

# TEHRAN TIMES

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## Baghdad Summit: What to Expect?

▶ Page 3

### IRGC chief: Borders are completely secure

TEHRAN — The commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Friday that Iran's borders enjoy full security, with the IRGC, Army and police forces closely watching and controlling border areas.

The comments by Hossein Salami came as the Taliban militants are capturing more territories in neighboring Afghanistan.

"The armed forces are present at the country's eastern borders with full readiness and vigilance," Major General Salami told reporters during a visit to the northeastern city of Mashhad.

Salami reiterated that all of the official and unofficial border crossings in the east of the country are under full control of the Iranian armed forces.

"People should not worry at all, because the scope of our observations has gone beyond the borders and we are monitoring and controlling all the developments in the neighboring country," he said.

In recent weeks, the Taliban militants have waged a massive rampage across the war-torn Afghanistan, seizing control of multiple strategic cities toward the capital, Kabul.

**IRGC and Basij do whatever possible to combat Coronavirus**

During his visit to Mashhad, Salami also visited the vaccination center in the shrine city, and reiterated the IRGC's determination in helping the government implement the public vaccination program.

"What I observed was that there is a serious determination in the responsible officials of the province, such as the governor and the medical officials, as well as the Guards," he highlighted. ▶ Page 2



Simon Shercliff, new UK ambassador to Tehran taking a selfie with Iran Air flight sign. Picture is taken from his Twitter account.

STAY UPDATED #UKAmbassador

### What the new UK ambassador to Iran is looking for?

TEHRAN — In our previous report titled "The curious case of new UK ambassador to Iran," we said that "The UK, with the appointment of Shercliff, has a tough time mending ties with Iran."

3 days after the arrival of Simon Shercliff to Tehran, it is now crystal clear to everyone that the Iran-UK relationship will be one of a kind.

It all began on Wednesday, when the official Twitter account of the Russian Federation embassy in Tehran tweeted a photo of Ambassador Levan Dzagharyan's meeting with the new UK ambassador to Iran, in the historical stairs of the Russian embassy, where the 1943 Tehran conference was held.

The tweet said, "Ambassador Levan Dzagharyan's meeting with the new head of the British diplomatic mission in Iran Simon Shercliff on the historical stair, where the 1943 Tehran conference was held."

The picture sparked a big controversy in social media among Iranian officials and the people. ▶ Page 2

### 400 idle industrial units revived since late March

TEHRAN- The head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) announced that 400 idle industrial units have been revived in the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21).

Speaking to the press on the occasion of National SMEs Day, Ali Rasoulian said reviving the mentioned units have created jobs for over 5,291 people, IRNA reported.

According to Rasoulian, there are currently over 48,000 industrial units based in the country's industrial parks and zones of which about 83 percent are active.

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

He noted that with the mentioned 400 units being revived, about 23 percent of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's goals for reviving idle units in the current year has been realized.

"The ministry also has it on the agenda to create 28,800 jobs by reviving idle units across the country, of which so far about 18 percent has been realized," Rasoulian added.

Last year, 1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to the production cycle in the industrial parks with the financing of 35 trillion rials (over \$833 million), providing employment for 27,000 people, according to the ISIPO head. ▶ Page 4

### Report

## Water transfer not a solution to drought

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — The transfer and desalination of seawater is only a temporary solution to water scarcity and not a permanent solution to drought, Ahad Vazifeh, head of the national center for drought and crisis management said.

The transfer of seawater to central cities to address drought can be assessed from a variety of perspectives; Iran is currently facing water stress in various areas, such as drinking and agricultural water supply; the water shortage is so serious that everyone is warning of a sharp decline in groundwater resources, he explained.

Referring to the dire consequences of excessive water withdrawal, he lamented that the water transfer definitely is not a good alternative to supply water or meet future needs.

This project can supply water to a city or village at most, but it does not meet the water needs on a large scale, he added, IRNA reported on Friday.

According to Vazifeh, transferring water is so costly that even if it is used in the agricultural sector, it will make agricultural products more expensive, while the volume of water is limited and is not sufficient for the whole agricultural sector.

However, in case of water stress, water supply is a priority and there is no other choice but to deliver water to the people through seawater desalination projects. However, it is recommended to reduce the cost of water treatment using technology. Supplying energy from solar power plants can reduce air pollution and help make the project cheaper, in the long run, he explained.

Iran has very rich sources of solar energy to generate electricity, and if we can desalinate seawater using solar energy, we will be both entrepreneurial and cost-effective in the long run and prevent environmental pollution from fossil fuel incineration.

A project for transferring water from the Persian Gulf to the southern Fars province is in its pipe-laying phase, which was started in February 2019. ▶ Page 7



Actor Ali Soleimani dies from COVID-19

TEHRAN — Stage and screen actor Ali Soleimani, who played roles in acclaimed productions such as Asghar Farhadi's TV series "Story of a City" and Bahram Beizai's movie "Killing Mad Dogs", died from coronavirus in a Tehran hospital on Thursday. He was 51.

Early last week, his close friend, actor Javad Hashemi, announced his illness and asked people to pray for him.

Soleimani studied theater at a Tehran university and began his career in theater as a property master in 1992. ▶ Page 8

### Seleucid, Parthian and Islamic relics unearthed in west-central Iran

TEHRAN — Archaeologists have unearthed relics dating from the Seleucid, Parthian, and Islamic eras as they were attempting to discover the ruins of the Seleucid Laodicea Temple believed to be buried under the modern town of Nahavand in Hamedan province, west-central Iran.

"The sixth archaeological season to discover Laodicea Temple has so far led to the discovery of artifacts from the Seleucid, Parthian, and Islamic (Ilkhanid) periods, while archaeologists continue to their search for the ancient temple," Mohsen Khanjan, who leads the excavation, said on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

One of the walls of Dokhaharan's sanctuary, where archaeologists believe might be built over

the ruins of the ancient temple, was demolished at the beginning of the current survey to let researchers carve trenches, Khanjan explained.

Due to the numerous and dense buildings constructed near Dokhaharan's sanctuary, which is located in one of the lesser-developed neighborhoods of Nahavand, the excavation team faced many problems, including choosing a suitable place for carving archaeological trenches, he stated.

According to Khanjan, in addition to a Greek inscription, other significant objects such as bronze statues of Greek gods, a stone altar, column head, column shaft, column base, and pottery pieces had been discovered in the Dokhaharan neighborhood.

### Anti-Asian hate crime in U.S. skyrocket since pandemic began

Despite increased national awareness and action against anti-Asian hate attacks, a new report has found such incidents have increased on Asian Americans in 2021. Observers say the majority of the intended attacks are against the Chinese community residing in America.

According to Stop AAPI Hate, from March 2020 to June 2021, there were more than 9,000 reports of anti-Asian American hate incidents.

4,548 of the attacks occurred in 2020, while 4,533 incidents happened in 2021.

The non-profit organization, which tracks incidents of hate and discrimination against Asian Americans, says the number increased from 6,603 to 9,081 during the last three months of the reporting period.

In a news release, Manjusha Kulkarni, co-founder of Stop AAPI Hate and ▶ Page 5

### From Inside

- MP says Iran, Saudi Arabia have traded positive signals P2
- Araqchi to Britain's Raab: Your friends in Washington froze prisoner swap deal P2
- The key to mending Tehran-Riyadh ties in Saudi hands: former ambassador P2
- Iran voices concern over escalation in Afghanistan P3
- FIFA President extends condolences on passing Azizi P3
- 2022 WCQ: Japanese Sato to officiate Iran vs Syria match P3
- Iran climb up in FIBA World Ranking P3
- Oil minister candidate releases future plans P4
- Govt., private sector discuss issues facing industrial units P4
- Iran may need to import wheat as drought cuts harvest P4
- U.S., allies scramble to save citizens amid Taliban "advance" P5
- Most countries that bought the Pegasus are authoritarian: Lebanese expert P5
- Japan eases travel restrictions for Iran P6
- Five Iranian provinces commissioned to hold special celebrations on World Tourism Day P6
- Ruins of magnificent Sassanid bridge strengthened by team of restorers P6
- Caspian Sea level shrinks by 5-10cm on year P7
- Italian embassy opens exhibition in honor of Iranian legendary wrestler Takhti P7
- Tehran Auction grosses about \$1.6 million P8
- CinéDOC-Tbilisi festival to review "Sunless Shadows", "Sonita" P8

### Interview

## Cryptocurrencies can't replace currencies: American economist

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — A professor of applied economics at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore says that cryptocurrencies can't replace currencies as they are nothing more than highly speculative assets.

Steve H. Hanke, who served on President Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers and is the world's leading expert on hyperinflation, tells the Tehran Times that "Cryptocurrencies don't, in fact, qualify as currencies."

According to Hanke Cryptocurrencies are nothing but speculative assets.

"Bitcoin, for example, has a fundamental value of zero. And, any of the stablecoins, including tether, are not redeemable into the assets that are allegedly backing the stablecoins," he argues.

Following is the text of the interview:

**How do you see the future of cryptocurrencies? Some people believe the globe is heading towards replacing paper money with cryptocurrency.**

Your question is a complicated one to answer. As far as cryptocurrencies, as we know them today, are concerned, their future is very uncertain. Indeed, it's virtually impossible to forecast their future with any degree of certainty. ▶ Page 5

## Iran move up five places in FIFA ranking

TEHRAN — Iran have moved up five places in the FIFA World Ranking released on Thursday.

Dragan Skocic's team returned to the pitch in June after a lengthy intermission, with the remaining games in Round 2 of the Asian Qualifiers postponed due to COVID-19.

Iran traveled to Bahrain to play the rest of the games in a hub, winning all four matches to make it a 100% record in the passage to Round 3.

The four wins against Hong Kong, Cambodia, Bahrain and Iraq saw the 'Persian Leopards' climb to 26th place in the ranking.

There has been a considerable amount of movement in the standings, although Belgium managed to retain their top spot despite being eliminated in the quarter-finals of the European Championship. Their last-eight opponents and eventual winners of the tournament, Italy, (5, +2), moved up into the top 5, just behind EURO runners-up England (4, no change). Just above that pair, Brazil (2, +1) and France (3, -1) swapped places.

The next FIFA Men's World Ranking will be published on 16 September 2021.

## IRGC ready to assist in Covid vaccination program in Iran: Commander

Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Ground Force expressed his forces' readiness to help the Iranian health society in the public vaccination program against the coronavirus.

In comments in Iran's northeastern city of Mashhad on Thursday, Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour said the IRGC Ground Force is ready to help and promote the coronavirus vaccination centers across Iran.

He also noted that the IRGC Ground Force has set up an operational headquarters after Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei ordered the mobilization of efforts by the military forces in the battle against the pandemic.

The general also said that the IRGC Ground Force's stationary and mobile hospitals across the country have focused efforts on the treatment of the coronavirus patients.

In remarks on Wednesday, Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the services offered by the military and the Basij forces when the pandemic had just broken out in Iran, asking for exploiting the full potential of these groups in helping the people.

Describing the COVID-19 disease as the most important issue of the country and lamenting the high rate of mortality, the Leader also thanked President Raisi for setting a one-week deadline in order to combat the new wave of the disease.

From page 1 ▶ The commander also said that a serious will has been formed after the order of the Leader to contain the Coronavirus.

"We hope to overcome this issue with collective will and great efforts. We also decide to meet the hardware needs such as oxygen generators and we expand the scope of activities according to the needs," General Salami stated.

He emphasized that the most important priority of the IRGC is to organize teams that can help medical officials all over the country to intensify the public vaccination plan named after martyr Soleimani, insisting on intensive and nationwide implementation of the plan in all sectors.

The Martyr Soleimani plan is being implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Basij, and the



Red Crescent Society, through which volunteer forces provide information, testing, diagnosis, referral of suspects to health centers, and offer

services by visiting people's homes. Salami stated that most of the hospitals in different parts of the country, including the hospitals

related to the IRGC and the hospitals of the ground forces have announced readiness, and in Mashhad, the Shahid Najafi clinic has been set up and its beds have been expanded.

In the fight against the Coronavirus, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Basij along with the Ministry of Health and other responsible organizations, have undertaken important activities, from rapid diagnosis and screening to providing medical services and shelter, but the most important activity of this population has been informing the public about health-care and treatment.

He stated IRGC naval hospitals and fixed and mobile forces in Qom, Arak, Sari and other cities have come to work to help the medical sector and remove the burden from the medical community.

## What the new UK ambassador to Iran is looking for?

From page 1 ▶ On Wednesday night, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted, "I saw an extremely inappropriate picture today. Need I remind all that Aug. 2021 is neither Aug. 1941 nor Dec. 1943. The Iranian people have shown—including during the JCPOA talks—that their destiny can NEVER be subject to decisions in foreign embassies or by foreign powers."

In a tweet on Wednesday afternoon, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf demanded an apology from the ambassadors.

"The inappropriate action of the ambassadors of Russia and the United Kingdom should be pursued immediately by the Foreign Ministry.

Both ambassadors must immediately formally apologize for the action taken, otherwise a decisive diplomatic response will be necessary," Qalibaf tweeted.

Hossein Amir Abdollahian, foreign minister-designate also reacted to the controversial picture, tweeting on Thursday, "The undiplomatic action of the two foreign ambassadors in Tehran has stifled public opinion in the Islamic Republic of Iran and shows the disregard for the diplomatic etiquette and national pride of the zealous people of Iran. Quick correction of this error is necessary."

The public opinion demanded official apologies from both embassies, asking for retractions. Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned the both ambassadors to explain about the inappropriate picture.

According to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Russian ambassador highlighted Tehran-Moscow strategic relations as well as deep-rooted and cordial ties between the two sides, expressing regret that the photo had caused misunderstanding and dismayed the people of Iran.

Iranian foreign minister's assistant and the

director general of the Foreign Ministry Eurasia Department highlighted the friendly relations between the two countries, and recalled that the posting of such a picture, even if with the same intention that the Russian ambassador had explained, was "unacceptable," according to the foreign ministry's website.

As for the British envoy, Shercliff expressed regret over the misunderstanding created by the photo, and said he had high respect for the Islamic Republic of Iran and the great people of Iran and its history. He further noted that there was no ill intention behind the photo and the two ambassadors only intended it to be a reminder of the alliance between Russia and Britain against the Nazi Germany during the World War II.

The British ambassador finally expressed hope that he will be able to help develop Tehran-London relations based on promotion of respect and mutual trust during his mission in Tehran.

It is important to remember that all these happened only three days after the arrival of Shercliff to Iran as ambassador. As a diplomat with noteworthy journalistic background, he certainly made a first impression in the media. Shercliff was the head of the Iran-Iraq media office at British Foreign Office from 2004 to 2005.

He was then later promoted to senior media officer in 2005, and then he was chosen to lead the media office of the foreign secretary in 2006. Shercliff knows media and the "war of narratives" cover to cover.

What Shercliff is trying to do is to start a manipulation of the media. It looked as if the photo-op was staged by the Russians. On the contrary, it is not at all impossible that Shercliff was the one staging the mis-en-scene. The UK is well aware that nowadays, it is the narratives that define foreign policies. That is why they have chosen someone with a prominent journalistic background to lead the diplomatic office in Tehran. The warfare has entirely changed.

If we take a hard look at where Shercliff has served in the past, we realize that important hotspots were the areas of interest for him. Yemen, Iraq, Iran, and Washington. These hotspots are of particular importance for the United Kingdom. A re-assignment to Tehran shows that the UK has changed its approach towards the new president and a new Iran.

Rob Macaire, the previous ambassador, took part in a protest in Tehran. Shercliff, on the other hand, knows better than Macaire. He is opting for the "war of words." The narrative Shercliff chose to take, was that he has done nothing wrong. The photo was taken by the Russian embassy, and posted by them. Therefore, he hasn't done anything undiplomatic. What is important to remember is that Shercliff knows media better than Dzhagaryan.

Since the UK is opting for the war of narratives, Iranian media must be well-prepared. War of media was one of the main points of the Leader's speech when he endorsed President Raisi on August 3.

"Today, the enemy is more active in the soft war – the media war – than in the security and economic war. They spend vast amounts and hatch many plots in order to dominate public opinion in our country. They hire many talents so that they could dominate and control public opinion in countries – especially, our country which is the target of superpowers – by waging psychological warfare and launching propaganda moves.

When public opinion in a country is possessed by foreigners, then the affairs of that country will be shaped according to their whims. Promotional work is important and we have shortcomings in this area. Excluding the ignorant people who use domestic media in favor of the enemy – I do not want to discuss such people – even those who are well-intentioned, their work falls short in this regard. Therefore, we should act more efficiently and more intelligently in the domain of promotion and media," Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on August 3, when endorsing Ebrahim Raisi as president.

What the Iranian people demand of the British ambassador, is to formally and publicly apologize to the Iranians. As for the media, and the Russian ambassador, they should be wary of the dangers of this clever diplomat. Shercliff will try to manipulate and divide the media, as he is doing now. This was his first, and will certainly not be his last move. Iranian media should be united against the false narratives of the UK embassy in Iran.

The third warning is issued to the Russian ambassador, who has fallen victim to the trap designed by the UK envoy to Tehran. He must know the British tricks better than that. It is time for the Russian ambassador to relocate the statue of Alexander Griboyedov, as a symbol of good faith.

## The UK ambassador must apologize to the people for irritating national mood

## MP says Iran, Saudi Arabia traded positive pulse

TEHRAN— Abbas Golru, head of the Foreign Relations sub-Committee of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the parliament said on Friday afternoon that positive signals have been received from Baghdad, regarding the Tehran-Riyadh talks.

"Currently, good signals have been exchanged between the two countries, and Raisi's statement at his first press conference that he was ready to reopen the embassy in the two countries was a message to our southern neighbor, Saudi Arabia, which is an important country," Golru said at a televised interview with the state TV.

He added that they also reacted positively in one or two comments, "Because the region has less capacity for tension, countries are willing to talk"

The parliamentarian added that there have been good talks in Iraq, the talk started with a regional dimension, regarding Yemen, at the request of the Saudi side, because it wants to calm the situation down.

"Saudi Arabia has been in Yemen for more than 6 years; they fell into a quagmire where they thought they could surrender Yemen in a few weeks, but what has happened now is that, first, the pro-Saudi forces are at loggerheads within themselves, and Saudi Arabia is in a difficult situation. Naturally, regarding the issue of Yemen, the priority is the talks in the Persian Gulf and security in the region, in order to reach bilateral understanding," he underlined.

He also said that he is optimistic over mending ties with the Saudis.

Golru added, "We have to overcome the challenges that exist in the region and there is no room for more."

He said that the region cannot tolerate the continuation of tension, although the tension was sparked from the other side and was imported from the U.S. and European countries, especially in Syria and Iraq.

"Unfortunately, some countries in the region are accompanying this imported tension," he remarked.

The MP said that Iran needs to get more involved in regional diplomacy than ever before.

"Our regional diplomacy needs a new study to bring about change, so that we can both advance foreign policy and use our soft power, and be able to pursue our interests with our neighbors in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility," he concluded.

## The key to mending Tehran-Riyadh ties is in Saudi hands: former ambassador

TEHRAN – Iran's former ambassador to Baghdad has said the key to resolve the disputes between Iran and Saudi Arabia is in the hands of Riyadh.

If the Saudis, like Iran, have the will to mend ties, Tehran is ready "but the knot should be untied by the Saudis," Hossein Danayeefer told IRNA in an interview published on Friday.

Tehran and Riyadh have been at loggerheads over the Saudi-led war on Yemen, the Saudi opposition to the 2015 nuclear deal, which was abandoned by former U.S. President Donald Trump in 2015 and imposed sanctions on Iran within his "maximum pressure" campaign against the Islamic Republic.

"Iraq seeks to find special place in the region"

The former ambassador also said Iraq sent its foreign minister to Tehran in efforts to keep Iraq safe from regional disputes and also promote the status of Iraq in the region.

"Iraqi diplomats and analysts believe that one of the reasons for the current situation in Iraq is that this country is affected by peripheral tensions. This analysis is technical and precise because in the current world regional and international developments affect situation all countries," the former Ambassador remarked.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein visited Tehran on Tuesday to official deliver a letter to new Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to visit Baghdad which plans to organize a regional summit late August or early September with the participation of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait as well



as representatives from the European Union and the United Nations. According to some reports, the French president has also been invited to attend the conference.

Iraqi Mustafa 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 Iraqi politicians believe that they should "reduce and manage peripheral tensions" so that they can create a situation within their own country to focus on main issues such as "power" and "governance".

Most politicians in Iraq are eager to find a special place in the region, the former diplomat remarked.

"In other words, one of the main purposes of Baghdad is to promote the status and influence of this country in regional and international developments," he opined.

"Iran sees no limit to improve ties with regional states"

The former diplomat said such an appetite has made Iraq interested in organizing such a conference and mediate

between countries.

Such an effort is not new in Iraq, he said, adding Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki started such efforts in his second administration and after the defeat of Daesh similar efforts were conducted by President Birham Salih and Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mehdi.

The former ambassador to Iraq said in a visit to Baghdad on January 2020

## Saudis have two views toward Iran

He went on to say that Iran is an "active, influential, and powerful" country in the region that sees no limit in strengthening relations with regional countries except the Zionist regime of Israel.

"Our relationship is very good with most Arab countries like Oman, Qatar, Iraq and Syria; it is normal with countries such as Jordan and have certain prob-

lems with certain (countries) like Saudi Arabia," he explained.

"Tensions have badly affected interests of all regional countries"

The new Iranian administration in Iran also sees no limitations to cement ties with these countries, Danayeefer remarked.

He cited initiatives like the Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE) as examples of efforts by Tehran to improve ties with neighbors and it even started dialogue with certain countries.

Even if Iraq did not try to mediate between Iran and Saudi Arabia, there was a will by the Islamic Republic to heal the rift with Riyadh "but the point is that whether the other side also has a will for serious dialogue, or it is waiting for the time to see the fate of the Vienna (nuclear) talks," the former ambassador to Iraq pointed out.

He went on to say that Saudi Arabia is trying to "buy time" and waiting to see the result of the Vienna talks, there will be no "good prospects".

"But if Riyadh shows it is serious for talks with Tehran and take practical steps, then we should witness a restoration of relations between the two countries."

The prerequisite to mend the ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia is that talks should be "serious and transparent", he said, adding if they just want to hold talks on the Yemen crisis "it will show that they are not serious in the talks."

Insisting that Tehran is firm to mend

ties with the Saudi Kingdom, the former ambassador said, "Iran believes that cooperation between regional countries is essential and relations between countries should be improved because tensions have hurt the interests of all countries and the winner of these tensions is the Zionist regime."

Asked whether regional countries have the capability to reach a consensus about regional issues, he said, "If there is a proper political will by all sides there is the possibility of an agreement."

He added, "In fact, if the sides should determination for managing tensions, there will be the possibility of achieving an agreement despite difficulties."

The senior analyst on regional affairs argued if the "knots between Iran and Saudi Arabia is untied then other knots will be untied."

It is not so that the Saudis don't want to resolve the disputes, rather they imagine that it will not benefit them and this will only favor Tehran and increase Tehran's influence in the West Asia region, he commented.

He said the Saudis have two views toward Iran.

One view is that the relations with Iran will create a new situation in the region and will unlock the deadlock in the region and pave the ground for great developments, he said.

The other view is that "we gain nothing in this relationship with Iran and instead we will endorse the behaviors and the moves of Iran," he pointed out.

In addition to these two views there is a pressure by the United States on the

## Iran summons Russian, UK ambassador over controversial picture

Iran has summoned the Russian and British ambassadors to Tehran over the release by Moscow's embassy of a controversial picture, which was taken to bring to mind a World War II-era conference in Tehran that lives in infamy in the historical memory of the Iranian nation, Press TV reported.

Russian Ambassador Levan Dzhagaryan was called in by the Iranian Foreign Ministry to receive representations over the release of the picture on

Twitter, which shows him and his UK counterpart meeting on the veranda of the Russian embassy in Tehran, the site of a 1943 strategy meeting of the then former -Soviet, U.S. and British leaders — namely Joseph Stalin, Franklin Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill — two years after the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran.

During the meeting on Thursday, the Russian diplomat explained that publishing the photo had merely been meant to highlight the WWII-era alliance with

Britain against the Nazi army, and had no anti-Iran intention at all.

He emphasized the deep and strategic ties between Iran and Russia and expressed regret that the picture had hurt the feelings of the friendly Iranian people.

Later in the day, the Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned the British Ambassador Simon Shercliff to explain about the photo.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's assistant, who is also the Foreign Ministry Director General for Western Europe, told the British envoy that it was an unacceptable measure, which "has hurt the national pride of the Iranian nation."

"The great people of Iran have proven throughout history that they reject any move emanating from arrogant thoughts and will resist against it," the Iranian official added.

# Baghdad summit: What to expect?

TEHRAN – With the Iraqi government making arrangements for a regional summit in Baghdad, the region seems to be heading toward a sort of de-escalation that would probably put differences on hold for a while.

Later this month, the Iraqi government of Mustafa al-Kadhimi is going to try its hand at peace-making by holding a conference that would focus on regional challenges and the ways to overcome them. The conference was initially designed to be held with the participation of Iraq's neighbors but it evolved into a "regional conference" that would include delegations from countries outside the region and non-neighboring states as well.

In addition to Iraq's five neighbors, a number of other countries such as France, Egypt, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates and international institutions such as the European Union and the United Nations are also expected to participate. The participation of Syria, which is a neighbor of Iraq, had not been determined yet.

The Baghdad conference marks the first time Iraq takes on a diplomatic initiative to soothe tensions in the region beyond diplomatic mediation. Over the past few years, Iraq has sought to calm tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia by mediations and in some cases, shuttle diplomacy. This time, Baghdad is moving beyond mediation to tout itself as a diplomatic venue for countries of the region to meet and address their differences in a public way.

It is also the first time Iraq holds such a conference since 1990, a move that suggests a resuscitation of Iraq's status as a regional player.

In a bid to set the stage for the conference, al-Kadhimi dispatched his ministers and emissaries almost in all directions. Planning Minister Khalid Najim Traveled to Kuwait, Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein to Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, Finance Minister Ali Allawi to Jordan, and Defense Minister Juma Inad to Egypt.

Also, letters of invitation were sent to heads of state and leaders to attend the conference that Baghdad seeks to organize on the initial date of August 29, after the country has completed the religious pilgrimage to the city of Karbala in the south of the country, which is witnessing huge security preparations and an alert for security units to secure it as millions of Iraqis and expatriates from abroad go to the city to commemorate the 10th of Muharram which marks the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein ibn Ali (AS).

The event, officially known as the "Iraqi Neighboring Countries Conference," is closely watched by observers in the region and beyond. Because its agenda and the level of participation of regional heavyweights, especially Iran and Saudi Arabia, will serve as a litmus test of whether de-escalation talks in the region, including between Tehran and Riyadh, have born fruits.

Iran has already welcomed the Iraqi initiative. In his recent meeting with the

## The Baghdad conference can offer Iran and Saudi Arabia a neutral venue and an ice breaker.

Iraqi foreign minister, Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi described the conference as a "blessed step" and said that "Iran considers dialogue between the countries of the region in the context of addressing issues and improving relations between them, as a step towards strengthening regional security and stability," according to a statement by the Iraqi Foreign Ministry.

The Iranian president made the remarks while receiving an invitation



letter from the Iraqi prime minister delivered by Hussein.

The Iraqi foreign minister delivered the letter on August 10 during a visit to Tehran where he met with a number of high-ranking Iranian officials.

During his meeting with Ayatollah Raisi, Hussein said, "The 'Iraqi Neighboring Countries Conference' is being held in the context of arrangements aimed at supporting the political process and economic growth of Iraq."

Hussein also met with Secretary of the Supreme Iranian National Security Council Ali Shamkhani, who alluded to the possibility of countries of the region settling their differences and maintain peace without the meddling of foreign powers. Shamkhani told the visiting Iraqi foreign minister that "the countries of the region are able to maintain security and peace in them without having to any external interference," according to a separate statement by the Iraqi Foreign Ministry.

Before visiting Iran, Hussein traveled to Saudi Arabia on a similar mission. He delivered a similar invitation letter from Al-Kadhimi addressed to King Salman Bin Abdulaziz. He met with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan in Riyadh, where they discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance them to achieve common interests. The Saudis have been tight-lipped about the Baghdad summit. They seem to be mulling the level of their representation at the Baghdad summit. Regional press reports suggested that the Saudis are waiting for the Iraqi government to inform them of the level of Turkish and Iranian representation.

A senior Iraqi diplomatic source told Al Araby Al Jadeed that "Saudi Arabia

wants to know the level of Iranian and Turkish representation in particular, to determine whether or not Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman will participate," adding that other countries that share the same thing with Saudi Arabia welcomed participating, but so far it has not been clear what kind of representation they are considering.

The same thing would likely be true for Qatar and the UAE, which have been at loggerheads since 2017.

These complexities make it difficult to expect a breakthrough from the Baghdad conference. Hussein said that this event will not be only a photo-op occasion. Instead, it will be a catalyst for a greater understanding about regional challenges. The Iraqi source also quoted Hussein as saying that the conference will provide an excellent atmosphere to convene a Saudi-Iranian meeting at the level of heads of delegations participating in the event.

The conference may succeed in convening a spontaneous meeting between the delegations of Tehran and Riyadh but such a meeting is unlikely to serve as a silver bullet. Because the Iran-Saudi differences are so deeply running that a chance meeting is unlikely to solve them. However, such a meeting can serve as a prelude to other meetings. Iran and Saudi Arabia have already been meeting in Iraq since last April. But all these meetings were held behind closed doors and even Iran's invitation of Saudi Arabia to Ayatollah Raisi's inauguration failed to get the two rivals to publicize their talks. This may have been due to a Saudi unwillingness to take the first step toward Iran. The Baghdad conference can offer both sides a neutral venue and an ice breaker as well.

# IRAN IN FOCUS

AUGUST 14, 2021

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

3

## SPORTS

### FIFA President extends condolences on passing of former Iran midfielder Azizi

TEHRAN — FIFA President Gianni Infantino sent his condolences to the Iran Football Federation and to the family, friends and loved ones of Alireza Azizi.

Former Iran midfielder Azizi passed away at the age of 72 in Tehran on Aug. 7.



"On behalf of the international football community, I wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the Iran Football Federation, and to his family, friends and loved ones. Our thoughts are with all of you. We hope that these memories and our words of support may help bring some peace and solace at this difficult time" FIFA President Infantino said in his condolence message to Iran.

Azizi was a member of Iran national football team who won 1976 AFC Asian Cup title in Tehran.

The Abadan-born player started his club career in 1972 with Homa and joined Persepolis after three years.

### Naderi officially joins Turkish side Altay

TEHRAN — Iranian football winger Mohammad Naderi officially joined Turkish football club Altay SK.

Naderi bade farewell to Iranian team Esteghlal at the end of Hazfi Cup final, where they were defeated against Foolad 4-2 in penalty shootouts.

He has penned a three-year contract with the Turkish football team.

Naderi joined Esteghlal from Iranian giants Persepolis but failed to meet expectations in the team.

Altay play at Turkish professional league namely Süper Lig.

### Iran climb up in FIBA World Ranking

TEHRAN — Iran basketball team have climbed one spot up to the 22nd in the FIBA World Ranking Men released on Thursday.

The FIBA ranking, has been updated following the FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournaments (OQTs) and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The United States, Spain and Australia remain first, second and third, respectively.

Slovenia and France also broke into top five of FIBA ranking.

Slovenia lost to Australia in bronze medal match nevertheless jumped 12 points to the No. 4 world ranking.

After reaching the podium at the FIBA Basketball World Cup in China as the winners of the Third-Place Game, France went one better by claiming the Olympic silver medal. France have moved up two points to No. 5 in the rankings.

In Tokyo, Iran lost to Czech Republic, France and the U.S. in Group A.

### 2022 WCQ: Japanese Sato to officiate Iran vs Syria match

TEHRAN — Japanese referee Ryuji Sato has been appointed to officiate the match between Iran and Syria at the 2022 World Cup qualification final round.

The match will be held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Sept. 2.

Sato will be assisted by his countrymen Hiroshi Yamauchi and Jun Mihara.

Hiroki Kimura is the fourth official.

### Feyenoord defeat Luzern in Europa Conference League

TEHRAN — Feyenoord is comfortably through to the next round of the Europa Conference League after a 3-0 victory over Luzern in De Kuip. The Rotterdamers progress 6-0 on aggregate.

Leading 3-0 from the first leg, Feyenoord went into the tie in a comfortable position, and after only nine minutes, Alireza Jahanbakhsh fired the hosts in front. The forward raced onto a pass from Luis Sinisterra before netting his first goal since joining Feyenoord.

Jahanbakhsh then doubled the lead in the 34th minute with a strike from just outside the box. The Iranian winger was on fire but just before the break he hobbled off injured and had to be replaced by Robert Bozenik.

Two minutes into the second half, Sinisterra cut inside the box before firing in a third goal for Feyenoord, who eased through the rest of the match.

Lennard Hartjes was handed his debut before 16-year-old Antoni Milambo became the youngest player to ever represent the club, football-oranje.com reported.

Feyenoord progress to the next round and they will face Swedish side Elfsborg.

### Iran's Akhbari best goalkeeper of ACL 2021 group stage

TEHRAN — Tractor football team goalkeeper Mohammad Reza Akhbari was voted the best goalkeeper of the 2021 AFC Champions League group stage.

He won the poll with more than 90 percent of votes.

When Tractor played out a thrilling 3-3 draw against Pakhtakor in its tournament opener it looked like its fans could be in for a rollercoaster ride but, instead, its eventual progression was the result of a resolute backline that had the outstanding Akhbari as the last line of defense.

The 28-year-old kept five successive clean sheets after conceding three against Pakhtakor, including two excellent shutouts against group winners Sharjah, the second of which helped seal a place in the Round of 16.

Dheeraj Singh (FC Goa), Kampol Pathom (Attakul – Ratchaburi FC), Jo Hyeon-woo (Ulsan Hyundai) and Mohammed Al Shamsi (Al Wahda) were also nominated for the best goalkeeper of the 2021 AFC Champions League.

### My injury not serious: Jahanbakhsh

TEHRAN — Feyenoord winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh says that his injury is not serious.

The Iranian scored twice against Luzern at the qualifying round of the Conference League Thursday night, where the Dutch team qualified for the next round.

Jahanbakhsh was forced to leave the field before the halftime due to his groin's injury.

"I thought: maybe I should be changed. It was a bit stiff. Then I went on for a while", Jahanbakhsh explained for the camera of ESPN.

"I thought if I make a few actions, I'll be fine. Then I realized: That is a lie! I won't be able to play if it gets any worse," he added.

"It's not a serious injury and I will be fine," Jahanbakhsh added.

### Paralympics to be held mostly without spectators

TEHRAN — The Tokyo Paralympic Games will be held mostly without spectators, as Japan's capital remains under emergency lockdown amid a surge in novel coronavirus infections, local media reported on Friday.

Organizers agreed late on Thursday to limit spectators at the Paralympic events, set to begin on August 24, similar to the Olympic Games which finished on August 8 and was held mostly without spectators, the Yomiuri reported, citing Games sources.

Paralympic venues in Shizuoka, central Japan, will limit spectators to under 5,000 people, the newspaper said. Organizers are still considering inviting school children to events, it said.

## Iran voices concern over escalation in Afghanistan

TEHRAN — The Iranian Foreign Ministry has expressed concerns over the rapid escalation of the war in neighboring Afghanistan as the Taliban took over the province of Herat where Iranian diplomats still work in the Iranian consulate.

Spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry Saeed Khatibzadeh issued a statement on Friday as media outlets broke the news that the Taliban have captured Herat and Kandahar, the third- and second-largest cities of Afghanistan respectively. In Herat, the situation aroused concerns in Iran because Iranian diplomats are still stationed in the province.

Expressing concerns over the escalation of the war in Afghanistan, Khatibzadeh called for the protection of the lives of civilians. The spokesman also called on the Taliban to ensure the complete safety and health of diplomats and diplomatic facilities, given the insurgent group's takeover of Herat.

Khatibzadeh also said that the Iranian Foreign Ministry is in continued contact with Iran's consulate-general in Herat and is following the safety and health of its diplomats in the diplomatic center.

Earlier on Thursday night, a senior diplomat at the Iranian Foreign Ministry announced that Herat fell to the Taliban. "Management of Herat has been handed over to the forces of the Islamic Emirate. Consul-General, diplomats, and the staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran consulate-general are inside the building. We are in constant contact with them. The forces in charge of administering the city have committed to complete safety of the consulate-general, diplomats, and staff," Director-General of the Foreign Ministry's South Asian Affairs Seyyed Rasoul Mousavi said on Twitter.

On Friday, Mousavi reassured journalists that "our diplomats, like those of the other three countries present in Herat, are in full safety and security. And they are not worried."

Taliban have rapidly advanced in many cities of Afghanistan, overrunning as many as 15 provincial capitals. The rapid advancement of the Taliban prompted many countries such as the United States and Canada to contemplate contingency plans for evacuating their diplomats from Kabul. But Iran, thanks in part to its diplomatic contacts with the Taliban seems to be sure that its diplomats would be safe and secure even after the Taliban takeover. This may explain why Iran decided to maintain its diplomats in Herat.

Iran has had contacts with almost all Afghan stakeholders and played host to at least one round of intra-Afghan peace talks. It also held talks with the Taliban in an effort to hear their views on the future of Afghanistan. Iran has always underlined the need to form an all-inclusive government in Afghanistan, one that would include representatives from the Taliban and the Kabul-based Afghan government.

In recent months, Iran embarked on active diplomacy to bring peace to Afghanistan. This included talks with both sides of the conflict. Last week, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held talks with UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan Jean Arnault, who had traveled to Tehran along with a delegation to exchange views with Iranian Foreign Ministry officials, according to a separate statement by the ministry.



In the Sunday meeting, Zarif touched upon the dire situation in Afghanistan and the growing complexity of the circumstances in the country, dismissing foreign powers' inappropriate policies as one of the root causes of the current situation in Afghanistan.

He expressed Iran's readiness to help with and facilitate negotiations among Afghan sides in order to advance the peace process in Afghanistan.

The foreign minister said intra-Afghan talks are the only solution to the problems facing the country.

"The international community should adopt a straightforward stance to support a political settlement of the crisis in Afghanistan and condemn violence and its consequences," Zarif pointed out.

The UN envoy, in turn, stressed the importance of the role of Iran and other regional countries in helping move forward with the peace trend in Afghanistan.

He said no country or a limited number of countries alone will be able to change the current situation in Afghanistan, adding only collective cooperation can defuse the situation in the country.

He emphasized intra-Afghan talks as the only way to tackle the current situation in the country, and described his negotiations in Tehran as fruitful and significant.

Earlier this month, Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian, the Iranian foreign minister's special envoy for Afghanistan affairs, had a phone conversation with Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar.

In the phone call, the two sides conferred on the latest developments in Afghanistan.

The two sides also discussed the significance of the ongoing Afghan peace processes, especially the continuation of intra-Afghan talks in Herat.

Also on Tuesday, Mousavi held talks with some European ambassadors and charge d'affaires residing in Tehran over the ongoing Afghanistan crisis, IRNA reported. He underlined that if the European countries want to take any step for peace in Afghanistan, today is the time to act. Tomorrow will be too late, he noted.

Mousavi said that the key message of his talks with the European envoys was that "time is rapidly wasting away."

"If Europe wants to do something for peace in Afghanistan, it must act today, tomorrow is too late," the

Iranian diplomat said.

He stressed that effective steps must be taken for peace in Afghanistan before the collapse of all structures.

During his last press briefing, Khatibzadeh voiced "deep concern" over continued clashes in neighboring Afghanistan as the interecine war between the Afghan government and the Taliban continued to rage on.

Speaking at his weekly press briefing on Monday, Khatibzadeh said, "Iran is deeply concerned about the developments in Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always considered the security of Afghanistan as its own security and has used all its facilities and capacities to contribute to the peace, stability, and tranquility of Afghanistan at bilateral, regional, and international levels."

He added, "In this context, we are ready and willing to pursue the Tehran Peace Initiative to form an inclusive government in a genuine intra-Afghan dialogue, including all the groups that exist in Afghanistan today."

The spokesman also called on Afghanistan's neighbors to hold regular and structured dialogue in order to coordinate their efforts, manage the humanitarian issue of war-displaced people, prevent the geography of Afghanistan from being exploited by extremist groups, and help end the war, bloodshed, and fratricide.

Khatibzadeh said Iran is ready to facilitate and play host to such a dialogue.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has hosted millions of its own Afghan brothers and sisters for the past four decades and has never had anything but a kinship view of the Afghan people, and this humane view has always existed and will continue, God willing," he pointed out.

The Taliban have adopted a different war strategy in their advancements. The first indication of this shift emerged on August 6 when mainstream media outlets broke the news that the Taliban have captured the first provincial capital in southwestern Afghanistan. On that day, Zaranj, the capital of the southern province of Nimruz, fell to the Taliban without any fighting.

Rouh Gul Khairzad, deputy governor of Nimruz, confirmed the news, saying that the Taliban took Zaranj from government forces without fighting, something that delivered a strong blow to the morale of the Afghan government troops and unleashed a series of military campaigns by the Taliban that led to the conquest of many other provincial capitals across the war-torn country.

Recent advancements of the Taliban were indicative of their new strategy. The group intensified its campaign in May but largely remained focused on rural areas and small cities, delaying the battle for provincial capitals until the proper time. Now, it seems that the Taliban think the time has come for them to gradually take over the major cities. They are currently going after provincial capitals one after another with Kabul is more likely to be the last and biggest battle.

### Khatibzadeh called on the Taliban to ensure the complete safety and health of diplomats and diplomatic facilities

### 400 idle industrial units revived since late March



From page 1 ▶ With the aim of reactivating stagnant units or units that are operating below capacity, 900 consultants from the private sector and knowledge-based companies were selected in the form of industry clinics across the country to recognize the weaknesses of these units. Rasoulhan has previously stated.

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

Sanctions have caused problems for financial exchanges and the export of goods to other countries, he said, adding, "The negative effects of coronavirus pandemic on various parts of the country, including industry,

are not hidden from anyone, and the economic growth of some countries has reached below zero during this period."

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

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

Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution,

the official has said: "In the year that has been dedicated to the production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and executive bodies should be towards supporting the country's industrial and mining units."

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

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

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

Iran's industrial parks play a significant role in making the country independent through boosting production, which is a major strategy of Iran to combat the U.S. sanctions.

In fact, strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.

### TSE's main index up 5.5 % in a week

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 78,000 points, or 5.5 percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1,484 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of National Iranian Copper Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Social Security Investment Company, State Retirement Fund, and Berekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed indices.

Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has said that the country's production units and companies can boost their employment and production by raising capital through the stock market.

"When people's resources are directed into the capital market, enterprises and companies listed on the stock exchange can have stronger financing from this market, and consequently have more investment and increases production and employment," Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi told IRNA on Monday.

Referring to the government's performance in directing people's capital to the stock market, Dehnavi said: "SEO believes the government has a great role to play in the country's economy, the government is the macro policy-maker and the main regulator of the country's economy, therefore in countries like Iran where the government is directly involved in the economic decisions, it should also be present in the production sector."

Dehqan Dehnavi further emphasized that the

government's duty is to invite people into the capital market, adding: "The stock market is a platform that provides financing for production."

According to the official, his organization has considered several incentive programs for supporting the shareholders and for protecting the newly joined members.

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

Analysts and scholars believe that trades in the Iranian stock market will be much better and more reasonable in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) compared to the first half of the year.

According to them, reaching a possible agreement on the nuclear deal will have a positive impact on the capital market and pave the way for significant growth in the market.

"Reaching such an agreement will result in the reduction of the costs in major companies and will certainly have a positive impact on the market as a whole, especially on the shares of export-oriented companies," stock market expert Mostafa Safari said in late July.

"Reducing costs will eventually increase the profits of corporate stocks; Therefore, we hope that the lifting of sanctions will be implemented as soon as possible so that we can see the positive impact of this event in the market," the analyst added.

# Oil minister candidate releases future plans

TEHRAN - Javad Owji, who is President Raisi's suggested candidate for the Oil Ministry, has released a comprehensive program for the development of the country's oil and gas industry during his tenure, Shana reported.

The published plan is comprised of five separate sections including an introduction, some documents related to the oil industry's upstream sector, major challenges facing the oil industry, urgent measures to be taken in the oil industry, and finally strategic steps based on the industry priorities.

"Factors affecting the oil industry that are closely related to each other can be classified as executive and organizational, economic, legal, political, technical and environmental, all of which should be addressed properly," Owji has said in his plan's introduction section.

"By reforming the structure and insights, the oil industry can play an important role in improving the business environment for real economic entrepreneurs and attracting investors," the candidate has said.

One of the main pillars of achieving the goals of the Oil Ministry is to focus on implementing the policies of the resilient economy, paying special attention to the fight against corruption, reforming procedures and structures in line with the general policies of Article 44 and with emphasis on downsizing and reducing government ownership, the introduction read.

The official had previously underlined the establishment of strong diplomacy and bolstering interna-



tional relations as a major priority for the Oil Ministry if he takes office.

## Establishing strong diplomacy and bolstering international relations are major priority for Oil Minister Candidate Javad Owji.

Paying special attention to diplomacy with a focus on trading oil, gas, petrochemical products, and export of technical and engineering services, interacting with neighboring countries to reduce tariffs and find suitable solutions are the major axis of his international agenda.

Moreover, Owji has said he will be deeply focused on expanding bilateral or multilateral agreements with target countries by tapping the capacities of international and regional organizations, including the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, etc.

The official is also cognizant of modifying the consumption pattern of gas and oil products using Articles 12 and 13 of the Law on Removing Barriers to Production.

Development and implementation of energy diplomacy document in cooperation with relevant institutions, maintaining and increasing Iran's status in OPEC, and expanding cooperation with neighboring countries, the Persian Gulf nations, and the Caspian Sea countries in the field of exploration, production, and joint venture capital are other areas that Owji's team will be specially focused upon during his tenure as the Iranian Oil Minister under Ebrahim Raeisi's administration.

Encouraging foreign investment for exports in the mid and downstream sectors and increasing the export of petroleum products to neighboring countries, as well as ensuring active support for boosting export of technology and engineering services of Iranian companies to neighboring countries are other areas of attention for the candidate.

## Govt., private sector discuss issues facing industrial units

TEHRAN - The 77th meeting of the dialogue council of the government and the Tehran Province's private sector was held on Thursday, in which issues pertaining to the supply of raw materials, especially steel sheets, for the province's industrial units was discussed.

The meeting was attended by the Governor of Tehran Province Anushirvan Mohseni, the Head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) Masoud Khansari, the Deputy Industry Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, and the representatives of the province private sector, the TCCIMA portal reported.

Speaking in the meeting, Niaraki presented a report on the latest situation of supply and demand of various types of steel sheets and the measures taken by the ministry for creating transparency in the distribution and supply of these products.

According to Niaraki, currently, the



Governor of Tehran Province Anushirvan Mohseni (1st L), the TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari (2nd L), the Deputy Industry Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki (2nd R)

Industry Ministry supplies over 1180 production units with subsidized steel sheets, however, some units are going to be eliminated due to inactivity or lack of production.

Noting that currently, about 20,000 industrial units across the country are major consumers of steel sheets, he said: "This number of production units need about 70 million tons of steel

sheets per year, while the supply is about five million tons."

He further referred to some measures taken by the Industry Ministry to regulate the supply of steel products, including a special supply of steel sheets for automakers and home appliance industries, as well as setting a zero percent tariff for importing steel sheets with a thickness of less than three millimeters.

Elsewhere in the meeting, representatives of some steel companies also raised some issues and offered solutions to resolve the problems in the way of the supply of steel products, which they said has plagued downstream manufacturing units, including auto parts makers and the home appliance industry.

Reforming the distribution system of steel products and the activation of the country's idle steel sheet production capacity were among the solutions mentioned by the attendees.

## Iran may need to import wheat as drought cuts harvest

TEHRAN - Secretary of the Iranian Parliament's Agriculture Committee has said the country is going to need to import wheat in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), since severe drought has significantly reduced the production of the strategic crop.

"Although our strategic wheat stocks are currently in good condition, it must be put on the agenda to meet the future needs through imports," Zabiollah Azami told IRNA on Friday.

According to the Agriculture Ministry data, so far 4,463,000 tons of wheat have been purchased from farmers, which is expected to reach a maximum of 4,600,000 tons, Azami said, adding that this year's production is significantly lower than the previous year.

The official further put the country's minimum demand for wheat in the current year at six million tons and stressed: "latest statistics show that the country may need to import eight million tons of wheat this year."

Earlier this month, the Government Trade Company (GTC) had announced that over 4.43 million tons of wheat had been purchased from Iranian farmers at guaranteed prices in the current fiscal year.

The total value of the mentioned wheat is estimated at 220 trillion rials (about \$5.23 billion) of which the government has so far paid 17.5 trillion rials (about \$416.6 million) to the farmers.

Khuzestan province with 1083 million tons, Fars with 506,000 tons, and Golestan with 449,000 tons of output were Iran's top wheat providers in the current year, accounting for nearly 50 percent of the country's total wheat cultivation.

This year, each kilogram of wheat has been purchased at a price of 50,000 rials (about \$119) which has doubled compared to the previous year.

In recent years, due to self-sufficiency in wheat production and the supply of this strategic product by do-

domestic farmers, wheat imports have been banned.

Iran's wheat production exceeded 14 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year 1399.

Over the past few years, the Agriculture Ministry has been implementing several programs for improving wheat production in the country.

Providing seed, pesticides, expert consultations, and technical supervision, as well as damage control programs like weed control, have been among the ministry's programs for boosting wheat production.

The wheat harvest season is approximately 4.5 months in Iran starting in early April up to mid-August.

Based on the agriculture ministry data, Iranian farmers produced nearly 14.5 million tons of wheat in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 20, 2020), 12 million tons more than the figure for its preceding year.

## Commodities worth over \$76m exported from Anzali Free Zone

TEHRAN - Products worth \$76.67 million were exported from Anzali Free Zone in north of Iran during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22).

As reported, during the first four months of this year, exports of the products produced in the zone amounted to \$4.43 million, and among the exported items, chemical and cellulose products, and industrial machinery had the largest share.

The products were exported to Iraq, Eurasia and the Persian Gulf littoral states.

The managing director of Anzali Free Zone Organization has put the value of export and re-export from this zone at \$188.7 million in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Ali Osat Akbari said products worth \$168.9 million were re-exported from the zone in the previous year, and named chemical products, wood, industrial machinery, and agricultural products as the main re-exported goods.

The official also announced that commodities valued at \$209 million were produced in the zone and exported



to the internal markets in the past year, and said this shows the serious determination of the producers of Anzali Free Zone to provide basic goods and essential needs of domestic consumer markets in the conditions of sanctions in the country.

He further put the worth of products produced inside the zone and exported since the start of current year at \$19.8 million, and said that cellulose and chemical products, as well as industrial equipment were the major exported items.

Located in Gilan Province, north of Iran, Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone is the sole free zone in the southern part of the Caspian Sea with an area of 9,400 hectares and 40 kilometers shoreline.

It is one of the country's seven free trade-industrial zones.

Located on the North-South International Corridor, having a special position in connection with the Caspian littoral states, proximity to the ports of Astrakhan and Lagan in Russia, Aktau in Kazakhstan, and Baku in Azerbaijan, access through convenient routes to

the consumer markets of CIS countries, and proximity to Rasht International Airport are some advantages of Anzali Free Zone.

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

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

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azarbaijan Province, and Maku in West-Azarbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

## Permits issued for establishment of 830 industrial units in Semnan province

TEHRAN - As announced by a provincial official, permits have been issued for the establishment of 830 industrial units in the central Semnan province during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 - July 22).

Faramarz Mahboubi, the deputy head of the province's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, put the estimated investment for these units at 69 trillion rials (about \$1.642 billion) and job creation at 14,800.

The official said that investment making in the industry sector of the province has risen 271 percent in the first four months of this year, as compared to the same period of time in the previous year.

According to the latest data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) 10,714 permits have been issued for establishing new industrial units in the country, which marked 31.8 percent increase year on year.

The estimated investment making for these units was more than 2.712 quadrillion rials (about \$64.571 billion), indicating 162 percent rise year on year.

The units are predicted to create jobs for 288,096 persons, with a 52.4-percent growth.

As announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the country increased 40 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

"The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest in the productive sectors", the official has stated.

He also said that over 6,500 new industrial units were established across the country during the past year, which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

The official further said that 1,500 idle industrial units have been revived in the country during the previous year.

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

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

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

# Most countries that bought the Pegasus are authoritarian: Lebanese expert

By M. A. Saki

TEHRAN - Most countries that bought the Pegasus program in the region are tyrannical, a senior Lebanese political analyst says.

"Most of the countries that bought the Pegasus program are countries based on authoritarian rule and suppression of freedoms," Amin Hoteit tells the Tehran Times.

Hoteit adds that countries such as Saudi Arabia and some other Arab monarchies never respect freedom of expression.

"These countries' access to the Pegasus program, which aims to spy, is consistent with their general policies," Hoteit notes.

"This is not new, but the presence of such a project in their hands would enable them to activate their tyrannical and repressive actions more."

Following is the text of the interview: **What is Israel's record in spying on other countries since the establishment of this regime?**

Espionage is a major part of Israel's strategy in dealing with the "other," whether this other is a friend, an enemy, an ally, or a neutral party.

Israel does not trust anyone and

considers the others as a threat to its goals and ambitions because most of its policies are illegal, unconstructive which undermines the truth.

The most important thing mentioned in the history of its espionage operation is its spy in Syria Eli Cohen who almost came to rule the country, not to mention its spies in Egypt, the United States of America and France.

Therefore, Israel and espionage are twins. Espionage is mixed in Israeli political, security and diplomatic acts.

Some have even said that every Israeli diplomat abroad is a spy for this regime.

**How do you read the Israeli Pegasus project and its consequences for the world?**

The Israeli Pegasus project, which has been exported to other regional countries, especially Arab regimes such as Saudi Arabia, constitutes a flag violation of the sovereignty of states, the sanctity of private life, which can impact the behavior of rulers, journalists and media professionals.

It would charge international relations with some tension, caution and



distrust, and we will encounter a new situation.

Therefore, we will be facing a tense international situation as a result of this dangerous espionage project.

**French President Emmanuel Macron has changed his phone number after reports that he was targeted with Pegasus. This shows that Israel's spying is not limited to its foes. What is your comment?**

I rule out Israel take responsible measures to alleviate France's concerns, and any explanations that Israel can give to France about its espionage activities will be a kind of throwing dust in the eyes.

## Israel and espionage are twins

Israel is sure that no one can chasten it; the Israelis are able to disguise the truth under the anti-Semitism law.

Israel has fortified itself in one way or another, and it is using its influence inside the countries in which it carried out espionage operations to prevent being pursued and to contain any effort to record its crimes abroad.

**There are reports that Israel sold the spyware program to countries including Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Morocco to target activists and journalists. Please explain.**

Most of the countries that bought the Pegasus program are countries

based on authoritarian rule and suppression of freedoms.

As we know very well, those countries such as Saudi Arabia and some other Arab states never care about opinion or freedom of expression.

Therefore, these countries' access to the Pegasus program, which aims to spy, is consistent with their general policies. This is not new, but the presence of such a project in their hands would enable them to activate their tyrannical and repressive actions more.

**What is Lebanon's experience with regard to Israeli espionage and assassination operations?**

Before the emergence of the Resistance front in Lebanon, Israel was not very aware of the Lebanese reality, yet it was spreading spies all around the country.

But after the Resistance grew and became a strong player in the region, Lebanon turned, in Israel's eyes, an existential threat because of the Resistance.

Therefore, Israel is always cautious and spreads spies where it finds a flaw in Lebanon. Some political groups constitute a fertile environment for the growth of these spies, who are used by the Israeli regime publicly, along with some people who hold foreign nationalities in addition to the Lebanese nationality.

As well, Israel gets help from spies working in southern Lebanon.

## Cryptocurrencies can't replace currencies: American economist

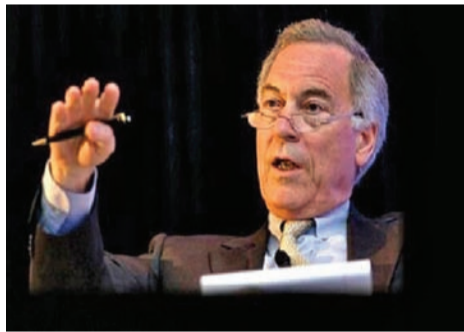
From page 1 ► That said, digital transactions, or what I refer to as electronic money, will become more prominent in the future. That's an easy forecast to make. After all, at present, debit cards are nothing more than digital or electronic money. Furthermore, virtually all the major central banks in the world are pursuing digital or electronic options for money.

**Given the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its foes, some countries, including Russia, are trying to remove the U.S. dollar from their trade exchanges. Don't you think that cryptocurrencies can provide a reliable alternative for dollar?**

No. Cryptocurrencies don't, in fact, qualify as currencies. They are nothing more than highly speculative assets. Bitcoin, for example, has a fundamental value of zero. And, any of the stablecoins, including tether, are not redeemable into the assets that are allegedly backing the stablecoins.

**Don't you think that decentralization of money and opposing central banks' control over currencies can push the world towards a more just global community?**

To answer your question, one would have to define what a "just global community" is. I have no idea what you have in mind. Indeed, I suspect there would be a thousand definitions for what a "just global community" might look like. And all of them, in a strict philosophical sense, would end up, upon careful examination, to be nonsensical.



**Currently, the U.S. government debt is \$28.5 trillion, about 29% more than the value of all goods and services that will be produced in the U.S. economy this year. Some countries blame the U.S. for weaponizing its debt and pressuring the others. And how can it affect the U.S. economy?**

The U.S. government debt has exploded, reaching 128% of GDP. That's very close to its post-WWII peak. But, that's way behind Japan's debt to GDP ratio of 257%. The key to keeping in mind when observing debt ratios is the growth in the money supply. In Japan, the money supply has been growing very slowly for decades. Japan has had virtually no inflation and has been able to service its debt with no problem. Indeed, Japan has a surplus of savings in its economy, has been exporting capital, and

has been consistently running current-account surpluses. When it comes to the United States, if the Federal Reserve system would slow the rate of growth in the money supply to around 6% per year, the U.S. would find that its debt would be serviced without problems. That said, I believe the U.S. fiscal deficit and debt-to-GDP ratios are way too high. Indeed, I have strongly opposed the wasteful and reckless spending that has occurred in the post-COVID period, a spending spree that's the source of the explosion in the U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio.

**Do you consider the U.S. economy successful in containing inflation? What can we learn from American approaches and experience?**

Since 2001, the inflation rate in the United States has averaged 1.91% per year, which almost exactly meets the Federal Reserve's inflation target of 2% per year. So, by that standard, the U.S. has been extremely successful in hitting its inflation target. Since COVID, however, the money supply has grown at about 4 times the rate that would be consistent with hitting the Fed's 2% inflation target. As a result, inflation has started to pick up. Over the last year, the Consumer Price Index has increased by 5.4%, the highest rate since 2008. I predict that inflation will be 6-9% by the end of this year. That's why I've been advocating a serious slowdown in the growth of the U.S. money supply. The reason for that is a lesson that Milton Friedman taught us long ago: "Inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon."

## Anti-Asian hate crime in U.S. skyrocket since pandemic began



From page 1 ► executive director of the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council said "our data clearly shows that Asian Americans across the country continue to be attacked and that the hate incidents that we have been tracking since March 2020 are not going away."

The study found that verbal harassment and deliberate avoidance of Asians make up the majority of hate incidents, followed by physical assaults and being coughed at or spat on.

A majority of the victims of the reported hate incidents were women.

The organization says "the implications are clear: the surge of racism and xenophobia has

not abated, if elected officials continue to scapegoat Chinese people for the spread of the pandemic, things will only get worse."

Stop AAPI Hate has called for investment in education, outreach and "more holistic solutions to combating hate in schools and places of business."

Separate research conducted earlier this year found hate crime incidents against Americans of Asian descent increased by 164 percent. The study said the attacks were documented in only 16 major U.S. cities.

Several factors contributed to the data, from an increase in anti-Asian rhetoric to a greater desire by the Asian community to report the crimes.

The study also noted that as the economy opened up in the past few months, it meant more public interactions and opportunities to attack Asian Americans.

The increase in anti-Asian violence was first reported in March 2020 as COVID-19 began spreading across the nation and some politicians, including former President Donald Trump, blamed China for the Pandemic. Trump regularly described the Pandemic as the Chinese virus, which many observers say triggered attacks on Asians by his supporters.

Experts say the former President tried to pin the blame on Beijing to divert strong criticism of his administration's mishandling of the Pandemic, which has led to the United States having the worst covid death toll in the world.

## Yemeni govt.'s initiative for ending war in Ma'rib

By Karim Ja'fari

Simultaneously with the appointment of the United Nations' new envoy to Yemen, consultations as well as political and diplomatic pressures, and, of course, the United States and the UK's entreaty for an end to the war in Yemen sustain themselves. The Yemeni army and Popular Committees' extensive victories over the past two weeks have caused the American side to finally despair of stopping Ansarullah through military means and seek out another approach.

It was for this reason that the White House's envoy for Yemen made several trips to the region over the same two weeks. She visited Riyadh and Muscat, meeting with a countries' officials. The Saudi side practically fights for the Americans and lacks all internal inclination towards the continuation of the war. However, it is trying to exit while still saving its face. For the American side, the fate of the city of Ma'rib is very important and it is engaging in the consultations for the same reason.

Over the past seven years, the British and Americans did not spare any crime against the Yemeni nation. Crimes of such enormity that should something slightly resembling them have happened in a country such as China, Russia or Iran, these countries would have had seven or eight

resolutions issued against them and faced hundreds of condemnations on the part of the bogus Western human rights organizations. Nevertheless, all these pressures led nowhere and starving the Yemenis did not make them sell out their scruples.

The West's heavy investment in Ma'rib did not bring along any victory for them. Their direct interference in the war in the city showed that, although they may be bigger in numbers and have greater equipment at their disposal, they have nothing on the Yemeni fighters in the area of designing and enacting battleground operations. Simply put, it should be said that the Emiratis departed from the battleground several years ago and admitted defeat. The Saudis are awaiting the smallest sign on the part of London and Washington, and the latter two, themselves, are facing a deadlock too.

The Sana'a forces are leading a winning strategy, which features a gradual approach towards the city. Their scenario comprises laying a siege on the city either directly or taking it under barrages of fire. Doing this, they would be leaving the coalition's forces just one outreach pathway through Hadhramaut. The Ma'rib battle signifies greatly since defeat in it equals the defeat of Mohammed bin Salman's adventurism in Yemen. Moreover, the war has impacted greatly on Saudi Arabia too because it has caused it to come

under successive rocket and drone attacks by Ansarullah. The war casts a long shadow on Saudi Arabia.

However, after Wendy Sherman's trip to Muscat and on a demand made by the Omani side, Yemen's National Salvation Government submitted its initiative for ending the war in the Ma'rib Province to the Omani mission. The initiative is actually the most generous one that the Yemenis can put on the table. And if the Saudis and the Americans do not accept it, Ma'rib would be besieged from the direction of the Shabwa Province. Here are the provisions of the initiative:

1. Formation of a common directorate comprised of Ma'rib's locals towards the protection of security and stability, and expulsion of al-Qaeda and Daesh's terrorists from Yemen

2. Provision of guarantees of free movement, freedom of all the abductees, compensation of those who suffered during the coalition's operations, return of those who have been displaced and migrated from the province, and an end to aggression on Ma'rib's residents

3. Allocation of the revenues that are made from exports of oil derivatives from the al-Hudaydah port to the provision of payment for Ma'rib's people

4. Renewal of the operations of the province's gas power plant, guaranteed commitment to the provision of

the other province's share of oil and gas, and formation of a joint committee tasked with repairing the SAF-ER-operated Ras Isa oil pipeline

Previously too, Mohammed Abdul-Salam, head of Sana'a's negotiating team and Ansarullah's spokesman, had told al-Mayadeen, "We came to an agreement with the Omani delegation over the resolution of the humanitarian case. We see no inclination on the part of the enemy coalition's constituent countries towards peace, and it is just the Omani side, which has initiated the negotiation process here. Our initiative awaits the approval of the other side. The initiative features agreement on freedom of all those who are captive in Ma'rib, and compensation of those who have suffered. We also agreed on Ma'rib's governance by its own people through an all-inclusive governing body."

Abdul-Malik al-Ojari, one of Ansarullah's leading figures, had also said previously that "Ansarullah had assumed that Ma'rib's battle would not be easy. We have not set a timetable for the conflict. The goal is to liberate the city. We take steps towards liberating it as well as other occupied cities and provinces from the filth of the occupiers. The Yemeni army and Popular Committees have adopted a military strategy that suits the region's geographical terrain."

(Source: Press TV)

## U.S., allies scramble to save citizens amid Taliban "advance"

The situation in Afghanistan is reported to be a very fluid one; on one hand, a six-month ceasefire between the government and the Taliban is said to be "95% agreed".

On the other hand, the Taliban claims to have captured Kandahar, which is Afghanistan's second-largest city as the group pushes ahead with its operations nationwide. If confirmed, it would leave just the capital and some pockets of another territory in the hands of the government.

In a statement on an officially recognized social media account, a Taliban spokesman said "Kandahar is completely conquered. The [ground] reached Martyrs' Square in the city". At the same time, the group has reportedly taken control of the southwestern city of Lashkar Gah, the capital of the southern Helmand Province.

Some Afghan officials said Kandahar fell on Thursday night and that government officials and their entourage relocated to an airport. The Taliban claim has also been backed by residents, who told media outlets that government forces appear to have withdrawn to a military facility outside the city.

The alleged seizure of Kandahar would mark the biggest prize yet for the Taliban, which has now taken at least a dozen of Afghanistan's 34 provincial capitals. The earlier reported seizure of Herat would also mark one of the biggest prizes for the Taliban. The group has reportedly rushed past the Great Mosque in the historic city and seized government buildings.

The United Nations says it is particularly concerned about a shift in fighting in Afghanistan to urban areas, warning that if a Taliban offensive reaches the capital Kabul it would have a "catastrophic impact on civilians."

Speaking to reporters, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric says "It is clear that urban fighting in the city of the size of Kabul would have a catastrophic impact on civilians and we very much hope that this does not happen"

He added, "we are continuing to believe that there is a political solution that can be had. This doesn't mean that we are also blind to what is going on in the on the ground".

Last year, peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban negotiators kicked off in the Qatari capital of Doha, but so far, no substantive progress has been made.

Dujarric also says any investigation into civilian deaths, which are reported to be around 1,000 in the recent violence, would have to be impartial and independent from the any party. In the first six months of 2021, the United Nations said 5,183 civilians had been killed or injured. Earlier, the United Nations said the Taliban had denied killing any civilians.

The Taliban has proposed that a UN-led team conduct an inquiry in any civilian deaths. The proposal by group would be a team made up of the United Nations, the Red Cross and other international aid groups whom would accompany Taliban representatives "to conduct an impartial and independent investigation into the latest events."

David Miliband, the President of the International Rescue Committee, has denounced the West for leaving Afghanistan in a bad shape amid increased violence. He says "We can turn this around. We need to. Investing in ourselves, our allies and partners has never been easier or more important. This is a choice. So far we're choosing to lose"

Analysts say the Afghan government is revis-



ing plans with the goal of pushing back the Taliban advance. The government has also offered a power-sharing deal with the group in return for a ceasefire.

Meanwhile, the United States and the United Kingdom are scrambling troops to evacuate their citizens from the country.

The Pentagon announced it would send three battalions, about 3,000 soldiers, to Kabul's international airport within 24 to 48 hours. The defense department spokesman, John Kirby, said the reinforcements would help the "safe and orderly reduction" of American nationals and Afghans who had worked with the U.S. military occupation and were consequently granted special immigrant visas.

Kirby added "We have been watching very closely with concern the security situation on the ground - and far better to be prudent about it and be responsible and watching the trends to make the best decisions you can for safety and security of our people than to wait until it's too late"

The UK is sending hundreds of military personnel to help evacuate Britons as the security situation in the country rapidly worsens. The move has been authorized by the Defense Secretary. Ben Wallace says 600 troops will be sent to Kabul on a "short-term basis" in response to increasing violence. The British soldiers are expected to arrive in the coming days.

Wallace also says Britain is relocating its embassy from the outskirts of the heavily fortified Green Zone to a potentially safer location closer to the center of the capital. London has described the move as part of the ongoing withdrawal of U.S.-led foreign forces.

However, observers say in reality it is an unplanned emergency response to the rapidly deteriorating security situation.

Canadian Special Forces are also being deployed to Afghanistan where the embassy's staff in Kabul will be evacuated before the troops shut down the diplomatic site altogether. This is while the German embassy in Kabul put out a statement urging all its citizens to leave the country as fast as possible on commercial flights.

The United States led the invasion of Afghanistan back in 2001, with the aim of toppling the ruling Taliban group. At the time, Washington waged the under the pretext of fighting terrorism.

20 years later, the United States is leading the withdrawal from the country with the Taliban asserting more power amid a rise in terrorist groups that had no presence before the invasion and subsequent occupation.

Just like with other countries that America has invaded and withdrew from; local civilians bear the brunt of the devastation and instability Washington leaves behind.

## Five Iranian provinces selected to hold special celebrations on World Tourism Day



TEHRAN – Five Iranian provinces, as representatives of flourishing and traditional travel destinations, have been selected to hold special celebrations on the World Tourism Day.

"The [six-day] celebrations are scheduled to be held in the provinces of Ardabil, Kordestan, Kermanshah, Kerman, and Fars as representatives of new and tradition-

al travel routes in the country," the deputy tourism minister, Vali Teymouri, announced on Wednesday.

Over the past couple of years, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has tried to take the advantage of important events such as World Tourism Day to help introduce lesser-known destinations and draw the attention of local authorities and people to the importance of tourism, Teymouri explained.

On the one hand, the selection of Ardabil, Kermanshah, and Kurdistan was based on the policy of defining a new tourism route in the northwest of the country.

On the other hand, Kerman and Fars are situated along the traditional and historical tourism route of the country, which should remain under the spotlight in parallel with the definition of new tourism routes.

September 27th is a special day for potential travelers and all tourism insiders: It's World Tourism Day! However, for the second time in the 40-year history of the occasion, being held amid the deep global economic recession, job losses, halted flights, as well as lockdowns and closures due to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Japan eases travel restrictions for Iran

TEHRAN – Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan has revised its travel advisory for Iran, upgrading it from "avoid unnecessary travels" to "travel with caution", ISNA reported on Friday.

"Now, Japan has changed [its] Iran's security map from level two to level one, in which there is no security consideration for Japanese citizens to travel to the Islamic Republic," said Seyyed Abbas-Ali Emamieh, the secretary of the consortium of incoming tours from Korea and Japan at the Association of Air Transport and Tourist Agencies of Iran (AATTAI).

The current notification, however, urges Japanese cit-

izens to reconsider travel to the Islamic Republic due to the suggested additional caution concerning coronavirus pandemic, he said.

"Japan shows the security and health levels of countries in two separate maps; [in early 2020] Iran's security map was changed [to level two] following the martyrdom of Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani and the shooting down of a Ukrainian passenger plane, in which no travel agency in Japan was allowed to arrange tours of Iran, and Japanese citizens were warned to leave Iran immediately," Emamieh explained.

On January 3, 2020, a U.S. drone strike assassinated

the Lieutenant-General in an act of retaliation, Iran fired missiles at U.S. targets in Iraq on January 8. The Ukrainian airliner was accidentally shot down by Iran's air defense as it was on high alert in the tense aftermath.

Iran embraces hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

# Seleucid, Parthian and Islamic relics unearthed in west-central Iran

From page 1 ▶ The archaeological project also aims at solving the problems of the residents of the districts near the site, who haven't been allowed to construct buildings for over 50 years.

In 1943, archaeologists discovered an 85x36 centimeter ancient inscription of 30 lines written in Greek calling on the people of Nahavand to obey the laws of the government. The inscription indicated the existence of the Laodicea Temple, which had been built by the Seleucid king who ruled Asia Minor, Antiochus III the Great (223-187 BC), for his wife Queen Laodicea.

Two of the inscriptions as well as four bronze statuettes, unearthed at the site, are on display in the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran. And, column capitals and bases are currently being used as decorations in Nahavand's Hajian Bazaar and several other parts of



the city.

Antiochus was the most distinguished of the Seleucids. Having made vassal states out of Parthia in present-day north-eastern Iran and Bactria (an ancient country in Central Asia), he warred successfully against the

Egyptian king Ptolemy V and in 198 BC obtained possession of all of Palestine and Lebanon.

He later became involved in a conflict with the Romans, who defeated him at Thermopylae in 191 BC and Magnesia (now Manisa, Turkey) in 190 BC. As the price

of peace, he was forced to surrender all his dominions west of the Taurus Mountains and to pay costly tribute. Antiochus, who early in his reign had restored the Seleucid Empire, finally forfeited its influence in the eastern Mediterranean by his failure to recognize the rising power of Rome.

The Seleucid Empire was a Hellenistic state ruled by the Seleucid dynasty which existed from 312 BC to 63 BC; Seleucus I Nicator founded it following the division of the Macedonian Empire vastly expanded by Alexander the Great. Seleucus received Babylonia (321 BC) and from there expanded his dominions to include much of Alexander's near-eastern territories. At the height of its power, the Empire included central Anatolia, Persia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and what is now Kuwait, Afghanistan, and parts of Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

## Ruins of magnificent Sassanid bridge strengthened by team of restorers



TEHRAN – A restoration project has recently been completed on the ancient arch bridge of Pol-e Dokhtar (literally meaning Girl Bridge) in the western province of Lorestan, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Parts of the Sassanid-era (224 CE to 651) monument including its deck and side arches, which were damaged by heavy flooding in 2019, were renovated and strengthened, Seyyed Amin Qasemi announced on Thursday.

A budget of over 1.5 billion rials (\$35,700 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to the project, the

official added.

The restoration was carried out using traditional materials and according to the original structure of the magnificent bridge, he noted.

With 270 meters long, Pol-e Dokhtar was built on the remains of an earlier structure dating back to the Achaemenid era (c. 550 – 330 BC).

Only one 18-meter-high arch has remained intact from the original structure, which was a passage between two ancient cities of Sha-

pur Khast and Jundi Shapur.

Inscribed on the national cultural heritage list, the mudbrick bridge has been restored several times up to the moment.

In 2019, days of devastating flooding and heavy rain inflicted damage to tens of cultural heritage sites in Lorestan; for instance, it washed away parts of a historic hill, on top of which the famed Falak-ol-Aflak Castle is nestled.

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. The Sassanid archaeological landscape also represents a highly efficient system of land use and strategic utilization of natural topography in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization.

## Iranian history: the rise of Elamite culture

A main factor that initially affects the course of a people's history is the geographical setting, the terrain, and the climate. For instance, life in Mongolia could not be the same as in the Aegean or in the Amazon forests.

But once geographical factors have given shape to a general mode of life, determining whether a people would be gatherers, stockbreeders, or fishermen, then it is the human factor—a people's inborn and cultivated capabilities—that more than any other is responsible for later developments.

The third factor is age. Some communities start on a course that leads to a relatively long-lasting and flourishing culture. The reasons for this are complex and unclear. Toynbee's theory of a "golden means of difficulty," such as prevailed on the shores of the Nile or in Mesopotamia, does not adequately explain the emergence of a culture, for it focuses solely on the geographical conditions.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, the lowlands of Khuzestan, the Iranian plateau, and western Central Asia, where Iranian culture developed, are relatively arid lands, but endowed in part with enough



Kneeling bull holding a spouted vessel, Proto-Elamite period, (3100–2900 BC)

precipitation and rivers to produce fertile valleys and plains. The basins of such rivers as the Karun, Oxus, Hind, and Zendarud provided favorable conditions for human habitation and eventually the growth

of agriculture and the domestication of animals. In their basins or valleys population increased, settlements developed, and villages and townships came into being, while nomadic life and tribal organization continued in most parts of the land.

Archaeological excavations continue to enhance our understanding of the material culture of this period. A jar once filled with resinated wine from the "kitchen" of a Neolithic building (4500-4000 BC) at Haji Firuz Tepe in northern Zagros (on display at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) attests to special techniques that had developed in the area around 4000 BC. In Susa, Khuzestan, Elamite painted pottery dating from circa 3500 BC shows an advanced stage of geometrical designs and stylized human and animal forms.

Of the original inhabitants of the Iranian plateau before the invasion and domination of the Aryan or Indo-Iranian people, we know very little, and the prehistory of Iran is shrouded in mystery. In the Khuzestan plain and parts of the province of Fars, the Elamite culture began with a strong political and religious influence from Sumer in southern

Mesopotamia. A number of Sumerian deities were also worshiped in Elam, which gradually came under the impact of the Semitic empires of Akkad and Babylon, but in 2004 BC Elam was strong enough to bring down the Ur Empire.

The Elamite civilization during the period of its prosperity was in many ways on a par with Babylonian and Assyrian civilizations and a worthy rival to them. Elam repeatedly challenged Assyrian power, but eventually, in 639 BC it was vanquished by Assurbanipal, who made Elam part of the Assyrian Empire. It never rose again as an independent power.

The Elamite language and ethnicity are not related to any known language or race. The Elamites developed a cuneiform script that rendered syllables rather than single sounds.

They have left inscriptions and monuments in Khuzestan and Fars, including the remnants of a ziggurat at Tchoga Zanbil. Darius I's inscription

at Bisotun includes also an Elamite version besides Old Persian and Babylonian.

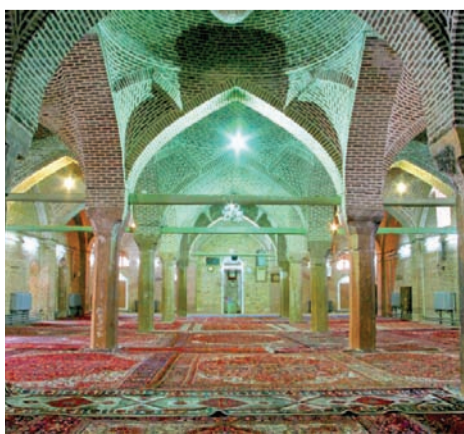
Old Persian cuneiform seems to have been based on the Elamite cuneiform. The extent of Elamite territorial authority is not entirely certain. It appears

that it extended north as far as the Caspian littoral and east as far as the Persian central desert and Sistan. Their language was still spoken at least until the advent of the Achaemenids, who used their script for some of their records, as evidenced by a mass of Elamite tablets found in excavations at Persepolis; they consist mostly of lists of rations and wages of the workers and throw considerable light on Achaemenid economy and administration.

In the end, the Elamite territories came under the suzerainty of the Medes and later the Persians, powers that arose in the wake of the Aryan invasion and conquests. The Elamite civilization exerted considerable influence on the Achaemenids and their culture.

Of the original inhabitants of the Iranian plateau we know very little, and the prehistory of Iran is shrouded in mystery.

## Centuries-old mosque in Mahabad being restored to former glory



TEHRAN – A team of cultural heritage experts and restorers has commenced work on the Jameh Mosque of Mahabad, which is one of the most significant places of worship in the northwestern Iranian city.

Located in West Azarbaijan province, the mosque is also a top tourist destination due to its age and unique architectural elements; it has 18 pillars and 18 domes.

Insulating certain parts of the mosque, repairing the façade of minarets and the entrance portal, as well as strengthening the surrounding walls are pillars of the project, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

A budget of 2.3 billion rials (\$54,700 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, CHTN

quoted Jalil Jabari as saying on Thursday.

The Safavid-era (1501-1736) mosque was inscribed on the national heritage list in 1969.

The terms "Jameh Mosque" or "Masjed-e Jameh" or "Friday Mosque" are used in Iran for a grand communal mosque where mandatory Friday prayers are/were performed. The phrase is used in other Muslim countries but only in Iran does it designate this purpose.

West Azarbaijan embraces a variety of lush natural sceneries, cultural heritage sites, and museums including the UNESCO sites of Takht-e Soleyman and Qareh Klise (St. Thaddeus Monastery), Tepe Hasanlu, and the ruined Bastam Citadel.

The region has been the seat of several ancient civilizations. It formed part of Urartu and later of Media. In the 4th century BC, it was conquered by Alexander the Great and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander's generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. The area returned to the Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE. The Arabs controlled Azerbaijan from the 7th century until Turkish nomads overran it in the 11th century. Thenceforth the inhabitants of the region were Turkish speakers. The region was overrun by the Mongols in the 13th century, and, under the ruler Hulegu, Azarbaijan became the center of a Mongol empire extending from Syria on the west to the Oxus River (now Amu Darya) on the east.

## Quake inflicts no harm to historical sites in southeast Iran

TEHRAN – A medium-sized 4.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Anbarabad county in Kerman on Thursday caused no damage to historical sites across the southeastern province.



Based on field visits conducted by the cultural heritage experts, no serious damage to historical relics and monuments has been reported so far, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

"However, experts are on standby to inspect the possible harms to historical sites and aging structures of the province," Mojtaba Shafiei said on Friday.

The southern counties of the province are home to many historical sites and monuments as well as natural attractions, the official added.

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

Kerman is bounded by the provinces of Fars on the west, Yazd on the north, South Khorasan on the northeast, Sistan-Baluchestan on the east, and Hormozgan on the south. It includes the southern part of the central Iranian desert, the Dasht-e Lut.

## Italian embassy opens exhibition in honor of Iranian legendary wrestler Takhti

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – The Italian Embassy in Tehran inaugurated on Thursday an exhibit to pay homage to Gholamreza Takhti, the Iranian wrestling icon, national hero and symbol of sportsmanship and hospitality, who passed away at the age of 37 in 1968.

Titled "Gholamreza Takhti, Portraits of a Champion" the event opened at the gardens of the residence of Giuseppe Perrone, the Italian Ambassador in Tehran.

The exhibit features 29 works by four Iranian artists (Khosrow Hassanzadeh, Yasamin Khorsandi, Behdad Panjehzadeh, and Behzad Shishegaran) portraying different imagery of internationally famous Iranian wrestling champion Gholamreza Takhti, winner of Olympic medals in three successive editions of the games (silver in Helsinki 1952, gold in Melbourne 1956, silver in Rome 1960).

Renowned not just for his extraordinary sports skills, but also for his unique human side, his fair play towards fellow athletes, his commitment to helping the poor and the more disadvantaged in society, Gholamreza Takhti over the years has become an icon of pop and contemporary art, being portrayed in the works of many Iranian artists, some of which are part of the collections of famous international museums, including the British Museum in London.

In his opening remarks at the inaugural event at the Italian Residence in Tehran, Perrone emphasized the importance of Gholamreza Takhti's figure as an athlete and as a man and the wide appreciation and respect he continues to enjoy today, after more than 50 years from his passing, with Iranians of all walks of life.

Perrone also stressed the close and friendly relations existing between Italy and Iran as far as sports are concerned, particularly when it comes to cooperation in such popular disciplines as football, volleyball, wrestling, and fencing.

The exhibit "Gholamreza Takhti, Portraits of a Champion", which will remain open until September 1, comes after the screening always at the residence of the Italian Ambassador in Tehran of the premiere of the documentary "The Man" by Ali Shahmohammadi which took place on July 24.

**Takhti symbol of Iranians' generosity, hospitality: Italian envoy**

Takhti was not only an athlete but a role model, who was admired by all Iranians in all aspects of life, still, he is respected by the nation, Italian Ambassador



In Tehran, Giuseppe Perrone told the Tehran Times.

He went on to say that Takhti was a truly unifying figure for Iranians, so that he became an inspiring character for the artists, as he was a symbol of generosity, positive values, and kindness, which made him remain in the hearts of all Iranians.

Referring to the reason why to choose the inspiring champion, he noted that with the beginning of the Olympics, we decided to tell a story that why sport is uplifting and how it unifies people, and the best figure to evoke the story was Gholamreza Takhti.

Pointing to the purpose behind organizing such events, he stated that it was also a way to introduce the true character of Iranians to the world, their generosity, hospitality, helpfulness, fairness towards fellow human beings.

Gholamreza Takhti, a man who really fought in his life and helped the poor and respected his fellow athletes along with being so respectful, embodies the character and values of the Iranian nation, he concluded.

## Takhti was a truly unifying figure for Iranians, the Italian envoy says

## Greenhouse gas emissions must peak within 4 years, says leaked UN report

Global greenhouse gas emissions must peak in the next four years, coal and gas-fired power plants must close in the next decade and lifestyle and behavioural changes will be needed to avoid climate breakdown, according to the leaked draft of a report from the world's leading authority on climate science.

Rich people in every country are overwhelmingly more responsible for global heating than the poor, with SUVs and meat-eating singled out for blame, and the high-carbon basis for future economic growth is also questioned.

The leak is from the forthcoming third part of the landmark report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the first part of which was published on Monday, warning of unprecedented changes to the climate, some of them irreversible. The document, called the sixth assessment report, is divided into three parts: the physical science of climate change; the impacts and ways of reducing human influence on the climate.

Part three is not scheduled to be released before next March, but a small group of scientists decided to leak the draft via the Spanish branch of Scientist Rebellion, an offshoot of the Extinction Rebellion movement. It was first published by the journalist Juan Bordera in the Spanish online magazine CTXT.

Bordera told the Guardian that the leak reflected the concern of some of those involved in drawing up the document that their conclusions could be watered down before publication in 2022. Governments have the right to make changes to the "summary for policymakers".

The top 10% of emitters globally, who are the wealthiest 10%, contribute between 36 and 45% of emissions, which is 10 times as much as the poorest 10%, who are responsible for only about three to 5%, the report finds.

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON AUGUST 13

New cases	39,119
New deaths	527
Total cases	4,359,385
Total deaths	96,742
New hospitalized patients	4,707
Patients in critical condition	7,152
Total recovered patients	3,674,529
Diagnostic tests conducted	26,984,630
Doses of vaccine injected	18,056,417

TEHRAN – The average annual water level of the Caspian Sea has decreased by about 5 to 10 cm compared to a year before, according to the network information of the Ministry of Energy.

Various factors such as the volume of water entering from the rivers to this catchment area and the amount of rainfall and the rate of evaporation have a determining role in the water level of the Caspian Sea, Behzad Layeqi, head of the National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Science said.

Lamenting that the water level of the Caspian Sea has been decreasing over the past 30 years, he said that in 1977, the water level of the Sea fell sharply and until 1995 experienced an increasing trend. But since then, over the past 26 years, the seawater level is on a downward trend.

It is now one meter above the level of this lake in 1977 – which was the lowest level of the Caspian Sea during the last five decades – and if the same trend continues, it will again reach its lowest level in less than 10 years, he highlighted.

Long-term forecasts based on climate change scenarios show 4-6 meters drop in the lake's water level over the next 30 to 50 years, he said, ISNA reported on Friday.

The declining water level of the Sea, in addition to the problems it poses for ports and shipping in this catchment area, has negative effects on ecologically protected areas, including wetlands, as well as the aquatic life, due to the increased salinity and temperature of the water, he stated.

Pointing to another factor in reducing the water level of the Caspian Sea, he noted that the largest river that enters the Caspian Sea is the Volga River, which supplies about 85 percent of the Sea, but in recent years, several dams have been built on the riverbed its water consumption in various parts has reduced the volume of water entering the Caspian Sea.

He further suggested that granting the water right of the Sea and its rivers



# Caspian Sea level shrinks by 5-10cm on year

is one of the most important measures that all Caspian littoral countries can take in order to prevent the water level reduction.

## Hosting 400 aquatic species has doubled the value of Caspian Sea.

The Caspian Sea is the largest enclosed inland body of water on Earth by area. It is bounded by Kazakhstan to the northeast, Russia to the northwest, Azerbaijan to the west, Iran to the south,

and Turkmenistan to the southeast. The sea has an area of 600,384 square kilometers and a coastline of 7,000 kilometers.

Hosting 400 aquatic species and holding third place in terms of oil and gas reserves under its bed after the "Persian Gulf" and "Siberia" has doubled the value of this basin, while sturgeon are the most important inhabitants of the lake.

Researchers believe that 80 percent of the pollution in the Caspian Sea is related to the flow of water from the Volga River and other western rivers from the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Frequent oil spills in the coastal areas of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, the entry of waste of over 40 factories and refineries into the sea, the decline, and extinction of the Caspian Sea aquatic species since 1990, are among the main

challenges faced by the Caspian Sea.

The National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Science has conducted extensive studies in this catchment area, including more than 10 research patrols in the Caspian Sea, obtaining a certificate and setting up a trusted laboratory of the Department of Environment, identification of high-risk points for cracking waves on the shores of the Sea.

Moreover, sampling of bed sediments in the deep waters of the southern Caspian Basin, publication of more than 80 scientific documents on the Caspian Sea, study, measurement, and modeling in Gorgan Bay and presented scientific and executive solutions for the sustainability of its ecosystem and more than 70 research projects in the southern part of the Caspian Sea are other actions of researchers at the Research Institute.

**Grappling with poor waste management**

Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy chief of the Department of Environment (DOE) for the marine environment, said in August 2020 that waste management in the Caspian Sea is on the verge of crisis and seriously threatens the Sea's environment.

In addition to waste, leachate enters the sea through rivers or rainfall, and because the severity of leachate pollution is very high, it imposes a serious threat to the marine environment, he lamented.

Noting that the release of urban and rural wastewater into the sea is another problem the Caspian Sea is struggling with, he clarified that a number of cities in the northern provinces either do not have a wastewater treatment plant.

Stating that plastics and microplastics are among the issues that can be a threat to humanity in the next 10 years, he noted that erosion makes microplastics out of plastic waste, and 70 percent of these are transferred directly to the seas, and therefore can enter the aquatic and human food cycle, causing damage to human health and marine biodiversity.

## Water transfer not a solution to drought

From page 1 ► Water transfer projects underway

Iran started water desalination and transfer project in recent years aiming at alleviating and meeting the urgent need of central arid areas for water.

However, redistribution of water resources is inevitably involved in changes in the ecological environment and endangering nature.

Changes are divided into two negative and positive impacts, including water supply in water-deficient areas, facilitating the water cycle, improving meteorological conditions in the recipient basins, mitigating ecological water shortage, repairing the damaged ecological system, and preserving the endangered wild fauna and flora.

The negative impacts include salinization and acidification of the donor basins, damage to the ecological environment of the donor basins, and both sides of the conveying channel system, an increase of water consumption in the recipient basins, and spread of diseases, etc.

In Iran, two water transfer projects also have been proposed by the government to ensure water supplies for the provinces of Semnan and Sistan-Baluchestan suffering severe water shortages, which have been controversial over the past years.

One of the projects is the water transfer from the



Caspian Sea to the central province of Semnan proposed in 2012, but not proceeded at the time due to concerns raised by the department of environment, while is now back on the table and at the planning stage.

The other looked to Oman seawater quenching the thirst of the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, Hormozgan, and Khorasan Razavi provinces, which have been allocated a budget of \$400 million by the president in March 2016.

**Water transfer projects beneficial or detrimental?**

Experts believe that these projects entailing economic and environmental burden are no solution to droughts, and demanded the water transfer projects to be dismissed due to the irreparable damages to the

environment namely deforestation, wildlife habitat destruction, biodiversity degradation, improper land change use, and contaminated seawater.

In a news piece published by Khabaronline, Mehdi Zare, a seismic expert, said that human intervention, speeding up climate change, is one of the major threats to today's human life and even the future. One of the threats is that transferring water to dry areas increases the population burden in those areas while imposing unsustainable development where there is no suitable climate for such a concentration.

The disastrous consequences of such interventions have so far been appeared in the country, especially in the provinces of Tehran and Isfahan located in arid areas, which have been demolished being accommodated a population of three to five times the size of their carrying capacity in the last 50 years, he lamented.

This is while, some others are staunch supporters of water transfer projects as well as the Department of Environment (DOE) chief Issa Kalantari arguing that to provide the amount of water needed for drinking purposes and industries, there is no choice but to use seawater, the incredible and abundant resources, now and in the future.

## CLIMATE OF IRAN

(Part 1)

Both the climate of Iran as a whole and the differences in weather among its various regions are determined primarily by its location within the arid belt of the eastern hemisphere. The general dryness and barrenness of the country result from its position in relation to the planetary circulation system and are further heightened, as well as internally differentiated, by the mountain ranges encircling much of its perimeter, specifically the Alborz and the Zagros.

On one hand, these high barriers prevent moist Mediterranean and Caspian winds from reaching the Iranian plateau and thus ensure the extreme dryness of the greater part of central Iran; on the other, the outer flanks of the mountains are subject to sometimes heavy precipitation, so that they

differ fundamentally from the plateau in their ecology and prevailing forms of human activity and land use.

The Iranian national weather service first began publishing its observations only in the year 1335 (1956), when a network of synoptic observation stations was first constructed in conformity with international standards; detailed data for many parts of the country are thus available for only about twenty-five or thirty years.

The most important sources of information are the meteorological yearbooks that have appeared annually since 1335 (1956). On the basis of these data, it has become possible to understand the place of Iran within the framework of climatic divisions of the earth's surface.

In W. Köppen's classification the larg-

est portion of Iranian territory appears to fall into the dry-steppe (semiarid; BS) and dry-desert (arid; BW) zones. The climates of the plateau and the southern coastal area can be further classified as colder (BSk or BSk) or warmer (BSh or BWh) respectively, the boundary being the 18° C annual isotherm. According to Köppen, only the upland areas of the Alborz and the Zagros can be classified as having a subtropical dry-summer climate (Csa), whereas the northern slopes of the Alborz and the Caspian lowlands belong to the category of subtropical humid climates (Cf).

In the more refined classification of C. Troll and K. H. Paffen, in which seasonal contrasts in humidity and aridity are also taken into account, most of Iran falls into two subcategories of the warm-temperate subtropical zone: the dry-summer steppe climates with hu-

mid winters (IV2), to which the greater part of the country obviously belongs, and the semidesert and desert climates (IV5), which are especially typical of the large stream basins on the uplands. The Zagros area is an exception in that it belongs to Troll and Paffen's climate type IV 1, the dry-summer Mediterranean climates with humid winters.

In the system of global atmospheric-pressure and wind belts Iran straddles the boundary zone between the northeasterly trade winds that prevail in summer and the rain-bearing westerlies of winter. The rhythm of seasonal shifts in these zones of atmospheric pressure has a major impact on climate, which is further influenced and modified by variations in topography, as well as by the distribution of land and water masses.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

## ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

### Wildfire risk increases in Zagros foothills

Following heavy rainfall doused the country during the past months, vegetation has covered vast areas of Zagros forest in southwestern part of the country, which easily ignites when temperature level gets higher and wildfire risk increases.

Torrential rains over the past few months, has positive consequences like saturating the wetlands and reservoirs, however, led to some natural incidents like flooding which caused losses to the country, Mohammad Mansourpour, an official with the Iranian Space Agency said.

As the result of the rain, plants and vegetation has grown in vast areas of forests and rangelands which soon will be dried due to temperature rise and enhance the possibility of massive fires, he added.

### احتمال افزایش آتش سوزی در دامنه های زاگرس

بارش باران طی ماه های اخیر باعث رویش علفهای پرتراکم در قسمت های مختلف کشور شد که پس از افزایش دما علفها خشک شده و احتمال آتش سوزی را در دامنه های زاگرس افزایش می دهند.

مصطفی منصورپور مدیرکل سنسجس از دور سازمان فضایی ایران گفتگو با ایرنا اظهار داشت: بارش های بهاری امسال، علاوه بر فوایدی که داشت و باعث بر آب شدن تالاب ها و ذخایر آبی شد، متأسفانه مشکلاتی و خساراتی مانند سیل نیز به بار آورد. او افزود: با توجه به این بارش ها، برخی از مراتع کشور که بدون پوشش گیاهی هستند، با علف های بهاری با تراکم بالا پوشیده شدند اما طول عمر این علفها معمولاً دو ماه است و پس از آن خشک می شوند. با توجه به ماهیت اشتعال، تراکم زیاد علفها و افزایش دما، بحران آتش سوزی قابل پیش بینی بود.



## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Generosity is to help a deserving person without his request, and if you help him after his request, then it is either out of self-respect or to avoid rebuke.

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times » Noon:13:09 Evening: 20:51 Dawn: 4:14 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:23 (tomorrow)

## What's in Tehran art galleries

### Painting



Ali Seyyedani is displaying his latest paintings in an exhibition at O Gallery 2.

O Gallery 2 is displaying artworks in various media by Ava Afshari, Ailar Dastgiri, Niki Fallahfar, Arash Qelich, Amin Moazzami, Kimia Dehqan and a number of other artists in an exhibition entitled "Claustrophilia".

The exhibitions will run until August 24 at the gallery located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.

An exhibition curated by Kiarash Alimi is currently showcasing paintings by Taha Heidari, Ziba Rajabi, Sam Samiei and Yasaman Nozari at Dastan Basement Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until August 27 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.



Ehsan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Alireza Nikzad, Parisa Mirhaj, Helia Afazeli, Fatemeh Ramezani, Fatemeh Mohammadi, Maryam Adibian and several other artists.

The exhibit named "Glance" will run until August 17 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

Vahid Gholami is hanging his latest paintings in an exhibition titled "To the Garden of Dreams" at Golhaye Davudi Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until August 18 at the gallery located at 263 near Nejatollahi St., Taleqani Ave.



Paintings by Abdorrasul Gharibi are currently on view in an exhibition at Outsider Inn Gallery.

The exhibit will run until August 22 at the gallery located at 11 Farrokhi Alley, near Vali-e Asr Square.

Nian Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Vahid Chamaani.

The exhibition entitled "Amino Acid" will be running until September 3 at the gallery located at 5 Abhari Alley, Vafai St. off Tur St. off Southern Mofatteh St.



A collection of paintings by Hanieh Rahimian and Shiva Abazarian is on view in an exhibition at Soo Gallery 1.

Soo Gallery 2 is hanging paintings by Babak Haji-Hassan in an exhibition titled "One of Us".

Soo Gallery 3 is also showcasing paintings by Mona Barani, Nasim Asgari and Nastaran Qadiri in an exhibition named "Needle".

The exhibits will continue until September 3 at the gallery located at 30 Purmusa St. off Somayyeh St.

Paintings by Amir Akbari are currently on view in an exhibition at Parallel Circuit Gallery.

The exhibit named "Uppercut" will be running until August 27 at the gallery that can be found at 409 Bamshad Alley, Hafez St. near the College Crossroads.



### Sculpture/painting

Iranshahr Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of sculptures and paintings by Anahita Shahamati.

The exhibit will run until August 26 at the gallery that can be found at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.

### Multimedia

Artworks in various media by Samaneh Mahdipur, Shaereh Fathian, Narges Ahmadi, Ali-Asgahr Farmani, Payam Rezai, Elaheh Mohammadi and dozens of other artists are currently on display in an exhibition at Ayrik Gallery.

The exhibition will run until August 22 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.

From Page 1 ▶ He began his acting career on stage with director Kiumars Moradi's "Morning Doesn't Dawn" in 1994, made his debut in cinema shortly afterwards with "Bon Voyage!", a comedy by actor and director Dariush Moaddabian.

The following year, he appeared in the war drama "Journey to Chazzeb" directed by Rasul Mollaqlipour who also cast him in a role for his "The Poisonous Mushroom" in 2002.

He also played a role in director Bahram Beizai's 2001 neo-noir "Killing Mad Dogs", which became a box-office hit.

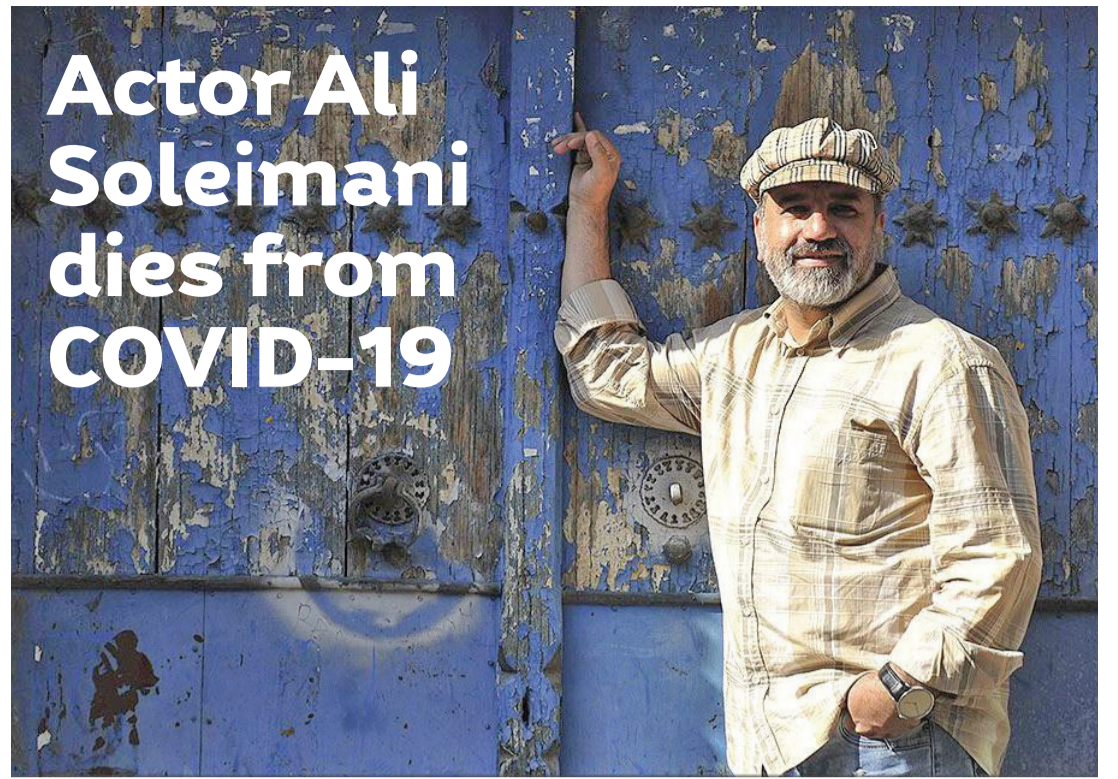
Director Hamid Nematollah's comedy drama "Penniless", Ali Vaziri's "A Span of Heaven" are also among his films.

He made his last appearance in cinema with Bahram Tavakkoli's acclaimed war film "The Lost Strait" in 2018.

Soleimani played roles in over 20 theatrical productions, including "You're the Beloved of Us" by Mehrdad Rayani-Makhsus, "Gate of the Watches" by Javad Hashemi and "Waiting for the Hangman" by Hossein Kiani.

He also directed several plays, including "A Man in the Mirror", which was staged at Tehran's Vahdat Hall in 2018.

Several directors such as Hassan Fathi and Asghar Farhadi worked with Soleimani in their TV series made for



Actor Ali Soleimani in an undated photo. (Honaronline/Mahdieh Babai)

Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.

Farhadi hired him for his 2000 TV series "Tale of a City", which indirectly featured social problems facing Iranian society by way of the

assignments that were given to a group of reporters working for a TV program named "Dar Shahr".

Soleimani was also praised by critics for his portrayal of a Muslim cleric in

the fourth season of the popular TV series "Paytakht" ("Capital" 2015) by director Sirus Moqaddam.

Soleimani is survived by his wife Soheila Javadi and daughter Saba.

## Tehran Auction grosses about \$ 1.6 million



"Counting Days and Nights, Every Day and Every Night" by Reza Derakhshani was the most expensive work sold at the 14th Tehran Auction held on August 12, 2021, at Parsian Azadi Hotel. It fetched about \$197,000.

TEHRAN - The 14th Tehran Auction has grossed 421.8 billion rials (about \$1.6 million based on Iran's free-market exchange rate: \$1 = 246,000 rials).

Reza Derakhshani's "Counting Days and Nights, Every Day and Every Night" was the most expensive work sold at the auction on Thursday as it fetched 52 billion rials (about \$197,000).

The mixed media diptych painting featuring fig leaves has been created on canvas in 2017.

A total of 120 lots of modern and contemporary Iranian art were offered during the auction held at Tehran's Parsian Azadi Hotel.

"Blue Dome I", a mixed media on linen by Y.Z. Kami (Kamran Youssefzadeh), was the second most expensive work sold at the sale. It fetched 46 billion

rials (over \$174,000).

The third most expensive work sold at the sale was "We the Roses", a painting by Farhad Moshiri, who created the artwork in 2012. It fetched 42 billion rials (over \$159,000).

It was followed by "Abandoned Emperor", an oil painting on canvas created by Vahed Khakdan in 2017, which sold for 17 billion rials (over \$64,000).

The auction was organized after a 40-day hiatus due to the pandemic. However, it was held on a day that Iran reported 568 coronavirus-related deaths and recorded one of its highest daily tally of 39,049 COVID-19 infections.

The 13th Tehran Auction held on January 15 grossed about 880 billion rials (about \$4 million based on Iran's free-market exchange rate: \$1 = 221,000 rials).

## CinéDOC-Tbilisi festival to review "Sunless Shadows", "Sonita"

TEHRAN - The 9th CinéDOC-Tbilisi Documentary Film Festival in Georgia will review Iranian films "Sunless Shadows" and "Sonita".

Directed by Mehrdad Oskui, "Sunless Shadows" has been acclaimed at several international events. It was selected as best documentary in the Spiritual Film Section of the 19th Dhaka International Film Festival in January.

In an Iranian juvenile detention center, a group of adolescent girls are serving time for having murdered their father, husband or another male family member. Oskui managed to build up a remarkable relationship with these inmates, whose frank conversations and playful interactions he observes, and who gradually open up about the consequences of, and sometimes the reasons for, their terrible acts.



"Sunless Shadows" by Iranian filmmaker Mehrdad Oskui.

"Sunless Shadows" won the award for best documentary in the international competition of the 8th edition of CinéDOC-Tbilisi in 2020.

"Sonita" directed by Rokhsareh Qaemmagami is about an Afghan refugee living in Iran who fights to keep her dream of becoming a rap star alive, while her family attempts to sell her as a bride.

The CinéDOC-Tbilisi festival will open on Sunday and will run until September 15.

Alex Szalat, Heleen Gerritsen and Madeline Robert are the members of the jury of the festival, which is organized by the Noosfera Foundation, which is committed to creative documentary films and film education, organizing screenings, training initiatives.

## "Practical Wisdom" published in Persian

TEHRAN - A Persian translation of "Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing" co-written by Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe has been released in Iran.

Ali-Akbar Abdorashidi is the translator of the book published by Torang in Tehran.

The book is a reasoned yet urgent call to embrace and protect the essential, practical human quality that has been drummed out of our lives: wisdom.

It's in our nature to want to succeed.

It's also human nature to want to do right. But we've lost how to balance the two. How do we get it back?

"Practical Wisdom" can help. It is the essential human quality that combines the fruits of our individual experiences with our empathy and intellect-an aim that Aristotle identified millennia ago. It's learning "the right way to do the right thing in a particular circumstance, with a particular person, at a particular time."

But we have forgotten how to do this. In "Practical Wisdom", Schwartz

and Sharpe illuminate how to get back in touch with our wisdom: how to identify it, cultivate it, and enact it, and how to make ourselves healthier, wealthier, and wiser.

Schwartz is an American psychologist who is the Dorwin Cartwright professor of social theory and social action at Swarthmore College.

He frequently publishes editorials in the New York Times applying his research in psychology to current events.



Cover of the Persian translation of "Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing" co-written by Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe.

## History of art in Iran: post-Qajar painting

### Part 6

Abolqasem Saeidi (b. 1926) was trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris and eventually specialized in highly colorful, light-filled renditions of trees in bloom, often with a strong calligraphic quality to his line.

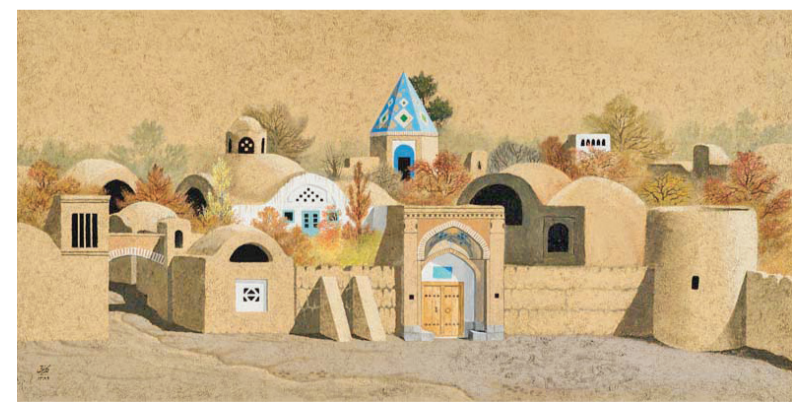
Nasser Assar (b. 1928) another Paris-based artist also paints large, almost monochrome canvases in soft hues.

Artists such as Marcos Grigorian, Parviz Kalantari (b. 1931), and Sirak Melkonian have all been drawn to the desert and local village architecture as formal sources.

Other artists should more properly be called artist-calligraphers: Mohammad Ehsai (b. 1939), Reza Mafi (b. 1943), and Sadeq Barirani can be numbered among artists who took their inspiration from the Saqqakhaneh formal idiom but in the mid-70s concentrated solely on script.

Monir Farmanfarmaian developed the decorative and formal possibilities inherent in the glass painting of the 19th century to create modern mixed-media work combining painting and sculpture.

Although modern Iranian painting is generally more decorative and concerned with formal questions, there were young artists who could be called expressionistic and produced powerful works of art - Nikzad Nojumi, Bahman Nayfar (b. 1945),



A painting by Parviz Kalantari.

Hanibal Alkhas, the cartoonist Ardeshir Mohasses, (b. 1938), and Nahid Haqiqat.

All of the above artists to one degree or another draw upon Iran's past in their search for a contemporary statement but there are others, reckoned among the more established, who work in a thoroughly international idiom, among them Manuchehr Yaktai (b. 1922), who creates still lifes and portraits with a strong abstract-expressionist flavor, Bahman Mohasses (b. 1930), who developed a forceful personal imagery of minotaurs and nightmare creatures in landscapes of despair, Behjat Sadr, an

abstract painter of rhythmic geometric designs whose signature style can be seen in a series of paintings based on the artist's brushstroke, and Morteza Sazgar, whose painting has led to basically geometric designs worked into fine textures.

To sum up: during the 70s, some fifty-sixty Iranians considered themselves full-time artists, holding at least one exhibition a year in the ten-twelve art galleries that were active at the time in Tehran or some key provincial center, such as Shiraz or Isfahan.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

Concluded