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## Interview



## Iran, Turkey, Pakistan have great task to solve Afghanistan problem: Turkish politician

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - Dogan Bekin, vice president of the New Welfare Party in Turkey, is of the opinion that Islamabad, Tehran and Ankara must make a concerted effort to restore peace in Afghanistan.

"Pakistan, Iran and Turkey, which are the D-8 member states, have great duties in solving the Afghanistan problem," Bekin tells the Tehran Times.

"If these three countries could come together to solve the Afghanistan problem and bring all sides together, it would be possible to solve the Afghanistan problem, which has been facing gangrene for many years," the Turkish figure remarked.

While U.S. President Joe Biden has pledged to pull out American forces from Afghanistan until September 11, political observers expect regional players like Iran and Turkey in cooperation with other powers like China and Russia will fill the vacuum left by the U.S. in the country.

Many have slammed Biden for his irresponsible move to withdraw U.S. forces from Afghanistan in such a tough time, which led to a lightening downfall of the Afghan government.

"In a word, we believe that Iran, Turkey and Pakistan should make a concerted effort to put forward a strong initiative and road map for a permanent solution in Afghanistan," Bekin suggests. ▶ **Page 5**

## Agricultural export up 9% in 4 months on year

TEHRAN- The value of Iran's export of agricultural products has risen nine percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the deputy head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced on Saturday.

Mehrdad Jamal Orounaqi, the IRICA deputy head for technical affairs, said that over 2.5 million tons of agricultural products worth more than \$1.7 billion have been exported in the four-month period.

The main foodstuffs and agricultural products exported during this period were tomatoes, pistachios, watermelons, tomato paste, cheese, apples, melons, potatoes, dates and various sweets, the official stated, and named Iraq, China, Afghanistan, and the United Arab Emirates as the main export destinations of the products.

Despite the economic sanctions, the coronavirus pandemic and the current drought, the value of exported agricultural products has increased in value compared to the same period last year, he said and expressed hope that this upward trend will continue through taking the needed measures by the related organizations. ▶ **Page 4**

## PCR test mandatory for passengers entering Iran

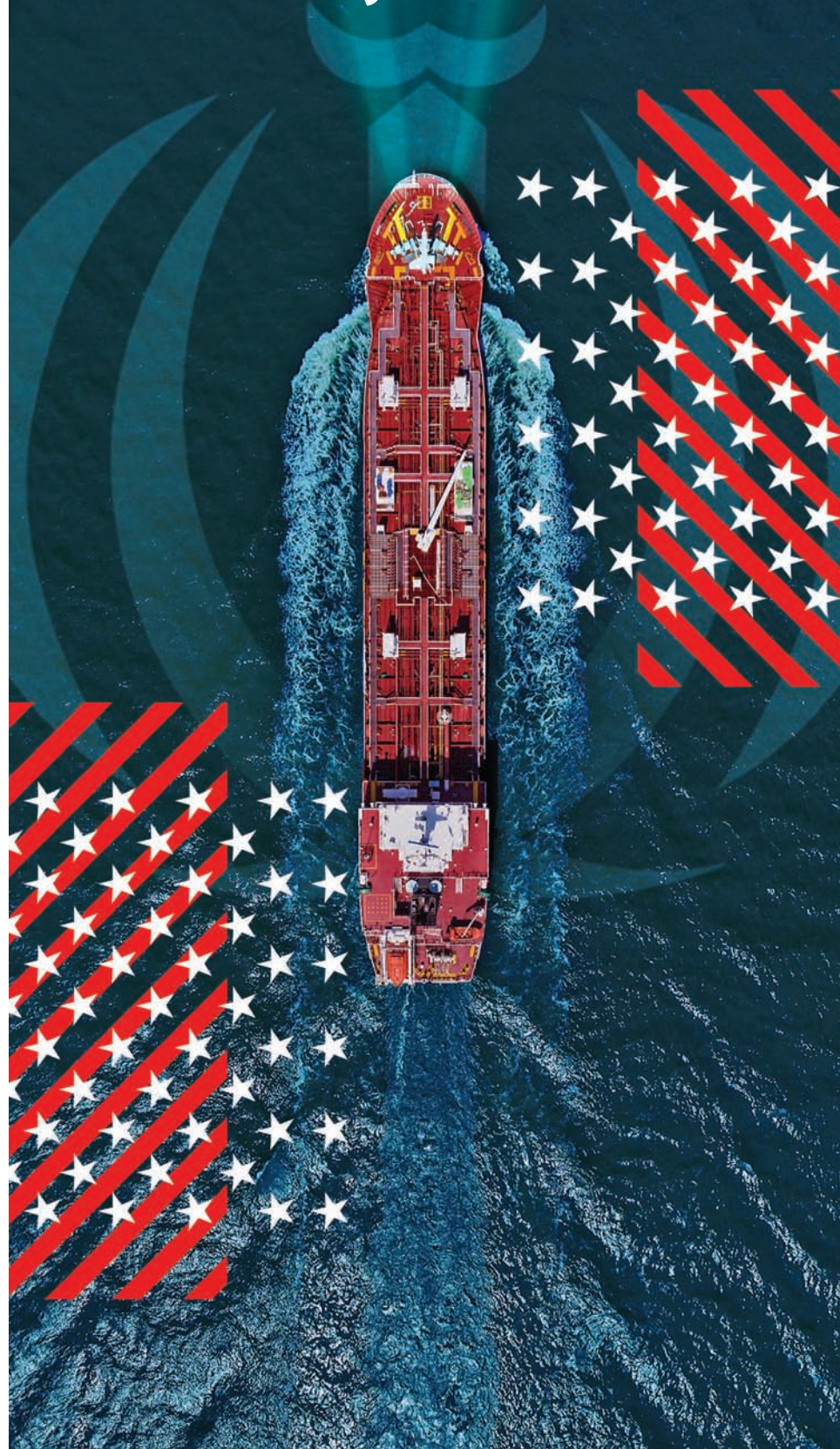
TEHRAN - All travelers to Iran must have a negative PCR test certificate or a health card during the Covid-19 pandemic, IRINN reported.

Due to the prevalence of delta variant, negative PCR test is also mandatory for vaccinated passengers, Mohammad Reza Seif, head of safety and quality assurance department of Imam Khomeini Airport Town Co, said.

All passengers entering Iran, even if they have been vaccinated and have a vaccination card, must

# With Iranian Fuel Surprise, Nasrallah Offered Lebanon a Third Way

▶ **Page 3**



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## Raisi says Iran not opposed to nuclear talks

TEHRAN - New Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said in a meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi on Sunday that Iran Tehran does not oppose the "principle of negotiation" to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The United States under Donald Trump quit the JCPOA in May 2018 and slapped the harshest sanctions in history against Iran in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Iran remained fully loyal to the terms of the JCPOA one year after the U.S. abandoned the deal and this was confirmed by regular reports given by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

However, Iran started to gradually remove bans on its nuclear activities after the European parties to the agreement did nothing to compensate Iran for the sanctions.

President Raisi said Iran complied with all its commitments in the nuclear agreement, but it was Washington that violated it.

Naturally, Raisi said, a country that adhered to its obligations should be "commended", and a country that has withdrawn from the deal and refused to fulfill its obligations must be "reprimanded".

The Americans must be held accountable to the world's public opinion for violating the legally binding nuclear pact, the president pointed out.

In response to the Japanese foreign minister's remarks on the necessity and importance of implementing the JCPOA as an international agreement, the president said, "Iran has complied with all its obligations under the JCPOA and it is the Americans who have not fulfilled their obligations and unilaterally withdrew from the international agreement and expanded sanctions."

### "Good and friendly relations"

President Raisi also described the Iran-Japan relations as good and friendly and stressed the need to deepen relations between the two countries in all fields, especially economy and trade.

"For the Islamic Republic of Iran, relations with Japan and the development and deepening of bilateral relations is of great importance," the president pointed out.

Raisi also thanked Japan for its humanitarian assistance in the fight against coronavirus, and expressed hope that the continuation of cooperation between the two countries in this field will help eradicate Covid-19 in both countries and the world at large.

In late July, Japan donated a total of about 2.9 million doses of Japanese-made vaccine to Iran as part of its support to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. It was the largest donation of vaccine by Japan abroad and the fastest vaccine donation under COVAX. ▶ **Page 2**

## "War criminal" Blair slams Biden's Afghan exit as sign of West's decline

Tony Blair has quite dramatically broken his silence over the "chaotic" U.S.-led military withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The Former British Prime Minister who himself was in office when the U.S. led the invasion of Afghanistan, unleashed a brutal attack on U.S. President Joe Biden.

In an article, he says the manner of Biden's Afghan withdrawal will lead allies and friends to question if the West has "lost its strategic will" in the aftermath of the swift Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

"We didn't need to [withdraw]. We chose to do it. We did it in the obedience to an imbecilic political slogan about ending 'the forever wars'."

He says the "the world is now uncertain of where the west stands because it is so obvious that the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan in this way was driven not by grand strategy but by politics".

According to Blair "Russia, China and Iran will see and take advantage. Anyone given commitments by Western Leaders will understandably regard them as unstable currency".

In another damning assessment of the West's declining reliability on the word stage, he also says "that's the worry of our allies and the source of rejoicing in those who wish us ill. They think Western politics is broken."

The former British premier adds the withdrawal is "tragic, dangerous and unnecessary. the abandonment of Afghanistan and its people is tragic, dangerous, unnecessary, not in their interests and not in ours"

Blair also says the crisis over the past week reveals that the UK is at risk of "being relegated to the second division of global powers".

He blamed the UK "being out of Europe" and "little or no consultation by our greatest ally" the United States, for Britain's declining influence on the international arena. ▶ **Page 5**

## Iranian thrower Pakbaz aims medal at Paralympics

TOKYO - Iranian thrower Saman Pakbaz says that he will have a difficult task ahead in the 2020 Paralympic Games but is looking forward to win a medal in the Games.

He won a silver medal at the 2016 Paralympic Games at the Shot put - F11-12 event. Pakbaz also claimed a silver at the 2017 IPC World Championships in London in discus throw.

"I have little chance to win a medal in Tokyo but will do my best to claim it," Pakbaz said.

"There are no easy opponents in Paralympics. I sit in the first place in the Asian ranking but I know that how difficult is it to win a medal in the Paralympics," he added.

Iran will partake at Tokyo 2020 with 62 athletes in 10 sports.

It will be the nation's smallest team since sending 40 to Sydney 2000. ▶ **Page 3**

## Iranian artist says teahouse paintings appeal to foreign tourists

TEHRAN - Iranian artist Narges Eshqi has said that foreign tourists find Iranian teahouse paintings more appealing than do her compatriots.

As one of the few Iranian artists who have adopted this style, she showcased her latest paintings at Tehran's Phi Café in an exhibition, which wrapped up on Sunday.

"Due to the unsteady place this style of painting has in the country and consequently, the lack of public access to the artworks created in this style, foreign tourists, collectors and lovers of this style are the target audience for Iranian teahouse paintings," she said in a statement published on Sunday.

Eshqi said that teahouse painters' unidimensional views have caused a disregard of ▶ **Page 8**



## Japan FM Moteqi holds talks with Zarif in Tehran

TEHRAN - Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi held talks with outgoing Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Sunday morning in Tehran.

The two chief diplomats held talks on bilateral ties as well as regional and international issues.

During his two-day visit to Tehran, the Japanese foreign minister also plans to ▶ **Page 2**

## Iran museum of salt mummies to be equipped with new air conditioner system

TEHRAN - A new air conditioner system will be installed at Zolfaqari Archaeological Museum, which is globally famed for being home to several magnificent ancient salt mummies and their belongings.

The installation of a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) system is to commence soon based on a memorandum of understanding that Zanjan province's cultural heritage and tourism directorate has signed with the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, and the Archaeological Museum Frankfurt, provincial tourism chief Amir Arjmand said on Saturday.

"We will no longer worry about keeping and protecting salt men in a stable and ideal condition due to the usage of a central control system and the presence of multiple sensors inside showcases and rooms," the official explained, "CHTN reported."

"The necessary credit for the installation of the VRF system in the museum is one billion toman, the entire cost of which will be paid by the University of Bochum," he added.

have a negative test result, he stated.

### PCR tests for over 59,000 passengers at border points

PCR tests have been performed on 59,510 passengers at the country's official borders based on a plan launched on March 10 to rapidly identify suspected cases of coronavirus.

Some 544,182 passengers have so far been screened for coronavirus by thermal tests at the

country's official borders, Mehdi Valipour, head of Relief and Rescue Organization affiliated to the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), has stated.

During the aforesaid period, IRCS forces have conducted 78,186 rapid tests, he said, ISNA reported on Saturday.

He went on to lament that some 199 individuals, who tested positive, have so far been temporarily quarantined. ▶ **Page 7**

## Iran museum of salt mummies to be

## equipped with new air conditioner system

Last year, a team of experts from the two countries started a project for purifying, cleansing, and restoring garments and personal belongings of the mummies which were first found in the salt mine in 1993. Furthermore, a joint exhibition of the salt men named "death in salt" was held in Iran and Germany.

What was a catastrophe for the ancient miners has become a sensation for science. Sporting a long white beard, iron knives, and a single gold earring, the first salt mummy was discovered in 1993. He is estimated to be trapped in the mine in ca. 300 CE. In 2004 another mummy was discovered only 50 feet away, followed by another in 2005 and a "teenage" boy mummy later that year.

In 1993, miners in the Douzlakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages in Zanjan province, accidentally came across a mummified head. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. ▶ **Page 6**



## Raisi emphasizes on importing vaccines as soon as possible

TEHRAN — Speaking Saturday evening at the meeting of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi said that the process of importing vaccines must not be delayed.

In another part of his speech, the President thanked the public, guilds, mourning groups and law enforcement forces for implementing the recent decision of National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, saying, "According to the report of the law enforcement forces and the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, 70% to 80% of this plan was successful."

"In enforcing these restrictions and lockdowns, care must be taken that people's businesses do not get into trouble," Raisi said.

Referring to the report of the governor of Fars province on the obstacles in the way of importing vaccines, the president emphasized that the importation of vaccines should not be delayed and every opportunity should be used to import vaccines.

"The possibility of importing vaccines by the private sector within the standards of the Ministry of Health should be facilitated," he underlined.

The President stressed the need to vaccinate prisoners, saying, "For some prisoners who did

not get vaccinated, action should be taken sooner to accelerate the vaccination process, while the Attorney General should pursue the matter if prisoners can use their leave as much as possible."

Emphasizing the importance of quarantine at the borders, especially the eastern borders of the country, Raisi said, "Governors of border provinces should take the necessary measures in this regard immediately to create better management and superiority in border control."

Appreciating the efforts of all provinces, especially the universities of medical sciences and the medical staff, Raisi said that he hopes that different measures will be taken in the production and import of vaccines, as well as speeding up vaccination so that people's lives return to normal.

Emphasizing that no delay in the way of importing of valid vaccines is acceptable, Raisi added, "Possible problems that have led to a slowdown in the import of vaccines should be investigated and if there is a problem, it should be resolved immediately."

Referring to the announcement of the readiness of the Ministry of Roads, the president emphasized, "The importation of vaccines should be done continuously without transportation restrictions."

### Vaccines must be imported as soon as possible

## Amir Abdollahian: I will use all my effort to make sanctions ineffective

TEHRAN — The Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has announced its agreement with the nomination of Hossein Amir Abdollahian as foreign minister, the committee spokesman said on Sunday.

Mahmoud Abbas-Zadeh Meshkini expressed hope that Amir Abdollahian would garner a high number of confidence votes in the parliament to be endorsed as foreign minister.

Amir Abdollahian was deputy foreign minister for Arab and North African affairs when Ali Akbar Salehi was foreign minister. He also held the post in the first three years of Mohammad Javad Zarif who took the helm at the Foreign Ministry in 2013. He also served as Iran's ambassador to Bahrain.

Amir Abdolla, 57, has a bachelor degree in diplomatic relations from the faculty of the Foreign Ministry, master's and PhD degrees in international relations from the University of Tehran. He speaks Arabic and English.

Reportedly, he has no affiliation to reformist and principlist camps in and his focus is on national interests. Reportedly, he has also held talks with former EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and former British foreign secretary Philip Hammond after the British embassy was reopened in Tehran in August 2015.

He also served as foreign policy advisor to former parliament speaker Ali Larijani and the current speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf.

In the parliamentary session on Sunday a number of lawmakers talked in favor and against Amir Abdollahian.

Seyyed Salam Zaker, the representative of Urmia in the parliament, said why Amir Abdollahian have not paid attention to border areas during these years. The MP also asked why the foreign minister nominee has not strengthened parliamentary associations with neighboring countries during the years that he served as foreign policy advisor to parliament speakers and has not sought this demand from the government.

He also said the proposed foreign minister has not taken steps for "economic diplomacy".

MP Ali Asghar Anabestani from Sab-



zvar said Amir Abdollahian should precisely elaborate on his "balanced policy" slogan in foreign policy areas and explain how he wants to realize the goals through such as policy in the next four years.

MP Hassan Mohammad Yari from Talesh and Rezvanshahr said it is necessary that the proposed foreign minister express his views about the Mena stampede incident and the U.S. terrorist act in assassinating Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani and do the necessary diplomatic moves in connection with these two mishaps.

MP Mohsen Alizadeh from Sepidan favored the nomination of Amir Abdollahian as foreign minister and said it is expected that he will observe "revolutionary stance" in appointing his right-hand men.

MP Abbas Golrou from Semnan also defended the nominee for foreign minister, saying Amir Abdollahian has the competence to take leadership at the Foreign Ministry.

MP Abolfazl Amoui from Tehran said Amir Abdollahian has the competence to reform the Foreign Ministry.

"The proposed choice for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the aptitude to implement ideas (in foreign policy areas) and is capable of establishing coordination among all different political, security, military and diplomatic perspectives."

Amoui, who sits on the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said pursuing efforts to implement the 25-year partnership between Iran and China, following strategic talks between Iran and Russia, joining the Eurasian

### We will never leave logical negotiating team

Economic Union and the Shanghai Economic Cooperation Organization (SCO) and more importantly the fate of the 2015 nuclear deal and continuation of nuclear talks prove that a person should take the driver's seat at the ministry that can handle all these issues. He said add these things developments in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iraq along with Iran's talks with other countries.

**I will use all my effort to make sanctions ineffective**

Elaborating on his foreign policy priorities, the proposed foreign minister said he will use all his efforts to neutralize economic sanctions and cancel them.

"I will not link the Foreign Ministry to Barjam (JCPOA) and will use all efforts to neutralize sanctions along with cancellation of sanctions," he explained.

The career diplomat also said, "We will never leave logical negotiating table that is afforded by power and wisdom. However, we will not link the Foreign Ministry to Barjam."

He said all countries give priority to "national interests" and "national power" and "we also don't not show oblivion to these issues by making ourselves committed to all values, Islamic principles and relying on our rich Iranian culture."

He added, "We believe that through dignified diplomacy and capacities we can realize the slogan of 'we can' and achieve maximum rights and protect national interests in foreign policy."

**"Asia-centered foreign policy"**

From page 1 ► Writing an article in the official IRNA news agency, Moteqi said, "If this support helps strengthen the relations and cooperation between Japan and Iran, it will make me happy."

**"Delay in unfreezing Iranian assets in Japan unjustified"**

At the meeting, Raisi also stressed the importance of releasing Iran's frozen assets in Japan, noting, "The delay in the release of Iranian assets in Japanese banks cannot be justified."

Raisi went on to censure the illegal U.S. sanctions against Iran.

"With what justification should the U.S. sanctions against the Iranian nation continue?"

Though U.S. President Joe Biden heavily criticized Trump for leaving the JCPOA and acknowledged that the "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran has failed to derail Iran's nuclear program, his administration has so far refused to lift illegal sanctions on Iran despite six rounds of talks, which started in April.

**Raisi praises Japan's efforts to stabilize Afghanistan**

In another part of the conversation, Raisi referred to the recent developments in Afghanistan and welcomed the efforts by Japan and other countries in the region to help establish peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region as a whole.

On August 15, the Taliban surprisingly and in a lightening way took over the capital Kabul and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country.

Now the country is in a state of chaos and anxiety as the people are worried what policy the Taliban will follow despite a declara-



## Raisi says Iran not opposed to nuclear talks

tion of amnesty and ceasefire.

**Afghans must decide their own destiny**

The new Iranian president also said it is the Afghans themselves who should decide about their country.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always supported peace and stability in Afghanistan; of course, we believe that in Afghanistan, Afghans must decide for their fate," Raisi remarked.

"The presence of Americans in the region, including Afghanistan,

not only has not brought security to the country, but has posed threats, and today, after 20 years, Americans are admitting that

their presence in Afghanistan was wrong," he stated.

He added, "We will undoubtedly see this admission in the near future in the case of other countries in the

region."

**"Maritime security will meet interests of all"**

Raisi also said security in regional and international waters

### Afghans must decide their own destiny

## Japan FM Motegi holds talks with Zarif in Tehran

From page 1 ► hold talks with a number of other Iranian officials including President Ebrahim Raisi and Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a former foreign minister who is nominated to succeed Zarif in the new Iranian administration.

Immediately after his meeting with Moteqi, Zarif tweeted he is "pleased to host Japanese FM Motegi in Tehran on Sunday."

Zarif also said he discussed with Moteqi how to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as well as the "catastrophic" situation created by the United States in Afghanistan.

"In what is probably my last meeting with a counterpart as Iran's foreign minister, we discussed strengthening bilateral relations, how to resuscitate the JCPOA and the catastrophic US-engineered situation in Afghanistan," Zarif wrote.

**"Open a new chapter"**

Earlier, the Iranian embassy in Japan had said that the Japanese foreign minister's visit to Tehran in the near future, on the eve of the formation of a new government, could open a new chapter for deepening bilateral relations, and close consultations between the two countries on important regional and international issues.

Ahead of his visit, Moteqi wrote an opinion piece for Iran's state news agency, IRNA, explaining the importance of the visit. "Close communication between the two governments is also necessary to strengthen bilateral relations. To this end, I decided to travel to Iran to exchange views at the earliest opportunity with the government of Mr. Raisi, who has recently taken office," he wrote.

"This is the first time in about two years that the Japanese foreign minister is visiting Iran, and in addition, he will be the first high-ranking foreign official from a developed Asian country to hold face-to-face talks with the new Iranian government. I look forward to having frank consultation to deepen the long-standing friendly relations between the two countries," Moteqi added.

The Japanese foreign minister noted, "In late July, Japan donated a total of about 2.9 million doses of Japanese-made vaccine to Iran as part of its support to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. I personally supported this decision due to the long-standing friendly



relations between Japan and Iran. This is the largest donation of vaccine by Japan abroad and the fastest vaccine donation under COVAX. If this support helps strengthen the relations and cooperation between Japan and Iran, it will make me happy."

"For Japan, which imports about 90 percent of its crude oil from the Middle East [West Asia], peace and stability in the Middle East are crucial. Stable oil supplies from the Middle East are also essential for the stability and growth of the global economy, including Japan. There is no doubt that in this regard, Iran's role as a major country in the Middle East is very important," he continued.

Moteqi concluded, "Having long-standing friendly relations with Iran, Japan will continue its diplomatic and active efforts to defuse and stabilize the situation in the Middle East, as well as to strengthen bilateral relations between Japan and Iran."

He had reiterated this position in an earlier interview with the Saudi daily newspaper, Asharq Al Awsat, underlining that he would conduct frank discussions with the region's countries about the situation in West Asia.

"Japan is in a position where it can openly talk with Iran through its long-standing and traditional friendship with Iran," he told the Saudi newspaper.

He also pointed to Japan's continued interaction with Iran. "I have had six direct conversations with the Iranian foreign minister since I took office," Moteqi noted.

## IRGC chief commander: We import vaccines only from countries whose products are sure to be safe

Iran will only import coronavirus vaccines from countries whose products are certain to be safe, or will use those vaccines it produces inside the country, says the chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Major General Hossein Salami made the remarks at a meeting on the situation of the coronavirus pandemic in the south-eastern province of Kerman on Sunday.

"Due to absolute distrust, we cannot trust the enemies and allow them to inject the vaccine solution into the bodies of our people, because we know that in the enemy's strategy, paralyzing the Iranian people is a definite goal," Salami said, referring to the economic sanctions as the first plot to paralyze the Iranian nation.

"Using biological weapons is an integral part of the enemy's military approach. Can

the enemy be allowed to inject our people with its vaccine solution, which we do not know what is it?" he asked.

The IRGC chief said the ongoing propaganda surrounding the coronavirus vaccine, which aims to accuse Iran of refraining from importing foreign vaccines, is part of the enemy's psychological operation, "because they want to show that we are dependent, humiliated and in need of the enemy."

"They are asking why they [Iranians] do not import vaccines from America. [They ignore the fact that] even now, Americans do not allow us to unfreeze our money to buy vaccines. How are they going to justify this contradiction? We are working under these conditions," Major General Salami said.

"Our country is different from all other



countries in the world, because while we are facing this mysterious and complex

global disease ... at the same time, we are also facing the most severe and inten-

sive global sanctions. We cannot use this nation's money, which has been frozen in other countries' banks by the US, to buy medicine, vaccine, and [other] pharmaceutical and medical articles," General Salami remarked.

Iran has been fighting back against one of the deadliest COVID-19 outbreaks in the world, with the harsh unilateral sanctions put in place by the US significantly hampering the country's efforts to contain the spread of the virus.

The sanctions were imposed by the administration of former President Donald Trump under a "maximum pressure" campaign and have been maintained by the current administration of Joe Biden, which has refused to soften the bans to ease pandemic-related hardship on Iranians.

Iranian officials have occasionally described the sanctions as "economic terrorism" and "medical terrorism" over their deadly impact on ordinary people.

As early as March 2020, when Iran was fighting its first COVID-19 wave, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif urged the international community to play its real role to stop the United States' medical terrorism against Iran.

"The global community must come to its senses and help Iran in order to stop the economic, medical and drug terrorism [by the US]," Zarif wrote in an op-ed published by Russian business newspaper Kommersant on March 30, 2020.

So far, 102,038 people have lost their lives in Iran due to the coronavirus, with 684 deaths registered in the last 24 hours.

(Source: Press TV)



# Iran lends Lebanon a helping hand amid severe fuel crisis

TEHRAN – While many observers in Lebanon and beyond were projecting a total collapse of order in the Mediterranean Arab country, Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah opened a new pathway for Lebanon to break free from a U.S.-led economic straitjacket.

Nasrallah dropped a bombshell last week when he announced that an oil tanker carrying Iranian fuel oil was bound for Lebanon. Addressing a commemorative ceremony marking the Day of Ashura on Thursday, Hezbollah's chief announced that the first of several ships loaded with fuel oil would sail from Iran to Lebanon within hours, warning the United States and Israel against targeting it.

“Our first ship has completed all arrangements and will sail within hours from Iran to Lebanon with the blessing of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him),” he said, noting, “This ship will be followed by other ships, but we gave priority to diesel oil on the first ship because it is a top priority and is linked to people's lives.”

In a stark warning to Washington and Tel Aviv, which oppose any fuel trade between Tehran and Beirut, Nasrallah declared that the ship will be considered as a Lebanese property the moment it leaves Iran and that any aggression against it would be seen as an aggression against Lebanon. “God willing, this ship and others will arrive

safely, we don't want confrontation with anyone. We are only after helping our people... We reject to be humiliated in any military, political or economic war. We refuse the humiliation of our people, let no one dare to challenge us,” he asserted.

The announcement sent the U.S. ambassador to Lebanon scrambling to find a way to prevent Lebanon from importing fuel from Iran. The ambassador, Dorothy Shea, rushed to speak with Lebanese President Michel Aoun hours after Nasrallah's announcement.

“President Aoun received a phone call from the U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon, Dorothy Shea, informing him of the U.S. administration's decision to help Lebanon import electricity from Jordan through Syria through Egyptian gas,” the Lebanese presidency said on Twitter. It also quoted Shea as saying that “transfer of Egyptian gas will be facilitated through Jordan and Syria to northern Lebanon.”

Shea also told Aoun that negotiations are underway with the World Bank to secure financing for the cost of Egyptian gas, the repair and strengthening of electricity transmission lines, and the required maintenance of gas pipelines.

The U.S. ambassador's conversation marked the return of her anti-Hezbollah media activism. During the Trump administration, Shea had launched a propaganda campaign



against Hezbollah in parallel with the Trump White House's tightening of the noose on Hezbollah.

If Lebanon is now in an economic tailspin, it's largely because of the U.S. continued efforts to prevent any economic cooperation with Beirut under the pretext of combating Hezbollah's influence. U.S. Arab allies in the region, who once helped Lebanon financially, have refrained from providing any aid to the religiously diverse Arab country.

Then there was the Iranian helping

hand. Iran has always offered to help the Lebanese people. But political factionalism and malign foreign influence in Beirut have stood in the way of Iranian help.

Nasrallah announced the import of Iranian fuel only after the fuel crisis in Lebanon reached new heights with almost all Western countries and their Arab allies refusing to alleviate the crisis.

And when Hezbollah declared the start of the import of Iranian fuel, Shea saw an opportunity to exploit the situation. First, Lebanese politicians and media outlets close to the West started to spread speculations about possible American penalties being leveled against Lebanon for importing fuel from a country under U.S. sanctions that is Iran. Second, Shea presented the old idea of importing gas and electricity from Egypt through Jordan and Syria, a project that is likely to make Lebanon chose between integration into a regional energy network that includes Israel and facing a total economic collapse.

Nasrallah has offered a third way that would protect Lebanon's sovereignty and improve the lives of its people. Iran does not dictate any terms whatsoever on the Lebanese and that they can buy anything from Iran without needing to sacrifice their interests on the altar of the American promise of help.

## SPORTS

### Iranian thrower Pakbaz aims medal at Paralympics

From Page 1 ▶ Since then, Iran sent 89 athletes to Athens 2004, 72 to Beijing 2008, 79 to London 2012 and 110 to Rio 2016.

Iran finished 15th in the medal table in 2016 with 24 medals after winning eight golds, nine silvers and seven bronzes.

About 4,400 competitors from more than 160 countries were set to compete at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics before it was delayed by a year.

### Iran's women's football team to play Uzbekistan

TEHRAN — Iran's women's football team will play two friendly matches with Uzbekistan.

Iran will meet Uzbekistan in Tashkent on Monday and face the team three days later.

Iran's women's football team prepare for the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualification.

They are scheduled to meet Bangladesh and Jordan on Sept. 22 and 25.

The competition will be the qualification tournament for the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup.

A total of 12 teams will qualify to play in the final tournament in India. The hosts and the top three teams of the previous tournament in 2018 will qualify automatically, while the other eight teams will be decided by qualification, with the matches scheduled to be played from Sept. 13 to 25 in centralized venues.

This tournament will also serve as the first stage of Asian qualification for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, where five teams from the Women's Asian Cup qualify directly for the World Cup (plus co-hosts Australia), and two teams qualify for a 10-team playoff tournament.

### IPL: Esteghlal complete three new signings

TEHRAN — Esteghlal football club have completed three new signings for the upcoming season of Iran Professional League (IPL).

The Blues have signed Saipa rising star Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh. The 21-year-old midfielder, who had been a member of Iran U17 football team, has joined Esteghlal on a two year contract.

Esteghlal, headed by Farhad Majidi, have also signed Foolad midfielder Zobeir Niknafs on a two-year deal.

Niknafs has previously played for Sanat Naft and Zob Ahan.

And finally, the Tehran based football team have completed the signing of Foolad defender Aref Aghasi on a two-year contract. Esteghlal look to bring an end to their nine-year title drought.

### Mehdi Torabi shortlisted for best 2021 ACL Group Stage midfielder

TEHRAN – Persepolis' Mehdi Torabi has been shortlisted for the best midfielder in the 2021 AFC Champions League group stage.

There are the 10 players in contention for their places in the center of the park.

It's fair to say that Torabi was the preeminent playmaker in the 2021 AFC Champions League Group Stage with the Persepolis star laying on more assists and creating more chances than any other player in the competition so far.

As well as playing provider, Torabi was also among the goals himself, netting a pair of penalties in the Iranian side's pair of wins against India's Goa.

While Torabi did not make as many passes as some of the other nominees, his use of the ball was far more direct with 159 of his passes ending in the final third – a tally far higher than the other nine candidates.

Modou Barrow (Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors), Kento Tachibanada (Kawasaki Frontale), Mateus (Nagoya Grampus), Valeri Qazaishvili (Ulsan Hyundai), Yasuto Wakizaki (Kawasaki Frontale), An Yong-woo (Daegu FC), Yoon Bit-garam (Ulsan Hyundai), Abdullah Otayf (Al Hilal) and Riki Harakawa (Cerezo Osaka) have been also nominated for the accolade.

### Greco-Roman wrestling coach Bana extends deal

TEHRAN – Greco-Roman wrestling team head coach will remain as Iran coach until 2022 Asian Games.

Under his leadership, Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers won a gold and a bronze medal in the 2020 Olympic Games. Mohammadreza Geraei seized a gold medal at the 67kg and Mohammadhadi Saravi won a bronze medal at the 97kg category.

Bana, 63, will also lead Iran at the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China.

### Syria to face Algeria in friendly

TEHRAN – Syria football team will face Algeria in a friendly match as part of preparation for the 2020 World Cup qualification Round 3.

The date of the match has not been yet announced.

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

The west Asian team will play Iran on Sept. 2 and play the UAE five days later in Emirates.

### Vahid Amiri extends contract with Persepolis

TEHRAN - Persepolis football team midfielder Vahid Amiri penned a three-year extension with the club.

The 33-year-old player has played a key role in the team's success over the past years, Tasnim reported.

“I want to help Persepolis continue its success. We also want to win the AFC Champions League for the first time because our fans deserve to win the title,” Amiri said.

Amiri is also a member of Iran national football team and can help Iran qualify for the 2022 World Cup finals.

### Iran captain Haji Safi misses Syria, Iraq matches

TEHRAN – Iran national football team captain Ehsan Haji Safi will be absent in the match against Syria and Iraq in the 2022 World Cup qualification Round 3.

He has been sidelined for three weeks after suffering a thigh injury

Iran national football team will play Syria on Sept. 2 and meet Iraq five days later at the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification Round 3.

## Tehran denies Iranian national killed in Yemen

TEHRAN — Iran has dismissed remarks by a member of the resigned government of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi claiming that an Iranian national has been killed in Yemen, calling it “basically false.”

In a statement on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said there is no Iranian military advisor in Yemen to be killed by the invaders' bombardments.

The statement came after Moammar Al Eryani, minister of information in the resigned government of Hadi, claimed that an Iranian military expert named Haidar Sirjan along with nine others, was killed during an airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition forces in Serwah, Marib. The alleged killing of the Iranian expert, Al Eryani claimed, “confirms [the] level of Iran involvement & destabilizing role to Yemen security & stability.”

He alleged on Twitter that Sirjan “is specialized in infantry & mountain infantry, & in preparing tactical combat plans served on the West Coast fronts until June 5, 2021, and on June 7 he was dispatched to Marib fronts to replace the deceased Mustafa Al-Gharawi of Lebanese Hezbollah.”

Al Eryani also accused Iran of sending “hundreds” of military experts to Yemen, leading military operations on the ground, and smuggling various types of weapons. He also called on the international community to take a “firm stand” against Iran.

Khatibzadeh strongly rejected these accusations. “Such baseless remarks will not change the reality on the ground in Yemen about the cowardly attacks of the self-proclaimed coalition against the oppressed people of Yemen and their determination to face the aggression,” he noted.

The spokesman expressed regret that those individuals who consider themselves Yemenis are now encouraging and backing the aggressors in their oppression caused by the blockade and war against the people of their own country.

Iran has long called on Saudi Arabia to end its aggression against Yemen and let the Yemenis determine their future. But Saudi Arabia paid no attention to Iran's calls. And it is still pursuing a military solution to the Yemen crisis, according to previous remarks by Khatibzadeh.

## Japan FM meets Iran's National Security Council secretary

TEHRAN — Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi held a meeting with top Iranian security official Ali Shamkhani on Sunday during a two-day visit to Iran that included several meetings with other high-ranking Iranian officials.

The meeting with the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) came on the heels of another meeting with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif.

As of this writing, no details have been released about the issues discussed by Shamkhani and Motegi. But Japanese media outlets have reported that Motegi's trip could serve as an opportunity for Japan to resume its mediation efforts between Iran and the United States.

The Japanese foreign minister also met with Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi.

Zarif said confirmed that the Japanese foreign minister's visit had something to do with the tattered Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Expressing satisfaction at receiving Motegi, Zarif said on Twitter, “In what is probably my last meeting with a counterpart as Iran's foreign minister, we discussed strengthening bilateral relations, how to resuscitate the JCPOA and the catastrophic US-engineered situation in Afghanistan.”

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh had announced that the Japanese foreign minister will pay a two-day visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran at the invitation of Zarif.

In the current month Khatibzadeh expressed regret that Saudi Arabia still pursues a military solution to the Yemen crisis, saying that this approach will result in nothing other than death and destruction.

Khatibzadeh urged Riyadh to abandon the military solution and instead seek political ways to put an end to the devastating war in Yemen.

Speaking at a weekly press briefing, the spokesman said, “It is unfortunate that the Saudi government is still looking for a military solution for Yemen although it knows and it has understood after a long time that war has no other result than killing innocent and civilian people and harming the nations of the region and the security of the region.”

He added, “The sooner the Saudi government shows its commitment to political solutions and ends this devastating war, the better for both this country and the region, and the peace and security of the region.”

Responding to a question about the talks with Saudi Arabia and their latest status and whether Riyadh is waiting for the formation of a new government in Iran, he said, “Talks with Saudi Arabia have been held in several rounds on bilateral, regional and international issues and important questions for both sides. Important questions were brought up for discussion for both sides.”

“We, in Iran, think that in a way based on dialogue and settlement of issues between us, we can reach a common view on some issues. Of course, differences between the two countries, as the case with many other countries, do not need to be resolved in one place and may never be resolved,” Khatibzadeh pointed out.

He added, “But we think that if Saudi Arabia pays due attention to the message of the Islamic Republic of Iran that our region is a region that only regional arrangements between the countries of the region can bring it to a comprehensive and lasting solution, we

think these talks will arrive at a good point.”

The spokesman also voiced Iran's readiness to cooperate with the new UN envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg.

“As the Islamic Republic of Iran, we have had extensive cooperation with the United Nations, and we will certainly continue to work closely with the UN Special Representative, who is a well-known figure to us,” Khatibzadeh said.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has named Swedish diplomat Hans Grundberg as his new Yemen envoy after a delay of several weeks as China considered whether to approve the appointment, which needed the consensus of the Security Council.

The 15-member council approved Grundberg as a replacement for Martin Griffiths, who became the UN aid chief after trying to mediate an end to the conflict in Yemen for the past three years, according to an Al Jazeera report.

Khatibzadeh expressed hope that the new UN envoy would be able to put an end to the Yemen war in line with international law, previous agreements, and honoring the Yemeni people's rights.

“We hope that the new envoy will be able to end this devastating war within the framework of international law and previous agreements and respect for the rights of the Yemeni people, and we will certainly do our best to help the new envoy,” Khatibzadeh noted.

He added, “Of course, it is natural that the change of envoy will not be fruitful in itself unless it is accompanied by a change of approach in the countries that are currently at war with the Yemeni people, whether countries that are directly at war with the Yemeni people or countries such as Britain, which exploit this situation and continue to sell their weapons to the aggressor countries.”

major country in the Middle East is very important,” he stressed.

The Japanese foreign minister's visit to Iran is part of a regional tour that also includes Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Iran, and Qatar. The tour started on August 15 and concludes on August 24.

In his August 10 presser, Motegi elaborated on the agenda of his tour, saying that “peace and stability in the Middle East [West Asia] region are extremely important for the international community, including Japan.”

He added, “Through this visit, I would like to emphasize again Japan's commitment to the Middle East, as we have contributed to the peace and prosperity of the Middle East region and built robust relations with the region over many years. I would also like to confirm the importance of the free and open international order based on the rule of law.”

Pointing to the inauguration of a new government in Iran, Motegi said, “I wish to hold candid discussions on regional affairs and plans to seek for a close collaboration towards regional stability.”

On his visit to Iran, the top Japanese diplomat noted, “Japan has consistently supported the JCPOA. I will call on Iran to return to the JCPOA. I believe that a dialogue between Iran and the United States is extremely important, even if it is indirect consultation. Iran is a major power in the region. I believe that the stability in Iran will truly lead to stability throughout the whole region. The exact same thing can be said for maritime traffic. I wish to convey that we would like to see Iran contribute to regional stability as a major power, and that regional stability will lead to the development of Iran. The new Raisi administration has just been inaugurated, and the Iranian foreign minister has just assumed his position. I believe that my visit will take place at a good time when Iran is trying to come up with various foreign policies.”

”Such baseless remarks will not change the reality on the ground in Yemen.”

“I wish to hold candid discussions on regional affairs and plans to seek for a close collaboration towards regional stability.”

two countries,” Motegi added.

“For Japan, which imports about 90 percent of its crude oil from the Middle East [West Asia], peace and stability in the Middle East are crucial. Stable oil supplies from the Middle East are also essential for the stability and growth of the global economy, including Japan. There is no doubt that in this regard, Iran's role as a



## Agricultural export up 9% in 4 months on year



From page 1 ► The IRICA head has put Iran's four-month non-oil export at 38.3 million tons valued at \$14.3 billion, with a 65-percent rise in value and a 27-percent growth in weight.

He has mentioned liquefied gas, polyethylene, iron semi-finished products, methanol, gasoline, iron and steel ingots, steel products, iron rods, liquid propane, bitumen, and copper cathode as the main exported

products in the said time span.

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

## Energy minister candidate plans to boost electricity output by 40GW in 4 years

TEHRAN – President Raisi's proposed Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian plans to boost the country's power generation capacity by 35-40 gigawatts (GW) over the next four years, the deputy head of the Iranian Parliament's Energy Committee told IRNA on Sunday.

"The proposed energy minister has developed a four-year plan for the two major challenges of the ministry (which are water and electricity supply), in line with which between 35,000 and 40,000 megawatts can be added to the country's electricity output," Ahmad Moradi said.

Moradi noted that Mehrabian's proposed program is very good, comprehensive and acceptable, and the promises made can be easily fulfilled over a four-year period.

The official noted that considering the candidate minister's strong background in the field of industry and mining, it can be predicted that Mehrabian can take positive measures in the Energy Ministry as well, especially in the field of electricity supply.

"The Ministry of Energy faces two serious challenges in the water and electricity sector, and the future minister must act quickly to implement his programs in order to fulfill the promises made," Moradi stressed.

"In a meeting with the Parliament's Energy



Committee, the proposed energy minister suggested that industries have their own electricity supply and this can be very effective in managing electricity distribution," the official added.

Ali Akbar Mehrabian was previously the minister of industries and mines from 2007 to 2011.

President Ebrahim Raisi released the names of his proposed cabinet ministers to the Majlis (Parliament) on August 11.

Now the MPs have to study the qualification of the proposed ministers in related parliamentary committees. After assessing their competence, the MPs will begin talks in favor or against the nominated ministers in an open session of the parliament in two consecutive days for a vote of confidence.

## 207 greenhouses active in West Azarbaijan province



TEHRAN – As announced by a provincial official, 207 greenhouses are active in West Azarbaijan province in north-west of Iran.

Jafar Vahdat, the acting deputy head of the province's Agriculture Department, said that these units are active in 60 hectares of land.

The official said that besides cultivating agricultural products, some medical herbs are also cultivated in these greenhouses.

Earlier this month, an official with Agriculture Ministry announced that the ministry plans to construct 3,052 hectares of new greenhouses in 10 different provinces across the country in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

Darioush Salempour, the

director of the Agriculture Ministry's Greenhouse Development Program, said these greenhouses will be built in provinces that are suitable in terms of climate, infrastructure, proximity to target markets, and access to manpower such as Sistan-Baluchestan, Hormozgan, Kerman, Bushehr, Fars, Isfahan, Khorasan Razavi, Tehran, East Azerbaijan, and Ardebil.

According to Salempour, over 30 trillion rials of facilities (about \$714 million) was paid for the construction of greenhouses across the country in the previous Iranian calendar year.

He stated that last year 45 percent of the greenhouses constructed in the country were funded by private sector investors, adding that this

year the National Development Fund (NDF) and the country's banking system will provide low-interest facilities to applicants in low-income regions for the construction of greenhouses.

The official also mentioned the ministry's plans for the modernization and renovation of the country's traditional and old greenhouses, saying: "Our plan in the 10-year horizon is to improve and renovate more than 5,000 traditional, wooden and worn-out greenhouses across the country."

"We have planned to renovate about 650 to 700 hectares of traditional and worn-out greenhouses each year," he added.

The Agriculture Ministry's Greenhouse Development Program is one of the priority projects of the mentioned ministry which aims at increasing productivity, efficiency, and water consumption management in the agriculture sector; the program was approved in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (ended on March 21, 2017) under the framework of the National Resilient Economy Plan.

The development of the country's agricultural parks and greenhouses not only is going to create new job opportunities but also increases the country's non-oil exports and helps to preserve the environment and the national water and soil resources.

# Numerous development projects to be inaugurated in 'Government Week'

TEHRAN – On the occasion of the Government Week (August 24-30), several development projects in different sectors including water, agriculture, infrastructure and electricity are set to go operational across Iran.

According to IRNA, 55 electricity projects valued at 2,057 trillion rials (about \$48.9 million) are among the projects scheduled by the Energy Ministry to be inaugurated in Semnan Province in the mentioned week.

The said projects include construction of a 63 kV line in Eyvanekey industrial park, seven electricity network optimization projects, and execution of fiber optic lines in power stations.

As reported, the projects will go operational in Garmsar, Miami, Shahroud, Semnan and Sorkheh cit-

ies.

Meanwhile, 49 electricity projects worth 415.134 billion rials (about \$9.8 million) will also be put into operation in Yazd Province during the Government Week.

The mentioned projects will be inaugurated in a variety of areas including development and construction of networks in urban and rural areas, optimization of networks in rural and urban areas and providing lighting for cities and villages.

In another report, Mehr News Agency quoted the Head of Golestan Province's Regional Water Authority as saying that 36 water



projects with a total investment of 140.9 billion rials (over \$3.3 million) are set to go operational during the said week.

Mohsen Hosseini noted that the mentioned projects are mainly rivers engineering and water supply projects.

Seven agriculture projects worth 208 billion rials (about \$4.9 million) are also going to be inaugurated in Amol city, Mazandaran Province to celebrate the mentioned week.

According to the Head of Amol City Agriculture Department Hossein Es-lami, the projects include equipping,

renovation and integration of paddy fields, three greenhouse projects, a project to renovate a rice mill, equipping and electrifying agricultural wells and implementing a new irrigation system.

Also, in Lorestan Province, 39 agricultural projects worth 1.07 trillion rials (about \$25.6 million) are set to go operational in the Government Week.

According to the Head of Lorestan Agriculture Department Esfandiar Hosseini Moqadam, 21 projects in the field of horticulture, one project in fisheries, two projects in the field of livestock, three projects in the field of conversion and food industries, and four projects in nomadic areas are among the projects that will be inaugurated in this province.

## Smart irrigation systems to be implemented in 5,000 hectares of farmlands

TEHRAN – Following the Iranian Agriculture Ministry's smart irrigation systems development program, the ministry plans to equip 5,000 hectares of farmlands with smart irrigation systems in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), the ministry's project manager for the mentioned program said.

According to Fariborz Abbasi, this pilot project will be implemented in various provinces such as Golestan, Ardebil, Qazvin, Fars, and Khorasan Razavi if the necessary funding is provided, IRIB reported on Sunday.

Abbasi noted that smartening of irrigation systems will increase their efficiency, improve their performance, and increases their productivity.

He further mentioned the Agriculture Ministry's plans for indigenizing the knowledge for the manufacturing and installation of smart irrigation systems, saying: "In this regard, we intend to implement model projects to identify suitable technologies for



the new irrigation systems in different regions according to climatic and social conditions and offer them to farmers and private companies."

"With the smartening of modern irrigation systems, human intervention in the operation of the system is reduced and carried out by tools, sensors, and equipment inside the field," Abbasi explained.

He said that the smartening of new irrigation

systems has been currently implemented by some farmers, adding that the farmers have implemented it considering the benefits of intelligent irrigation systems.

Considering the importance of water consumption management in the agricultural sector, the Iranian Agriculture Ministry has been implementing a plan for installing modern irrigation systems in the country's farmlands over the past few years and the new program for smartening these systems will increase their efficiency to a great extent.

Over the past three years, each year, an average of 150,000 hectares of farmlands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems, according to the ministry data.

Back in May 2020, outgoing Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said Energy Ministry has implemented 301,000 hectares of irrigation and drainage networks since 2017.

## Iran could face a \$71b budget deficit in current fiscal year: MP

TEHRAN – Head of the Iranian Parliament's Economic Committee has said the country could face up to three quadrillion rials (about \$71.4 billion) of budget deficit in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 21, 2022), Mehr News Agency reported on Sunday.

"There is a concern that the budget deficit at the end of the year reaches 250,000 to 300,000 billion tomans (2.5-3 quadrillion rials) and we should think of arrangements to manage this deficit," Mohammadreza Pour-Ebrahimi said in an interview with state TV.

The official noted that the government's expected incomes in taxes and treasury bonds have been almost completely realized, however the realization of the target incomes in the customs (35 percent), oil sales (15 percent) and revenues from state-owned companies are not acceptable.

Stating that the previous government neglected to use the opportunity to sell petroleum products, Pour-Ebrahimi said: "It is interesting

for people to know that our oil exports are sanctioned and not the oil products."

The official further noted that the parliament expects the new government to change its approach in crude sales and focuses more on selling oil products.

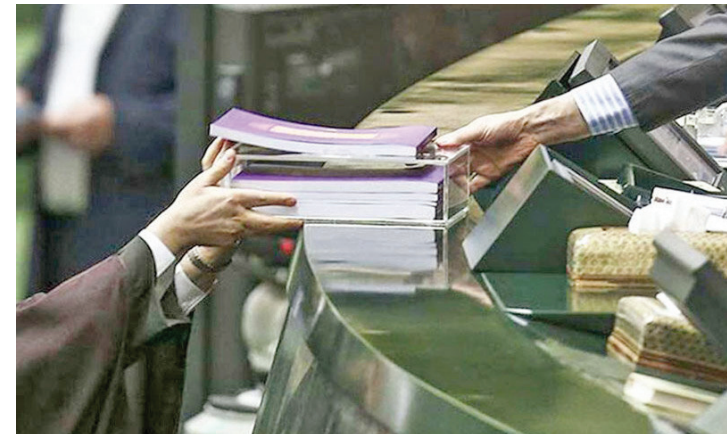
Earlier this month, Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi announced the current Iranian calendar year's amended national budget bill to be implemented by the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO).

President Raisi sent the approved amendments to PBO on August 11.

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

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

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



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

The parliament's budget review committee had wrapped up its final session for reviewing the details of the national budget bill for the current year in early March.

According to Rahim Zare, the spokesman of the parliament's budget committee, the bill then was submitted to the Guardian Council

for final approval.

The parliament had rejected the general outlines of the budget bill in early February, urging the government to reform the bill and submit it to the parliament again; after making the necessary amendments, the government resubmitted the bill to the parliament, and Majlis approved the amendments of the national budget bill in mid-February.

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

## TEDPIX gains 15,500 points on Sunday

TEHRAN – TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 15,555 points to 1.515 million on Sunday.

Over 13.407 billion securities worth 101.584 trillion rials (about \$2.418 billion) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.

The first market's index rose 14,184 points, and the second market's index climbed 22,657 points.

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.

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, there-



fore 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.



From page 1 ► Following is the text of the interview:

**How do you describe U.S.-Turkey relations under the Biden administration? The U.S. Congress has called for condemning Turkey's behavior on the Cyprus issue, stressing that Ankara has not acted as an ally of the United States for a while.**

Turkey's geopolitical position and its access to Eurasia constitute the main dynamics of U.S. and Turkish strategic alliance within the framework of NATO. For this reason, the United States has been trying to see Turkey as a lever in its foreign policy which is based on unilateral will and surrenderist approach in the geopolitical geography of the Middle East (West Asia) and Eurasia since the reign of U.S. President Truman.

Despite a large-scale confidence between Turkey and the United States, Ankara's decision to purchase the Russian S-400 in order to fortify its defense system has caused tension in U.S.-Turkey bilateral relationship. The United States is trying to force Turkey to back down on the S-400 by using the F-35 leverage and introducing CAATSA sanctions.

The U.S. Congress has declared Turkey should be condemned, stating that Ankara has not acted as an ally of the United States recently and that Turkey has not adopted the current Cyprus policy. However, the United States publicly supported the policies of Cyprus and Greece in the Eastern Mediterranean. To put it this way, when Turkey tries to implement its own national policies in the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus, this situation does not align with U.S. policy, so this time the negative policies of the United States start to come up.

The isolationist and divisive policies that the United States is following against Turkey has entered a new stage since Biden took office in a way that is very different in a difficult period of time.

As the long-running invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan has become more military and politically frayed, U.S. President Joe Biden is eyeing the great potential in the Asia-Pacific, just as he did under Obama.

The United States, which cannot fully trust in Turkey as a NATO ally, especially in the Middle East (West Asia) and Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa policies, tries to take different steps in this regard, by providing great support for the monarchies in the (Persian) Gulf in order to guarantee its own interests and Israel's security in this region.

Americans are keen to put rulers on power who can work closely with them and so as to protect their interests. In this regard we can put forward some examples that are blindingly obvious including Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen, etc.

For this reason, Cyprus, which is located at the most strategic point of the Eastern Mediterranean, has a similar situation. The United States, which strives for 'United Cyprus', is in a great political divergence with Turkey on this issue. Rich hydrocarbon reservoirs in the Eastern Mediterranean also can be a drive for the United States to meddle in this region.

## Sweden's PM announces 2nd resignation in 2 months

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will resign, again, following a tumultuous summer of political infighting in the Scandinavian country that ended in a no-confidence vote in his leadership.

In a speech on Sunday, Löfven announced that he would step down as the head of the Social Democrats, and would also resign as prime minister, in November.

"The decision has matured over time. I have been party chairman for ten years, prime minister for seven. These years have been amazing. But everything comes to an end. I want to give my successor the best of conditions," he said, according

## PM Johnson says UK will work with Taliban to 'find a solution' for Afghanistan

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that the UK will work with the Taliban to "find a solution for Afghanistan," and defended Foreign Minister Dominic Raab, who was holidaying as Kabul fell to the Islamist militants.

"What I want to assure people is that our political and diplomatic efforts to find a solution for Afghanistan, working with the Taliban, of course if necessary, will go on," Johnson told reporters on Friday.

After a whirlwind advance across Afghanistan in the wake of the US



## Iran, Turkey, Pakistan have great task to solve Afghanistan problem: Turkish politician

**What is Turkey's policy when it comes to Afghanistan? How would Ankara deal with the Taliban?**

As for Afghanistan, the United States will withdraw its military forces from Afghanistan entirely by 9/11, while it is intent on protecting its interests in the most strategic point: Hamid Karzai Airport in Kabul. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Biden met at the recent NATO summit in headquarters of NATO in Brussels and agreed to ensure security of Kabul Airport.

### Turkey's relations with Israel generally dependent on ups and downs with the U.S.

The Taliban then stated that Turkey had come to Afghanistan with NATO and should leave Afghanistan together with NATO, and explained that if Turkey had been forced to protect Kabul Airport, they would treat Turkey as an 'occupying force'. It is a grave development that the United States is trying to leave Turkey here in order to protect its own interests after withdrawing its forces from Afghanistan.

What Turkey should do here is not to be a party to the problem, but to be a party to the solution. To put it this way, holding the 'Istanbul Summit, which will bring all parties together, may be a solution-oriented approach. In this regard, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey, which are the D-8 member states, have great duties in solving the Afghanistan problem. If these three countries could come together to solve the Afghanistan problem and bring all sides together, it would be possible to solve the Afghanistan problem, which has been facing gangrene for many years. In a word, we believe that Iran, Turkey and Pakistan should make a concerted effort to put forward a strong initiative and road map for a permanent solution in Afghanistan.

**Palestine is the most important issue of Muslim nations, particularly Arabs. How do you evaluate Turkey's policies in this regard? Is Turkey planning to approach Israel again?**

The issue of Palestine is a common problem for all Muslims. For the first time, all Palestinians have acted together to show solidarity in the face of the aggressive policies of the occupying Israel against Jerusalem, Masjid al-Aqsa, al-Jarrah neighborhood and Gaza. All Islamic nations, except the (Persian) Gulf states, which have good relations with Israel, have been in great solidarity. It has pushed Israel to back down, especially as a result of demonstrations in the West and throughout the world. Turkey's relations with Israel are generally dependent on ups and downs with the United States. It is not acceptable for President Erdogan to have a phone conversation with Israeli President Yitzhak Herzog for more than 40 minutes and to stress that Middle East (West Asian) peace is possible with Israel.

President Erdogan's policy of rapprochement with Israel in order to get close to Biden will not contribute to restore rights of Palestinians, but it is an unacceptable step to further strengthen Israel's hand. Such moves and policies are neither acceptable nor efficient.

**Is there any desire in Ankara to form a regional deterrence to confront U.S. influence and meddling in West Asia?**

As we have always stated, the ability to put forward a lasting solution in the Middle East (West Asia) can greatly reduce U.S. power and influence in this region. In this regard, close rapprochement and co-operation between Islamic countries is a must.

It seems unlikely when Ankara is trying to establish more cozy relations with the U.S. administration headed by Biden.

There is no way to solve the problems in the Middle East (West Asia) while it is pursuing a policy of rapprochement with the United States and Israel. The current government is trying to strengthen its relations with the United States in order to win Biden's support in the upcoming

elections.

Therefore, in the short term, we consider such a formation in the Middle East (West Asia) as a remote possibility.

It is also a fact that peace and stability in the Middle East (West Asia) are unlikely without contribution of strong countries of the region. It is now inevitable to come together by learning great lessons from the examples of Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

**How do you assess Iran-Turkey's ties? What are the main challenges and opportunities in this regard?**

Turkey and Iran are the two strong elements of the Middle East (West Asia) that have managed to survive and consolidate their positions despite all external efforts to undermine them. From time to time, Turkey is far from being able to establish full-faith relations with Iran in the context of its relations with the United States and NATO. The Turkish government under the reign of the former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan had a vision and mission that can truly demonstrate the will and read the stability and future of the region very well. If Necmettin Erbakan's approach towards Iran is followed, relations between Iran and Turkey can be strengthened.

The Turkey-Iran rapprochement will not only be limited to relations between the two countries, but also by giving great synergies to other countries in the region, can reshape the Middle East (West Asia). In this regard, the late Prime Minister Dr. Necmettin Erbakan and Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani's close relations in many aspects may actually be possible with Iran's newly elected President Ibrahim Raisi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The biggest obstacle in this regard can be the U.S.-Turkey rapprochement; however President Erdogan thinks just like Prime Minister Dr. Necmettin Erbakan; we expect him to take strong initiative and take concrete steps to improve relations. We are trying to underline that the trust and stability of the Middle East (West Asia) is possible not with the United States and Israel, but with the Turkey-Iran rapprochement it is extremely necessary to take the most important steps in this regard.

**What lessons can be learnt from Turkey's forest fires?**

We can state that the fires in Turkey are aimed at destabilizing Turkey. It's not a coincidence that fires broke out simultaneously at different points. Unlike the Western world, which remains silent on this issue, it makes great sense that friendly and sister countries, especially Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia, are rushing to help with planes and helicopters to fight the fire in Turkey.

These and similar moves to destabilize Turkey will be scrapped as in the past. Likewise, it cannot be coincidental that similar steps have been taken from time to time to destabilize Iran. It is a fact that strong Turkey and strong Iran are not accepted by the West and it is possible to see that big moves are being made today as they were in the past in order to destabilize these countries. We would like to emphasize once again that the solidarity of both countries is inevitable for the stability of the region.

### Solidarity of Iran and Turkey inevitable for the stability of the region.

## “War criminal” Blair slams Biden’s Afghan exit as sign of West’s decline

From page 1 ► However, opponents of Blair, will no doubt be furious, especially the British anti-war movements who say his stance on wars is hypocritical. They argue his involvement in the disastrous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has left the former premier as a hypocrite and discredited.

In 2001, then Prime Minister Blair sent British troops to Afghanistan and took the same decision again in 2003 with Iraq.

Following the Chilcot Inquiry, legal hearings

took place which tried to prosecute Blair for war crimes.

Many anti-war movements, members of Parliament and other organizations labelled Blair as a “war criminal” who has the blood of a million people on his hands.

In 2017, a YouGov poll found that a third of British people wanted to see Blair tried as a war criminal. His critics argue that he knowingly misled Parliament and the public and should be tried as a war criminal.

## Israel bombs Gaza, troops injure dozens with live fire

Residents in at least four areas heard huge explosions overnight that rocked the coastal enclave. The regime confirmed that its warplanes had conducted air raids on four sites.

Apart from the mental trauma on women and children that comes with dropping bombs from fighter jets, No casualties have been reported from the airstrikes.

Hamas spokesman, Fawzi Barhoum says the raids showed Israel was “trying to cover up its failure and disappointment in front of the steadfastness of our people and their valiant resistance.”

The regime says it has also sent more forces towards the so-called buffer zone. Meanwhile, Israeli media have reported that Tel Aviv has increased the deployment of its Iron Dome missile system.

The airstrikes came after the regime shelled Gaza and fired at protestors, injuring more than 40 Palestinians.

According to Gaza's Health Ministry, two are in critical condition, including a 13-year old boy who sustained injuries to the head.

The ministry added that most of the other injuries include gunshots to the limbs, backs, and abdomens.

Thousands of protesters had gathered to mark the burning, 52 years ago, of occupied Jerusalem al-Quds' al-Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam.

In a statement, the Hamas movement said “Al-Aqsa Mosque is a red line, and any attack on it will be met with valiant resistance from our people”

The Israeli military claims

## French “Health pass” protests a worry for Macron

Thousands have taken to the streets across France for the sixth consecutive weekend against a COVID-19 health pass required for daily activities.

According to the French Interior Ministry, around 175,500 people participated but organizers say the number is higher.

The protests are posing an increasing risk for President Emmanuel Macron's popularity ahead of next year's election.

Macron has strongly defended the health pass despite widespread public criticism.

The pass is official documentation, with a QR scan code, that proves a person has had the COVID-19 vaccine. Many places including cafes, restaurants, museums, and sports venues will not be allowed to enter people unless they can show

the health pass.

While many people in France have been vaccinated against COVID-19, demonstrators argue the health pass discriminates against those who have not and infringes upon people's liberties.

One protester argued that “this health pass divides French people. I think that is clear. And unfortunately, I believe we should abolish it”

The protests have united a disparate group of parties. The biggest demonstration in Paris was led by far-right politician Florian Philippot, head of 'Les Patriotes' party, while there was also a demonstration by left-wing protesters linked to the 'Yellow Vests' movement.

The government claims the pass is designed to encourage more people to get vaccinated.

## Armed gunmen have kidnapped at least 75 people from a village in northwest Nigeria

Locals reported the incident, in the northern village of Rini village, the latest in a line of abductions that have plagued the West African country.

The spate of kidnappings, many of which target school girls are mostly carried out by armed Takfiri terrorist groups.

Residents have vented their anger at the government and security forces' failure to stop the wave of kidnappings in the country's north.

According to Aliyu Tun-

gar-Rini, a resident of the community in northwest Nigeria's Zamfara state “The number of people kidnapped from (the village of) Rini must be more than seventy-five”.

Habu Abubakar, also a resident of Rini village, said more than 80 people were kidnapped by the gunmen. He says they came wearing black clothes on more than 50 motorbikes.

Meanwhile, the death toll from an attack by Nigerian security forces on a peaceful

procession marking Ashura has risen to three. At least a dozen others have also been injured in the state of Sokoto.

Analysts have slammed the government for deploying security forces to a peaceful procession instead of tackling the spate of kidnappings by terrorist groups.

Nigerian security forces have repeatedly used deadly force against the peaceful processions sparking outrage from human rights organizations.

## Trump says Biden’s foreign policy is incompetent

Addressing the disastrous situation in war-torn Afghanistan on 21 August, former U.S. President Donald Trump said recent developments in the country are due to the current administration's foreign policy and a great military demonstrating Joe Biden's incompetence.

UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace stated in an article for The Mail on Sunday that those Afghans who try to flee to Britain to escape the Taliban will have to make their own way to the borders if the US does not delay the deadline for leaving the country. The latter is set for 31 August.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab earlier discussed the situation in Afghanistan with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, especially the evacuation of UK and US citizens from the country.

Meanwhile, former US President Donald

Trump has criticised President Joe Biden. The former POTUS took aim at the current administration at a Saturday Save America rally in Cullman, Alabama, accusing the latter of surrendering U.S. military bases in Afghanistan, and stressing that American troops are leaving \$83 billion worth of military equipment behind.

The Taliban entered Kabul on 15 August. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fled the country to prevent what he described as bloodshed if the militants had to fight for the city. Most countries have since reduced or evacuated their diplomatic missions in Kabul.

The chief of the political office of the Taliban, Abdul Ghani Baradar, will likely make a decision concerning the structure of the future Afghan government over the next two weeks, a source in the Taliban told Sputnik on 21 August.



withdrawal which commenced in May, Taliban fighters entered the capital city of Kabul less than a week ago, triggering a scramble by





## Iran museum of salt mummies to be equipped with new air conditioner system

From page 1 ► The hair, beard, and mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot, according to Ancient History Encyclopedia.

The first mummy, dubbed the “Saltman”, is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive. The third, fourth, and fifth “saltmen” were also carbon dated. The third body was dated and placed in 2337 BP, the fourth body in 2301 BP, and the fifth mummy was dated to 2286 BP, placing them all in the Achaemenid period.

The isotopic analysis of the human remains revealed where these miners were from. Some of them were from the Tehran-Qazvin plain, which is relatively local to the mine's locality, while others were from north-eastern Iran and the coastal areas around the Caspian Sea, and a few from as far away as Central Asia.

Furthermore, the archaeozoological finds, such as animal bones found within the context of the saltmen, showed that the miners might have eaten sheep, goats, and probably

pigs and cattle, as well. The archaeobotanical finds recorded showed different cultivated plants were eaten, indicating an agricultural establishment in the vicinity of the mine.

The wealth of fabric and other organic material (leather) worn by the saltmen have allowed a thorough analysis to be undertaken, detailing the resources used to make the fabrics, the processing, the dyes used to color the fibers of the garments, and not least they offer an excellent overview of the changes in cloth types, patterns of weaving, and the changes of the fibers through time.

Saltman No. 5 had tapeworm eggs from the *Taenia* sp. genus in his system. These were identified during the study of his remains. The find indicates the consumption of raw or undercooked meat, and this is the first case of this parasite in ancient Iran and the earliest evidence of ancient intestinal parasites in the area. The best preserved and probably the most harrowing of the saltmen is Saltman No. 4. A sixteen-year-old miner, caught in the moment of death, crushed by a cave-in.

# Reliefs depicting scene of Greco-Persian Wars discovered in Turkey

TEHRAN – Archaeologists in northwestern Turkey have recently discovered a bas-relief, which depicts a battle scene between the Persians and the Greeks in the fifth century BC.

Figures on the relief show fighting Greek soldiers beneath the hoofs of the Persian war horses, said archeologist Kaan Iren, who leads the dig site in the ancient city of Dascylium in the modern-day Bandirma district of Balikesir province, Hurriyet Daily News reported.

“Here is a scene of propaganda under the pretext of war. We can say these reliefs are a scene from the Persian-Greek wars,” Iren told the state-run Anadolu Agency.

“We think these reliefs were probably made for propaganda purposes during the wars,” he added.

Iren, who has been working at the excavation site with a team of 30 people since June 22, said they had unearthed parts of a stone and mudbrick wall dating back to the eighth century BC this year.

“Of the eighth-century-BC wall left from the Phrygian age, this year we



An excavation site in northwestern Turkey, where archaeologists find a relief depicting a war scene between the Greeks and Persians in the fifth century BC, August 16, 2021. (PHOTO: Hurriyet Daily News)

unearthed an area of 4 meters high and 40 meters long. We think that this wall had a height of 7 to 8 meters. We prepared a protection roof project for this place. We will present it to the

Balikesir Cultural Heritage Preservation Regional Board. If approved, we will take this place under protection,” said Iren, who is also a faculty member of the Mugla Sitki Kocman University.

The 5-meter-wide wall is believed to have been built by the ancient Phrygian civilization to protect its territory, Iren said.

Iren said that the discovery of reliefs during the wall excavation this year was a surprise. Stating that the reliefs carved into the stone were cleaned by the restorers in the excavation house, he explained: “The relief, dating from the Persian era in the fifth century BC, depicts the war between the Persians and the Greeks. This was one of the most important findings of the season for us. In the figures on it, there are Greek soldiers fighting and Persians on horseback fighting them. Greek soldiers are depicted under the hoofs of Persian horses.”

There is a propaganda scene here under the pretext of war. We can say that these reliefs are a scene from the Persian-Greek wars. We think that these reliefs were probably made for propaganda purposes during the wars.”

Greco-Persian Wars also called Persian Wars, (492–449 BC), was a series of wars fought by Greek states and Persia over almost half a century.

## Nomadic tent hotel to be established in Ardabil

TEHRAN – A nomadic tent hotel is planned to be established in northwestern Ardabil province, a local tourism official has announced.

Consisting of nomadic tents, which is the first of its kind [in Iran], the hotel will be launched in one of the agritourism farms of the ancient town of Kowsar, Jahangir Shahbazi said on Sunday.

Such a hotel will be available to tourists due to the rising demand for traditional and indigenous spaces, the official added.

In addition, nomadic products will also be offered to tourists, such as woven items and other products, which will contribute to boosting the marketing of their products along with the growth of tourism in the nomadic areas, he noted.

Iran seeks to boost ethnic tourism or tribe tourism in recent years. Tribal tourism lays the ground for tourists and travelers to feel indigenous people by living with a nomad or rural family or enjoying an independent stay.



Many tourists from all over the world tend to observe the lifestyle of these hardworking people and spend a few days watching activities such as milking, yogurt making, buttering, oiling, woolen, carpeting, and much more. Many Iranian and foreign tourists are interested in sleeping in nomadic black tents.

The varied natural setting of the country never

disappoints visitors when it comes to tribal tourism as the culturally diverse country is home to many regional people including ones with Turk and Arab elements in addition to the Kurds, Baloch, Bakhtyari, Lurs, and other smaller minorities such as Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and others.

Language, music, indigenous cuisine, clothing, songs, anecdotes, crafts, live performances, and local rituals such as celebrations and wedding ceremonies have always spurred many to experience life among the tribes.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardabil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

## Innovative prototypes of ancient handicrafts produced in Zanjan

TEHRAN – A team of Iranian researchers and crafters has made some innovative prototypes of ancient handicrafts, which their practical know-how is passed down from generation to generation across Zanjan province, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

Charuq (a local style of women's handmade shoes), filigrees, knives, potteries, and copper dishes have been recreated as a demonstration for researchers and artists interested in the region's handicrafts for their further studies, Amir Arjmand said on Saturday, CHTN reported.

“Several of the products have a long history and could be redesigned for new capabilities and applications,” the official added.

He also noted that every region has its own handicrafts created according to its customs and traditions, and the handicrafts of each area reflect its values and culture.

Back in April, the official announced that handicraft products worth more than \$1.3 million were exported from Zanjan province in the previous Iranian



calendar year (ended March 19).

Handicrafts provided a very good capacity to generate income and jobs, and led to the development of the province, he mentioned.

“Zanjan, as one of the most important provinces of metal handicrafts in the country, has a prominent position in production, and handicraft artists of the province are at the forefront of

production.”

He also said Zanjan's handicrafts, including knives, Givah (kind of traditional shoe), traditional jewelry, leather products, and tapestry are mostly exported to Iraq, the Persian Gulf littoral states, Turkey, and European countries.

Knifemaking is one of the oldest handicrafts practiced for centuries

in several Iranian cities, of which the northwestern city of Zanjan is the most famous.

Knives, swords, and daggers were produced and a lot of knife-making workshops were active in these cities. But due to their design, cut, diversity, and durability, Zanjan knives have been the most successful.

Hand-made copper dishes are very popular in the central province of Isfahan and Zanjan. In addition to being useful for human health, these products can also be used as decorative pieces and are considered to be superb works of art.

Filigree consists of curling, twisting, or plaiting fine, pliable metal threads and soldering them at their points of contact with each other with metal groundwork.

In January 2020, Zanjan was designated as a “world city of filigree” by the World Crafts Council after the WCC assessors visited various craft workshops, stores, exhibits, and bazaars of the city in a two-day itinerary in December 2019.

## Extra restoration to start on Chehel Sotoun Mosque

TEHRAN – A new round of restoration work is to commence on the historical Chehel Sotoun Mosque, which stands tall in the northwestern Zanjan province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

A key goal of the project is to fully repair damaged parts of the mosque's shabestan so that it can be used once more by the faithful, Amir Arjmand announced on Sunday.

Shabestan is an underground space that can be usually found in Iran's traditional mosques, houses, and schools.

The project will be carried out with the utmost sensitivity and accuracy using a combination of traditional and appropriate materials, the official added.

The mosque has undergone several restoration projects to date, including the repair of columns, walls, and gutters, as well as the replacement of worn-out materials and lightening of the roofs, he noted.

The Qajar-era (1789–1925) mosque is located in the historic bazaar of Zanjan. It is the second most prestigious seminary school in Zanjan after Jameh Mosque.

The main prayer hall of the mosque is built



in Chehel Sotoun (forty columns) style, which is mostly compared to the 17th-century Chehel Sotoun palace in Isfahan.

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

## Iranian experts to attend Intl. Virtual Conference on Museums

TEHRAN – A 12-member team of Iranian experts is scheduled to attend the second part of the International Virtual Conference on Museums, which will be jointly hosted by the ICOM Pakistan & ICOM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History.

The Iranian professionals, who are affiliated with the Association of Iran Museum Experts (AIME), along with their international fellows, will be delivering lectures at the event scheduled to take place from September to February 2022, ILNA reported.

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

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

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

Furthermore, senior curators and specialists from Arab and African countries and Latin America have been invited to join the event, which will be revolving around the theme “The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine”.

The International Council of Museums selects each year for International Museum Day a theme that is at the heart of the concerns of society. With the cited theme, International Museum Day 2021 invited museums, their professionals, and communities to create, imagine and share new practices of (co-)creation of value, new business models for cultural

institutions, and innovative solutions for the social, economic and environmental challenges of the present.

As of 2020, the COVID-19 crisis has swept the whole world abruptly, affecting every aspect of our lives. Some already pressing issues have been exacerbated, questioning the very structure of our societies: the call for equality is stronger than ever.

“This is a pivotal moment for our society, and we call museums to embrace it and lead the change. The time is now to rethink our relationship with the communities we serve, to experiment with new and

hybrid models of cultural fruition, and to strongly reaffirm the essential value of museums for the construction of a just and sustainable future,” ICOM says.

According to the council, museums are no exception to these changes, and the cultural sector is among the most affected, with serious economic, social, and psychological repercussions in the short and long term alike. But this crisis also catalyzed crucial innovations that were already underway, notably an increased focus on digitization and the creation of new forms of cultural experience and dissemination.

## Historical bathhouse in central Iran undergoes restoration

TEHRAN – Parts of Hammam-e Okhovat have undergone some rehabilitation works. The Pahlavi era (1925–1979) public bathhouse is located in Najafabad of Isfahan province.

Strengthening and repairing the bathhouse's walls, which have been seriously damaged over the years, are essential parts of the project, Najafabad's tourism chief Alireza Habibi announced on Sunday, CHTN reported.

The monument was once fully restored in 2006 on a budget of three billion rials (\$71,400 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar), the official added.

However, due to its abandonment, parts of this privately-owned structure have been torn down, he explained.

The historical public bathhouse has been inscribed on



Iran's national heritage list, the official said.

Bathhouses or ‘hammams’ in Iran were not only places for bathing and cleaning up. They had a social concept for people who gathered at these places weekly.

It was a place where people talked with each other about their daily life and shared humor and news. There

are still bathhouses in Iranian cities but they do not have their social function anymore since most people have bathrooms in their homes due to the modern lifestyle.

Some cities had separate bathhouses for men and women. They were usually built next to each other. However, there were some bathhouses, which were used by men and women at different times of the day.

There were also male and female public bathhouses; at daybreak, a longhorn (boooq-e javaz) was blown to announce that the bath was ready. Men came to the baths from daybreak till the afternoon. Women could use the bathhouses from then to sunset. In some cases, five days were allocated to men and two days to women.

Persian literature is full of proverbs, narrations, and folk stories about bathhouses, which indicate the importance of the place in the past time.



TEHRAN – Prisons across the northwestern Zanjan province have been offering handicraft training courses in a bid to empower the inmates, the deputy provincial tourism chief said on Saturday.

Being held in collaboration with Zanjan's General Administration of Prisons, the courses consist of practical workshops in the fields of leatherwork, traditional jewelry, as well as cutting precious and semi-precious stones, Elnaz Khodai explained.

The courses, which have been held by the experienced handicrafts masters, are also intended to generate employment for inmates in the post-prison period and become a source of income for them, the official added.

**Tourism ministry helps empower inmates**

In October 2020, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts signed a memorandum of understanding with the Prisons, Security, and Corrective Measures Organization to create jobs and make income for prisoners.

The MOU also aimed at implementing special



# Artemia: a multi-million-dollar source of income in Lake Urmia

TEHRAN — Artemia of Lake Urmia is of great commercial value and if exported, it will be a multi-million-dollar source of income for the country, Salman Zaker, a member of the Majlis (Iranian parliament) has said.

So far, 9 species of Artemia have been registered in the world, he said, adding, one of the most important species of Artemia is “Artemia Urmi-ana”, which lives in Lake Urmia, he said.

Natural conditions and infrastructure for farming Artemia in Lake Urmia are available but it is not exploited, Zaker noted, IRNA reported on Sunday.

By cultivating Artemia in the country, not only a considerable amount of foreign currency can be saved, but millions of dollars of foreign exchange can enter the country by exporting it, he also highlighted.

Emphasizing the need to breed Artemia in the country and support the private sector in this regard, Zaker said that artificial breeding of Artemia

## Iran is now one of the importers of Artemia.

Iran is now one of the importers of Artemia; According to the assessment of the average capacity of Lake Urmia in 2019, the reserves of Lake Urmia in normal conditions, in addition to meeting domestic needs, can

## Iran negotiating to import Pfizer, Moderna vaccines from Europe

TEHRAN — Negotiation is underway with one or two European countries to purchase Pfizer and Moderna coronavirus vaccines, Alireza Raisi, the spokesman for the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, has said.

Referring to good efforts made to import vaccines, he said: “By the end of September, we will definitely import about 30 million doses of

By the end of September, 30 million doses of vaccine will be imported.

## Persian deer species breeding in East Azarbaijan

TEHRAN – A plan on conservation of Persian fallow deer and red deer is underway in Arasbaran forests in the northwestern East Azarbaijan province, the head of the provincial department of environment has stated.

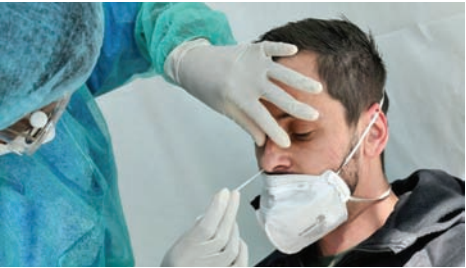
Restoration plans for maral (the Iranian red deer) as an extinct animal species, started in East Azarbaijan in 1991 and 7 red deer were transferred from northern Golestan breeding site to a site in East Azarbaijan, IRNA quoted Hassan Abbasnejad as saying on Sunday.

After increasing the population of marals, the area increased to 186 hectares and now this site hosts more than 26 red deer, he added.

The mountainous and green area of Inanloo is located in Kalibar city at an altitude of 1500 meters above sea level, which has been selected to breed marals due to its suitable vegetation and forests, he further noted.

Maral is one of the largest deer types that unfortunately their population has declined in the country. However, the red deer occur literally from the shores of the Caspian Sea to the high alpine meadows of the Alborz Mountains.

The mating of red deer begins in the second half of September each year and lasts for a month.



According to the latest monitoring in maral habitats during the mating season, the population of this species in Golestan National Park has been counted 612, which was recorded 540 years ago.

Road construction, land-use change and live-stock overgrazing in the Hyrcanian forests, and, most importantly, the presence of poachers are among the main factors influencing the decline of the maral population.

### Persian fallow deer

The main habitat of fallow deer in the country includes western and southwestern areas, but the declining trend in the number of these valuable species in the 1330s (falling on 1951-1961) led to measures to save them since the late decade.

For the past 60 years, the species are inhabiting protected areas, and the most important center for the reproduction of fallow deer is the semi-natural breeding site of



lead to the annual export of 180 tons of cysts and 120 tons of live Artemia to other countries.

### Artemia

Artemia is a genus of aquatic crustaceans also known as brine shrimp. The first historical record of the existence of Artemia dates back to the first half of the 10th century AD from Lake Urmia, with an example called by an Iranian geographer an “aquatic dog”, although the first unambiguous record is the report and drawings made by Schöller in 1757 of animals from Lynton, England.

Artemia populations are found worldwide in inland saltwater lakes, but not in oceans. Artemia is able to avoid cohabiting with most types of predators, such as fish, by their ability to live in waters of very high salinity

(up to 25%).

The ability of Artemia to produce dormant eggs, known as cysts, has led to extensive use of Artemia in aquaculture. The cysts may be stored for long periods and hatched on demand to provide a convenient form of live feed for larval fish and crustaceans.

Nauplii of the brine shrimp Artemia constitute the most widely used food item, and over 2000 tons of dry Artemia cysts are marketed worldwide annually. In addition, the resilience of Artemia makes them ideal animals for running biological toxicity assays and it has become a model organism used to test the toxicity of chemicals. Breeds of Artemia are sold as novelty gifts under the marketing name Sea-Monkeys or Aqua Dragons.

noted that within the next 3 weeks, there will be a significant increase in vaccine production, reaching 10 to 15 million doses by the end of September.

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

While Iran continues efforts to mass-produce local candidates, over 18 million doses of foreign vaccines have already been imported and others are expected soon.

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

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



Lake Urmia, we encountered a large population of carnivorous animals, which affected the life of this species. So that, it is necessary to first eliminate the extinction factors and then introduce the species, he further explained.

Research has not been conducted on fallow deer or many other animals in the country, because wildlife studies are expensive and that is why research is scarce, he stated, adding, but now monitoring is of great importance, as we must determine that why the species population do not increase despite being in captivity.

As a result, lack of accurate information and constant monitoring are among the reasons that put this species at greater risk, he lamented.

## Western Iran forests

### (Part 2)

It has been observed that the Zagros Mountain chain forms a corridor for the southward distribution of northern faunal elements (Anderson 1999).

Zohary (1973) cites evidence that the Zagros range is the original source of some species that are also now found in some eastern Mediterranean mountains, such as Quercus libani and Q. boissieri. He notes that Iran has served as the center of origin for a vast number of species and genera, including Astragalus, Euphorbia, Acanthophyllum, Salvia, Heliotropium, and Centaurea.

### Current Status

In areas of the Zagros range where rainfed cultivation and grazing occur, the natural vegetation has been reduced to remnants of its former extent. Overgrazing has also led to changes in vegetation

composition, resulting in the re-treat of the original woodlands and a wider distribution of thorny shrubs and thorny dwarf-shrubs. Advanced degradation is visible even in densely forested areas of the Zagros Mountains and species that are better able to withstand grazing and pruning have crowded out original species, such as Carpinus spp. and Quercus spp., in many areas (Frey & Probst 1986).

Since the discovery of the small population of Dama dama ssp mesopotamica, reintroduction and captive breeding projects have been initiated in northwestern Iran and several other countries. However, by 1988, the last wild population was verging on extinction (IUCN 2001).

There are a number of protected areas in the Zagros Mountains region. The Arjan Protected Area and Biosphere Reserve covers approximately 65,750 ha on the southwest flanks of the mountains. This reserve ranges in altitude from 825m to 3,219m and hosts a range of habitats and mammal species. Scientific and research activities have in-



cluded extensive ecological studies and annual bird censuses (UNEP 1989a).

The Mooteh Protected Area is located on the eastern side of the Zagros Mountains, about 100 km south of Qom in the northern Esfahan Province. Covering 200,000 ha and ranging from 1,572m to 3,264m in altitude, it encompasses arid montane and steppe vegetation and is an important protected areas for larger mammals and avifauna (UNEP 1989b).

### Types and Severity of Threats

Agricultural cultivation and overgrazing have contributed greatly to the reduction in areas of natural vegetation and continue to pose significant threats.

### Justification of Ecoregion Delineation

Ecoregion boundaries correspond with the actual and supposed climax areas of two zones as classified by Zohary's geobotanical map of the Middle East (1973): the xerophilous deciduous steppe forest of Quercetia brantii, and the contiguous (westernmost) reaches of actual and supposed climax area of Pistacia-Amygdalus steppe forest.

Concluded.  
(Source: worldwildlife.org)

## Deforestation in Brazilian Amazon hits highest annual level in a decade

Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon has hit the highest annual level in a decade, a new report has shown, despite increasing global concern over the accelerating devastation since President Jair Bolsonaro took office in 2019.

Between August 2020 and July 2021, the rainforest lost 10,476 square kilometers – an area nearly seven times bigger than greater London and 13 times the size of New York City, according to data released by Imazon, a Brazilian research institute that has been tracking the Amazon deforestation since 2008. The figure is 57% higher than in the previous year and is the worst since 2012.

“Deforestation is still out of control,” Carlos Souza, a researcher at Imazon said. “Brazil is going against the global climate agenda that is seeking to urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

Souza called for the urgent resumption of government actions to stop the destruction, including the enforcement of illegal agriculture-led deforestation in the region, which has been impaired by budget cuts for the environment ministry and environmental protection agencies.

Even as he faces accusations of systematically dismantling environmental protections, Bolsonaro has deployed thousands of soldiers to combat illegal deforestation and fires.

But the policy has proved ineffective, said Marcio Astrini, the executive-secretary of the organisation Climate Observatory.

“The data shows that it didn't work,” said Astrini. “No army operation will be able to mask or reverse the attacks of the federal government against the forest.”

Astrini said that the deforestation rates in 2021 are expected to be almost 50% higher than in 2018, before Bolsonaro took office.

In June, then-environment minister Ricardo Salles resigned amid a criminal investigation over allegations that a police investigation into illegal Amazon logging was blocked.

But the ministry's leadership “hasn't shown any progress,” Astrini said.

“The measures that benefit the export of illegal timber – the reason why Salles had to leave office – are still in place,” he said.

The new figures were released as lawmakers held a public hearing to push for changes in Brazil's environmental policies.

“We are going through a very tough moment in Brazilian history. There's a lot of denialism, and many attempts to weaken our environmental policy,” senator Eliziane Gama told the hearing.

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON AUGUST 22

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| New cases                      | 36,419     |
| New deaths                     | 684        |
| Total cases                    | 4,677,114  |
| Total deaths                   | 102,038    |
| New hospitalized patients      | 5,007      |
| Patients in critical condition | 7,662      |
| Total recovered patients       | 3,932,472  |
| Diagnostic tests conducted     | 27,855,470 |
| Doses of vaccine injected      | 22,548,321 |

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

### Iran starts five-year tobacco-free national plan

A nationl plan aiming to protect people from secondhand smoking in 63 cities and 63 villages over the course of five years has just piloted in the central city of Qom.

Following Article 8 of the Convention on Tobacco Control of the World Health Organization to protect people from tobacco use and reduce its side effects, Iran declared Qom city as the country's first “tobacco-free city”.

This five-year program will eventually launch in 63 cities and 63 selected villages of the country, however, it is probably can cover the whole cities, Behzad Valizadeh, head of the National Secretariat of Tobacco Control said.

A tobacco-free city is a place in which the sale, supply, and use of tobacco are regulated in such a way that people are protected from secondhand smoke, and direct and indirect incentive mechanisms are restricted, tobacco consumers will be encouraged to quit, he explained.

### برنامه ۵ ساله شهر و روستای بدون دخانیات اجرایی شود

رئیس دبیرخانه کشوری کنترل دخانیات گفت: این برنامه یک برنامه پنج ساله است که از سال ۱۳۹۸ به صورت پایلوت در شهر قم کلید خورد و تا سال ۱۴۰۴ ادامه خواهد یافت و در نهایت ۶۳ شهر و ۶۳ روستای منتخب کشور عاری از دخانیات خواهند شد.

مهندس بهزاد ولی زاده با بیان این مطلب اظهار داشت: ابتکار شهر و روستای بدون دخانیات بر اساس ماده ۸ کنوانسیون کنترل دخانیات سازمان جهانی بهداشت به منظور محافظت از مردم در مواجهه با دود دست دوم دخانیات و کاهش عوارض آن از سال ۱۳۹۸ به صورت پایلوت در شهر قم کلید خورد و از مرداد سال جاری هماهنگی های لازم جهت اجرای آن در ۶۳ دانشگاه علوم پزشکی سراسر کشور انجام شده است. شero روستای بدون دخانیات، عبارت از شهر و روستایی که در آن فروش، عرضه و استعمال محصولات دخانی ضابطه مندشده به نحوی که مردم از مواجهه با دود دست دوم محافظت شوند، تبلیغات و ساز و کارهای تشویقی مستقیم و غیرمستقیم آن محدود شده، مصرف کنندگان دخانیات به ترک آن تشویق شوند، در مجموع بر هر دو راهبرد کاهش تقاضا و کاهش عرضه تمرکز نموده، انتظار می رود به تدریج شیوع استعمال دخانیات در آن مناطق کاهش یابد.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet.  
*Imam Ali (AS)*

Prayer Times » Noon:13:07    Evening: 21:03    Dawn: 5:01 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 6:30 (tomorrow)

## History of art in Iran: Sassanid period

Sassanid bas-reliefs in Taq-e Bostan, Kermanshah.

Part 3

A number of battle scenes in the form of equestrian combats between two protagonists are contemporary with the reliefs of the late 3rd century.

This type was first commissioned by Ardashir I in Firuzabad and is illustrated on a much smaller scale on the relief carved blocks from a building constructed during the reign of Shapur I at Bishapur.

The later examples, all at Naqsh-e Rostam, have a simple composition and more limited subject matter than the Firuzabad relief.

The figures do not always wear recognizable Sassanid crowns, and it is possible that in at least two instances the warrior is a member of the royal family or the high nobility rather than the king.

On one of the reliefs, the three pronged headgear worn by the central combatant may be a special form of helmet rather than a crown.

These battle scenes have a narrative, pictorial quality lacking in the more conventional investiture and victory reliefs. A wealth of detail covering the animal and human bodies gives the representations a rather decorative appearance.

The reliefs in Taq-e Bostan follow by more than half a century the latest rock carved monuments in Fars and reveal a change in style. Commissioned by Ardashir II and in all probability, Shapur III, they are primarily proclamations of legitimacy.

During this troubled period in the history of the Sassanid monarchy, the natural succession was interrupted by the accession of Ardashir II who was then succeeded by Shapur III, the son of Shapur II.

The relief of Ardashir II is the more conventional of the two monuments in type and design. Within the customary rectangular panel three figures carved in high relief are standing side by side.

The monarch, in the center, grasps the ring of investiture extended to him by the figure on his left, possibly the god Ohrmazd, although the headdress is that of the deceased Shapur II.

On the other side is the god Mithra, rays emanating from his head, a barsom bundle in his hands, and standing on an Indian lotus.

This same divinity is associated with a Sassanid ruler of the Kushan territories who has been identified as Ardashir II. Beneath the king and the figure holding the symbol of office lies a dead enemy, probably the Roman emperor Julian.

In the arrangement of the figures the scene resembles the investiture of Narseh, but the king wears a new form of royal dress: A

beaded halter, strapped around the chest, has replaced the cloak held by a clasp, and the tunic, drawn up at the sides, falls in a rounded curve along the lower hem.

The style of the carving is also distinctive. The drapery folds are rendered as a series of curving concentric lines covering the body; this stylization gives the surface of the relief an extremely decorative appearance.

The crude, almost grotesque treatment of the facial features is particularly noticeable since the heads are turned outward in a three quarter view.

These changes in style and quality of workmanship suggest that the monument was executed by local artisans lacking the skills of the carvers who had worked on the royal monuments in the south. Noting the apparent inexperience of the craftsmen, Herzfeld suggested that the reliefs were the work of painters rather than sculptors.

The adjacent relief with the figures of Shapur II and III is carved in a similar style, but the subject and the setting are new. The two kings, standing side by side, are represented on the back wall of a deep arched niche.

They are almost full sculptures in the round. Inscriptions on either side of the heads give the names of the monarchs. Since no divinity is included in the scene and the emphasis is on the relationship between the two royal personages, father (Shapur II) and son (Shapur III), it is appropriate that the setting resembles an arched hall similar to the audience halls of Sassanid palaces.

Shapur III does not wear the crown appearing on his coins and it is possible that the relief was executed before he became king of kings, during the reign of Shapur II.

The latest relief at Taq-e Bostan is generally attributed to Khosrow II in spite of some arguments for an earlier date in the reign of Peroz and one suggestion that the monument was executed during the reign of Khosrow I.

This great avyan similar in shape but larger than that of Shapur II/III may well celebrate the victory of Khosrow II over the usurper Bahram VI (Chobin).

Two winged females placed in the spandrels of the arched facade give it the appearance of a Western triumphal monument. The divinities, Ohrmazd and Anahid, stand on either side of Khosrow II.

All three figures are carved on the top of the back wall of the niche. The gods do not surpass the king in height; rather, they appear as supports to the royal person.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

# Iranian artist says teahouse paintings appeal to foreign tourists

From Page 1 ► this style and added, “Teahouse paintings have a potential to be combined with other styles, if artists blend teahouse painting and other styles we would see some genuinely new artworks, and that would be a highly positive occurrence.”

“Teahouses have been places for people’s daily gatherings, and teahouse paintings have supported their cultural needs in different circumstances, especially in mourning ceremonies and religious events,” she noted and added, “Teahouse painting is the art of the common people, which was formed with contributions from Iran’s genuine religious art and culture.”

The exhibition entitled “Ashura Teahouse Paintings” was organized in collaboration with the Iranian Research Institute of Philosophy.

“For years, religious beliefs were promulgated by eulogists, naqals [traditional storytellers] and Muslim clerics at hosseiniehs, tekyehs [places for seasonal Islamic ceremonies] and teahouses,” the institute said.

“Each of these people used to

A teahouse painting by Mohammad Farahani is on display in an exhibition at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran.

share their beliefs artfully and filled with emotion with the people who eagerly came together in these places,” it added.

“Also in these places were teahouse painters who listened to the stories, reflected on them

and then portrayed the stories on canvases,” the institute explained.

“Teahouse painting has recently been restored based on legacies from the past by a number of young artists, one of them is Narges Eshqi,” it noted.

## Belgrade ethnological film festival picks docs from Iran

“The Snow Calls” by Iranian filmmaker Marjan Khosravi.

TEHRAN – The Iranian documentary films “The Snow Calls,” “And the Sky Was Created” and “Balora” will be competing in the 30th International Festival of Ethnological Film in Belgrade.

The festival will take place at the Ethnographic Museum in the Serbian capital of Belgrade from October 4 to 8.

Directed by Marjan Khosravi, “The Snow Calls” is about Mina, who has just one more chance after bearing three daughters. Her next child has to be a boy or her husband will marry another woman. That’s the tradition.

The very pregnant Mina and her family live in southwestern Iran, where the rules of the Bakhtiari tribe apply. This time, the expectant mother decides not to have an ultrasound scan, for fear of the result and the gossip that would ensue. She is already under enough pressure from her in-laws, although she still has people on her side, too.

As the snowdrifts become deeper, and the outside door will barely open anymore, the atmosphere in the household becomes increasingly oppressive. Will there be a happy ending with the birth of a son, or are we watching a life that is about to fall apart?

The film was selected as best feature at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival in Missoula in the northwestern U.S. state of Montana.

Documentarian Darya Majlesi will screen her latest short “And the Sky Was Created” at the festival.

This film portrays the mystifying relationship between nature and humans through centuries. The story is based on traditions and ceremonies that have been performed since the very early stages of civilization until now in a different form.

The essence of this relationship has changed from a very respectful and fearful approach to

a destructive and ignorant one. The moderate conditions in those early years have now become dangerous and unpredictable. Consequently, the film observes this process by both images of nature and human socio-cultural legacies.

In his documentary “Balora”, director Abdolqader Khaledi centers on Balora, an old song that used to be performed by ethnic Iranians especially by the Kurdish people.

In times when there were no means of mass communication, this song was also used to communicate with other people in the mountains.

Balora has had aspects of romance, satire and humor, as well as a description of the death of a hero, the extent of which depends on the taste, imagination and skill of the poet, since there is a strong element of improvisation.

Performing it requires special skills because it requires the coordination of the fingers and proper breathing while singing. Through this song, Kurdish women have cried out their desires, aspirations and sufferings not in a quiet and secret voice but in a loud and free voice in the mountains. This film reflects some of these cries.

## Split Film Festival to screen “The Badger”, “Minus Me”

TEHRAN — Iranian movies “The Badger” and “Minus Me” will be screening at the Split Film Festival, which will take place in Split, Croatia’s second-largest city, from September 15 to 21.

The acclaimed drama “The Badger” directed by Kazem Mollai will be showcased in the Forum section of the festival.

It is about Sudeh, a 40-year-old woman who faces a strange incident right before her second marriage. Sudeh and her son Matiar live in an old apartment. One day, she hires a pest control company to solve the termite problems in the apartment. While the pest control company is working, Matiar is recording the procedures, as this is his hobby. The next day, Matiar gets kidnapped after school, and the kidnapper asks Sudeh to pay 10 Bitcoins for her son. Tremendous pressure is put on Sudeh, but the truth hidden beneath will surprise everyone.

“The Badger” has been screened at over a dozen

Photo: “The Badger” by Iranian director Kazem Mollai.

international events and has won several awards, including the grand prize for the best foreign feature

## New Persian translation of “Before the Coffee Gets Cold” released

TEHRAN — A new Persian translation of Japanese writer Toshikazu Kawaguchi’s novel “Before the Coffee Gets Cold” has come to Iranian bookstores.

Aradman is the publisher of the new translation by Reza Abedinzadeh, which hit the Iranian bookstores nearly one month after the release of the first Persian rendition of the book by the Moon publishing house.

The original edition was published in 2015 and an English translation of the book by Geoffrey Trousselot was released in 2019.

In a small back alley in Tokyo, there is a café that has been carefully serving brewed coffee for more than one hundred years. But this coffee shop offers its customers a unique

experience: the chance to travel back in time.

In “Before the Coffee Gets Cold”, we meet four visitors, each of whom is hoping to make use of the café’s time-traveling offer, in order to: confront the man who left them, receive a letter from their husband whose memory has been taken by an early onset of Alzheimer’s, to see their sister one last time, and to meet the daughter they never had a chance to know.

But the journey into the past does not come without risks: customers must sit in a particular seat, they cannot leave the café, and finally, they must return to the present before the coffee gets cold.

Kawaguchi’s beautiful, moving story explores the age-old question: what would you change if you could

Cover of the new Persian translation of Toshikazu Kawaguchi’s novel “Before the Coffee Gets Cold”.

travel back in time? More importantly, who would you want to meet, maybe for one last time?

Kawaguchi was born in Osaka in 1971. He formerly produced, directed and wrote for the theatrical group Sonic Snail. As a playwright, his works

include “COUPLE”, “Sunset Song” and “Family Time”.

The novel “Before the Coffee Gets Cold” is adapted from an 1110 Productions play by Kawaguchi, which won the grand prize at the 10th Suginami Drama Festival.

## Iranian bookstores host “Jonathan & Martha”

Photo: Front cover of the Persian translation of Petr Horacek’s “Jonathan & Martha”.

TEHRAN — A Persian translation of children’s book writer Petr Horacek’s “Jonathan & Martha” has been published in Tehran.

The book translated by Hamid Pirhadi has been released by the Elmi Farhangi Publishing Company under the title of “Mr. Orange & Mrs. Orange”.

The book, also illustrated by Horacek, tells the story of Jonathan and Martha, two lonely orange worms that live on opposite sides of a tree. One day, a big juicy pear lands on the ground between

them. Jonathan nibbles from the left, and Martha from the right... and soon they are caught in a tangle.

Using his signature style of eye-catching illustration, collage and a simple narrative, Horacek weaves together a story that captures the essence of friendship.

“Jonathan & Martha” is a classic story that teaches children and adults about the importance of sharing.

Horacek grew up in Prague and trained as a graphic designer, illus-

trator and painter.

He has written and illustrated many books for children, including “Animal Opposites”, “Strawberries Are Red” and “The Greedy Goat”. He lives in England.

Horacek has experience entertaining audiences of all ages from tiny children to groups of adults.

He delivers highly visual talks featuring readings from his picture books, showing the illustrations and sketches he has made for them, as well as explaining how he develops his ideas.