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, says Cairo is a “critical security partner” in the region.

She acknowledged Egypt’s crackdown on dissent saying “the president himself has underscored the importance of a constructive dialogue on human rights with the government of Egypt and we will continue to pursue this, even as we pursue shared security goals on maritime security, on border security, on counter-terrorism”

However, Democratic Senator, Chris Murphy, questioned this logic saying “It is time to ask whether the threat that less arms from the U.S. will cause our partners to simply abandon us and turn to Russia or China is real, or whether it is just a red herring.”

Murphy criticized the Egyptian military for focusing “more on internal repression than on regional security.”

He added, “This is a country that is receiving significant U.S. aid, \$1.3 billion a year, and in the midst of a dizzying crackdown on political dissent”.

He further raised the issue of Egypt’s two-year imprisonment of Egyptian-American human rights activist Mohamed Soltan, who has been released, as an example of the government’s human rights abuses. “They would throw sick prisoners into his cell – dying, sick prisoners, let them die there, and let the corpse sit and rot inside his solitary confinement cell as a means to try and break him,” Murphy said.

Dana Stroul, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East, stressed “the bottom line for President Biden is that he values the relationship with Egypt. He believes

they are an important security partner”

The highest-ranking Republican Senator sitting at the hearing, Todd Young, argued that attaching “insurmountable barriers” to arms exports would undermine Washington’s ability to exert influence in West Asia.

Last month, the House of Representatives passed its version of the fiscal year 2022 to 2023 foreign policy appropriations package. It included funding to the tune of \$1.3bn in arms exports to Egypt. It comes as Democratic lawmakers are increasingly raising concern over human rights abuses in Egypt. Congressman Tom Malinowski and Adam Schiff have called for a cut in Egypt’s assistance because of its rights record.

The Senate is preparing to take up foreign policy spending bills that includes a decision over whether to fully finance \$1.3 billion in assistance to the Egyptian government.

America’s own laws require the Secretary of State to certify Egypt is taking “sustained and effective steps” in strengthening the rule of law, democratic institutions and respect for human rights in order to release \$300 million in foreign military financing.

However, the Secretary of State can bypass this by issuing a waiver claiming it is in the national security interest of the country to fully fund military assistance.

In July 2020, Former Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, issued such a waiver for Egypt.

Advocates of arms exports to dictatorship with poor human rights records say if Washington withdraws its assistance, other super-powers like Russia or China will fill the void.

However, China’s influence in West Asia has grown through economic means largely due to investments and construction projects via its Belt and Road Initiative.

Russia on the other hand has decreased its arms exports, according to research by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

The United States is the largest arms supplier to West Asia, with exports increasing by 28 percent between 2016 and 2020.

Many of those weapons tend to land on the heads of women and children in Yemen and the Palestinians.

Safavid-era leather sheets restored as treasure trove of fortress

TEHRAN – A team of cultural heritage experts has successfully restored some Safavid-era (1501-1736) documents, which are inscribed on leather sheets as the treasure trove of the ancient Falak-ol-Aflak Fortress in western Iran.

"The fortress' treasure trove consists of 52 meters of historic leather sheets, of which 24 meters were preserved and restored in this phase of the project," Lorestan province's tourism chief announced on Wednesday.

"The leathern works date back to the Safavid-era and they were written in ink," Seyyed Amin Qasemi said.

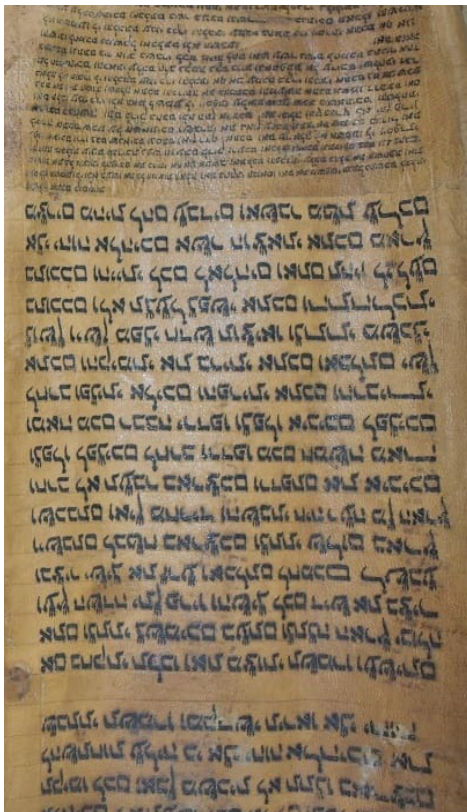
A very sensitive organic material, leather is subject to various damages in terms of its protein structure, as well as the effect of environmental conditions and its very sensitive nature, the official explained.

Made of brick and mortar, the unmissable eight-towered monument dominates the capital city of Khorramabad as one of the most visited travel destinations in the region for both domestic and foreign sight-seers.

The fortress dates from the Sassanid era (224–651). It seems particularly imposing and dramatic when floodlit at night, offering picturesque views of its encircling crenelated battlements.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in Iranian history, under which Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance.

Soaked in history and culture, Lorestan is one of the lesser-known travel destinations



in Iran, which mainly acts as a gateway to the sweltering plains below in adjoining Khuzestan province. Lorestan is also a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring.

Moveable properties in South Khorasan made national heritage



TEHRAN – A total of ten moveable properties in South Khorasan province have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

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

The stones of ancient Iranian windmills locally known as "asbads", traditional bride dresses, leather shoes, a

wooden door, and stone statues were among the historical properties added to the list.

Located in eastern Iran, South Khorasan is home to many historical and natural attractions such as Birjand Castle, Dragon Cave, Furg Citadel, and Poland Desert.

The province is also known for its famous rugs as well as its saffron and barberry which are produced in almost all parts of the province.

Kashan: a living piece of history on the edge of harsh desert

From page 1 ► If you have time, pay a visit to Abyaneh village, which is located around 90 km southward. Abyaneh is known for its beautiful architecture, traditional clothing specifically from the inhabitants, and its old dialect of Persian that dates from the Sassanian Empire. The village and its people's ways of life and traditions have survived practically unchanged for hundreds of years. It will be an unforgettable day trip from Kashan.

Many travelers opt to bypass Kashan on their journeys to Isfahan and Yazd, but this delightful oasis city is one of the most alluring destinations in the country.

During the reign of the Seljuks (1051–1118), Kashan became famous for its textiles, pottery, and tiles, reaching high levels of accomplishment in each of these industries. Today, Kashan and its surrounding towns and villages are also widely known as a major center for the production of rose

water, which is sold at outlets around the main tourist attractions and dedicated stores in the local bazaars.

Put the prehistoric Tepe Sialk, which is situated near Kashan, on your to-do list. The site has yielded remains of settlements dating to the 6th millennium BC. Kashan was also the center of Persian ceramics, producing decorated pottery and glazed tiles exported throughout the Near East. Its lusterwares were especially famous, while its woolen and silk carpets are among Iran's finest.

Under travelers' eyes

Here is a selection of comments that visitors to Kashan have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the



world:

"Great day trip"

[Our tour guide] Hossein made the best of our day trip in the Kashan area, with our amazing driver Jafar and our guide Fatimah we had a wonderful day to the salt lake and desert with food and water provided. We recommend skipping the visit to Kashan city and directly go outside and enjoy around. You can visit inside Kashan on your own. (SalimosDe-Bilbao from Bilbao, Spain)

"A m a z i n g one day tour of Kashan"

I booked to do a one-day city tour with them & it was fantastic! I arrived 1h later than the expected arrival time from Tehran (with no way to in-

form them as I hadn't had the chance to get a local sim card yet) & they were very gracious about it. I really enjoyed my tour with Alex, it was informative & packed with interesting historical facts. I learned a lot about Iranian architecture & culture from him. (EmG from Melbourne, Australia)

"Excellent tours"

We did a tour around Kashan, where we saw most highlights including the salt lake and a desert sunset, without feeling rushed. As stated here by other travelers.

The next day we visited Abyaneh with Ibrahim, who is also a very nice and funny guy, and then traveled to Barzok for an overnight stay in this mountain village. This was less of a sightseeing trip but more laid back talks with the nice villagers, eating with a local family, a short walk through the mountains, visiting an artisan carpet workshop. Saeed guided us so well here! All this is very much recommended! Evelien B. from Antwerp, Belgium))

Hotel project worth over \$71m underway in Ardabil

TEHRAN –A four-star hotel is being built in the northwestern province of Ardabil with a total budget of three trillion rials (\$71.4 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar).

The project, which is carried out by the private sector in the capital city of Ardabil, is complete by 90 percent and will come on stream in the near future, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

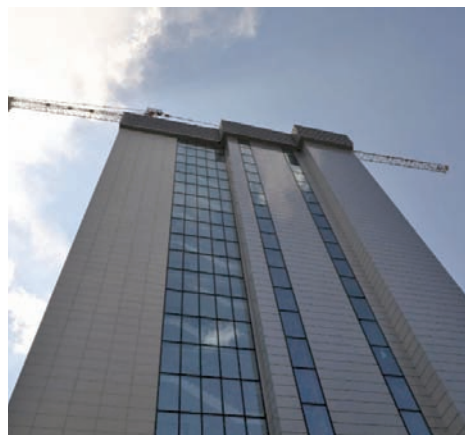
Covering an area of 12,000 square meters, the hotel is expected to generate 200 job opportunities upon its completion, Nader Fallahi said on Wednesday.

The hotel is expected to make the accommodation more convenient for travelers during the high season, the official added.

He also noted that the hospitality sector of the province is open to private investors.

Back in January, Fallahi announced that more than 150 tourism-related projects are underway across Ardebil province.

The mentioned projects will prepare the province's tourism sector for the post-coronavirus era when the number of tourists and



travelers is expected to rise magnificently, the official added.

Last April, tourism authorities of the province announced that they have developed extensive plans to draw more tourists during the winter season to the province and make it the winter tourism hub of the country.

Ancient coins confiscated from illegal excavator

TEHRAN – Iranian authorities have seized some ancient coins from an illegal digger in the western province of Ilam, the provincial tourism chief announced on Wednesday.

Following days of police surveillance, 63 historical coins were discovered from an illegal excavator and smuggler in Eyvan county, Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh said.

Based on assessments performed by provincial cultural heritage experts, the coins date back to the Sassanid era (224 CE–651), the official explained.

The accused was detained in this regard and surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, he noted.

In many ways, Iran under the Sassanian rule witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance during Sassanid rule.

In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were



translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

Of all the material remains of the era, only coins constitute a continuous chronological sequence throughout the whole period of the dynasty. Such Sassanian coins have the

name of the king for whom they were struck inscribed in Pahlavi, which permits scholars to date them quite closely.

The legendary wealth of the Sassanian court is fully confirmed by the existence of more than one hundred examples of bowls or plates of precious metal known at present. One of the finest examples is the silver plate with partial gilding in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The dynasty was destroyed by Arab invaders during a span from 637 to 651.

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

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

Over 180 people trained as crafters in Arak

TEHRAN –A total of 185 people have recently been trained as crafters in Arak, the capital of Markazi province, the tourism chief of the oasis city said on Wednesday.

The courses covered various fields such as making enamels, pottery and ceramics, leatherwork, and tureutics, Mohammad Ali Azqariati said

A budget of 300 million rials (\$7,100 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was spent to organize courses, the official added.

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.

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

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

The value of Iran's handicrafts exports stood at \$120 million



during the first eleven months of the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – February 18, 2021), Mehr reported. The country's handicrafts exports slumped during the mentioned months in comparison to the same period last a year earlier due to the damage the corona-

virus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

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

Iranian handicrafts: Khorjins of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari is one of the smallest, lesser-known provinces of Iran, however, is the home of two of the most important tribes of the country; Bakhtirai and Qashqai.

In the culture of nomadic society, Khorjins, which are a kind of saddlebags, have been turned into a way of expression and beautifying and helped bring diversity to the monotone and repetitive rhythm of seasonal migration.

The nomads use the Khorjins as sacks, baggage, and crates. Khorjins are popular and come in many different sizes.

According to Visit Iran, the small and medium Khorjins consist of two parallel squares that have been sewed to each other on a rectangular piece. But the large ones which are specifically used by nomads consist of two big rectangular pieces and are positioned in the front middle of each other.

The small Khorjins are called "Akbeh" and usually contain documents, valuable objects, personal things, and jewelry. Some of them are particularly used by women riders when they hang the Akbeh Khorjins on the saddle to carry their items.



Most commonly those Khorjins that are hung in front of the animals have two wide pieces of fabric as long as sixty centimeters and buttons are sewed on all over them.

They have patterns and pom poms as decorations. The pom-poms, also known as Varaneh, move around when the animal is trotting and prevent the stings of bees and other insects, and reduce the risk of the horse tilting its head to move away from the flies.

The second Khorjins are medium, they are sewed in one hundred in fifty centimeters and are used to carry edibles and common tools. The people of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari also use them

to carry their daily stoppings. The third group is large Khorjins and is more popular with the Bakhtiari tribe. They are one hundred in one hundred and fifty centimeters and have pockets in the form of rectangular which means they are wider than they are tall. Darjune, Chelgard, Kuhrang, and other cities are some of the most important centers where Khorjins are sewed.

Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari is the birthplace of various unique traditions and rituals relative to the 'tribal' lifestyles. Special forms of music, dance, and clothing are noteworthy. It has considerable potential to become a vibrant tourist attraction because of its changing natural landscape.

The province is also a hub for making wool felt products, majorly of which exported abroad. It is home to some 500 crafters, in over 250 workshops, making handmade felt products.

First biotech park come on stream in Bushehr

TEHRAN – The first biotechnology park in Iran has started operating in southern Bushehr Province, Hassan Habibi, head of Bushehr science and technology park, has announced.

After approving the establishment of a biotechnology park in Bushehr province as the first biotechnology park in the country, a biotechnology council with the presence of experienced evaluation experts formed, then the necessary call was made on biotechnology companies to invest in this area, he explained.

The biotechnology park is located in Delvar (Tangestan city) stretching to 70 hectares, which due to its location in the coastal area, has created a unique opportunity for those interested in investing in the field of biotechnology, he said.

Many scientists believe that the sea will become a valuable pharmacy in near future due to its high impact on health, Habibi stated, IRNA reported Tuesday.

If final approval is met in accordance with the required standards, biotechnology companies will soon be established in the biotech park and start operating, he emphasized.

Activities such as the cultivation of micro and macro algae indoors and in greenhouses, cultivation of marine mollusks and crustaceans, production of biofertilizers from algae, production of marine biopolymers as commercially competitive products in the food industry, cosmetics, medicines, industries, recyclable plastics, dentistry, bioadhesives, wound dressings and marine pharmaceutical and food



supplement industries are the priorities of Bushehr province's specialized biotechnology park.

Knowledge-based firms active in biotechnology

Currently, over 7,000 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency.

Nearly 800 knowledge-based companies in the country are currently operating in the field of biotechnology and supplying their products and services to the domestic market.

Among the companies, a number of them have made significant

progress in the field of bioactive technology and have commercialized domestic products.

Production of biofertilizers, biopolymers, and bioadhesives are among the priorities.

Earlier in May, the Biotechnology Development Council launched 129 production projects with the aim of

saving up to \$1.44 billion of foreign currency; the projects include the production of 27 biological medicine, 12 vaccine development, and 90 pharmaceutical raw materials through knowledge-based companies.

Iran ranks 12th in biotechnology

Iran is ranked 12th in the world and first in West Asia in terms of biotechnology, as 9.5 percent of the income of knowledge-based companies and more than 60 percent of their exports are related to biotechnology.

Foreign exchange savings of \$1 billion per year by producing 22 biopharmaceuticals, gaining the first rank in biotechnology products and vaccines in West Asia, and the presence among the top five biotechnology producers in Asia are among the country's achievements, Mostafa Ghanei, secretary of the biotechnology development office of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, said in October 2020.

So far, 27 biotechnology medicines, 12 vaccine projects, 90 pharmaceutical raw materials, and 55 projects in agriculture and food security have been implemented in order to gain a 3 percent market share and biotechnology assistance to the development of the economy, he explained.

Some 8 major companies are responsible for managing the country's 117 priority products in the fields of biopharmaceuticals, pharmaceutical raw materials, vaccines, probiotics, equipment, and chemical drugs, he emphasized.

Six Iranian cities registered in WHO's healthy city network

TEHRAN – Six Iranian cities have been so far registered in the Healthy Cities Network of the World Health Organization (WHO), Jafar Sadegh Tabrizi, head of the Network Management Center of the Ministry of Health, has stated.

Out of 6 cities, Sahand, Jolfa, and Maragheh are in northwestern East Azarbaijan province, Ardakan is in central Yazd province, Kashan is in central Isfahan province, and Germi is in northwestern Ardabil prov-

ince, he said, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Health plans to expand the network of healthy cities in Iran, and in the future, the number of healthy cities will reach 31 in the country, Tabrizi noted.

A healthy city should meet at least 80 percent of the 80 indicators in 9 areas recognized by WHO, ranging from socio-economic measures, governance, and increasing potentials to institutional transformation and cooperation based on planning and implementing innovative projects.

The Eastern Mediterranean regional network has 67 cities from 13 countries.

Sahand, a new town in East Azarbaijan, has recently been awarded the first healthy city in Iran under the World Health Organization's Healthy Cities Program.

WHO promotes Healthy Cities by awarding, and endorsing, flagship cities such as Sahand, and by estab-



lishing National Healthy Cities Networks, which bring together healthy cities across countries through local capacity building, monitoring, implementation, and exchanging experiences. In both cases, WHO provides strategic, and technical support as well as capacity-building at the national and local levels.

A healthy city should meet socio-economic indicators for implementing innovative projects.

National projects launched to develop livestock, poultry industry

TEHRAN — Increasing the reproduction and breeding of livestock and poultry will be promoted by implementing six national projects supported by the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

The livestock and poultry industry is one of the sectors that with the help of new technologies and knowledge-based firms can experience a growing trend and have a thriving domestic market.

Accordingly, the Biotechnology Development Council has defined six national plans to promote the industry using the power of the country's technologists, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

The projects include production of sperm, embryos, and purebred of endangered calves, production of microchips for identification, and registration of livestock according to standards, reproduction of sheep suitable for the environmental conditions of Iran, and breeding program of native Iranian sheep, and etc.

Knowledge-based companies

Despite sanctions putting pressure on the country, a unique opportunity was provided for business development and the activity of knowledge-based



The projects include production of embryos and breeding native sheep.

companies in the country.

Currently, over 7,000 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manufacturing diverse prod-

ucts to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency.

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in, leading to import reduction.

In recent years, the vice presidency for science and technology has been supporting knowledge-based companies active in the production of sanctioned items.

Revenue from sales of technolog-

ical products of companies located in science and technology parks in 2020 was close to 137 billion rials (nearly \$3.2 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials), which compared to 4.6 billion rials (about \$152,000) in 2013, shows the growth of 287.8 percent.

This issue was quite evident in the export sector of these companies so that the export of knowledge-based products was equal to \$1.14 million, but this amount increased to \$63.2 million in 2018, while reached \$98 million in 2020, despite the very harsh sanctions imposed on the country.

Vice President for Science and Technology Sourena Sattari told the Tehran Times in October 2020 that "U.S. sanctions caused exports of knowledge-based companies to decline three years ago, however, it has returned to growth and is projected to reach the pre-sanctions level of more than \$1 billion by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20).

Fortunately, last year, companies achieved a record sale of 1.2 quadrillion rials (nearly \$28.5 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), which is expected to increase by 40 percent this year."

ENGLISH IN USE

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Educational projects worth \$330m to be inaugurated

A total of 1,015 educational projects worth 14 trillion rials (nearly \$330 million) will be inaugurated across the country, Mehrolah Rakhshanimehr, director of the organization for renovation, development, and equipment of schools, has announced.

The projects will be inaugurated by the next 10 days, on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, he stated, ISNA reported on Sunday.

According to Rakhshanimehr, the projects include 4,168 classrooms, 11 swimming pools, and 32 gyms.

About 14,000 classrooms have been built so far this year (started March 21, 2019), compared with some 10,000 last year, he concluded.

افتتاح ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان پروژه آموزشی

رئیس سازمان نوسازی، توسعه و تجهیز مدارس کشور گفت ۱۰۱۵ پروژه آموزشی با اعتباری به میزان ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان در سراسر کشور به بهره‌برداری می‌رسد.

به گزارش ایسنا، مه‌ال‌ه رخشانی مهر افزود این پروژه‌ها طی ۱۰ روز آینده و به مناسبت چهل‌ویکمین سالگرد پیروزی انقلاب اسلامی افتتاح خواهند شد. به گفته او، این پروژه‌ها شامل ۴۱۶۸ کلاس درس، ۱۱ استخر، و ۳۲ سالن ورزشی هستند.

رخشانی مهر ادامه داد تاکنون در سال ۹۸ حدود ۱۴ هزار کلاس درس افتتاح شده است در حالیکه در سال ۹۷ حدود ۱۰ هزار کلاس افتتاح شده بود.

Caspian seals awaiting protection plan to survive extinction

From page 1 ► Our main problem is that the Caspian Sea is located between five countries, which unfortunately have no coordination on environmental issues, he said, adding, a species like the Caspian seal, which has been inaccessible for years, has been listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature since 2008.

"It is unfortunate that most of those who do scientific work on this species are not from the Caspian littoral countries, and researchers from countries such as Japan, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom are active in this field."

"Such a situation has prevented the development of a codified program for the protection of Caspian seals. Although conferences and talks on the protection of Caspian seals and other endangered species may be held every year, none of which have no practical guarantee.

Few non-governmental organizations, such as the Caspian Seal Conservation Center in countries such as Iran, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan, have begun to work to protect the species, but the consensus of officials and governments of the five countries has not been achieved," he regretted.

In 2008, Iran's Department of Environment started the seal conservation program with the support of the Zeehondencreche, a seal protection center founded by Lenie 't Hart. And in 2019 the second center was established in Kazakhstan.

If the protection plan is launched and the various organizations related to the Caspian seal come together, we can take effective steps to protect this species, provided that governments implement this program regionally and internationally, he concluded.

Sea pollution and diseases are among the factors contributing to the decline in the Caspian seals, he concluded.

The oil spill, industrial waste as well as heavy met-

als, agricultural pesticides, radioactive waste, wastewater, and household waste entering the sea, and noise pollution caused by oil and gas refineries, and excessive boat traffic have pushed the species toward extinction through poisoning them.

National plan to protect Caspian seals

The National Action Plan to protect the endangered Caspian seals was prepared on March 21, carried out under the supervision of the DOE with the cooperation of non-governmental organizations and all responsible bodies.

Caspian seals included on CMS

Caspian seals are included in Appendices I and II of the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

As per Appendix I of the Convention, poaching and illegal fishing activities are banned to save the animals from extinction, while Iran has not had a share in illegal fishing of the species since the very beginning, she concluded.

Over the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CMS COP12) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), administered by UN Environment on October 28, 2017, Caspian seals were included on Appendices I and II of the Convention.

According to the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals Website, Appendix I comprises migratory species that have been assessed as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range.

Appendix II covers migratory species that have unfavorable conservation status and that require international agreements for their conservation and management, as well as those that have a conservation status that would significantly benefit from the international cooperation that could be achieved by an international agreement.



tribal allegiances are still strong among all Kurds. They are estimated at about five million, but since many live in Tehran or other cities, it is difficult to know how many consider themselves as Kurds.

Most Kurds are Sunnis, but in the southern areas in Kermanshah Province one finds Shiites and followers of sects such as Ahl-e Haqq and Yazidis. About half a million Kurds live in northern Khorasan, having been moved there by the Safavids. Many Kurds consider themselves descended from the ancient Medes, and even use a calendar dating from 612 B.C., when the Assyrian capital of Nineveh was conquered by the Medes.

The Turkish speakers of Azerbaijan are mainly descended from the earlier Iranian speakers, several pockets of whom still exist in the region. A massive migration of Oghuz Turks in the 11th and 12th centuries gradually Turkified Azerbaijan as well as Anatolia. The Azeri Turks are Shiites and were founders of the Safavid dynasty. They are settled, although there are pastoralists in the Moghan steppe called Ilsevan (formerly Shahsevan) numbering perhaps 100,000; they, as other tribes in Iran, were forced to adopt a settled life under Reza Shah. Other Turkic speakers—Turkmen, Qajars, Afshars, etc.—are scattered in various regions of western Iran.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

Concluded

COVID-19 UPDATES ON AUGUST 11

New cases	42,541
New deaths	536
Total cases	4,281,217
Total deaths	95,647
New hospitalized patients	4,865
Patients in critical condition	6,932
Total recovered patients	3,618,224
Diagnostic tests conducted	26,790,150
Doses of vaccine injected	17,294,797

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

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

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

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:13:09 Evening: 20:49 Dawn: 4:17 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:22 (tomorrow)

History of art in Iran: post-Qajar painting

A sculpture from the Heech series of Parviz Tanavoli, a leading figure of the Saqqakhaneh School.

Part 5
A few of the better-known names associated with the Saqqakhaneh School are the following:

Parviz Tanavoli (b. 1937), the leading Iranian sculptor, has worked with different materials and highly diverse techniques.

He is a graduate of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran and the Berrera Academy in Milan, where he studied with Mario Marini.

His search for ancient Iranian sculptured pieces, in the absence of statues made during the Islamic period, has led him to a study of traditional metalwork, such as utensils, decorative birds, even locks.

He is equally engrossed with the legend of Farhad, the rock carver of Bisotun who died for the love of Shirin and whose story is echoed throughout the pages of Persian literature.

Tanavoli's most typical Saqqkhaned work is a pair of hands gripping the grillwork of a shrine in a gesture of beseeching.

During one of his later periods, Tanavoli created a series of sculptures in which the Persian word heech (nil), laden with mystical connotations, is seen twisting and turning in space like some fantastic dragon.

Faramarz Pilaram (1937-1983), a graduate of Tehran's School of Decorative Arts, was a modernist painter and an accomplished calligrapher.

Initially he produced paintings in which geometric forms borrowed from Shia iconography were painted yellow, gold, and silver and then embellished with seal impressions (one such work of Pilaram's is now in the collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art).

Then he turned to calligraphy in compositions that were also characterized by bold coloring and large size. One of Pilaram's last creations, before his premature death from a heart attack, was a gigantic word fragment made of wood.

Masud Arabshahi (b. 1935) is another graduate of the School of Decorative Arts.

He works with ancient motifs borrowed from Achaemenid or even Assyrian and Babylonian rock carvings in decorative and colorful compositions.

During the seventies, he received several commissions to decorate walls and facades of public buildings (such as that of the Ministry of Industries and Mines) with bas-reliefs of his own design.

Sadeq Tabrizi (1938-2017) is another successful graduate of the School of Decorative Arts.

He has tried his hand at pottery, collage, and painting, drawing on elements borrowed from calligraphy, folk art, and the more formal figures of Persian miniatures with equal success.

His earliest paintings were executed on

parchment in lively color combinations. Later on he shifted to relatively large canvases. An element that pervades his works in all its different periods is a strong sense of humor.

Mansur Qandriz (1935-1965) was a student of the School of Decorative Arts; his life was cut short by an automobile accident.

From quasi-surrealistic paintings he moved to a period in which he would combine decorative motifs, taken from a wide range of sources, to create synthetic ensembles. By contrast, he was economical during this period in his palette and would often limit himself to two or three key colors.

Nasser Ovisi (b. 1934) is a modern painter who has pursued, all the while, a diplomatic career.

Ovisi works in a figural style reminiscent of Seljuk, Safavid, or even Qajar art. He embellishes his figures with calligraphy or decorative patterns directly transferred from the wooden blocks of the qalamkar (printed cotton) maker.

His idiom has remained more or less constant, but his style has gradually evolved from relative simplicity to elaboration, with a profusion of silver and gold in his later works.

After a "Spanish period" in the late seventies resulting from his diplomatic post in Spain, he has returned to his old motifs in which figures of women and horses are prominent.

Jazeh Tabatabai (1931-2008) was a painter and sculptor. Jazeh might be reluctant to call himself a Saqqakhaneh artist as he started to draw on motifs borrowed from Iranian folk arts a year or two before this school had a name.

He was also one of the pioneers of the modern art movement in Iran, having established a gallery (the Iran Modern Art Gallery) which was very active during the sixties.

In his paintings, Jazeh often satirizes Qajar stereotypes, combining them with decorative elements taken from different sources, including qalamkar blocks, book illustrations, calligraphy metal engraving, etc.

Jazeh's sculpture pieces are also combinations of different elements found in the scrap heap but imaginatively and humorously put together.

In this fashion, Jazeh created a number of "fantastic" dragon-birds that adorned the exhibition halls of the last two Tehran Biennales. Among his other works the doors for the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) may be mentioned.

Besides the Saqqakhaneh School artists, a wide range of tendencies could be discerned among other contemporary artists. Some took their inspiration from nature, often with elements from the Iranian landscape.

Sohrab Sepehri (1928-1980) was a leading contemporary painter and an outstanding modernist poet.

A graduate of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran, he participated in the first and second Tehran Biennale, studied lithography at the Beaux Arts, Paris, in 1957, and woodcut techniques at Tokyo in 1960.

A year later he held his own exhibition of paintings at Talar-e Reza Abbasi, revealing clear impressions of Japanese designs.

In the next two decades, he created a large number of paintings, which he showed at various exhibitions, and several collections of poems, proving his earnest preoccupation with both means of expression.

His paintings attracted attention both in Iran and abroad, following successful participation in such group shows as the Venice Biennale (1958), the Sao Paolo Biennale (1963), and solo exhibitions such as those held at the Benson Gallery in New York (1971) and Galerie Cyrus in Paris (1972).

Sepehri worked in a simple, semi-abstract style with a watercolor effect that reflected the landscapes of the countryside around his native city of Kashan and in his later years concentrated his attention on a series devoted to tree trunks. The stark simplicity and serenity of his paintings were illuminated and complemented by his poetry.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

A thespian acts in tazieh performance at the Rudaki Open-Air Theater in Tehran on August 28, 2020. (IRNA/Amin Jalali)

From Page 1 ► However, Fars ruler Qotlogh Khan is assigned by Abbasid caliph Mamun the task of stopping them. They all are killed in an intense battle with the ruler's men.

"Hazrat Muslim (AS) Tazieh" was performed on Wednesday night.

The tazieh portrays the journey of Muslim ibn Aqil al-Hashimi (AS), the messenger of Imam Hussein (AS), to Kufa a few days before the Ashura uprising that led to the martyrdom of the Imam and his companions in 680.

The story of the martyrdom of

Muslim ibn Aqil's sons, Muhammad and Ibrahim, is scheduled to be staged on Thursday night.

The story of Hurr ibn Riahi, one of Yazid's commanders, who joined the troops of Imam Hussein (AS) on the eve of Ashura, is another highlight

Books released to boost children's knowledge of Iran's endangered species

TEHRAN – The Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) has released a book series to raise children's awareness of the species at risk of extinction in Iran.

Children above nine are the target audience of the series titled "Hey! Take Care of Us", the IIDCYA announced on Tuesday.

It is composed of 11 books written and illustrated by different authors and artists coordinated by Zohreh Parirokh.

Nine books of the series include "Run, Run, Run!", "Who Had Stuck the Letter on the Glass?", "Who...? Where...? and...", "The Little Big-Eared", "Persian Fallow Deer", "Believe, I'm a Turtle", "Fear... Fear... Fear...", "The Last Iranian Ground-Jay of the Big Plain" and "Call Me Salamander".

In this series, children learn about Iran's wildlife species that are increasingly threatened with extinction. The animals take children to their world, telling them why and how they have faced the tribulation.

"Hey! Take Care of Us" also teach the children how

to help the environment and the animals.

The books center on Persian onager, Persian fallow deer, turtle, salamander, Pleske's ground jay, Asiatic cheetah and a number of other animals.

Parirokh, Tahered Ibad, Minu Karimzadeh, Mohammadreza Marzuqi, Sorur Kotobi, Mostafa Rahmandooost, Susan Tagdis, Mohammadreza Shams and Farhad Hassanzadeh are the writers of the nine books of the series.

The books have been illustrated by Ali Nurpur, Majdi Saberinejad, Fereshteh Jafari-Farmand, Reza Maktabi, Babak Amel-Qarib, Parvin Heidarzadeh, Sanaz Zamani and Hadis Jazayeri, and Majid Kazemi and Ali Khodai have collaborated as graphic designers.

The IIDCYA has previously published numerous books to raise children's knowledge of the environment and wildlife.

In January 2019, British children's book writer Leon Gray's series "Animal Scientists" was published in Persian by the institute.

Composed of five books, "Animal Scientists"

This combination photo shows the front covers of the nine books of the series "Hey! Take Care of Us".

combines ecology with simple scientific principles so young readers can see how animals have adapted to cope with their environment and how they relate to other animals. The series explores animals' use of science and engineering to overcome environmental challenges such as escaping predators, making a shelter, finding food and finding a mate.

Iranian shorts line up for Linz film festival

TEHRAN — Eight movies from Iranian filmmakers will be competing in the Linz International Short Film Festival in Austria.

The films include "Barter", "Dualpa", "Good Girl", "Hanged", "Love Can't Be Quarantined", "Prestige", "Violet" and "White Clad".

"Barter" directed by Ziba Karamali and Emad Arad is about Parsa, a 13-year-old boy who is trying to hide a secret from his father. The film depicts a dramatic situation in a family, and how people change when their interests are at stake.

Directed by Mohammadreza Moradi, "Dualpa" is about a young man who meets a bizarre old man while searching for a mythical creature in an Iranian desert. The young man promises to help the old man find the holy book of his tribe in lieu of a treasure. However, the young man has to give him a piggyback ride.

"Good Girl" by Raheleh Karami tells the story of a good young girl who is forced to face in silence the

"Barter" directed by Ziba Karamali and Emad Arad.

drama that life places before her.

"Hanged" by Roqieh Tavakkoli is about a 40-year-old woman who weighs 300 pounds and works as a hangman in Yazd Province, Iran.

"Prestige" by Zahra Ahui is about Mahsa, a

TV presenter who posts videos of her songs on Instagram anonymously. As a result, she faces a challenge for this decision.

Directed by Ghasideh Golmakani, "Violet" tells the story of Azi, who is alone even if she lives in a big traditional family. Just before the wedding ceremony, Azi notices that her sister's wedding rings are lost. She tries to find a solution despite her familial problems.

"White Clad" by Reza Fahimi is about an old woman who brings some sheep cheese to Ahmad, a ten-year-old boy, so that he can give it to his father, who is a teacher, in hopes that his father would intervene and stop them from hanging the woman's son.

"Love Can't Be Quarantined" by Jinus Pedram is a love story made based on a plot by Arash Dehqan.

The 4th edition of the Linz International Short Film Festival will take place from September 20 to 25.

"Wabi Sabi" published in Persian

Front cover of the Persian translation of Beth Kempton's book "Wabi Sabi".

TEHRAN — Japanologist Beth Kempton's book "Wabi Sabi: Japanese Wisdom for a Perfectly Imperfect Life" has been released in Persian.

Azadeh Masunia is the translator of the book published by Saless in Tehran.

Wabi sabi is a captivating concept from Japanese aesthetics, which helps us to see beauty in imperfection, appreciate simplicity and accept the transient nature of all things.

With roots in zen and the way of tea, the timeless wisdom of wabi sabi is more relevant than ever for modern

life, as we search for new ways to approach life's challenges and seek meaning beyond materialism.

Wabi sabi is a refreshing antidote to our fast-paced, consumption-driven world, which will encourage you to slow down, reconnect with nature, and be gentler on yourself.

It will help you simplify everything, and concentrate on what really matters.

From honoring the rhythm of the seasons to creating a welcoming home, from reframing failure to ageing with grace, wabi sabi will

"Making of Emotional Capitalism" at Iranian bookstores

dating sites.

How did this happen? What are the social consequences of the current preoccupation with emotions? How did the public sphere become saturated with the exposure of private life? Why does suffering occupy a central place in contemporary identity? How has emotional capitalism transformed our romantic choices and experiences?

Building on and revising the intellectual legacy of critical theory, this book addresses these questions and offers a new interpretation of the reasons why the public and the private, the economic and the emotional spheres have become inextricably intertwined.

of the tazieh program, which has been organized by the Art and Cultural Organization of the Tehran Municipality.

The tazieh troupe is composed of Masud Azizi, Milad Azizi, Hossein Atiqi, Hossein Nabai, Alireza Seyyed-Salehi, Amirali Rezai, Amir Seyyed-Salehi, Mehdi Aqai, Yasser Babai, Hamid Farrokhi, Ebrahim Khodabandeh, Mohsen Daneshi, Sajjad Khesali and Sajjad Mohammadzede.

The Art and Cultural Organization of the Tehran Municipality has also organized troupes to perform over 200 tazieh performances in Tehran parks in a program that started on Tuesday and will run until September 7.

The Iranian passion play tazieh was registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in November 2010.

Tazieh represents religious events, historical and mythical stories and folk tales. Each performance has the four components of poetry, music, song and motion.

However, stories about the uprising of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions against the oppressive Umayyad dynasty in 680 CE are more highly regarded by tazieh troupes and audiences.

Performers are always male, and female roles are played by men, most of whom are amateurs who gain their living through other means but perform for spiritual rewards.