

American Politician Implicitly Confirms Tehran Times Report



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Interview



Israel has established its presence on Yemeni islands: Yemeni ambassador

By Ali A. Jenabzadeh

TEHRAN – Yemen's ambassador to Tehran, Ibrahim Mohammad Mohammad al-Deilami, confirms Israel's presence in Yemeni territories, especially in a number of strategic islands.

"There is also an Israeli presence, especially in Yemeni territorial waters and some strategic islands, whether on Hanish Island, Mayun Island or even on Socotra Island in the Arabian Sea," al-Deilami tells the Tehran Times.

Although Saudi Arabia is known for its leading role in the war on Yemen, Israel's presence backed by American-British green light no longer is hidden.

"This is no longer a secret as the aggressors have recognized the presence of their forces on Yemeni soil. This is not hidden and there is no attempt to cover it up by the aggressor countries," the Yemeni ambassador says.

Some Yemeni sources accuse the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia of letting Israel on the Yemeni islands.

The Yemeni ambassador to Tehran says expelling all foreign forces from Yemeni territories is an important pre-condition to reach a political agreement on the crisis in his country.

"Therefore, one of the most important items presented to the United Nations envoy and everyone looking for a political solution was the necessity of expelling foreign forces from Yemeni lands," he insisted.

Following is the text of the interview:

Q: Recently we have heard a lot about the developments and battles in Marib, Al-Bayda and other areas in Yemen. Could you update us about the latest developments on the ground, especially the battle of Marib and the balance of power on the ground?

A: I would like to emphasize that the battle is not confined to Marib and Al-Bayda. Rather, there are many battlefields that their number reach fifty areas in various parts of Yemen, in which the Yemeni army and the popular committees fight against aggression.

The Yemenis are trying to deter the aggressors and confront the mercenary militias, whether they are Sudanese or Yemeni militias supported by Emirati-Saudi presence, especially on the border fronts. Therefore, the recent hype about Marib is the result of focus on this region in the international media.

But we in the Republic of Yemen, according to the military plans carried out by the army, the popular committees and the Yemeni armed forces, are now going through the third phase of the plan to liberate the Marib Governorate.

This province, as you know, embraces fourteen districts, and the number of liberated districts reaches more than nine, while the battles remain confined to approximately three districts. ▶ **Page 5**

Report



Battle for Afghan's Panjshir heats up

Fighting has escalated between the Taliban and an alliance of forces opposed to the group vying to control the isolated Panjshir Valley north of the capital Kabul, the last Afghan province holding out against the Taliban forces. The escalation comes amid a warning by the top U.S. general of "civil war" if the Taliban fail to consolidate power.

Both sides claim to have the upper hand in Panjshir but neither have been able to produce conclusive evidence to back up their claims. Both sides also claim to have inflicted heavy losses on each other.

The Taliban, which swept through the country ahead of the final withdrawal of U.S.-led forces this week, were unable to control the valley when they ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001.

Taliban spokesman Bilal Karimi says the districts of Khinj and Anabah had been taken, giving Taliban forces control of four of the province's seven districts.

Karimi wrote on social media "the Taliban forces are advancing towards the centre (of the province)"

This is while the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan, grouping forces including former Afghan army personnel, loyal to local leader Ahmad Massoud, says it surrounded "thousands of militants" in the area of Khawak pass. ▶ **Page 5**



© Getty Images

TEHRAN – The U.S.'s chaotic and messy withdrawal from Afghanistan and its mishandling of Iran's nuclear dossier have sent shockwaves through the world. U.S. reliability and credibility have been questioned by friends and foes alike.

When the United States led a military campaign comprised of mainly Western nations against the

Taliban in 2001, the war was conceived mainly as a collective action under the "leadership" of the U.S. The Europeans sleepwalked into a destructive war that was bound to end disastrously based on miscalculations that war per se can change the course of Afghanistan's history.

Ironically, these kinds of miscalculations were largely

a product of the U.S. intelligence community that failed to understand the dynamics of a society known for its long history of being the graveyard of empires.

Throughout the Afghan war, the Europeans refused to grasp what was in the making all along: The U.S. does away with its allies as easily as flinging a crumpled newspaper into the fire. ▶ **Page 3**

PBO intends to amend next year's budget structure

TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) has said his organization is going to change the structure of the next fiscal year's national budget for the better, following the guidelines of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyyed Ali Khamenei on the matter.

Speaking in the first meeting of the heads of provincial Planning and Budget Departments, which was held online, Masoud Mirkazemi said: "The Leader emphasizes on changing the structure of the budget bill and making it more effective, therefore, it is not

in the interest of the country to continue the current trend, and the budget structure should be reviewed."

"The budget shapes the economy and guarantees the country's great goals," he added. The official noted that PBO is also preparing the country's Seventh National Development Plan, saying: "Change is a necessity and it must be wise and systematic."

Mirkazemi further noted that the main emphasis in the preparation of the next year's budget bill will be on achieving economic growth.

"We determine the share of each sector in the budget and allocate them resources so that it will be easier for the government to monitor their performance and ensure the realization of the country's economic goals," he explained.

Noting that the country's first priority is to reform the structure of the economy the official continued: "We must move in a way that reduces the pressure on people's lives. We need to improve people's livelihood by making our resources more efficient." ▶ **Page 4**

MP says Iran fuel shipment to break U.S. siege on Lebanon

TEHRAN – A Lebanese parliamentarian has said the American financial, economic and political siege has started to break with the forthcoming arrival of the first Iranian ship loaded with fuel to Lebanon.

"As the Lebanese are preparing to receive Iranian fuel with the arrival of the first ship, the doors of the American blockade have begun to break, and options are opened for Lebanon to alleviate the impact of its crisis, after the American administration was forced to back down from its threats and maximum pressure in the face of the will of the Lebanese people," Hassan Fadlallah said in a statement on Saturday.

He added that the U.S. administration tried to use the siege to impose its will on Lebanon, before it came to realize the negative and reverse impacts of its failed policies.

It did not take into account the facts pertaining to Lebanon until it suffered a new political defeat in the face of the declared policy that the Iranian ship is considered Lebanese territory, he added. ▶ **Page 2**



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Javanmardi carries flag for Iran at Paralympics closing ceremony

TOKYO – Shooter Sareh Javanmardi carried flag for Iran in the 2020 Paralympic Games closing ceremony. The closing ceremony was held in the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo Sunday night. Iran sent 62 athletes to the Games in 10 sports and won 12 golds, 11 silvers and one bronze. Iran finished in 13th place in the 2020 Paralympic Games.

60 properties in Khorasan Razavi made national heritage

TEHRAN – A selection of 60 historical sites, aging structures, and natural sites which are located in Khorasan Razavi province have been inscribed on Iran's national heritage list.

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

Archaeological hills, historical mansions, old mosques, traditional ice storages (yakhchals), cisterns, public bathhouses, and petroglyphs were

among the properties added to the magnificent list.

The history of Khorasan stretches back to very ancient times. It was part of the Achaemenian Empire of the 6th to 4th century BC and the Parthian empire, which spanned from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century CE, according to Britannica.

Khorasan, literally meaning "Land of the Sun", was first named by the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE. After the Arab conquest in 651–652 CE, the name was retained both as the designation of a definite

province and in a looser sense. At first, the Arabs used the area as a march or garrisoned frontier, but soon large colonies of Arabs moved in, especially around Merv, and a meld of Islamic and eastern Iranian cultures ensued.

Later Khorasan regained virtual independence under the Tahirid, Saffarid, and Samanid dynasties (821–999). Successively it formed part of the Ghaznavid, Seljuk, and Khwarezm-Shah kingdoms but was overrun by Genghis Khan in 1220 and again by Timur (Tamerlane) about 1383. ▶ **Page 6**

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Report



From nanotechnology to solar power: solutions to drought

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – While the drought has intensified in Iran and the country is facing water stress, various solutions from the use of solar power plants to the expansion of watershed management and nanotechnology are offered by experts and officials.

Iran is located in an arid and semi-arid region, and Iranians have long sought to make the most of water.

In recent years, the drought has intensified making water resources fragile and it can be said that we have reached water bankruptcy in Iran.

However, water stress will continue this fall (September 23-December 21), and the season is expected to be relatively hot and short of rain, according to Ahad Vazifeh, head of the national center for drought and crisis management.

In such a situation, officials and experts propose various solutions for optimal water management.

Alireza Qazizadeh, a water and environment expert, referring to 80 percent of the arid regions in the country, said that "Iran has one percent of the earth's area and receives only 36 percent of renewable resources.

The country receives 250 mm of rainfall annually, which is about 400 billion cubic meters, considering 70 percent evaporation, there is only 130 billion cubic meters of renewable water and 13 billion cubic meters of input from border waters."

Referring to 800 ml of average rainfall and 700 mm of global evaporation, he noted that 70 percent of rainfall in Iran occurs in only 25 percent of the country and only 25 percent rains in irrigation seasons.

Pointing to the need for 113 billion cubic meters of water in the current year (began on March 21), he stated that "of this amount, 102 billion is projected for agricultural use, 7 percent for drinking and 2 percent for industry, and at this point water stress occurs." ▶ **Page 7**

Leader praises novel "Twenty Years Later"

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has praised "Twenty Years Later", a novel written about the reign of Muawiah I, the founder and first caliph of the Umayyad Caliphate.

In a note published by the Leader's office on Sunday, he wrote, "Send my regards to the writer... and also thank the writer and the publisher."

The leader called the novel "a strong and highly compelling historical love story," which "has been well produced." Written by Salman Kadiyar, the novel was first published in 2019 by Shahrestane Adab.

The novel begins with the imamate of Imam Ali (AS), which led to the Ashura uprising.

In this novel, Kadiyar intends to answer this question, "Why was Imam Hussein (AS) killed?"

The novel uncovers the evil plots developed by Muawiah to maintain his government in Damascus.

He takes the readers to alleys in Damascus, which were once under the Romans' rule, and now the Umayyads treat the same as the Romans did in the name of Islam.

The novel also explains the endeavors the Umayyad pursued to keep people away from the teachings of pure Islam, which had been replaced with an Umayyad version of Islam. ▶ **Page 8**

Pakistan and Iran should work for peaceful and united Afghanistan

By Ambreen Gul Shahid (Press & Education Counsellor)

As in Iran, the sudden fall of Kabul to the Taliban has come as a surprise in Pakistan. But there are many who argue that the hasty withdrawal of U.S. forces has left a power vacuum in Afghanistan emboldening the Taliban to take over the country, as former President Ashraf Ghani and his coterie fled the country.

After spending more than 2 trillion dollars and thousands of lives lost, the U.S. and its Western allies failed to address the basic governance failures and massive corruption in Afghanistan. They also failed to realize that 40 years of continual conflict and violence had left ordinary Afghans exhausted and with no appetite at all for further bloodshed.

After all, it is Afghans themselves who have suffered the most, irrespective of whichever side or group they belonged to.

Pakistan and Iran have suffered the most in decades-long conflict in Afghanistan. Both the countries have been hosting millions of Afghan refugees with their own limited resources. There were also other problems that Pakistan and Iran are still facing such as narcotics, drugs and human trafficking.

Despite its negative fallout and challenges, Pakistan has always extended maximum facilitation to the Afghan people and has been a proud partner in their development. A peaceful and stable Afghanistan is in the interest of Pakistan, and a central pillar of our policy on Afghanistan.

Since the beginning, Pakistan has consistently upheld that there was no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and the only way forward was a negotiated political settlement. Pakistan shuns human rights violations anywhere in the world whether it be Palestine, Kashmir or Afghanistan. It has always played the role of a facilitator in bringing peace to the country and

supports the developmental gains of the past 20 years in Afghanistan particularly in the areas of human rights, education and women's empowerment.

As a next-door neighbor, Pakistan is cognizant of the fact that chaos, instability and civil war in Afghanistan would have serious implications on the security and stability of the neighborhood. Suffering more than 80,000 casualties and \$150 billion losses to the economy, Pakistan is the only country after Afghanistan to have borne the major consequences of the conflict. Over the past 20 years, Islamabad has witnessed bloody attacks by terrorist organizations stationed in Afghanistan and its soil being used in launching activities against Pakistan.

Since the 1990s, Pakistan has continued to urge the international community to remain engaged in the efforts to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan. While the prospects of a civil war in Afghanistan appear to have been averted, continued regional and international support are of paramount importance to ensure that dialogue among various Afghan factions continues. Pakistan has consistently held that it has no favorites in Afghanistan. It supports an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive negotiated political settlement through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process as the only solution for lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has called upon the international community to make efforts for an inclusive, participatory political dispensation in Afghanistan. As we move forward, it is important to be aware of "spoilers" within and outside Afghanistan, who would work to destabilize the situation and negate any positive outcome for Afghanistan and its people. Pakistan and Iran, being the direct neighbors, should work towards achieving a peaceful, stable, united and prosperous Afghanistan in the interest of regional peace, economic integration and connectivity.



A traffic jam caused by cars lining up for fuel is seen in Damour, Lebanon on 21 August 2021.

Jordan and gas from Egypt.

Four U.S. senators who had visited Beirut told Lebanese officials on September 1 that the United States was eager to help that country tackle its fuel shortages but warned against Beirut seeking to import Iranian oil to alleviate the problem. The Democratic senators claimed that turning to Iranian supplies could have "severely damaging consequences."

At a news conference on August 23, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said "we sell our oil and its products based on our own decisions and the needs of our friend. Iran is ready to send fuel again to Lebanon if needed."

Khatibzadeh added, "Certainly, we cannot see the suffering of the Lebanese people."

Syria has agreed to help crisis-hit Lebanon by allowing gas and electricity transit through its territory, an official said on Saturday during the first high-level visit from Beirut to Damascus since the war erupted in Syria 10 years ago.

Analysts have said the daring move by Iran has forced Washington to allow Lebanon to import gas from Egypt and electricity from Jordan using Syrian infrastructure despite the fact that U.S. has imposed sanctions against the Damascus government.

Analysts also say Iranian fuel shipments to Lebanon pose a new challenge for U.S. President Joe Biden.

In a televised program hosted by Al-Manar network on Thursday evening, Iranian Ambassador to Beirut Mohammad Jalal Firouznia said Tehran is ready to build power plants in Lebanon.

According to the Al-Akhbar newspaper, quoting Al-Manar, the ambassador first addressed the issue of Iran's fuel shipments to Lebanon and said the Islamic Republic will not allow the U.S. to keep the Lebanese in starvation through brutal and illegal sanctions.

Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, an ally of Hezbollah and one of the most powerful figures in the state, has said he welcomed any support, including from Iran, to help Lebanon get through its fuel crisis.

In a Friday phone call with Gebran Bassil, the former Lebanese minister of foreign affairs and leader of the Free Patriotic Movement, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said Tehran is ready to sell more fuel to the Lebanese government and businessmen if need be.

Abdollahian said Iran sets no limitation to the expansion of relations with Lebanon and is ready to sell more fuel production to "new customers."

American politician implicitly confirms Tehran Times report

TEHRAN — Mark Dubowitz, one of the people who knew about the secret group titled "Group on Iran Policy," has implicitly confirmed in a tweet the existence of such a group by saying he is "honored" to be part of it.

In a report titled "Group on Iran Policy" on Saturday, the Tehran Times revealed that the Biden administration was working with a number of Iran hawks in Washington to "set out a plan to destroy the Vienna talks in case they are resumed."

"The U.S. special envoy for Iran, Rob Malley, has been in touch with a vague, secret team of former Trump officials and Iran experts at conservative think tanks. The hush-hush team, known among its members as 'Group on Iran Policy,' includes Trump Iran envoy El-jot Abrams, former diplomat and Distinguished Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy Dennis Ross, and managing director at the Washington Institute Michael Singh, the Tehran Times can reveal," the report said.

Soon after the report was published on the Tehran Times website on Friday night, Jason Brodsky, Senior Middle East Analyst & Editor at Iran International, a news network founded and funded by the Saudi regime, posted a screenshot of a segment of a report tweeting, "All the usual caveats apply,



but Tehran Times is clearly eyeing the reports that the @StateDept #Iran team is expanding, and now it claims it has seen 'documents' revealing."

As reported, the Tehran Times has obtained documents, revealing the intentions behind the foundation of the group.

"According to documents seen by the Tehran Times, the group's existence and meetings as well as discussions were meant to be secret and off the record, even though many other Iran hawks such as Ray Takeyh, Hasib

J. Sabbagh senior fellow for Middle East studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), and Mark Dubowitz, CEO of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, were already in the know about the formation of the group," it said.

The report also indicated that a number of Republican figures such as Abrams, John Bolton, and Dubowitz reinforced this belief "by supporting Trump's decision to scupper the 2015 nuclear deal."

The report caught the attention

of Mark Dubowitz. Early on Sunday morning, Dubowitz tweeted, "Honored to be part of the 'machinations of the scheming group' to defeat the regime in Iran. 'In fact, there are already indications that the seventh round could be overshadowed by machinations of the scheming group,' the report added."

The tweet implicitly confirmed what was reported by the Tehran Times. The chutzpah in the tweet, however, reveals the enmity of Washington with Iran.

With this implicit confirmation, the question remains: "Can the U.S. be trusted in the Vienna negotiations?"

Change of approach

After the Tehran Times disclosed the secret group, its members were dumbfounded. Richard Goldberg tweeted on Sunday, "The usual dance to see if Biden and E3 will once again back away from holding Iran accountable at the IAEA board meeting. Fool me once shame on you; fool me three times shame on Malley."

The tweet was retweeted by Dubowitz. This shows that the members of Group on Iran Policy are stunned. The dispute among the members is clear.

It seems that the group has begun to change and adopt their strategies.

Negotiations and pressure don't go together: Raisi

TEHRAN — Speaking in his first live TV interview on Saturday night, President Ebrahim Raisi stated that Iran is not opposed to the principle of negotiations, however, negotiations under pressure is meaningless.

"Negotiations is an option as a tool for diplomacy, but negotiation under pressure and threats is not acceptable at all," the president insisted.

He added that dialogue has already been tested but it has not worked, referring to the "maximum pressure" policy that Donald Trump exercised against Iran during his presidency.

"Americans and Europeans have experienced that dialogue with pressure don't go together," he noted.

One year after Trump quit the 2015 nuclear deal and returned sanctions Iran started to gradually remove cap on its nuclear activities.

Raisi underscored that the issue of nuclear talks is still on the agenda, but negotiations must be fruitful.

"The focus of our talks is the interests of the Iranian people and the complete lifting of sanctions, from which we will not take a step back," the president highlighted.

"We will not hesitate to talk and negotiate in any way, but what Westerners and Americans want is dialogue under pressure. Does that mean dialogue? If pressure is to be on the side of dialogue, what kind of dialogue is this?" he asked.

"American presence is a threat to security"

On the status of the Iranian government's position on the ongoing developments in Afghanistan, the president said, "Afghanistan has really suffered a great deal. With the invasion of Afghanistan by the Americans and foreign countries, this country has been oppressed for years and Afghan children got injured and disabled every day."

The U.S. invaded Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime in 2001 for hosting Osama bin Laden whom Washington considered the chief architect behind the September 11 terrorist attacks. However, after 20 years the U.S. was forced to leave the country in disgrace last month.

President Raisi said during these 20 years of occupation international bodies have announced that more than 30,000 Afghan children have been injured or maimed.

Many homes have been destroyed and the people of Afghanistan have been severely affected, the president added, referring to the real culprit of these sufferings, the United States.

"Today, in Iran alone, we host more than 3 million Af-

ghans who have been displaced from their homeland," he underlined.

Raisi continued by saying that the issue of Afghanistan has shown that the presence of the Americans not only does not create security anywhere, but also undermines security.

"The United States has committed human rights abuses in Afghanistan and actions that definitely need to be analyzed and pursued (by human rights experts)," he remarked.

The president added that the solution to the Afghanistan issue is the establishment of a government "based on people's vote."

According to Raisi, the Islamic Republic has always favored the establishment of peace in Afghanistan, to stop the bloodshed and fratricide in Afghanistan and to the point where the will of the people would rule in this country.

"We support a government that is based on the will of the people of Afghanistan, and this is a requirement of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic (of Iran). The government that emerged from the popular vote in Afghanistan can certainly have very good relations with the Islamic Republic," he said.

Raisi stated that "Afghanistan's security is Iran's security" and Iran considers not only Afghanistan but also the security and peace of all the neighboring countries as its own security.

The president also highlighted his slogan of promoting ties with neighbors. "Strengthening relations with the neighbors is a focal issue and priority of Iran's foreign policy"

The president said that in the period since the beginning of the official activity of his government, he has had more than 50 meetings and talks in person or over the phone with the leaders of different countries. "In all these talks, I have always emphasized the interaction of Islamic Iran with different countries as the most central point"

Raisi continued that Iran hopes that peace will prevail in Afghanistan as soon as possible and that the people of Afghanistan will feel that a government based on their vote has been formed "based on the views of all groups and ethnicities active in Afghanistan."

Regarding interventions by foreigners in the affairs of Afghanistan, Raisi warned them not to seek to "infiltrate" Afghanistan.

"Foreigners want to oppress the Afghan people again.

Afghan officials made strategic mistake by trusting U.S., Qalibaf says

TEHRAN - The Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, Mohamed Bagher Ghalibaf, said on Sunday that the trust of some former Afghan officials in the United States to bring progress and security to their country was a "strategic mistake."

On August 15 the Taliban took control of Kabul, ending 20 years of ruling by the U.S.-backed governments in Afghanistan.

"Analysts around the world with different point of views analyze the humiliating escape of the U.S. military as a clear symbol of the decline of the U.S. international power," Ghalibaf said in an open session of the parliament, Tasnim reported.

"Abandoning the country by the U.S.-puppet government in Afghanistan and the Taliban's takeover across the country without facing any resistance which is the result of widespread dissatisfaction with 20 years of U.S. occupation and sluggishness on the part of the U.S. administration, clearly demonstrated that trust of some Afghan officials in the U.S. to bring progress and security to their country was a strategic mistake," Ghalibaf stated.

The speaker said 20 years of ruling by the U.S.-backed governments, despite all the slogans and expectations, not only did not make any tangible progress in economic development or public welfare, but also the most basic needs of a civil society and security were not met.

Qalibaf reiterated Iran's position on the need to establish an inclusive government in Afghanistan with the involvement of all religious and ethnic groups.

"Considering the recent developments, the Iranian nation underscores upholding the religious and human rights of the Afghan people of all races, languages, religions and establishing lasting security in Afghanistan, and ultimately the will of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be the will of the Afghan people," the top parliamentarian stated.

"We remain hopeful and sensitive to the future of this dear neighbor," the high-ranking official highlighted, adding, "The Islamic Republic of Iran will defend the honorable people of Afghanistan in the face of possible attempts by foreign domineering powers to create insecurity and instability, and their plans in this regard are carefully monitored."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the speaker of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) referred to domestic affairs and thanked the MPs for holding sessions for vote of confidence to the proposed ministers.

"With regular planning for the first time, and holding 275 meetings, all the

ministers participated in the (parliamentary) commissions and factions to get acquainted with the representatives face to face, which played an important role for the representatives to precisely review the ministers' programs."

The top MP underlined that after a few busy days in a timely manner and orderly environment, the vote of confidence was finalized.

"To accelerate the formation of the cabinet, the representatives gave the maximum vote to the proposed cabinet in order to pave the way for the formation of a strong administration. The first step of the Majlis in interaction with the administration was taken with good will, and the Majlis was determined to help formation of the cabinet in due time from the very first day," Ghalibaf reiterated.

Tehran's representative in the parliament stated that the president and members of the cabinet in the first week of their responsibilities vigorously showed their seriousness in forming a people-oriented administration and raised hope in the society.

The speaker added the parliament will support the government in meeting the

people's expectations amid the Covid-19 pandemic and the devaluation of national currency.

"The parliament will help the administration in addressing the basic issues of the people, especially those that have a direct impact on their current lives, such as dealing with health and livelihood problems caused by Covid-19 disease..., preserving the value of the national currency, the supply of essential commodities at affordable prices, economic stability and attention to under-developed areas," Qalibaf explained.

He also said the parliament is ready to assist the Raisi administration to meet the interests of people, as well as to oversight compassionately the administration's responsibilities to address possible weaknesses.

The speaker also pointed to the remarks of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution regarding justice in a meeting last week with the president and members of the cabinet.

"The roadmap set by the Leader with regard to justice is among the Leader's recommendations which will be addressed by the Majlis in legislating, and as we will pay attention to this issue in with more sensitivity and precision in legislation, especially in approving the next year's budget and the Seventh Development Plan," he explained.

MP says Iran fuel shipment to break U.S. siege on Lebanon

From page 1 ► "The cargo of this ship will be a precise bullet that will break the financial, economic and political siege imposed on our people, especially as it will reach those who need it through a transparent and publicized mechanism in which there is no place for monopolists, smugglers, policy brokers and American investment associations, who traffic in people's pain," Fadlallah said, Press TV reported.

Apart from providing Lebanon with its needed fuel, the MP said, the shipment challenged U.S. self-proclaimed right to decide on Lebanon's official relations with Syria, and its prevention of Lebanon's electricity and gas imports through Syria.

"It is the veto that we have long demanded to challenge because submitting to it causes severe harm to Lebanon's economy and national interests," the lawmaker said.

Fadlallah added that Hezbollah's humanitarian initiative is one of the many cards of strength that the resistance possesses to defend the rights of the Lebanese people to a decent life.

It also constituted an unexpected surprise for the U.S. administration which revealed the hollow policy of intimidation with sanctions that does not work, he noted.

The first ship containing Iranian fuel reportedly entered Syria's territorial waters on Thursday to unload its cargo, which will be then transferred to Lebanon via tankers. Informed sources said that two other Iranian ships will also deliver their cargo to Lebanon through the same mechanism.

According to Reuters, the oil will be trucked to Lebanon, with the first priority being to deliver fuel oil to hospitals for power generation.

Quoting a source on September 3, the Middle East Eye said, "Choosing to receive the vessel via Syria is not related to any fear of targeting by Israel or the U.S., but is due to internal considerations related to not wanting to implicate any allies."

Fuel shortages in Lebanon have forced businesses and government offices to close, threatening to cause blackouts at hospitals and halt transportation and other vital sectors in the country.

The World Bank has described Lebanon's economic crisis as one of the world's most severe since the 1850s. Its currency has crashed as the central bank's foreign reserves dried up, leading to crippling shortages of medicine and fuel.

The plan to buy Iranian fuel announced by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of the Hezbollah resistance movement on August 19, is seen as a watershed in the U.S. sanctions, which have severely affected Lebanon and Iran alike.

In his announcement, Nasrallah warned the U.S. and Israel that Hezbollah would consider the tanker and next Iranian ships as "Lebanese territory" from the moment they sail. He later stressed that the Lebanese resistance group did not have any political aspirations by importing fuel from Iran.

The announcement by Nasrallah 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 informing him of the U.S. administration's decision to help Lebanon import electricity from

From Page 1 ► Having felt a sense of “we’re all in this together,” the Europeans continued to toe the American line in Afghanistan only to discover in broad daylight that the U.S. has left them facing the geopolitical implications of its disorderly withdrawal from the Afghan quagmire.

The European Union foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, should be credited with this discovery. In an interview with the Italian daily Corriere Della Sera, Borrell called on the European Union to learn a lesson from the crisis in Afghanistan and boost its own military capacity and strategic autonomy.

Underlining that the recent developments in Afghanistan are a “catastrophe,” the EU foreign policy chief said, “It’s a failure of the Western world and it’s a game-changer for international relations.”

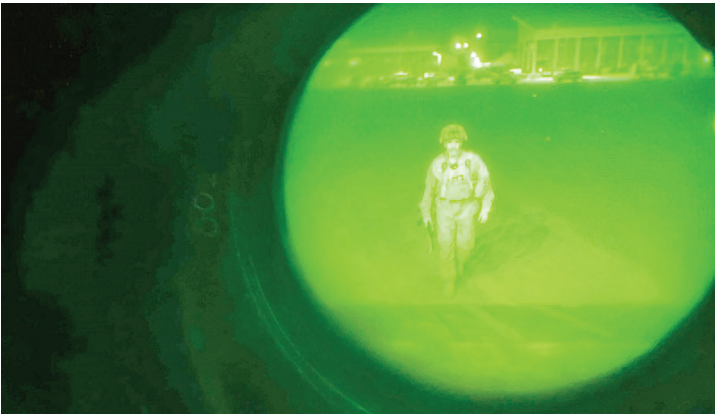
He admitted that there was “a certain disengagement of the U.S. in the world arena” that shed light on the necessity to strengthen the EU’s own capacity to act in times of crisis.

But this assessment was a long time coming at least since 2018 when the U.S., in an early snub to the idea of “we’re all in this together,” withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), despite repeated calls by the Europeans not to do so.

During the Trump years in office, the Europeans thought that could get the U.S. back into compliance with the JCPOA if they waited out Trump in favor of a Democrat president. Actually, they waited out Trump and hoped that Biden would open a new chapter in transatlantic relations.

Biden, however, fooled the Europeans at every turn, with the recently disclosed secret team on the JCPOA being the latest example of how Biden keeps sidestepping the Europeans in making

Unreliable partner



decisions that are supposed to be collective.

The Tehran Times reported on Saturday that the U.S. special envoy for Iran, Rob Malley, has been in touch with a vague, secret team of former Trump officials and Iran experts at conservative think tanks. The hush-hush team, known among its members as “Group on Iran Policy,” includes Trump Iran envoy Eliot Abrams, former diplomat and Distinguished Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy Deniss Ross, and managing director at the Washington Institute Michael Singh, the Tehran Times said.

According to documents seen by the Tehran Times, the group’s existence and meetings as well as discussions were meant to be secret and off the record, even though many other Iran hawks such as Ray Takeyh, Hasib J. Sabbagh senior fellow for Middle East studies

at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), and Mark Dubowitz, CEO of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, were already in the know about the formation of the group.

This group showed that the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan was not advertently improvisational. The U.S.’s ignorance of the interests of its European allies has become a pattern in American foreign policy. A sense of abandonment has emerged among U.S. allies across the globe. From Taiwan to the Persian Gulf region’s Arab states, American allies began to cast doubt on the reliability of the United States.

“Lesson learned: Who can trust the United States anymore?” read a headline in Al-Arab newspaper. The London-based newspaper, which is believed to be close to the United Arab Emirates, said, “With the last American planes leaving the capital, Kabul,

policymakers’ thoughts must turn to the future and how to deal with and rely on a new reality in the relationship with the United States.”

The Financial Times quoted an Arab foreign minister, who described him as a veteran, remarking that the main problem is the dependence of Arabs on foreigners, and then, when foreigners change their policies, we are lost.

“Can we attribute all this escalation of rapprochement, at least in the Arab and regional environment, to what the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden did in Afghanistan?” Al-Arab asked, adding that the U.S. “broke promises of twenty years, squandered billions, lost thousands of its soldiers, and then fled in terror!”

Tariq al-Hamid, former editor-in-chief of the Saudi-owned Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper, echoed similar concerns. “If the unilateral U.S. position to withdraw from Afghanistan has worried America’s most important ally, Europe, and NATO, then it is a fortiori that the latest U.S. behavior should be a cause for concern for all moderate Arab countries, as well as the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council countries,” he wrote in an article for the Saudi newspaper.

U.S. allies in the region have sensed the danger of being abandoned by Washington. Some believe that the U.S. “humiliating escape” from Afghanistan would serve as a wake-up call for those who still pin hope on Washington to protect them.

“The humiliating escape from Afghanistan has even made Americans & Israelis admit the U.S. demise, but some vassal states feel too helpless to grasp the new order & its requirements. Yet, sooner or later they’ll be forced to learn,” Seyed Mostafa Khoshcheshm, an Iranian journalist and analyst, said on Twitter amid uproar over U.S. disorderly evacuations from Kabul’s airport.

Iran finish 2020 Paralympics in 13th place

TOKYO – Iran delegation came 13th in the 2020 Paralympic Games with a total of 24 gold medals.

The Iranian para athletes won historic 12 gold medals as well as 11 silvers and one bronze.

Iran sent 62 athletes to Tokyo in 10 sports.

The Persians finished in 15th place in 2016 with 24 medals after winning eight golds, nine silvers and seven bronzes.



The Paralympics consisted of 539 medal events across 22 sports. Taekwondo and badminton were added to the games for the first time.

China, which will host the Beijing Winter Games in February, is top of the medal table by a big margin, followed by Britain, the United States and the Russian Paralympic Committee, with some events remaining on the final day.

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

- Gold medal winners:
- Rouhollah Rostami – powerlifting
 - Vahid Nouri – judo
 - Mohammad Reza Kheirollahzade – judo
 - Amir Khosravani – long jump
 - Mahdi Olad – shot put
 - Hashemiyeh Motaghian – javelin throw
 - Sareh Javanmardi - shooting
 - Saeid Afrooz – javelin throw
 - Zahra Nemati – archery
 - Hamed Amiri – javelin throw
 - Asghar Azizi Aghdam – taekwondo
 - Iran sitting volleyball team
- Silver medal winners:
- Amir Jafari – powerlifting
 - Hamed Solhipour – powerlifting
 - Mansour Pourmirzaei – powerlifting
 - Ali Pirouj – javelin throw
 - Sadegh Beyt Sayah – javelin throw
 - Amanollah Papi – javelin throw
 - Alireza Mokhtari – shot put
 - Sajad Mohammadian – shot put
 - Mahdi Olad – discus throw
 - Ramezan Biabani – archery
 - Mahdi Pourrahnama – taekwondo
- Bronze medal winner:
- Saman Razi – powerlifting

Iran’s Motaghian happy for her great success

TEHRAN – Iranian javelin thrower Hashemiyeh Motaghian says that she is lost for words after her great success in the 2020 Paralympic Games.

Motaghian won the gold medal in the women’s javelin throw - F56 with a World record throw of 24.50m.

She became the first Iranian woman athlete to win a gold medal in athletics.

“I don’t know what to say, I’m lost for words. There was so much going through my mind I can’t tell. You don’t know how much this gold means to me and my family and the country as a whole,” said a thrilled Motaghian.

Motaghian, who was participating in her second Paralympic Games, missed out of the podium spot in Rio 2016 and that fourth-place finish was hurting her a lot.

“Rio was my first Games, but I was so close to winning a medal there. I didn’t want to miss out on it again in Tokyo. I gave my everything out there. It was hot and humid, but I kept my focus going. I would say all my hard work paid off,” said Motaghian, who started with throws of 22.94m, 22.98m before coming up with a sensational throw of 24.50m on

the third. She was seen screaming her heart out on realizing that she had set the world record.

Motaghian has been lucky to have a family that has stood like a rock behind her all the way through. And understandably she was all praise for them.

“This medal is first for my family, brothers, sisters, my parents, especially my mother. Thanks to her for treating me normal and providing me all the support that I wanted. Our government and everyone associated with Para sport in Iran has been equally deserving for all the praise. Had it not been for each one of them, I wouldn’t be here,” said Motaghian, who urged everyone to believe that their kids are capable of doing anything and just back them up.

“I’m glad today that I set an example and it will open doors for many kids out there back home. Most of us keep complaining about what we have lost or about our physical disabilities. I would say if you are mentally strong then you can achieve anything. The first thing that one need to do is get that sadness out of your life and find ways to move on and excel. The will to do something and being happy and cheerful is most important.”

Though Motaghian is thrilled about the prospect of the grand ceremony she is expecting back home, she was quick to reveal that more is still to come.

“I’m looking forward to the welcome that we will receive and meeting my family. It’s going to be a special moment and I want to cherish that for life. Then I will be starting my training in a few days and will keep pushing hard and try to set new bench marks.

“The Asian Games next would be perfect stage to build on this success before looking ahead to Paris,” said Motaghian beaming with confidence.

Iran continue cementing their position in sitting volleyball

TEHRAN -The gold medal went to reigning Paralympic and world champions Iran, cementing their position as the most successful sitting volleyball team in history.

RPC were the only team to win a set against the Iranians at the Tokyo 2020. “Today we won one set but this is just one game. We couldn’t win two or more sets, it just depends on the process of the game. And every team can make mistakes,” said RPC’s Viktor Milenin.

Iran’s key to success includes a rigorous training regime of around 200 days of practice per year. “The first reason (for success) is the unity among the team members.

“When we set a goal as a championship in the Paralympic Games, we need to do that. It is a necessity to try to train more and more when we are at such level,” said Iran’s libero Ramezan Salehi.

The men’s bronze medal match saw Brazil take on two-time Paralympic champions Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia’s appearance in the bronze medal was one of the big upsets of the Games. Before Tokyo, the team was always in the final against Iran, with the winners swapping every cycle for the last 21 years. However, in the pool play the RPC team best Bosnia to send them into a semi-final collision course with their biggest rivals. Iran overcame them in the semi-finals, leading to the bronze medal match placement.

Despite being up against one of the greatest sitting volleyball teams, Brazil put up a fight and took the first set, beating the veterans 25 to 23. Bosnia then won each subsequent set to finish the game at 98-72.

Most of Bosnia’s core players are part of the ‘golden generation’ who have notched between four and six Paralympic appearances, and as many medals. Their performance at Tokyo 2020 might prompt a changing of the guard, initiating fresh blood into the team.

“Right now we are facing a problem with the younger generation who need to continue to play for the national team of Bosnia, and we are hoping to find some younger players who can compete at this high level of competition,” said Ermin Jusufovic, who is at his fifth Paralympic Games.

The Brazilian team, who also finished fourth at Rio 2016, now have to wait until Paris 2024 for another shot at a Paralympic medal, but hope to make an impact at the Hangzhou 2022 Sitting Volleyball World Championships.

“I think it can change for next year’s world championship. Brazil need to be in the final. I’m telling the boys, ‘we need to be at the party’, and the party is the final,” said top scorer Gilberto Lourenco da Silva, who delivered 15 of their points.

The Brazilian team were jubilant with maintaining their bronze medal position from Rio 2016. “We knew that their team has developed a lot but we all gave it all on the court and I think that this is the Brazilian spirit. We showed that Brazil is about joy, we played with a lot of happiness and brought home that bronze,” said Edwarda de Oliveira Dias.

Iran FM discusses Afghanistan with Pakistani diplomat

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has received many phone calls from foreign counterparts and officials in which developments in Afghanistan have been discussed in some of these calls.

Abdollahian and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi discussed the latest developments in Afghanistan over the phone on Saturday.

The call came amid ongoing clashes between the Taliban and resistance groups in the Panjshir Valley.

Pursuant to previous negotiations between Abdollahian and the Russian and Chinese foreign ministers, the top Iranian and Pakistani diplomats agreed that the teleconference of Afghanistan’s neighbors be held at the level of special envoys and foreign ministers within a few days, according to a statement by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Abdollahian also discussed the Afghanistan issue in a phone conversation with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi.

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi has congratulated Abdollahian on the beginning of his tenure.

In the phone call, Wang relayed the Chinese president’s regards to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian president.

The top Chinese diplomat highlighted the key and constructive role of Iran in regional developments, according to a separate statement by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The Chinese foreign minister said Beijing seeks a comprehensive expansion of bilateral ties with Tehran, emphasizing the Chinese president’s serious determination to expand Sino-Iranian relations.

Wang said, “We believe that no international development or obstacle can disrupt the two countries’ stable relations.”

China’s top diplomat also said Beijing is ready to implement bilateral agreements previously reached between the two sides including the 25-year Strategic Cooperation Agreement.

Wang said the two sides should follow up on agreements reached during the phone call between the Iranian and Chinese presidents.

He stressed that the international community has no other options but to combat unilateralism and bullying on the international arena.

Wand went on to announce the dispatch of a large number of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine shots to Iran in September.

The top Iranian diplomat, for his part, stressed the strategic ties between the two sides and the long-running friendship between the two nations.

He thanked China for supporting Iran’s bid to accede to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Abdollahian described the United States’ unilateralism as a threat to global peace and stability, and stressed that it is Iran’s definite policy to oppose certain powers’ intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries including China.

The Iranian foreign minister said ties between the two sides are based on strategic friendship and long-running partnership. He expounded on the priorities of the new Iranian administration including a foreign policy that focuses on Asia, adding that Tehran is determined to expand ties with Beijing in all fields.

Abdollahian said the government and the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic are working diligently to implement the Strategic Cooperation Agreement, and pursuing the plans for the expansion of ties.

He said it is necessary to further speed up Chinese vaccine deliveries in line with the agreement of the



Shah Mahmood Qureshi Hossein Amir Abdollahian

presidents of the two countries and highlighted the importance of this in containing the current outbreak [of the coronavirus] in Iran.

The foreign ministers of Iran and China also stressed the necessity of forming an inclusive government in Afghanistan with the participation of all tribes and groups.

They also emphasized that the fight against terrorism and illegal drug trade is an important priority. Wang and Abdollahian said the flow of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan must not be hindered and the country’s border crossings must remain open.

The two sides stressed that the United States is responsible for the current situation in Afghanistan, and that America played an unconstructive role regarding Afghan people over the past two decades.

The Chinese and Iranian foreign ministers agreed to meet for further talks on the sidelines of the SCO summit.

Iran has called on the Afghans to avoid violence and resolve their disputes through dialogue. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has called on the Afghans to avoid violence and resolve their differences through dialogue amid ongoing clashes in the Panjshir Valley between the Taliban and resistance groups led by Ahamd Massoud.

Referring to the sporadic clashes in Panjshir, Afghanistan, the Foreign Ministry spokesman called on all parties to show restraint and adhere to the principle of dialogue to resolve disputes, and called on Afghan groups to refrain from resorting to violence and fratricide, according to Iran’s state news agency IRNA.

In an interview with IRNA on Friday about the current developments in Afghanistan and the sporadic clashes in Panjshir, Khatibzadeh called on all parties to show restraint and adhere to the principle of dialogue to resolve disputes and reach a mutually acceptable solution.

The spokesman underlined, “The Islamic Republic of Iran is in constant contact with all parties and has made every effort to reduce the suffering of the Afghan people to a minimum. We believe that lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan can only be achieved through genuine intra-Afghan dialogue without the presence and intervention of foreign countries.”

Khatibzadeh said: “Afghanistan today is tired of years of occupation and war and violence, and therefore all groups must avoid the re-use of violence and fratricide.”

Condemning any foreign interference, he noted, “The people of Afghanistan deserve a popular and inclusive government that reflects the demographic and ethnic composition of this country.”

Khatibzadeh stated, “The Islamic Republic of Iran is with the people of Afghanistan in this direction, as it has been for the last 40 years.”

Ahmad Masoud, the son of the late anti-Soviet Mujahideen commander Ahmad Shah Masoud, has established himself in Panjshir Valley, leading a several-thousand-strong force comprised of militias and remnants of the Afghan army and special forces units who are opposed to the Taliban, according to Press TV.

On Saturday night, Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi addressed the situation in Afghanistan during his first live interview.

“The solution to the issue in Afghanistan is the establishment of a government based on people’s vote,” he said.

Ayatollah Raisi continued, “The issue of Afghanistan has shown that the presence of the Americans not only does not create security anywhere, but also undermines security,” according to a readout of the president’s remarks issued by the Iranian presidency.

He added, “Afghanistan has really suffered a great deal. With the oppression of Afghanistan by the Americans and foreign countries, this country has been oppressed for years and Afghan children are injured and disabled every day.”

Ayatollah Raisi noted, “Today, the international community is announcing that more than 30,000 Afghan children have been injured in the past two decades, many homes have been destroyed and the people of Afghanistan have been severely affected. Today, in Iran alone, we host more than 3 million Afghans who have been displaced from their homeland.”

He continued, “The issue of Afghanistan has shown that the presence of the Americans not only does not create security anywhere, but also undermines security. The United States has committed human rights abuses in Afghanistan and actions that definitely need to be analyzed and pursued.”

He said, “The solution to the issue in Afghanistan is the establishment of a government based on people’s vote. The Islamic Republic has always favored the establishment of peace in Afghanistan to stop the bloodshed and fratricide in Afghanistan.”

The president added, “We support a government that is based on the will of the people of Afghanistan, and this is a requirement of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic. The government that emerged from the popular vote in Afghanistan can certainly have very good relations with the Islamic Republic.”

“Afghanistan’s security is Iran’s security”
Ayatollah Raisi went on to say that Iran considers security in Afghanistan as its own.

“Afghanistan’s security is Iran’s security and we consider not only Afghanistan but also the security and peace of all our neighboring countries as our own security and peace and strengthening relations with them is a central issue and priority of Iran’s foreign policy.”

Ayatollah Raisi added Iran hopes that “peace will prevail in Afghanistan as soon as possible and that the dear people of Afghanistan will feel that a government based on their vote has been formed according to the views of all groups and all groups active in Afghanistan.”

The Iranian president also cautioned foreigners not to seek adventures in Afghanistan again and let the people decide for themselves.

“Foreigners should not seek to infiltrate in Afghanistan and want to oppress the Afghan people again. Everyone must allow the people of Afghanistan to decide their own destiny,” said Raisi.

PBO intends to amend next year's budget structure

From page 1 ► In recent years, Iran's national budget bill has been criticized repeatedly for being unrealistic and every year the government has been facing a huge budget deficit which is said to be a result of a defective budget structure.

Back in August, the Head of the Iranian Parliament's Economic Committee 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).

"There is a concern that the budget deficit at the end of the year reaches 250,000 to 300,000 billion toman (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 on August 22.

Monthly cement production stands at 4.5m tons



TEHRAN- Iran produced 4.5 million tons of cement during the previous Iranian calendar month (ended on August 22), the director general of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's Mineral Industries Office announced.

Speaking in a meeting with the Industry Minister Reza Fatemi Amin for exploring issues related to market regulation and promoting exports, Seifollah Amiri said there is no problem in the production and supply of cement in the country, IRNA reported on Sunday.

"Ten regional groups have been formed for assessing and managing the cement market and we have had various meetings with consumers, producers and the operators of Ofogh system [which is a system for monitoring prices of various commodities in the domestic market]," Amiri said.

The official further noted that 10,500 major cement consumers have registered at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) to buy this product, adding: "This figure used to be 5,000 consumers, and if

commodity exchange brokerages are more active in this area the figure will increase even more."

He went on saying that over 62 cement producers are currently offering their products at IME and 52 units are also offering their shares at the Tehran Stock Exchange.

According to Amiri, the measures taken by the government for managing the cement market has caused the prices of this product to decline over the past few months.

Iran's cement industry has a history of more than eight decades of activity. With an annual production capacity of 87 million tons, this industry holds the world's sixth place in terms of production capacity.

Currently, there are 96 cement production lines active in 74 factories across Iran, nearly half of them are less than 10 years old. This is an indication that new production units have a greater share of the total output in this sector.

According to the secretary of Cement Industry Employers Association Abdolreza Sheikhan, Iran produced 68.3 million tons of cement during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) and the annual output can reach over 70 million tons in the current year.

The country's annual cement consumption stands at about 65 million tons and the annual exports of the commodity chain are over 11 million tons.

Neighboring countries are not only the consumers of Iranian cement but also demand the transfer of the cement industry's technology to their countries.

IRHF ready to build up to 250,000 housing units in a year

TEHRAN- The deputy head of Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation (IRHF) has announced that the foundation is prepared to construct 200,000-250,000 housing units in the framework of the National Housing Action Plan and other new housing plans for building one million housing units in the country.

"In the National Housing Action Plan, it was decided that the government would build 400,000 housing units, of which the share of the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation was set at 138,000 units, and so far, we have got land from the National Land and Housing Organization for 73,000 units", Javad Haqshenas stated.

About 53,000 applicants who registered and their files were investigated were approved and introduced to the bank, and this number also paid the initial amount, he added.

"We are ready to carry out our duties according to the plans of the new minister of transport and urban development", the official further stressed.

The deputy speaker of the parliament has recently said that by using the land, facilities and the capacity of the private sector, it is possible to build one million housing units in the country.

Speaking in a TV interview on August 29, Ali Nikzad referred to the plan for surge in housing construction, and said that the MPs presented the plan to the parliament, which became law yesterday.

He continued by pointing out that this

plan is very progressive; in this plan, the issue of land and the transfer of government lands to the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development was accelerated.

Also, the deputy Head of Iran's Mass Construction Association Iraj Rahbar has recently said the country's contractors are capable of constructing one million housing units a year if the necessary funding and land is provided.

Mentioning a plan for the construction of one million affordable housing units per year by the new government, Rahbar said: "allocating land and financing are two important factors for the successful implementation of any housing project, and if these two are provided, building one million housing units per year will be easily possible."

The official noted that over the last three years, many efforts have been made to allocate the needed land for housing projects including the National Housing Action Plan to the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, but the land has not been provided as needed.

Rahbar further stressed that there are different ways to attract financial resources for housing construction projects including the use of private sector potentials.

If the trust between the private sector and the government is restored, the issue of taxation on housing projects is resolved and the government's dues to the private sector contractors are paid on time, mass builders will be more motivated to participate in construction projects, he said.

The official noted that private sector investors have huge resources that can be guided into mass construction projects if they are encouraged and appropriate incentives are considered by the government.

National Housing Action Plan aims to construct 400,000 small and medium-size apartments across the country.

Referring to the recent rise in the prices of cement and steel as main items used in construction, he continued: "The rise in the prices of cement and steel is one of the obstacles in housing production that the government must address; the government has provided all the necessary facilities including cheap energy for the cement and steel production units, but we see that

such products are exported instead of being supplied to the domestic market."

In early August, Mahmoud Mahmoudzadeh, deputy transport, and urban development minister announced that planning has been made and preparations have been done to start constructing 1.3 million affordable housing units across the country.

Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of National Iranian Copper Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Social Security Investment Company, Isfahan Oil Refinery, Bandar Abbas Oil Refinery, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed indices.

As stated by a capital market analyst, Reza Alavi, confidence in the capital market has increased and the market is expected to experience an upward trend in the long term.

Major industrial firms to build 10,500MW of power plants

TEHRAN – Major Iranian industrial firms are going to fund the construction of 10,500 megawatts (MW) capacity of new power plants to meet their own electricity needs, Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Saeed Zarandi announced.

Making the remarks in an online seminar on electricity supply challenges in the steel industry on Sunday, Zarandi said the Energy Ministry has so far issued permits for 13 such companies to pursue building power plants, IRNA reported.

Speaking in the mentioned event, the official said: "challenges in electricity supply over the past three months have severely hampered the country's industrial and mining production plants and we are already worried about supplying power to such units in the winter."

"It is predicted that we will have a

shortage of at least 5,000 MW of electricity to reach the goal of producing 55 million tons of steel by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025)."

He noted that the only way to compensate for these shortcomings is to get help from the industrial units themselves.

"The way out of this problem is to increase investment, and for this reason, we invited 100 large companies in the country to help in this regard; later the number of these companies increased to 500 and they have a high potential for investment," Zarandi explained.

According to the official, some solar power plants are also planned to be established for the country's industrial



parks as well to help meet their electricity needs.

Back in July, Zarandi had announced the signing of an MOU with the Energy Ministry for constructing power plants for big industries.

"Since earlier this year, the Industry Ministry, on behalf of the industrial sector, started seeking a permit for building 13 power plants. We held several meetings with Tavanir [Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company] and the Energy Ministry and proposed to sign a memorandum of understanding with the ministry. We also sent a letter to the Energy Ministry last week to expedite the issuance of the permit," the official

explained.

The mentioned power plants are financed by 12 investors from various industrial sectors and will be constructed within 2.5-3 years, according to him.

One of the main goals of this program is to provide reliable and sustainable electricity to high-consuming industries and the country's industrial parks in order to reduce the pressure imposed on the national grid in the industry and mining sector, the official said.

"If these power plants are built, a significant load will be removed from the national electricity distribution network," he stressed.

The official further noted that in case of any surplus electricity generation, the industrial units can sell the surplus electricity to the Energy Ministry.

Export from South Khorasan province rises 40%

TEHRAN- The value of export from South Khorasan province, in the east of Iran, rose 40 percent during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to a provincial official.

Hassan Rahimizadeh, the director-general of the province's customs department, announced that products worth \$329.7 million were exported from the province in the five-month period.

The official further announced that the exported products show an 18-percent drop in terms of weight in the said time span.

He named cement, ceramic tiles, distilled fuel oil, light hydrocarbons, gas oil, bitumen, rebars and dates as the major products exported from the province and Iraq, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan as the export destinations of the products.

As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 38 percent during the first five months of the current year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi said that Iran has trad-



ed 59.3 million tons of non-oil products worth \$34 billion with other countries in the mentioned period, which indicates also 14 percent growth in terms of weight on an annual basis.

The official put the five-month non-oil exports at 45.5 million tons valued at \$17.661 billion, with a 63 percent rise in value and 20 percent growth in weight.

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

He said major export destinations of the

to increase the share of transport in the country's Gross Domestic Product."

The official further noted that his ministry will try to complete the semi-finished projects and fulfill the demands of the government and people.

Started in winter 2018, the National Housing Action Plan aims to construct 400,000 small and medium-size apartments (70-100 square meters in size) across the country and particularly in Tehran, where housing prices have risen most sharply.

Nearly half of the total number of the said houses will be constructed in Tehran's suburban "new towns" such as Parand and Pardis, respectively located in the west and east of the city.

Back in March, former Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami had announced that 510,000 residential units will be provided for the applicants under the framework of the National Housing Action Plan during the current year.

In early September 2019, the registration of the National Housing Action Plan was started from Kerman Province. The second round of registration began in ten other provinces in November that year.

Applicants in Sistan-Baluchestan, Qom, North Khorasan and South Khorasan provinces registered first and those from Kordestan, Kohgiluyeh-Boyer-Ahmad, and Golestan came in the second stage, while from Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Hamedan, and Yazd provinces came in the third stage.

According to the analyst, the market will get various signals from the mentioned factors and will take new decisions and go in new directions accordingly.

In the capital market, sometimes supply increases, and sometimes demand rises, and this causes natural fluctuations in the market, he stressed.

"As we move forward, the ambiguities in the market decrease and the situation will become in the market's favor," the expert added.

Iran exports to Iraq impacted by bureaucracy, high tariffs

TEHRAN – Setting high tariffs and complicated visa issuance procedures for Iranian businessmen by the Iraqi government has been negatively affecting the Islamic Republic's exports to the Arab neighbor, a member of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce board of directors said.

"Iraq has imposed severe restrictions on issuing visas to Iranian businessmen and has increased import tariffs, which is hurting Iranian exports to the country," the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICIMA) quoted Sha'ban Foroutan as saying.

The official noted that due to such restrictions and lack of comprehensive trade views regarding the development of exports, Iran is lagging behind its rivals in the Iraqi market, including Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Unfortunately, customs tariffs for exports to Iraq have increased, which increases the cost of goods exported to Iraq. As a result, it has reduced our competitiveness in this market, he said.

Foroutan further noted that the government should support exporters and provide incentives for them to ensure the improvement of trade with the neighboring countries.

Referring to the expectations of businessmen and traders from the new government, Foroutan said: "One of our proposals is to establish an economic working group between Iran and Iraq, with a focus on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the private sector, to be able to raise and follow up problems directly."

Although, our trade with Iraq has increased compared to the previous year due to the resolution of some of the problems related to the coronavirus pandemic, but overall, the volume of trade between Iran and Iraq has declined, leaving Iran behind competitors such as Saudi Arabia, China and Turkey, he regretted.

However, according to Foroutan, Iraqis are more willing to cooperate with Iran than trade with Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Jordan due to cultural and religious ties.

Iranian businessmen should look for new products and markets in Iraq because the situation is constantly changing. For example, in the past, Iran was the top exporter of cement to Iraq, but now Iraq has eliminated the need to import Iranian cement by building cement factories, he said.

TEDPIX drops 3,700 points on Sunday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 3,700 points to 1,537 million on Sunday.

As reported, 10,776 billion securities worth 86,479 trillion rials (about \$2.59 billion) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.

The first market index lost 6,132 points and the second market index rose 2,893 points.

TEDPIX lost 30,000 points, or two percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.52 million points on

Israel has established its presence on Yemeni islands: Yemeni ambassador

From page 1 ► In the third phase of our plan to liberate Marib governorate, we will continue this process unless the other side succumbs to calls for peace and attempts to stop the war.

Actually, the initiative put forward by our leader Sayyed Abdul-Malik Badr al-Din al-Houthi regarding the governorate of Marib is a fair proposal for Marib and all the Yemeni people, because it includes partnership in power and wealth of the province.

There are also just humane demands for the Yemeni people, such as the necessity of providing electricity from Marib, securing the roads and removing the camps and expelling members of al-Qaeda and ISIS who are present in this Yemeni province. We call for the exit of foreign forces in their entirety from this province and others.

With regard to the situation in Marib, we stress that the military operation is proceeding according to the steps planned and endorsed by the chief of staff in the capital, Sana'a, and the Ministry of Defense.

We have given way to attempts for peaceful solutions, and if there is compliance by the other side, we will welcome that. Otherwise, the military options will continue until the liberation of this province and all occupied areas in Yemen.

Speaking of developments on the ground, we know there are two sides in the Yemen war; there is a party that is represented by the government in Sana'a and the Popular Committees, while there is another based in Marib and other areas, which is called by pro-Saudi media the "legitimacy". However, everyone knows that the so-called "legitimacy forces" are bankrolled by foreign countries. In your opinion, who is leading the battle against the Yemeni government in Marib and other regions?

Regarding the truth of the conflict in Yemen, there are two parties: the Yemeni side, which is represented by the revolutionary and political leadership in Sana'a, along with the army forces and the popular committees, and behind them the Yemeni people.

The opposite side is represented by the U.S.-Saudi-led coalition against our country, which uses various means to achieve its goals, including Yemeni mercenaries and terrorist groups linked to Saudi Arabia and the Emirates.

The United Nations made a blunder, and the international media continues the same path in dealing with the war on Yemen when they portray it as a conflict between Yemeni groups. But this is not true.

We are facing an external invasion against a country called the Republic of Yemen, which is a member of the international community.

This is a conspiracy that aims to undermine Yemen, divide it, violate its sovereignty, and practice various types of collective punishment against the Yemeni people, through besieging Yemen.

On the other hand, there is a national resistance front that confronts this invasion and confronts the aggressors in various arenas, whether on the military, security, economic, or media levels.

Therefore, describing such a battle as a civil war is unfair and a great injustice against Yemen and the Yemenis.

However, there is clear Saudi-American aggression; this is neither the Yemenis nor the Saudis who hamper the political process. It is U.S. President Joe Biden who is trying to prevent ending the war in an attempt to impose its agenda on Yemen.



One of Biden's most important electoral slogans was to stop the war in Yemen. So, if the U.S. was not entangled in this war and it was between the Yemenis or even between the (Yemenis and) Saudis, they would not have contributed to stopping it.

As I told you, although the implementation and tools are on the shoulders of Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, the main responsible for this war is the U.S., as it acknowledges itself.

If America is not a contributor to this war, why does the U.S. president send a special envoy for Yemen, Timothy Lenderking, who bypasses even the U.S. ambassador in Yemen?

As I told you, America has a leading role, whether within the United Nations or at the media and political level.

Even in determining the agendas of the ceasefire and the political process, the first and most prominent decision-maker is the United States.

But, there is another Yemeni side facing aggression, i.e. the army, the popular committees, and the government in Sana'a.

Everyone should know that the invasion is planned by America while the execution is Saudi-Emirati.

Indeed, the Americans are participating in the siege and bombing and providing the coalition of aggression with intelligence information. Add to this the arming of Saudi Arabia and the Emirates.

As well, a number of European countries led by France, Britain and Germany have contributed to arming the Saudi-led coalition.

You mentioned the role of Britain, France and Germany in Yemen. We want to know whether there are Saudi forces in the field, whether at the level of leadership or fighters on the ground. There are also reports pointing to the presence of British forces in Yemen. Do you confirm these reports?

This is no longer a secret as the aggressors have recognized the presence of their forces on Yemeni soil.

This is not hidden and there is no attempt to cover it up by the coalition of aggression.

The U.S. forces are present at the Al-Anad airbase in Lahj governorate and are present at the airport of the Mahra governorate, as well as on the Yemeni islands within brigades and military factions. The British announced during the past few days the presence of the Rapid Reaction Forces in Al-Mahra Governorate.

The Saudis and Emiratis announce the presence of their forces, experts, and

military advisors inside Yemen, whether on the Yemeni-Saudi border, or in Marib, Aden, and Hadramawt.

Emirati forces are still present on Socotra Island, Mayun Island, and at Mukalla Airport in Hadramaut Governorate, as well as at Aden Airport.

Therefore, one of the most important items presented to the United Nations envoy and everyone looking for a political solution was the necessity of expelling the foreign forces from Yemeni lands.

There is also an Israeli presence, especially in Yemeni territorial waters and some strategic islands, whether on Hanish Island, Mayun Island or even on Socotra Island in the Arabian Sea.

This presence is no longer hidden, and aggressors feel no shame for the presence of their military forces on Yemeni lands. So, the first condition of the Yemeni government is the exit of foreign forces as a priority, whether these forces are American, British, Saudi, Emirati or Israeli.

The United Nations has appointed Hans Grundberg as its new special envoy for Yemen. Gruenberg's predecessor, Martin Griffiths, as well as the U.S. envoy to Yemen stated that their efforts failed after regional tours and talks with both sides of the conflict. What are the main reasons for Griffith's failure? Is Grundberg following in the footsteps of his predecessor?

Let's not take it too far. In fact, the international community and the United Nations suffer from weakness as a result of the dominance of the American decision on this organization.

Add to this the involvement of the so-called five permanent members of the Security Council that have undermined this international institution, as it prevented the transfer of power by the Security Council to the General Assembly in the United Nations.

Let's talk in principle.

Therefore, the faults of the delegates, representatives, or envoys in this international organization are due to the weakness of the institution itself.

Eventually, there are people who represent this international will.

But from my point of view, although the problem was related to the international envoys and their characters, we must not forget that the international resolutions are notorious.

It was Resolution 2216 on Yemen that restricted the envoys' initiatives and obliged them to do something that was not realistic; this international resolution portrayed the

war on Yemen as a civil war and forgot the presence of foreign forces in this issue.

There are also countries that relied on this resolution to practice maritime piracy and aggression against our country. Although the international resolution does not allow this, they used it as an excuse.

I think that the new international envoy will not be different from Griffiths, because he is obliged to work based on the same bases that we talked about, which reflects the weakness of the United Nations.

Therefore, if the United Nations wants to have a new initiative in the Yemeni crisis, it must start from two basic premises: The first is that there is external aggression against Yemen, and the war is not intra-Yemeni.

The United Nations must have the courage to engage in this issue without being constrained by the resolutions, which have proven their failure and inability to be applied, given their contradictions with reality in form and nature.

The other point is that the United Nations must take into account the fact that Yemen, especially after seven years of war, requires a new approach that guarantees its sovereignty, independence.

Regardless of politicization, the exit of foreign forces from Yemen, the preservation of its unity and the integrity of its territory are essential.

However, there are plans that may be presented to the United Nations to divide and re-partition Yemen.



Do you think that the new UN special envoy for Yemen is biased towards one party or the other?

We cannot judge because he has not assumed his position yet.

What about Griffiths?

I listened to Martin Griffiths in his briefing to the Security Council after he became Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

I saw a strange difference in his attitudes when he was appointed as envoy for humanitarian affairs after he ended his mission as a special envoy to Yemen.

When he was an envoy, we asked him to suggest opening Sana'a airport and the port of Hodeidah and lifting the siege on our country, considering it as a humanitarian affair, but he did not talk clearly about these proposals.

But when he became an Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, he began to speak about this. He was supposed to speak clearly against the siege as a

representative of the United Nations.

We consider that Griffith was one of those who were drawn to British policy, and he was not an honest envoy to Yemen.

He did not play an active role in ending this tragic war that our people are suffering from for seven years.

He was an agent through his international position to practice many types of suppression and continuation of the siege against the Yemenis.

Only one thing is mentioned in his record; the Stockholm Agreement, which was held during the days when Griffiths was United Nations envoy for Yemen. However, this agreement, as Griffith's only achievement, failed to be realized.

This comes as a result of the biases of many international envoys and also some international institutions, as I mentioned earlier.

Sana'a demands a separation of the humanitarian aspects of the Yemen crisis from political issues. However, the other side rejects this. In your opinion, what is the reason behind linking the humanitarian issues with politics?

The reason is clear. They want to gain through siege and pressure what they could not achieve through war and direct military aggression.

Therefore, the continuation of the siege and the exercise of pressure is no longer acceptable at all because it affects the lives of Yemenis and deviates from the dignity, sovereignty and independence of Yemen.

There are plans that may be presented to the UN to re-partition Yemen

Given Martin Griffith's new position, we hope he would try to correct the mistakes when he was the UN envoy to Yemen, he will speed up pressure on the aggressors at the United Nations to separate the humanitarian issues from the political and military aspects. This is one of our rights and we will not forgo it, and it is neither a requirement, nor a condition, but part of our rights.

Returning to the new envoy, is there a draft resolution or any initiative to resolve the conflict in Yemen?

As the United Nations announced, the new UN envoy is supposed to take up his job on September 5th, and therefore he has not received his duties yet and has not taken any step

regarding Yemen.

But we advise the United Nations and the new envoy, before he takes over his job, to have a new look and a different approach to the Yemeni issue based on two points that were raised to him; namely the belief in the need for Yemen to restore its independence, sovereignty and complete

territorial integrity as well as the need for a political process under the auspices of the United Nations apart from Security Council resolutions.

Give the calm role that Oman is playing in regard to the Yemen crisis, could you update us about the nature of this role? Is there any Omani initiative that differs from those of the United Nations? Is there an Omani mediation?

Let's talk about Oman as a priority in Yemen's foreign policy given the neighborhood and geographical proximity, as well as the ties of kinship and history between the two countries.

We also do not forget that since the first days of aggression against Yemen, which was called at that period "Decisive Storm," Oman clearly declared that it is not part of the Saudi-led coalition and demanded peaceful solutions. They refused to resort to the use of force in order to impose demands.

We also do not forget the humanitarian role played by the Sultanate of Oman when it allowed the flow of humanitarian aid across the Yemeni-Omani border, as well as allowing Yemenis from different regions to use Omani airspace and airports for travel, especially after the tightening of the land, sea and air blockade on Yemen.

Such Omani actions are welcomed by Yemen, and this qualifies it to play a pivotal role in the political process.

But I want to stress that the Omanis and others are keen not to bypass the United Nations and that any agreement or understanding must be passed through the UN and the international community.

The Omani role is a facilitator of the political process, and they emphasize the need to stop the aggression against Yemen.

Omanis believe that the unity and stability of Yemen must be preserved, and the solution should be based on Yemeni-Yemeni talks without the interference of any external party; that is why we welcome such a role now.

Who plays the main role in the Yemen conflict? Britain or America?

They are two sides of the same coin. Given its colonial legacy, as well as its dominance over the decision-making in the Security Council, and its notorious role in the intelligence fields, Britain bears a great resemblance to the U.S.

Add to this Britain's military presence in Yemen, and arming Saudi Arabia and the Emirates with the latest and most deadly weapons.

Both of them follow the same policies, but America is at the forefront, especially at the leadership level.

Nevertheless, we believe there are four countries directly responsible for this aggression: America comes first after Britain, and after these two comes Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, which has adopted an implementing role.

This does not mean that there are no other countries or organizations associated with or involved in this aggression, such as France, Belgium and even Germany, that continue to arm the aggressors.

We have also a Sudanese involvement, but we believe that the so-called Quartet that was formed, which is America, Britain, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, is more directly responsible than others for the situation in Yemen and what happened after seven years.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



Battle for Afghan's Panjshir heats up

From page 1 ► The National Resistance Front's spokesman, Fahim Dashti, added the Taliban had abandoned vehicles and equipment in the Dashte Rewak area and that "heavy clashes" were going on.

In a separate post on Social Media platforms, the anti-Taliban group's leader, Massoud insisted Panjshir "continues to stand strongly." He also praised "our honorable sisters", saying demonstration by a small number of women in the western city of Herat calling for their rights showed Afghans had not given up demands for justice and "they fear no threats".

The Taliban insist they will allow women to work and study, saying their form of governance will not be similar to the one that governed most of the country 20 years ago.

An Italian medical aid organization, Emergency, says Taliban forces had pushed further into the Panjshir Valley, reaching the villages of Anabah where the medical organization runs a medical facility located in the area itself.

Emergency said in a statement "we have received a small number of wounded people at the Anabah Surgical Centre, there has so far been no interference with Emergency's activities". The aid group added that many people had fled from local villages over the past couple of days.

Anabah lies some 25 kilometres north inside the 115-km-long valley, but unconfirmed reports suggested the Taliban had seized other areas too.

The U.S.-based Long War Journal said that there

was still a "fog of war" with unconfirmed reports the Taliban had captured multiple districts, but that "it looks bad".

It is not easily possible to get immediate and independent confirmation of the fluid situation in Panjshir, because, apart from a sole narrow entrance, the territory is walled off by mountains.

But, local reports indicate fighting in the traditionally anti-Taliban region has left hundreds of people dead. The majority are believed to either Taliban forces or fighters loyal to Massoud with little civilian casualties.

Analysts say the Taliban may have the advantage with a large amount of weapons and munitions it captured after the U.S. withdrawal and collapse of the Afghan National Army.

But anti-Taliban forces also have the advantage of staging attacks and overseeing Taliban advances from their positions high up in the mountains.

Meanwhile, U.S. General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, highlighted the tense situation in Panjshir.

Milley says "my military estimate is, is that the conditions are likely to develop of a civil war. I don't know if the Taliban is going to be able to consolidate power and establish governance"

There's growing concern in Pakistan about the security situation in Afghanistan.

Speaking to U.S. media from Ramstein Air Base in Germany, Milley says if the Taliban cannot control the country; that will "in turn lead to a reconstitution of al-Qaeda or a growth of Daesh or other myriad of terrorist groups" over the next three years.

Milley's remarks on the emergence of terrorist groups may not sit well with average Americans whose leaders invaded Afghanistan 20 years ago under the pretext of toppling the Taliban rule claiming it was providing a safe haven for al-Qaeda terrorists. The same group Washington held responsible for the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

At the time, the idea of revenge, invading Afghanistan and capturing the "terrorists" was not strongly opposed by the American public. 20 years later, opinion polls indicate otherwise.

Elsewhere, Pakistan's spy chief Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed has flown into Kabul. It was not clear what his agenda was, however earlier this week, a senior official in Pakistan said that Hameed, who heads Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency, could help the Taliban reorganise Afghanistan's military.

There is growing concern among Pakistani government officials about the security situation in neighboring Afghanistan.

A Taliban source has also said the announcement

of a new government will be pushed back to next week. This marks the third time that the new government formation has been delayed.

Taliban sources have said the group's co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar is widely believed to be in line to lead the new government. Speaking to Al Jazeera, Mullah Baradar, the head of the group's political office, says the Taliban is in the process of forming an "inclusive" government.

He told the network, from the Afghan capital Kabul, "I assure the people that we strive to improve their living conditions and that the government will be responsible to everyone and will provide security because it is necessary for economic development, not just in Afghanistan but in the whole world".

Baradar added "we are doing our utmost efforts to improve their living conditions. The government will provide security because it is necessary for economic development,"

Journalists on the ground say some signs of normality has returned to Kabul following the sudden collapse of the country's former government and the chaotic withdrawal of U.S.-led foreign forces from the country.

Qatar's ambassador to Afghanistan says a technical team was able to reopen Kabul airport to receive aid, according to Al Jazeera, which also cited its correspondent as saying some domestic flights had resumed.

The airport has been closed since August

30 when the United States completed U.S.-led evacuations of more than 120,000 U.S. nationals, other foreigners and Afghans deemed at risk from the Taliban, and withdrew the last of its troops.

The Taliban's main spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, also said one of the main foreign exchange dealers in Kabul had reopened.

Afghanistan's economy has been thrown into disarray by the Taliban's takeover. Many banks are closed and cash is scarce. Washington has also frozen up to \$10 billion dollars in Afghanistan's assets, which experts say the White House will use as leverage against the Taliban.

The United Nations will convene an international aid conference in Geneva on September 13 to help avert what UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called a "looming humanitarian catastrophe". Aid organizations have also sounded the alarm over widespread hunger amid a severe drought.

Many countries say they are prepared to engage with the Taliban and send humanitarian aid, but that formal recognition of the government and broader economic assistance will depend on its action, not just promises.

Iran, which shares a border with Afghanistan and is home to the largest number of refugees from the country, in the world, has called on all Afghan parties, especially in Panjshir to resolve their disputes through dialogue and form an inclusive executive governing body.

60 properties in Khorasan Razavi made national heritage

From page 1 ► The Iranian Safavid kings (1502–1736) fought over it against Uzbek invasions. It was occupied by the Afghans from 1722 to 1730. Nader Shah, born in Khorasan, broke the Afghan supremacy and made Mashhad the capital of his Iranian empire. Ferdowsi, author of the Shahnameh ("Book of Kings"), and Omar Khayyam, the celebrated poet, and sage, were born in the region. Khorasan's current Iranian frontiers were defined in 1881 and in a convention of July 8, 1893. This gave form to the modern Iranian province of Khorasan, which was split into three smaller provinces in 2004.

The provincial capital of Mashhad attracts hundreds of pilgrims each day from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries, and even across the globe; the raison d'être is the striking massive shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam.

Dozens of five-star hotels and hostels are dotted across Mashhad. The city has also the highest con-



centration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces a variety of cultural and historical sites that are generally crowded. The metropolis is also a good place to buy top handwoven rugs and carpets, and it's a staging post for travel to Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and little-touristic Khorasan regions.

WCC-designated Malayer to open plaza dedicated to carved furniture



TEHRAN – Private investors will be establishing a plaza dedicated to engraved furniture in Malayer, named as a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture by the World Crafts Council – Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR).

Located in Hamedan province, the ancient city is home to over 4,000 furniture workshops, 8,000 wood masters, and some 25,000 crafters.

"Covering an area of 74,000 square meters, the permanent marketplace will be the country's biggest bazaar dedicated to carved furniture," the deputy provincial tourism chief said on Sunday.

Having 116 exhibition units, this bazaar will be set up on nine floors by the private sector, the official said.

"A significant feature of the project is specialized halls for laboratories, conferences, conferences, traditional dining halls, and office sites, independent parking on one floor, green spaces, and a prayer hall."

Artists and crafters of this region use the wood of beech, walnut, and plane trees to make different products such as traditional, classic, steel, and sofa furniture. Their other products are dining tables, desks, all kinds of chairs, beds, and decorative pieces.

In some cases, the whole family is occupied with traditional furniture making and although they didn't make much money this way, their love for handicrafts and the increasing perseverance of woodcarving artists of Malayer shows today a new face of this art-craft to the world.

Currently, some 60 percent of the furniture and woodcarving products in Iran are reportedly produced in Malayer and they are sent to various Iranian cities or being exported to Central Asian countries, Persian Gulf littoral states, Turkey, and Iraq amongst some others.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations, and there's a scattering of historical curiosities.

Tourism projects in Khalkhal forecasted to generate 900 jobs

TEHRAN –The developing tourism sector is estimated to create more than 900 jobs in Khalkhal county of the north-western Ardabil province.

"A total of 928 job opportunities are expected to be generated by implementing seven tourism-related projects across the county," the provincial tourism chief said on Sunday.

The projects that include two guest houses, three tourist complexes, a recreational center, and a camping site, are being carried out in collaboration with the private sector, Nader Fallahi added.

The projects are expected to

attract more holidaymakers to the region upon their completion, the official added.

Back in January, the provincial tourism chief, Nader Fallahi, announced that more than 150 tourism-related projects are underway across the mountainous province. "The mentioned projects will prepare the province's tourism sector for the post-coronavirus era when the number of tourists and travelers is expected to rise magnificently," the official said.

Last April, tourism authorities of the province announced that they have developed extensive plans to draw more tourists during the winter season to the

province and make it the winter tourism hub of the country. In December 2019, Fallahi announced that seventeen tourism projects, worth 1,500 billion rials (some \$35 million) would be inaugurated in the province in near future. He said that the objective to launch tourism projects in the province is to provide tourists from all over the world and domestic tourists as well with the opportunity to use these facilities and select Ardabil as their prime destination.

Last November, the former minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Ali-Asghar Mounesan, said that investment in the tourism sec-

tor and boosting tourism infrastructure has not stopped despite the outbreak of the coronavirus in the country.

Sprawling on a high, wind-swept plateau, Ardabilis 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 Ardabilis usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

tation of historical documents and books of the province is of great importance."

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC.

The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period. Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.



and historical properties of Lorestan are valuable and like historical monuments, the res-

Historical manuscripts and books restored in Lorestan museum

TEHRAN – Tens of historical manuscripts, rare books, and paper documents have been restored by a team of cultural heritage experts in Lorestan province.

"The first phase of a project to restore significant historical documents and books has come to an end in the Boroujerd municipality museum," CHTN quoted the provincial tourism chief, Seyyed Amin Qasemi, as saying on Sunday.

The official attached great importance to the efforts made to preserve historical documents and books being kept in the western province.

"It should be noted that all the cultural

New postal museums to open across Iran

TEHRAN – New museums dedicated to the post and philatelic are planned to be inaugurated across Iran in the near future, the CEO of Tehran's Post and Communications Museum has announced.

A total of four post museums will open their doors to the public in the provinces of Khorasan Razavi, Yazd, Sistan-Balouchestan, and Zanjan, IRNA quoted Hassan Amidi as saying on Sunday.

Postage stamps from before and after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, historical envelopes, and rare foreign letters will be displayed at the museums, along with old museum items in the fields of communications, the official added.

There will also be a chance for stamp and philatelic collectors to have their old items displayed at these museums, he noted.

Referring to Rasht's Post-Museum-School, which according to its authorities is the first of its kind in the world, he also mentioned that educating children in various fields of communication and media as well as promoting the culture of the post by holding communication courses and classes is one of the main objectives of such museums.



The Chapar-Khaneh in Meybod is where important letters, messages and governmental depositories would have been stored (Credit: Ajlber/Getty Images)

It was only in 1851 when the government of Iran started to produce its own stamps, thus the creation of a unique mailing and communication arrangement.

It was through the Naser al-Din Shah Qajar's (1848-1896) that the postal system in Iran has begun developing.

He was inspired by the reported successes of a postal system in many regions, so he decided to send a group to France to study the system and launch it in Iran.

The history of the postal service has a rich history in Iran, stretching back to prehistorical times.

According to Joobin Bekhrad, the founder and editor of Reorient, an acclaimed publication about the contemporary arts and culture of West Asia, the Persians of Iran took the idea of a postal system to previously unseen heights although civilizations like those of Egypt and China are said to have been amongst the first to use postal services, and the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires in modern-day Iraq were using forms of mail delivery before the Persian Empire was founded in the 6th Century BC.

"They used an extensive network of roads worked by expert horsemen who covered stupefying distances throughout the massive, diverse empire with bewildering speed and unwavering resolve."

The Achaemenid Persians (c. 550–330 BC) were able to deliver, through the use of a system of couriers on horseback, messages from one end of the massive Persian Empire to the other in a matter of days, Bekhrad says.

According to scholars, a message could be sent from Susa, the administrative capital of the empire in western Iran, to Sardis, in what is now western Turkey, in between seven and nine days, following the Royal Road, a sort of highway connecting the two cities.

In the Histories, the Greek historian Herodotus – who estimated that the approximately 2,600km distance would take three months on footmarks Susa and Sardis as the extremities of the Royal Road, but the Persian postal system was far vaster.

The modern era of postal service in Iran started in 1851 with a postal reform that had no immediate effects.

WCC workshops discuss branding, e-marketing of handicrafts

TEHRAN – A series of virtual workshops, organized by the World Crafts Council, covered contemporary craft issues and related themes from August 2 to September 3.

A host of Iranian craftspeople attended the workshops which turned the spotlight on the latest methods and techniques of digitization and virtualization, e-marketing, and advertising, CHTN quoted a tourism official as saying on Saturday.

Devised by Rosy Greenlees, former WCC International President, and Dr. Joseph Lo the workshops draw on feedback from the seminar participants on areas where further support was identified, according to organizers.

The events were open to WCC members, WCC Craft Cities, craft organizations to build resilience and enable organizations to protect their craft products while strengthening their brand.

According to WCC, the virtual world is here to stay and offers the opportunity to reach greater audiences and new forms of expression. "Participants will be in-



troduced to content and techniques to best digitalize and virtualize crafts; e-marketing and promotion; and how to protect against e-risks."

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with

four, and India with three ones come next.

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 ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.



Agricultural Support Services Company

INVITATION TO RENEWAL OF ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

Second Announcement

55/00/12579

06/09/2021



Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad of I.R. of Iran, is considering the purchase of 4×40000±5% MTS of Granular Triple Super Phosphate (GTSP) through one step international tender.

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from **Monday** dated **6/9/2021** until **Tuesday** dated **14/9/2021** (7 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of Iranian Rial 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 3580397822635006500000000000006.

The bidders are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on **Saturday** dated **16/10/2021** (during official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelops will be on **Sunday** dated **17/10/2021** at 2:00 PM with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

- The bid bond value should be at **€ 375509** or in equal value of that in any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on Telegraphic Transfer rate in Sana rate website, www.sanarate.ir. It should be noted that this site lists the Currency Transactions, executed in Integrate Currency Transactions System [Nima website] on 28/8/2021 for each lot of 40000 MTS ± 5% in bank guarantee.

– The bidders are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 40000 MTS ± 5% will be **IR 102384000000** which must be only submitted by the bidders.

- After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as the bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and <http://iets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

PR & Intel Affairs Dept. of Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)

Iran police arrest suspected smugglers, seize treasures

TEHRAN – Iranian police arrested two women suspected of smuggling ancient artifacts and recovered 495 pieces of ancient coins and other treasures in Khuzestan province.

The objects were discovered from their dwelling after the police received reports of illegal excavations and attempts to smuggle ancient artifacts in Ramhormoz county of the southwestern province, Mehr reported on Saturday.

Historical objects discov-

ered from this band include coins of historical and Islamic periods as well as valuable creations such as daggers, swords, figurines, seal statues, which are made of stone, metal, silver, gold, bronze, iron, tin, and copper, the deputy provincial tourism chief explained.

The objects are mainly related to the eras of Elamite, Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, early Islamic, Seljuk, and Qajar, the official said.

A team of archaeologists

and cultural heritage experts will conduct a thorough examination of the relics before they undergo restoration.

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

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

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) has recruited 500 rangers over the past two years to enhance environmental protection, Mehr reported on Sunday.

It is planned to hire 2,500 rangers for the environment departments in 10 years, Jamshid Mohabbat-Khani, commander of the protection unit of the DOE said.

In the next [Iranian calendar] year (March 2022-March 2023), it is scheduled to attract another 250 rangers, he stated, noting that over the past two years, 500 forces have been added to the environmental protection forces.

“Currently, 3,600 rangers are in charge of defending the protected areas, and the number should reach at least 8,000. There are over 600 [environment protection] stations in the country, 100 of which are inactive due to the lack of manpower.”

There is one ranger on average per thousand hectares area of lands worldwide, however, the figure is one ranger per 12,000 hectares in Iran, which means that the number of rangers in the country is one-twelfth of the global average, while the rangers protect 11 percent of the country’s natural areas, Mohabbat-Khani concluded.

Challenges facing rangers

A long-awaited bill to protect the rights of rangers including rules on carrying and use of firearms was approved by Majlis [Iranian parliament] in June 2020.

The bill was drafted in July 2016 by the Department of Environment following the death of two rangers, Mohammad Dehqani and Parviz Hormozi who were killed in June 2016 during an armed conflict with poachers in Hormozgan province. It has been approved by the judiciary committee of Majlis in September 2019.

As per the proposed bill, the rangers



500 environmental defenders recruited in 2 years

would not face charges in case of involuntary manslaughter while on duty and would be compensated for the losses they suffer while trying to protect the environment and biodiversity, the government is required to allocate budget to help those rangers who might be obliged to pay out blood money or other sorts of money-penalty compensation for murder or any injuries trespassers may suffer in armed conflicts with them, and the rangers will be provided with regular insurance coverage and are entitled to compensation for the losses they suffer while doing their job.

Before, the rangers hold weapons only to survive, but now the environmental defenders are allowed to use

The number of rangers in Iran is one-twelfth of the global average.

weapons. However, the use of weapons is the last resort, and only when the lives of defenders are in danger and it must be proven that there has been no other way to save the life of the ranger.

If two rangers encounter offenders and one does not have a weapon and his life is in danger, the other ranger who has a weapon can defend his colleague.

Some 123 rangers have been killed while protecting the environment since 1979 in Iran.

The other challenges the rangers are dealing with are the low wages.

Cov Pars begins third phase of clinical studies

TEHRAN – “Razi Cov Pars” vaccine entered on Sunday the third phase of the human trial, being administrated to 40,000 people, IRIB reported.

Developed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, Razi Cov Pars is the second Iranian-made vaccine that started the clinical trial on February 27.

The vaccine is protein-based, which employs recombinant versions of the spike protein and tutors the immune system against the virus by producing antibodies.

It is developed in 3 doses. The first two doses are injectable and the third dose is intranasal. The second dose of the vaccine will be injected into the volunteers 21 days later and the third dose will be inhaled 51 days later.

The first phase of the studies was performed on 133 people, the second phase also started on May 28 by being injected into 500 people.

At the end of the second phase, Cov Pars proved 80 percent of the immunogenicity.

Razi Institute (affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture) is capable of producing 20 million doses of vaccine by the end of 2021, Agriculture Minister Javad Sadatinejad said.

Ali Es’haqi, head of the Razi Institute, ex-



plained that in the third phase, two programs are envisaged.

In the first plan, the vaccine is compared with a consumer vaccine in the country, which inoculates more than 40,000 volunteers. While, through the second plan, the vaccine will be evaluated as the first and second phases with adjuvant or placebo vaccine, and if approved, the third phase will proceed with about 28,000 volunteers.

The Food and Drug Administration issues an emergency use permit with 35 percent of the positive results from the third phase, he emphasized.

If an emergency consumption permit is issued in September, we will provide between 20 and 30 million doses of vaccine to the Ministry of Health, Es’haqi stated.

Homegrown vaccines

Made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, COVIRAN BAREKAT was unveiled on December 29, 2020, and received the license for public use on June 14.

It proved effective against Indian strain, according to Hojjat Niki-Maleki, head of the information center of Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam.

Eleven countries from Asia and South America, and a European country have asked for importing COVIRAN vaccine, Hassan Jalili, the vaccine’s production manager, has said in June.

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

Pastu Covac coronavirus vaccine, developed by Cuba’s Finlay Vaccine Institute and Pasteur Institute of Iran, is another homegrown vaccine, which has received the emergency use license, after COVIRAN.

From nanotechnology to solar power: solutions to drought

From page 1 ► In 2001, 5.5 billion cubic meters of underground resources were withdrawn annually, and if we consider this amount as 20 years from that year until now, it means that we have withdrawn an equivalent of one year of water consumption from non-renewable resources, which is alarming.”

The use of unconventional water sources can be effective in controlling drought, such as rainwater or river runoff, desalinated water, municipal wastewater that can be reused by treatment, he concluded.

Rasoul Sarraf, the Faculty of Materials at Shahid Modarres University, suggests a different solution and states that “To solve ease water stress, we have no choice but to use nanotechnology and solar power plants.

Pointing to the sun as the main condition for solar power plant, and while pointing to 300 sunny days in the country, he said that at the Paris Convention, Iran was required to reduce emissions by 4 percent definitively and 8 percent conditionally, which will only be achieved by using solar power plants.

Hamidreza Zakizadeh, deputy director of watershed management at Tehran’s Department of Natural Resources and Watershed Management,

believes that watershed management can at least reduce the effects of drought by managing floods and extracting water for farmers.

Amir Abbas Ahmadi, head of habitats and regional affairs of Tehran Department of Environment, also referring to the severe drought in Tehran, pointed to the need to develop a comprehensive plan for water management and said that it is necessary to cooperate with several responsible bodies and develop a comprehensive plan to control the situation.

He also emphasizes the need to control migration to the capital, construction, and the implementation of the Comprehensive plan of Tehran city.

While various solutions are proposed by officials and experts to manage water and deal with drought, it is necessary for the related organizations to work together to manage the current situation.

Mohammad Reza Espahbod, an expert in groundwater resources, also suggested that while the country is dealing with severe drought due to improper withdrawal of groundwater and low rainfall, karst water resources can supply the whole water needed by the country, only if managed.

Iran is the fifth country in the world in terms of karst water resources, he stated.

Qanats can also come efficient to contain water scarcity due to relatively low cost, low evaporation rates, and not requiring technical knowledge, moreover, they proved sustainable being used in perpetuity without posing any damages to the environment.

According to the Ministry of Energy, about 36,300 qanats have been identified in Iran, which has been saturated with water for over 2,000 years.

In recent years, 3,800 qanats have been rehabilitated through watershed and aquifer management, and people who had migrated due to water scarcity have returned to their homes.

Water resources shrinking

Renewable water resources have decreased by 30 percent over the last four decades, while Iran’s population has increased by about 2.5 times, Qasem

Flora of Iran

(Part 9)

Oak forests require annual precipitation of more than 500 mm; it can rise to more than 1,000 mm in the mountain chains.

Another prerequisite is fairly regular summer precipitation, which alone ensures regeneration; winter lows must be higher than those in the juniper woodlands. Zohary (1973) named this type of woodland “Kurdo-Zagrosian oak steppe-forest” (Quercetea brantii) and Bobek (1951) suggested “oak forest of the Zagros chain.”

Scrublands. Coniferous scrub is known only from the subalpine levels of the Alborz. It consists of Juniperus excelsa and Juniperus communis subsp. communis. Elsewhere cold-adapted deciduous scrub prevails.

On the northern slopes of the Alborz the Hyrcanian forests give way gradually to deciduous scrub, and then either to the dwarf scrub and herbaceous formations characteristic of high mountain elevations or, in the east, to the juniper woodlands of Khorasan.

Because of declining precipitation at higher elevations and farther east, the rich array of Hyrcanian forest species disappears. Zelkova carpinifolia, Carpinus orientalis, Carpinus betulus, and Quercus macranthera can advance farther in shrub form and thus form components of the scrublands, as do many shrubs that are characteristic of the distinctive eastern scrub.

They include Acer monspessulanum subsp. turcomanicum, Acer cappadocicum, Acer campestre, various species of Crataegus, Mespilus germanica, Prunus divaricata, Cerasus microcarpa, Pyrus boissieriana, Colutea persica, Celtis caucasica, and species of Berberis. Species of Pistacia and Amygdalus have not been observed in these scrub complexes (Frey, 1980). Deciduous shrubs are associated with regular summer precipitation, which can be interspersed with long dry periods. The total annual rainfall must be around 500 mm. Also characteristic are extreme winter lows.

Open xeromorphic scrub is associated with forests of Quercus brantii on the southwestern slopes of the Zagros range as far as the Mesopotamian lowlands and the plains along the Persian Gulf.

After the oak forests peter out, this scrub continues in the southern and southeastern mountain chains and massifs. Its last outposts are found at 27A° N and as far east as the Taftan range south of Zahedan. In the latter re-

gion, however, there is frequently a transition to very open xeromorphic scrub formations.

Bobek (1951) identified these formations as “œpistachio-almond-maple dry forest” : Zohary (1973) as “Juniperus-Pistacia-Amygdalus steppe scrub” (Juniperro-Pistacietea). Particularly diagnostic are Amygdalus scoparia and other species of Amygdalus, Acer monspessulanum subsp. cinerascens and Acer monspessulanum subsp. persicum, Pistacia khinjuk, and Pistacia atlantica. Other plants include species of Ephedra and Rosa, Amygdalus haussknechtii, Amygdalus kotschyii, Amygdalus elaeagnifolia, Amygdalus erioclada, Amygdalus eburnea, Amygdalus lycioides, Cerasus brachypetala, Cerasus microcarpa, Cotoneaster persica, Crataegus azarolus, Prunus divaricata, Colutea persica, Rhamnus pallisii, Rhamnus kurdicus, species of Berberis, Ficus carica, Lonicera nummulariifolia, Daphne angustifolia, species of Lycium, and Juniperus excelsa. Although the species of Acer and Pistacia frequently grow as trees, in this zone they are considered scrub in the physiognomic sense.

In the east and southeast, where stands of pistachio trees are often even sparser, their cover is so thin that they can be classified

neither as woodlands nor as scrub. Such stands of mountain almond and pistachio trees (Bobek 1951) must be considered part either of the very open xeromorphic scrub or of the dwarf scrub formations.

In the northwest, where scrub gives way to oak forests and the demarcation line is often not clear, the scrub is very rich in species, but their number declines toward the southeast, reflecting decreasing annual and summer precipitation. At Shiraz, where annual precipitation is ca. 400 mm, a large proportion of the scrub species has already disappeared.

The last, most dry-resistant survivors are Zygophyllum atriplicoides, Pistacia khinjuk, Acer monspessulanum subsp. persicum, and species of Amygdalus, which constitute very sparse complexes of open xeromorphic scrub.

The lower limit of the scrublands is determined by the amount of precipitation, an annual minimum of 400–500 mm being necessary. They rise to an elevation of 3,000 m. Zohary (1973) was probably incorrect in grouping together juniper woodlands and Pistacia-Amygdalus scrub as Juniperus-Pistacia-Amygdalus steppe scrub (Juniperro-Pistacietea).

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)



Also, over-harvesting in 77 percent of Iran has led to more land subsidence and soil salinity. Research and statistics show that the average overdraft from the country’s aquifers was about 5.2 billion cubic meters per year.

Mohammad Darvish, head of the environment group in the UNESCO Chair on Social Health, has said that the situation of groundwater resources is worrisome.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON SEPTEMBER 5

New cases	25,870
New deaths	610
Total cases	5,129,407
Total deaths	110,674
New hospitalized patients	3,430
Patients in critical condition	7,689
Total recovered patients	4,362,814
Diagnostic tests conducted	29,452,322
Doses of vaccine injected	29,152,527

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

\$m4 budget allocated to promote non-motorized transport

A total budget of 170 billion rials (around \$4 million) has been allocated to promote bike lanes across the capital city of Tehran, encouraging the residents to ride bicycles, Sakineh Ashrafi, deputy mayor of Tehran for planning, urban development and council affairs has said.

One of the main issues taken into consideration through the next year’s budget bill, was development of non-motorized transportation, which focuses on active transportation and human powered transportation including walking and bicycling, she explained.

According to Tehran third development plan, biking as a green transport has been taken into consideration in order to mitigate traffic congestion and air pollution, she further noted, ISNA reported on Sunday.

تصویب اعتبار ۱۷ میلیاردی برای توسعه دوچرخه سواری همگانی در پایتخت

سکینه اشرفی معاون برنامه ریزی، توسعه شهری و امور شورای شهردار تهران از تصویب حدود ۱۷۰ میلیارد ریال اعتبار برای توسعه دوچرخه سواری همگانی در پایتخت خبر داد.

وی اظهار کرد: یکی از موضوعاتی که در بودجه سنواتی سال آینده شهرداری تهران به آن توجه شده، موضوع توسعه حمل و نقل عمومی غیرموتوری از جمله دوچرخه سواری همگانی است.

به گزارش روز یکشنبه برگزاری ایسنا وی ادامه داد: در برنامه سوم توسعه شهر تهران ، موضوع توجه به دوچرخه سواری به عنوان یک حمل و نقل پاک برای کاهش ترافیک و آلودگی هوا مورد توجه و تأکید قرار گرفته است.

