

U.S. Pushes for Resumption of Vienna Talks as Iran Urges Patience

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Opinion

Iran to begin new chapter at Asian Volleyball C’ship

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN – Iran volleyball team have traveled to Japan to take part at the 21st Asian Senior Men’s Volleyball Championship but the Persians are not a star-studded team in this edition.

After the poor performance in the 2020 Olympic Games, Iran volleyball federation decided to rebuild the national team with the young players. The superstars like Mohammad Mousavi, Amir Ghafour and Mehdi Marandi as well as Saeid Marouf, who announced his international retirement, were not invited to the National Team.

Behrouz Ataei has a chance to make history with a young team who will be captained by Milad Ebadipour.

Defending champions Iran are determined to win the title for the fourth time. Team Iran will have a difficult task ahead in the event since hosts Japan, who are the most-decorated team with nine titles, are a team to beat on home soil.

A total of 16 teams will compete in the 21st Asian Senior Men’s Volleyball Championship from Sept. 12 to 19 in Chiba, Japan, vying for two spots in next year’s FIVB Volleyball Men’s World Championship in Russia.

After successfully hosting the 3rd Asian Senior Men’s Championship in 1983 in Tokyo, Japan will now become the battleground for the continent’s top-tier competition for the first time in 38 years.

The 21st edition features 16 teams comprising hosts Japan, India, Qatar and Bahrain in Pool A and reigning champions Iran, Pakistan, Thailand and Hong Kong China in Pool B. Pool C consists of Australia, China, Uzbekistan and Kuwait, with Korea, Chinese Taipei, Kazakhstan and Saudi Arabia in Pool D.

As of September 6, 2021, world No.10 Japan are the Asian team with the best world ranking, followed respectively by Iran (11), Korea (21), Qatar (27), China (29), Australia (30), Chinese Taipei (32), Thailand (39), Pakistan (52) and Kazakhstan (58).

Iran have the potential to win the title in Japan since the team are empowered by rising stars namely, Saber Kazemi, Meysam Salehi, Javad Karimi, Ali Asghar Mojarad, Amirhossein Esfandiar and Amirhossein Toukhteh.

Book published on Ayatollah Khamenei’s speeches ‘during Holy Month of Ramadan in 1974’

“Outline of Islamic Thoughts in Holy Quran”, which is the result of the implementation of speeches of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei during the holy month of Ramadan in 1974 was published in the form of a book.

The book entitled “Reconstruction of Resurrection Chapter of the Book on Outline of Islamic Thoughts in Holy Quran” was published at the initiative taken by a group of researchers from the Development Center of Imam Sadeq (AS) University and Office of Preachers at Imam Sadeq (AS) University.

The book of “Outline of Islamic Thoughts in Holy Quran”, which was the result of the implementation of sublime speeches of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei during the Holy Month of Ramadan in 1974, found a special place in recognizing his view on Islam and ij-tihad, systematic and scholastic recitation of its most fundamental subjects.

However, the mentioned book was considered as a source of teaching and discussion at university among seminary and academic elites and even public religious circles. ▶ Page 8

56% of Iran’s export to EAEU subject to preferential tariffs in 2020

TEHRAN- According to statistics, in 2020, the total value of Iran’s exports to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states was \$1.041 billion, 56 percent of which was done using preferential tariffs.

As reported by the news portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), according to statistics, the value of Iran’s exports of GSP-covered goods to the mentioned countries was \$191 million in 2016 and Iran’s total exports to those states in the same year was \$535 million. These figures in 2020 were \$584 million and \$1.041 billion, respectively.

GSP, is a preferential tariff system which pro-

vides tariff reduction on various products.

After the conclusion of a free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union, with the elimination of customs tariffs over time for at least 80 percent of goods, there will be no need to enjoy GSP privileges, which is also mentioned in the GSP laws of that union.

However, it is possible that for the first few years after the implementation of the free trade agreement, which has not yet been fully implemented, the use of GSP discounts in trade relations with EAEU member states will continue. This was also the case with the union’s free trade agreement with Vietnam.

Iran and Eurasian Economic Union reached a free

trade agreement in October 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items were subjected to preferential tariffs.

The interim agreement enabling the formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU was signed on May 17, 2018, and officially came into force on October 27, 2019.

Iran is a very important market in the region and the development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan).

The free trade agreement between Iran and this union has laid the ground for the expansion of trade ties between the two sides. ▶ Page 4

IRGC strikes terrorist positions in northern Iraq

TEHRAN - After warning against anti-Iran movements, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) pounded the positions of terrorists in northern Iraq on Thursday morning.

The IRGC Ground Force used suicide and combat drones as well as smart and precision-guided artillery to target the terrorists in the semi-autonomous region’s rugged mountains, Press TV reported.

It came days after Mohammad Pakpour, the IRGC Ground Force chief, warned the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) not to allow terrorist and counter-revolutionary groups to use its territory to threaten the Islamic Republic.

In remarks on September 6, Pakpour said armed terrorist groups use the northern territory in northern Iraq as a base to sow insecurity in border regions with Iran, warning that “continuation of this situation is not tolerable for us and we will give the necessary response to terrorists.”

General Pakpour noted that Iran has frequently warned and informed the KRG officials about the moves by armed terrorist groups in northern Iraq to penetrate into Iran and threaten the country’s security.

In his September 6 warning, General Pakpour

said these groups are affiliated to the imperialist front and foreign intelligence services.

He warned of a crushing response, and asked the inhabitants of the region to distance themselves from the terrorists’ positions, so that they remain safe.

In September 2018, an Iranian missile strike on the terrorist headquarters in Iraq’s Kurdish region killed 15 people. Also in July 2019, the IRGC attacked suspected terrorists in Iraqi Kurdistan, killing and wounding several gunmen.

The Iraqi Kurdistan Region has been used for a long time by anti-Iran terror groups such as the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and its offshoot, PJAK, which are active in Iraq and Turkey, to launch occasional attacks against the positions of Iranian border guards and border areas in northwestern parts of the country. The attacks have been invariably faced with crushing responses from Iran’s border guards and other military units deployed in those areas.

Groups like PJAK took up arms in the aftermath of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. Yet, they became increasingly less confrontational over time. However, in recent years they have conducted cross-border hit-and-run operations. They also seek extortion from the locals.

Iran seeks ICESCO label for one of its oldest mosques

TEHRAN – Iran is preparing to put forward Tarikhaneh, which is one of its oldest standing mosques, as a candidate for inclusion in the cultural heritage list of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO).

“We assign a high priority to Tarikhaneh Mosque of Damghan to become registered on the ICESCO’s Islamic World Heritage List (IWHL),” provincial tourism chief Hamidreza Doustmohammadi said on Tuesday.

The mudbrick mosque is located near the modern city of Damghan in Semnan province. Some sources including the ArchNet, a collaborative digital humanities project focused on Islamic architecture, say that the Tarikhaneh is the oldest existing mosque in the country.

Also called Tarik Khana, the monument incorporates a simple Arab plan with Sassanian con-

struction techniques. An arcade lines the central courtyard, a single bay deep on all but the qibla side where it increases to three bays. The central aisle on the qibla arcade is wider and taller than the others, a form that presciently indicates the later ubiquitous monumental axis of Persian architecture.

The arcades, recalling Sassanian precedents, are formed of fired brick arches, elliptical and sometimes slightly pointed, and massive circular brick piers.

Standing together at a distance from the mosque are the remains of a square minaret of uncertain date, possibly part of the original construction period, and a cylindrical minaret from the Seljuk period (1060-1307). The latter is strikingly divided into six zones of ornamentation, each rendered in brick with a different geometric pattern. ▶ Page 6

Afghan territory must not be used for sheltering or training terrorists: Iran

TEHRAN – Iran’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi said on Thursday that the next round of the meeting of the foreign ministers of countries bordering Afghanistan will be held in Tehran in the near future.

Ravanchi said this in line with Iran’s utmost efforts to help all Afghan groups to solve their disagreements through dialogue.

On Wednesday, Iran hosted a virtual summit of the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and China on Afghanistan.

“The first ministerial meeting of neighbors of Afghanistan, held virtually yesterday (Wednesday), was meant to serve that purpose. Its next round will be held in Tehran in the near future,” Ravanchi told a meeting of the UN Security Council on Thursday evening. ▶ Page 2

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Interview

U.S. efforts to promote democracy in the world have failed: Hunter

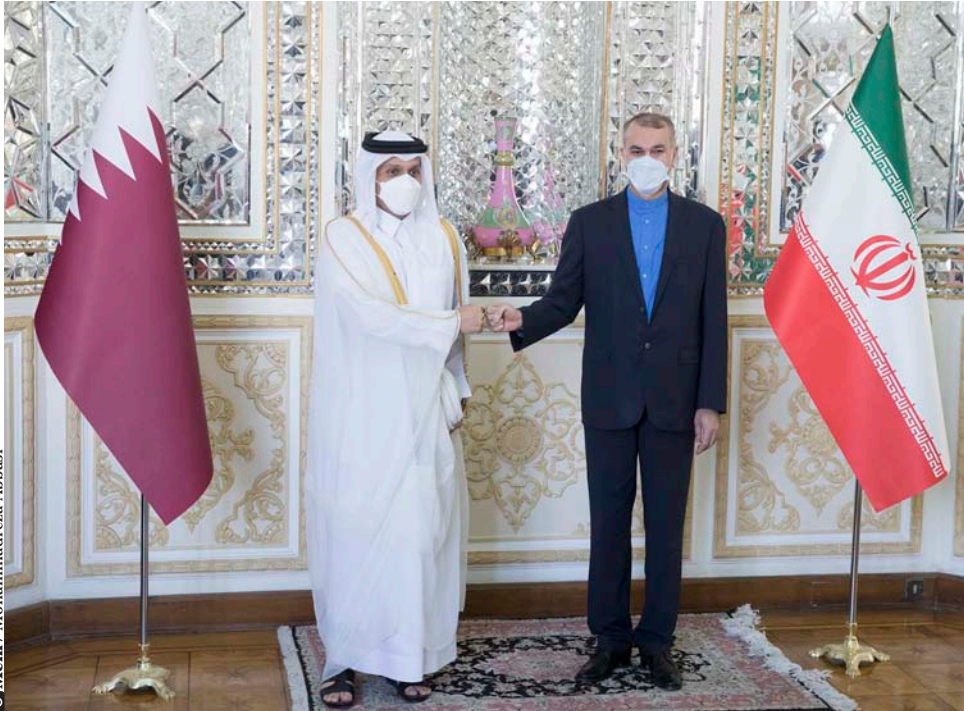
By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Shireen Tahmaasb Hunter, a professor of political science at Georgetown University, says that the U.S. efforts to promote democracy and respect for human rights in many parts of the world have failed.

“In foreign policy, as with everything else in life, total success is impossible. The United States is no exception to this rule. Certainly, its efforts to promote democracy and respect for human rights in many parts of the world have failed,” Hunter tells the Tehran Times.

“The main reason has been because, in some parts of the world, these concepts have not yet established deep roots in local cultures,” she adds.

Last week, U.S. President Joe Biden ordered a widespread declassification of information collected during the U.S. investigation of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks following growing pressure to do so from family members of the victims. ▶ Page 5



Iran FM discusses bilateral, regional issues with foreign officials

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian had a busy day on Thursday. He met and spoke by phone with many foreign officials including the foreign ministers of Qatar, Russia, the United Arab Emirates.

In addition, he received many congratulatory messages and calls from foreign counterparts on becoming the foreign minister of Iran.

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres has congratulated Abdollahian on his appointment as the Islamic Republic’s top diplomat. ▶ Page 3

Attritional negotiations useless, MP says

TEHRAN - Shahriar Heydari, a member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Parliament, has said that continuing the nuclear negotiations in an attritional way without tangible results is useless, suggesting that the West should avoid seeking a departure from the basic principles of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on September 6 that Iran would not seek a "delay even for an hour" if the talks prove productive. He said Iran has been in a transition stage and Iran's position on the nuclear talks have been clearly expressed by the president and foreign minister.

"A democratic transition has taken place in Iran... government and ministers have taken over. About the continuation of negotiations messages have been delivered by the president and foreign minister which are clear," the spokesman reiterated.

He underlined that Iran has made it clear that it will continue the talks to ensure a full implementation of commitments by the U.S. under the JCPOA endorsed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231.

Negotiations should serve the interests of Iran and its people which have repeatedly been neglected by the U.S. violations and Europe's inaction, the spokesman stated.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian also emphasized that the Vienna talks should serve Iran's interests and rights.

Abdollahian wrote on his Twitter account on September 2 that while receiving congratulatory calls from German, French, and Austrian foreign ministers, he discussed Iran's "new balanced foreign policy and calibrated ties" with the European Union.

The new foreign minister added that in the phone calls he "reiterated that the Vienna talks must secure our rights and interests" and the United States' "irresponsible conduct and EU's passivity must end."

In an interview with Mehr about the latest situation surrounding the nuclear talks published on Friday, Heydari said: "Since 2015, the JCPOA talks have continued. Based on past experience, the Islamic Republic of Iran has come to the conclusion that continuing negotiations without results is useless".

He said: "Iran is looking for the outcome of the ne-



gotiations and this issue is the opinion of the establishment, administration, and diplomatic apparatus, and if the negotiations continue, these negotiations should have results for us."

At one point the JCPOA achieved good results and it was decided that the sanctions on Iran be lifted over time, the MP said, but with the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, the entire deal was affected and the implementation and continuation of the JCPOA was suspended.

The MP noted that the Vienna talks has been held several times in recent months and the Westerners announced that they agree with the lifting of sanctions on Iran "provided that Iran would return to the JCPOA and fulfill its obligations."

Heydari added: "In fact, it was decided that the other side would lift all sanctions, but unfortunately this did not happen and even after the Vienna talks, we did not see a definite outcome."

He noted that Western officials attended the inauguration ceremony of President Ebrahim Raisi, declared their readiness to return to the JCPOA and negotiate with Iran.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is also ready for negotiations, but only if these negotiations prove fruitful and not become attritional, he asserted.

The member of the national security committee stressed: "If the Westerners are to add new issues to the JCPOA, they will certainly seek to divert the JCPOA from its core principle, and neither they nor we will get any results from these talks."

"We have determined our path and strategy in the negotiations, and if the JCPOA has a result for us and leads to the complete lifting of sanctions, we will return to it, otherwise returning to the JCPOA is not in the interest of the Islamic Republic of Iran and our people," the MP concluded.

Afghan territory must not be used for sheltering or training terrorists: Iran

From page 1 ▶ Takht Ravanchi also pointed to the sufferings of the Afghan people, saying, "Afghanistan is passing through a critical juncture; hundreds of thousands of Afghans have fled their country; nearly 600,000 others have become internally displaced; essential food supplies are running short; and 18.4 million people need humanitarian assistance."

He added, "This situation is primarily the direct result of the intervention by the U.S. and other foreign forces in Afghanistan and their irresponsible withdrawal. When they entered Afghanistan, they brought catastrophe for Afghans, and when they withdrew, they left calamity for Afghans."

The U.S. invaded Afghanistan following the attacks on the twin towers in New York and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The U.S. blamed al-Qaeda headed by Osama bin Laden for the attacks and invaded Afghanistan that was ruled at the time by the Taliban.

The Taliban had given sanctuary to bin Laden.

Finally, after 20 years the U.S. left Afghanistan in disgrace and in a chaotic manner.

"Through 2001-2021, nearly 165,000 Afghans have been killed, and the direct child casualties of the conflict is estimated around 33,000. These figures alone indicate the gravity and scale of death and devastation. War crimes committed by foreign forces in Afghanistan must not go unpunished."

The ambassador went on to say that Iran is ready to facilitate humanitarian aid to the Central Asian country.

"Iran stands ready to facilitate the transfer of humanitarian aids to Afghanistan through Iran's sea ports, airports, railways, roads and border crossings."

Ravanchi also asked the international community honor to help the Afghan refugees.

"For well over four decades, we



have hosted millions of Afghan refugees. After the recent crisis, many more refugees have entered the Iranian territory. We expect the international community to shoulder its responsibility and do a lot more in providing assistance to these refugees."

Iran's ambassador the UN added, "Afghanistan's people must also be helped to achieve lasting peace, stability and prosperity. The full realization of this objective must be facilitated and strongly supported by the international community particularly the neighboring countries. The first ministerial meeting of neighbors of Afghanistan, held virtually yesterday (Wednesday), was meant to serve that purpose. Its next round will be held in Tehran in the near future."

The diplomat said Iran has been seeking to deescalate tensions between the conflicting sides in Afghanistan.

"Iran has always made every effort to help all Afghan parties to settle their differences peacefully. Last July, we organized a high-level peace talks between the delegations of the Afghan government and the

Taliban. They agreed to continue their talks at a later meeting. Iran is ready to host the next round of such talks."

Ambassador Ravanchi went on to say that Iran urge all Afghan leaders from different religious, linguistic, ethnic and political backgrounds to place the interests of Afghan people above all things.

Ambassador Ravanchi added that the "recent unjustifiable attack and condemnable fratricide in Panjshir" was in contradiction with the united position of the international community that any government that came to power through force in Afghanistan would not be recognized.

The top Iranian diplomat to the UN went on to say that the path to stability and pace in Afghanistan passes through "intra-Afghan talks".

"Indeed, the path to stability, durable peace and sustainable development in Afghanistan passes through intra-Afghan talks with the active and equal participation of the true representatives of all ethnic, linguistic and religious groups aimed at finding a just,

peaceful and durable solution to the crisis, achieving national reconciliation and establishing a truly inclusive, broad-based and fully representative government that is emerged from a free and fair elections including with the full participation of women both as voters and candidates and is committed to combat terrorism and organized crime as well as to guarantee and protect, based on true Islamic teachings and principles, the human rights of all Afghan people including ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities and women. We expect the Taliban to honor its commitments in this regard. Such a government will enjoy Iran's support," he stated.

Ambassador Ravanchi also said Iran is concerned about threats of terrorist networks in Afghanistan, saying, "Like Afghanistan's other neighbors we are gravely concerned about insecurity and instability as well as threats of terrorist networks and organized criminals active in trafficking in drugs and persons."

The ambassador insisted that Afghanistan must not give sanctuary to terrorists or turn into a center for training terrorists.

"We also strongly believe that Afghanistan's territory must not be used, under any circumstances, to threaten or attack any country or to shelter or train terrorists, or to plan or finance terrorist acts. Terrorist groups like Daesh that represent a grave threat to Afghanistan and the region must not be allowed to operate in that country."

Ravanchi also cited the services that Iran has provided for commercial ties between the Afghanistan as a landlocked country and other countries through Chabahar Port and to Europe through the Khaf-Herat railway.

"Afghanistan needs to be supported to overcome its current economic difficulties. We have established the link from Afghanistan as a landlocked country to high seas through Iran's Chabahar Port and to Europe through the Khaf-Herat railway."

Expert: Paying attention to social contexts essential to strengthening ties with neighbors

TEHRAN - An expert on West Asia stresses the need to pay attention to social contexts to strengthen relations with neighbors.

"Relative homogeneity of civilizational and cultural areas and risks such as terrorism, environmental problems and poverty are a good platform for cooperation in economic, political and security sectors with the countries of the region," Nosratollah Tajik said, IRNA reported on Friday.

About the Raisi administration's foreign policy to strengthen the Islamic Republic's relations with neighbors, Tajik said: "Prioritizing strengthening relations with neighbors is a positive development in itself, but it requires a coherent and workable action plan because the previous administrations have been pursuing this goal but have not been successful in all areas."

The former Iranian ambassador to Jordan added: "In addition to having a coherent plan, strengthening relations with neighbors requires the political will of both sides and efforts to understand the concerns of the other side and provide trust building grounds for mutual cooperation."

In the past, this issue has always faced challenges, and in some cases, Tajik noted, Iran had not political will, and in other cases, the parties did not have the political will to improve relations.

"Iranophobia preventing strengthening ties with neighbors"

Referring to the efforts of the enemies of the Islamic Republic to create Iranophobia, Tajik said: "In order to improve relations with our neighbors, it is necessary to properly elaborate on Iran's policies to the people and governments of the region so that they understand that we seek peaceful coexistence."

Achieving this goal by using public diplomacy and building trust is possible, the expert remarked.

The former Iranian ambassador to Jordan also pointed to the structural problems of the region to improve relations.

"Some of Iran's neighbors, es-

pecially the countries south of the Persian Gulf, have Iranophobia and see the improvement of the Islamic Republic's relations with the world to their detriment. To reduce Iranophobia and build trust in these countries, we need to create social, political, security, economic, cultural and civilizational contexts so that we can connect with the people and government of these countries."

Tajik likened the countries of the region to the passengers of a ship, saying: "We need comprehensive solutions to resolve disputes and improve relations in a way that takes into account the interests of all countries in the region and can play a win-win game for all."

"Having 15 neighbors is an advantage for the country," he said. "Each of our neighbors has different political, economic, cultural and social advantages, and we can work with them to take advantage of them."

He said centralized administrative system without having broad view for the region creates an obstacle to strengthening the Islamic Republic's relations with other countries, especially border provinces with neighbors.

"The economies of neighboring countries can complement Iran's economy and the two sides can use each other's capabilities, but at the same time one should not be hopeful that the neighbors can solve all of our problems because they also face their limitations and requirements."

"Social, historical commonalities with neighbors"

Tajik said creating opportunities for expanding political, economic, social and cultural co-operation with neighbors is the most necessary step in this direction.

"If we do not have an effective foreign policy with proper foreign arrangements and interactions, we will not be able to make good use of our neighbors' capacity," the political expert highlighted.

"So it is this set of issues that



can move our economy forward. At the same time, we should not neglect the other capacities that exist in the world and focus only on the capacities of our neighbors and be satisfied with the regional balance."

The senior expert pointed to the historical, civilizing and cultural depth of Iran and said: "Because of the historical depth that we have, we can claim that we have socio-cultural commonalities with all neighbors and different capacities for cooperation. It is important that a strong will be formed to use these capacities in the various decision-making bodies."

In the past, less attention was paid to the cultural, social and historical commonalities of the nations of the region, Tajik said, adding, "We were unaware of these issues, but the reality is the relative homogeneity of civilizational and cultural areas as well as common dangers such as terrorism, environmental problems and poverty are a good platform for cooperation in the economic, political and security sectors of the region."

Tajik likens the countries of the region to the passengers of a ship

"Oil is a major obstacle to using the neighbors' capacities"

"We have to interact with the world to sell oil," Tajik said, noting that the country's dependence on oil sales is a major obstacle to using the capacity of neighboring countries.

"So in the current situation, working with our neighbors alone is not enough, although it can alleviate our pain, problems and

challenges, but it cannot solve them."

"In addition to working with our neighbors, we need to solve international problems because using direct financial channels with our neighbors cannot meet our foreign exchange needs lonely and completely," the former diplomat explained.

Tajik called for a comprehensive review of the administration's foreign policy, adding that maximizing the country's interests would depend on establishing stability and security in the region and working with all countries.

"In this regard, it is necessary not to polarize the region. But at the same time, boosting non-oil exports to neighboring countries and refraining from selling crude and using the capacity of mines, petroleum products, tourism and agriculture can reduce our economic dependence and better guarantee the country's political independence."

Iran should not miss any opportunity for countries to get closer to each other, the expert stressed.

"If not, we will prepare the conditions for the intervention of powers outside the region. The most important principle in this regard should be to solve the problems of the region with foresight, comprehensiveness and joint cooperation."

The former Iranian ambassador to Jordan added: "The continuation of the current status quo in the region will lead to the outflow of more capital and its conversion into weapons, and as a result increase the general poverty of the people in the region, which will make life difficult for all."

Iran and developments in its eastern neighbor

TEHRAN - In response to the developments in Afghanistan over the past month or so, Iran has emphasized the need to avoid fratricide and prevent foreign interference in its eastern neighbor, and has stated that it will do everything it can to help end the suffering of the Afghan people and form an inclusive government.

The Fars news agency in a report on Tuesday wrote that "following the recent developments in Afghanistan, we have witnessed the announcement of positions and also efforts by the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish peace and stability in this country."

Iran has hosted millions of its Afghan brothers and sisters for the past four decades, and as Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh says, Iran has never had anything but kinship with the Afghan people.

Mohammad Ebrahim Taherianfard, special representative of the Iranian Foreign Minister for Afghanistan, also continued consultations with Afghan officials during this period, and these consultations did not stop.

Readiness to assist and facilitate talks between the Afghan parties to advance the peace process in the country, declaring readiness to hold a second round of peace talks, expressing deep concern over developments in Afghanistan, keeping the Afghan people away from conflict and fratricide, and that borders of this country should be the border of peace and security, that Iran considers the security of Afghanistan as its own, and welcoming the formation of the Coordination Council and emphasizing that Afghanistan's geography should always remain a geography of peace, have been among the positions adopted by Iranian officials in the face of developments in its eastern neighbor.

Prior to the recent developments in Afghanistan, Khatibzadeh in a statement urged all countries not to take measures that would imply that they were supposed to get involved in making decisions for the future of Afghanistan.

On August 13, Khatibzadeh expressed Iran's concern regarding the escalation of violence in Afghanistan and the situation of people and those displaced.

The spokesman also stressed for ensuring full security and safety of diplomats and diplomatic facilities as the Taliban took over the city of Herat.

The formation of Coordination Council

After the departure of Ashraf Ghani and some other officials from the country, and formation of the Coordination Council by Abdullah Abdullah, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Hamid Karzai, Former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted, "Violence and war - like occupation - are never the solution. Iran welcomes Karzai's announcement of the formation of a Coordination Council by Afghan leaders. We hope that this initiative will lead to dialogue and a peaceful transition in Afghanistan. Iran is ready to continue its efforts to make peace."

We are in contact with all parties

At a weekly press briefing on August 16, Foreign Ministry spokesman Khatibzadeh said: "We are closely following the developments and are in contact with all parties. The Islamic Republic of Iran, while expressing concern over the escalation of violence in Afghanistan, calls on all parties to reduce violence, maintain calm and strive for peaceful solutions through dialogue."

Speaking to reporters on August 23, the spokesman reaffirmed Iran's stance vis-à-vis developments in Afghanistan.

"There is no military solution to the problems of Afghanistan, and all groups and political parties must resolve issues through negotiation and refrain from using force."

"We are basically not at that stage right now," he said of the Taliban's recognition. "We are now at a stage where we must strive to form an inclusive government in Afghanistan that, if it reflects all the realities of Afghanistan and the ethnic and popular composition of Afghanistan from different perspectives, can move in that direction."

As the diplomat highlighted it is certainly the behavior of an inclusive government in terms of its actions and commitments that can facilitate the path to recognize it.

"It is too early for us to decide now on the future government of Afghanistan. What is a priority for us is the lives and honor of the people and inclusive dialogue and formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan," Khatibzadeh insisted.

Qureshi trip to Tehran

On September 26, Shah Mahmoud Qureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, at his request and after a visit to three Central Asian countries, paid a visit to Iran and met with Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Iran's Foreign Minister.

The two countries' support for peace and stability in Afghanistan and formation of an inclusive government with participation of all ethnic groups was among other topics discussed by the Iranian and Pakistani foreign ministers during the meeting.

In the meeting, Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs welcomed a proposal by the Pakistani side to hold a meeting of the foreign ministers of six countries neighboring Afghanistan and announced Iran's readiness to hold the meeting.

In addition, Iran's Special Representative for Afghanistan met with his Pakistani counterpart, who accompanied Qureshi on his visit to Tehran, and also consulted with Afghan leaders and personalities about the developments in the country.

The issue of Afghanistan and the developments in this country during this period were among the topics discussed by the Iranian Foreign Minister with a number of his counterparts, including Sergei Lavrov and Wang Yi, foreign ministers of Russia and China.

EU foreign policy chief Joseph Borrell and some of European counterparts also discussed the issue of Afghanistan in a telephone conversation with the Iranian foreign minister.

People of Afghanistan must decide for themselves

In a telephone conversation with Borrell, Iran's Foreign Minister said formation of an inclusive government that reflects the ethnic and demographic composition of the country is the remedy to the Afghanistan problem.

"It is the people of Afghanistan who must decide for the future. The Islamic Republic of Iran hosts more than three and a half million Afghans in Iran, but the new wave of Afghan migration is a serious issue that requires other countries and international organizations to provide assistance."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

U.S. pushes for resumption of Vienna talks as Iran urges patience

TEHRAN – While Iran has made it clear that the resumption of the Vienna nuclear talks is only a matter of time, western parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal mount pressures on Tehran to resume the talks in the latest sign that U.S. sanctions have failed to intimidate Iran.

Over the last few days, the situation around the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has become even more complicated, with the United States undertaking shuttle diplomacy to convince other parties to the deal into urging Iran to return to Vienna as soon as possible.

To this end, U.S. Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley started a global tour that includes Russia and France. In Moscow, he met with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov to discuss “the prospects of restoring full-fledged implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action,” according to the Russian foreign ministry.

Earlier On September 7, the U.S. State Department had confirmed in a statement that Malley’s journey was to make “consultations with our Russia and European partners on Iran’s nuclear program and the need to quickly reach and implement an understanding on a mutual return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.”

After consultations in Moscow, Malley will meet diplomats from France, Germany and the UK in Paris ahead of a board meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency on Monday.

On the same day Malley met Ryabkov, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov phoned his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir Abdollahian to discuss the JCPOA, among other issues.

The Iranian and Russian foreign ministers exchanged views on the JCPOA and the Vienna talks with Lavrov saying Moscow, like Iran, does not accept any change in the nuclear deal and demands full implementation of the agreement, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.



The thrust of the U.S. push is to build a consensus among the P5+1 group of countries that stalled Vienna nuclear talks should be resumed as soon as possible, indicating a sense of frustration over the failure of the so-called maximum pressure campaign of the U.S. in forcing Iran into giving more concessions regarding the revival of the JCPOA.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the nuclear deal in May 2018, starting a pressure campaign he dubbed “maximum pressure.” In his election campaign, Joe Biden had vowed to change course and relinquish this campaign in favor of resuscitating the JCPOA.

Nearly a year into his administration, Biden is yet to deliver on his campaign promise. Instead, he keeps clinging to Trump’s maximum pressure in the hope of using it as leverage to extract more concessions from Iran in a bid to “lengthen and strengthen” the nuclear deal.

But six rounds of Vienna talks proved that what Biden seeks is near to impossible. After months of diplomatic wrangling, the Biden administration now can only hope for a resumption of talks, not more. And even for that, it is resorting to

diplomatic pressure, something that has proven futile. The U.S. economic pressures against Iran have backfired, putting Iran in a comfortable position that allows for more time away from Vienna.

In an apparent effort to turn up the heat on Iran, Washington and its allies seem to be mulling a censure motion against Iran at the next meeting of the IAEA board of governors, which is expected to take place on Monday.

The Guardian reported that the European powers and the U.S. will decide on Friday whether to censure Iran in response to a “damning” report by the IAEA.

It is becoming hard for the west not to table some censure given the clear public warning by Rafael Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, on Tuesday that the IAEA’s activities in Iran had been severely undermined, the British newspaper added.

The IAEA said in two reports to member states reviewed by Reuters that there had been no progress on two central issues: explaining alleged uranium traces found at several old, undeclared sites and getting urgent access to some monitoring

equipment so that the agency can continue to keep track of parts of Iran’s nuclear program.

Citing diplomats, Reuters claimed that the IAEA urgently needs access to the equipment to swap out memory cards so there are no gaps in its observation of activities like the production of parts for centrifuges, machines that enrich uranium.

“The Agency’s confidence that it can maintain continuity of knowledge is declining over time and has now significantly further declined,” one of the two reports said, adding that while the agency needs to access the equipment every three months, it had not had access since May 25.

“This confidence will continue to decline unless the situation is immediately rectified by Iran,” the IAEA claimed.

Reuters report also suggested that the United States and its European allies could push for a resolution at next week’s meeting of the 35-nation IAEA Board of Governors pressuring Iran to yield.

Iran has already warned against such a resolution, saying non-constructive actions would disrupt negotiations. “It is natural that in the case of a non-constructive treatment in the International Atomic Energy Agency, it is unreasonable to expect Iran to have a constructive response. Non-constructive actions naturally disrupt the negotiation process as well,” Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi told President of the European Council Charles Michel in a recent phone conversation.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh had issued a stark warning to Washington and its European allies over the likelihood of pushing for a resolution against Iran at the next meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors.

“The next meeting of the Board of Governors is a usual meeting. So, no parties should make miscalculations that would impinge on the Vienna negotiations,” the spokesman said.

The U.S. economic pressures against Iran have backfired.

Iran FM discusses bilateral, regional issues with foreign officials

From Page 1 ► In a telephone call, Guterres described the Islamic Republic of Iran as a very influential country among the members of the United Nations and said he expects close cooperation with the Iranian president and foreign minister, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

The UN chief appreciated the efforts of Iran in generously hosting Afghan refugees, stressing his commitment to supporting Iran’s efforts in hosting refugees.

Guterres called the UN a supporter of agreements and dialogue as a mainstay, and stressed the need for the resumption of the nuclear talks in Vienna.

He also stressed the United Nations’ commitment to safeguarding the rights of Palestinians.

In this telephone conversation, Abdollahian emphasized Iran’s readiness to cooperate with the UN secretary general to find a political solution to the current situation in Afghanistan in line with talks held during the meeting of the foreign ministers of Afghanistan’s six neighbors.

He said the UN would be a key part of efforts to find a solution to the Afghanistan crisis. Abdollahian expressed serious concern regarding the new influx of migrants from Afghanistan and stressed the need for assistance from relevant organizations at the United Nations.

On the Vienna talks, the Iranian foreign minister said the Iranian government is conducting the necessary studies on the matter, and emphasized Tehran’s commitment to dialogue and negotiation as a tool of diplomacy.

Abdollahian added, “Unfortunately, the US made a miscalculation by maintaining their illegal sanctions on Iran and they mistakenly think they can use the sanctions as a bargaining chip.”

Abdollahian added, “The negotiating parties should come to Vienna with a realistic understanding and pay serious attention to the rights and interests of the Iranian people, and Iran believes negotiations will be acceptable if they lead to a tangible result.”

He also voiced concern over terrorist activities in Afghanistan and the wider region, saying the use of terrorism by some powers as a tool is the main obstacle to peace and stability in the region, which is regrettable.

Iran’s foreign minister and the Secretary General of the United Nations stressed the need for a fully inclusive government in Afghanistan with the participation of all Afghan ethnic groups. They said war and violence should not rule Afghanistan.

Abdollahian also spoke of Iran’s pursuit of the cowardly assassination of Iran’s top anti-terror icon General Qassem Soleimani. He said Iran is following the case at international and legal levels with seriousness and the US will not be able to dodge its responsibility for the assassination of this “great hero of the fight against terrorism.”

Referring to the actions of the Israeli regime, Iran’s foreign minister said, “The Zionist regime continues to openly commit crimes in the occupied territories, and the international community and the United Nations have a definite duty to uphold the Palestinian cause and the rights of defenseless Palestinian women and children.”

South Korea’s Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong has in message congratulated Abdollahian on winning the vote of confidence of the Iranian Parliament and taking office. In the message, Chung expressed hope that Amir



Abdollahian’s tenure as foreign minister will strengthen cooperation between the two countries, which has continued since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1962.

Russia, Iran FMs discuss Afghanistan, JCPOA and mutual issues

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held a telephone conversation with his Iranian counterpart Abdollahian on Thursday.

Abdollahian and Lavrov discussed regional developments and initiatives related to Afghanistan, as well as the Iran nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA.

Other issues Abdollahian and Lavrov discussed were meetings between the officials of the two countries on the sidelines of the Shanghai Summit, the need to strengthen cooperation to contain Covid-19, the problems of traders and businessmen for visiting Russia.

As for Covid-19, Abdollahian emphasized that Iran expects Russia to stick to previous agreements on supplying Iran with more sputnik vaccines.

He also thanked Russia for its efforts to resolve the problems related to the return of Iranian students studying in Russia.

Iran’s Foreign Minister also raised the problems Iranian traders and economic activists face for traveling to Russia. The Russian foreign minister said he would follow up on the issue as soon as possible.

The foreign ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation also discussed regional developments and initiatives related to Afghanistan and stressed the need to form an inclusive government in the country that would represent all ethnic and political groups.

The Iranian and Russian foreign ministers also exchanged views on the JCPOA and the Vienna talks with Lavrov saying Moscow, like Iran, does not accept any change in the nuclear deal and demands full implementation of the agreement.

Dutch FM invites Abdollahian to the Netherlands

Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Sigrid Kaag has congratulated Iran’s top diplomat Abdollahian on his appointment to the post and on the commencement of his job as Iran’s new foreign minister. Kaag was talking with Abdollahian over the phone. She invited the Iranian foreign minister to visit the Netherlands.

In this telephone conversation, the Dutch Foreign Minister praised Iran for hosting millions of displaced Afghans for decades and also hailed the Islamic Republic’s humanitarian actions in this regard.

The foreign ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Netherlands agreed on consultations between the

political deputies of the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the review of bilateral relations. They also agreed on the subsequent visit of the Dutch foreign minister to Iran in the future.

During the phone call, Abdollahian and his Dutch counterpart discussed bilateral relations and ways to expand them. The two sides also exchanged views on the issues of Yemen and Afghanistan, regional developments, and the Vienna talks, with Abdollahian outlining the Islamic republic’s stance.

Abdollahian discusses regional developments with UAE counterpart

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates has phoned Abdollahian to congratulate him on his appointment as the Islamic Republic’s new top diplomat.

He referred to his friendship with Amir Abdollahian and their previous meetings, stressing the good and neighborly relations between the two countries.

Iran’s foreign minister thanked his Emirati counterpart’s phone call and his congratulation and emphasized the strong and stable relationship between Iran and the UAE.

He also discussed the latest regional developments with Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed and underlined the significance of consultations between Tehran and Abu Dhabi over bilateral as well as regional and international issues.

Abdollahian also spoke of his recent meeting with the UAE’s Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid, and described as important, the support of the two countries’ leaders for expanding bilateral relations.

Also on Thursday, the Iranian foreign minister received Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman Al Thani. Abdollahian met with his Qatari counterpart in Tehran.

During the meeting, the Qatari foreign minister greeted the Iranian president and government on behalf of the high-ranking Qatari officials and wished them success. The two top diplomats discussed regional issues. Abdollahian outlined Iran’s view on the need to strengthen dialogue in the approach to the region.

Then, he and Al Thani discussed important bilateral issues. Improving trade relations between the two countries, speeding up the issuance of trade visas and facilitating the movement of traders and the private sector, holding a joint commission for cooperation between the two countries in the near future and cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Qatar in the 2022 FIFA World Cup were among topics discussed at the meeting.

Regarding the developments in Afghanistan, Abdollahian stressed that the United States is responsible for the suffering of the Afghan people and that the current situation can only be resolved through the establishment of an inclusive government with the participation of all Afghan groups.

The meeting between the Iranian and Qatari foreign ministers came amid a transition period taking place in Afghanistan. The Taliban have announced a caretaker government that fell short of meeting the demands of the international community in respecting the rights of all Afghan groups.

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SPORTS

Gianni Infantino lauds Iranian football fans

TEHRAN – FIFA president Gianni Infantino praised the Iranian football fans, remembering the match between Iran and Spain in the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.

Iran lost to the La Roja 1-0 in Group B at the Kazan Arena.



“I was remembering the memories of the match in Kazan at the last World Cup between Spain and Iran. The 40,000 Iranian fans were so emotionally supporting their national team. This was one of the most emotional moments of the whole World Cup. All these fans cheered for their national team in an incredible way 90 minutes supporting and reflecting the image of the whole country behind its football team. Thanks you for giving us and the entire world these emotions,” Infantino told the Iranian fans in a video message in Doha, Qatar.

Infantino also met head of Iran football federation Shahabeddin Azizi Khadem in Doha and said he will travel to Iran in January or February of 2022.

Alireza Mansourian takes charge of Sanat Naft

TEHRAN – Iranian football club Sanat Naft announced that they have reached an agreement with ex-Esteghlal coach Alireza Mansourian for the new season of the Iran football league.

Mansourian, 49, has penned a one-year contract with the Abadan based football club.

He replaced Sirous Pourmousavi, who left the team for Naft Masjed Soleyman, in Sanat Naft.

The former Esteghlal coach led Aluminum in Iran Professional League (IPL) last season but parted ways with the Arak based football team at the end of the season.

Iran, Qatar football federations stress importance of continuing cooperation

TEHRAN – Shahaboddin Azizi Khadem, President of the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) and Saud bin Abdulaziz Al Mohammadi, Vice-President of the Qatar Football Association (QFA), met in Doha.

This visit comes on the sidelines of the Iranian team’s presence in Doha, where Team Melli defeated Iraq 3-0 in Group A of the 2022 World Cup qualifier at Khalifa International Stadium on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the officials discussed topics of common interest between the two federations, the importance of initiating ways to develop football in the two countries in the coming months and years, Peninsula reported.

The discussions also dealt with the consideration of future projects at the level of exchanging experiences related to football and how to enhance the roles between the two sides in order to serve the game.

At the end of the meeting, Al Mohammadi stressed the importance of continuing permanent cooperation between the two federations.

Khadem said he was pleased to be in Qatar where ‘QFA has always welcomed the Iranian sides with open arms’.

He added that the two federations will continue to join hands to develop football around the Asian continent.

Jahanbakhsh, Taremi shortlisted for Player of the Week

TEHRAN – Iranian players Alireza Jahanbakhsh and Mehdi Taremi have been shortlisted for Player of the Week following good performance in the 2022 World Cup qualification Round 3.

Iran defeated Iraq 3-0 Tuesday night in Doha thanks to goals from Jahanbakhsh, Taremi and Ali Gholizadeh.

Now, the-afc.com has named 10 candidates for the accolade.

Jahanbakhsh

Settled and scoring for his club and wearing the captain’s armband for the national team, Jahanbakhsh reminded fans throughout Asia just what a superb talent he is, scoring the winner against Syria before providing the crucial opening goal against Iraq as Team Melli raced clear in Group A.

Taremi

The man who provided the final pass for Jahanbakhsh’s winner against Syria, Taremi did what he does best during Iran’s excellent 3-0 victory over Iraq, scoring a terrific goal to further underline his status as one of Asia’s most lethal finishers.

Saleh Al Shehri (Saudi Arabia), Ajdin Hrustic (Australia), Wataru Endo (Japan), Ali Mabkhout (UAE), Hwang In-beom (Korea Republic), Salaah Al Yahyaiei (Oman) and Abdullelah Al Malki (Saudi Arabia) are also candidates for the Player of the Week.

Two Oman international players join Iran’s Mes

TEHRAN – Iranian football club Mes Rafsanjan completed the signing of two Oman international players.

Oman national team goalkeeper Faiz Issa Khadoom al-Rushaidi has joined Mes from Dhofar.

Mes have also signed the right winger Zahir Al-Aghbari from Omani club Al-Seeb.

Mes, coached by Mohammad Rabiei, finished in eighth place in Iran league last season.

Firouz Karimi named Tractor coach

TEHRAN – Firouz Karimi was named as new coach of Tractor football team, the Iranian club announced on Friday.

The 65-year-old coach took charge the Tabriz based football team following Faraz Kamalvand’s resignation.

Karimi has been appointed as Tractor for the third stint. He led the team in the 1988/99 season in Azadegan League. Karimi was also appointed as Tractor coach at the end of the 2020/21 Iran professional League (IPL) season as Rasoul Khatibi’s replacement but stepped down after the end of the season.

Now, he has returned to Tractor once again.

Karimi will have to prepare Tractor for Al Nasr Match in the AFC Champions League Round of 16 which has been scheduled for Tuesday.

Iran Volleyball Super League to begin on Oct. 24

TEHRAN – The 2021-22 Iran Volleyball Super League will begin on Oct. 24, Tasnim news agency reported.

A total of 14 teams will compete in the new season, Shahram Azimi, Director of Competition and Events of Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation, said.

The Iranian Super League (ISL) is a professional volleyball league in Iran at the top of the Iranian Volleyball League system. It was founded in 1975 as the Pasargard Cup, but after the Iranian Revolution it was renamed to the First Division. In 1997, the league system was revamped and the Iranian Super League was established.

Paykan Tehran, which have captured the Asian Men’s Club Championship for seven times including six in a row (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011), have won 12, the most titles in the new Super League.

56% of Iran's export to EAEU subject to preferential tariffs in 2020



From page 1 ► The agreement with the bloc has increased Iran's exports to the EAEU member states significantly, which is a turning point for the Islamic Republic's plans for boosting non-oil exports during the U.S. sanctions.

As recently reported, the value of non-oil trade between Iran and the members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) exceeded \$1.6 billion in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 – July 22) to register 93 percent growth compared to the previous

year's same period.

According to Hossein Kakhaki, director-general of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported over \$385 million worth of commodities to the EAEU members in the period under review, 46 percent more than the figure for the previous year's same period.

During the said four months, the Russian Federation with \$188.926 million, Armenia with \$83.043 million, Kazakhstan with \$53.395 million, Kyrgyzstan with \$24.294 million, and Belarus with \$6.578 million of imports were the top destinations for the Iranian exports to the EAEU, according to Kakhaki.

Iran's imports from the bloc hit \$1.252 billion in the mentioned period, the official said.

Russian Federation with \$1.062 million, Kazakhstan with \$178.722 million, Belarus with \$8.29 million, Armenia with \$2.239 million and Kyrgyzstan with \$216,000 were the top five sources of Iranian imports.

Iran's share of petchem trade in West Asia rises 2%

TEHRAN – National Petrochemical Company (NPC)'s Director of Planning and Development Hassan Abbaszadeh said Iran's share in West Asia's petrochemical trade has increased by two percent, IRNA reported on Friday.

Abbaszadeh said the country's share of petrochemical trade in the region was 20.2 percent in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended in March 2020) and it reached 22.1 percent at the end of the previous fiscal year (March 2021), indicating a two percent growth.

"In terms of production capacity, Iran had a 2.5 percent share of world petrochemical production in 1398, which increased to 2.7 percent at the end of last year following the implementation of the proj-

ects defined for the second leap of the petrochemical industry," the official said.

Iran's share of the world's petrochemical production capacity is increasing while most countries are working to upgrade their capacity, he added.

According to Abbaszadeh, the Islamic Republic accounted for 24.9 percent of the West Asia's total petrochemical production in the Iranian calendar year 1398, while the figure reached 26.5 percent at the end of the previous fiscal year.

Stating that about 70 percent of Iran's petrochemical products are exported, he said: "Iran's share in the world petrochemical products trade in 1398 was about 5.3 percent and at the end of 1399, due



to increased exports, the country's share rose to 5.9 percent."

"Iran now has a production capacity of 30 million tons of petrochemical products such as methanol, olefins, ammonia, aromatics, etc., and stands at the second place in West Asia after Saudi Arabia but with the implementation of ongoing petrochemical projects by the end of [the Iranian calendar year] 1405 (March 2027), Iran's petrochemical production capacity will reach 57 million tons per year and the country will become the top petrochemical producer in the region," Abbaszadeh stressed.

According to Abbaszadeh, by the end of the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2026), the production

capacity of petrochemical products in Iran will increase to 136 million tons and total revenues of this industry will reach \$37 billion.

Petrochemical is Iran's most important industry after oil and gas. The National Petrochemical Company hopes to lift output capacity to 120 million tons per annum by 2022.

The industry has played a key role in domestic economic growth as it creates value-added and reduces the sale of oil and gas on which the economy has been dependent for decades.

With abundant hydrocarbon reserves and new private sector investments, Iran is working hard to maintain its global status in this key sector and broaden its scope.

'Supply of cement through commodity exchange ensures rights of producers and consumers'

TEHRAN – The supply of cement in the commodity exchange ensures the rights of producers and consumers, the secretary of Iran's Cement Industry Employers Association has stated.

Emphasizing the strategy and supportive role of the Ministry of Industry in the entry of cement into the commodity exchange, Abdolreza Sheykhani described the requirement to offer this commodity only in the commodity exchange as a right decision that protects the rights of producers and consumers.

From the beginning of this year, with the follow-ups and consultations carried out and the approval of the Ministry of Industry, cement factories and production units gradually entered the commodity exchange voluntarily, he said, adding that due to the transparency created in prices by doing this, the desire of production units to offer their products on the commodity exchange increased, so that now about 85 percent of cement production units offer their products on the commodity exchange.

He described the requirement of production units to offer their products in the commodity exchange as a right decision and added that the supply of a part of cement in the exchange causes the product to become multi-priced and is exploited by profiteers and brokers.

The market of cement, which is one of the most important constructional materials, has witnessed huge turmoil in Iran in the past three months, that has been unprecedented in the history of production and consumption of this product.

The price of cement, that was 2.2 million rials (about \$52.3) per ton at the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (late March), fell to 1.2

million rials (about \$28.5) in a period of less than three months, which led to the closure of ready-mixed concrete production plants and the cessation of concrete pouring in the constructional projects, and these closures continue.

The reason behind this condition is said to be offering cement on Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), something arousing many debates.

Some experts and also those active in the cement market say that ordinary pricing for cement has always challenged producers, so this product is offered on the commodity exchange.

Gholamreza Shariati, a member of the parliament's development committee, is one of those supporting this idea.

He says cement is one of the basic commodities that should be offered in the commodity exchange and get rid of government pricing. Market surveillance should replace dictatorial interference in commodity price trends.

Achieving transparency in trades is made possible by the supply of cement on the stock exchange, he believes.

Referring to the opponents of offering cement on the commodity exchange, the MP says, "Some profiteers who suffer from the transparency of the cement trading process are looking to create chaos in the market".

Alireza Asgari Marani, a capital market expert, is another person supporting the idea of offering cement on the IME.

In a recent published essay titled "Why the supply of cement in the commodity exchange helps the national economy?", the expert says:

"Since last year, due to the structuring that was done in some of the large cement holdings, more



supervision over the sales and cash sales cycle began gradually.

And further, with the continuation of the entry of a number of products of those companies in the commodity exchange, it causes the transparency in the market of this national product, which is worth over five billion dollars in GDP.

Gradually, it moved a way that could be followed by a reconstruction of the existing units to increase the capacities and a semi-finished development plan in line with the production leap.

Although, the unfair power outage in this industry and the steel industry, without observing fairness compared to the rest of the industries, caused the production of this product to stop and consequently disrupt the supply and demand mechanism in the high consumption seasons (spring and summer), and the excuse of shortage and price increase was provided by the permanent rent-seekers of this strategic commodity, so that they could continue their corruption and rent-seeking by appearing in the corridors of the Ministry of Industry and Mining and chanting deceptively popular slogans."

On the other side, there are those opposing the offering of cement on the commodity exchange.

They say that the beginning of this strange

crisis in the cement market was the arbitrary decision of cement factories to change the pattern of sales and listing cement on the commodity exchange.

The decision that according to the minister of transport and urban development, was made and implemented without observing the rules and regulations of the country, and despite the opposition of this ministry and even the market regulation headquarters, and the condition has not returned to its previous routine.

One of the cement distributors in Tehran city also criticizes the process of offering cement on the IME, saying, "Under no circumstances the ordinary people are able to enter the stock market. We arrive at the stock exchange early in the morning. The big investors buy the cement production line together and then sell it to us at several times the price; Only if we get a chance and the goods reach us."

Such opponents say that although offering cement and also steel on the IME could have helped producers, housing builders and buyers by eliminating intermediaries, this remains a matter of concern so far.

Meanwhile, one of the current problems is the supply of half-and-half of cement in the stock market, with some cement entering the stock market and others being sold directly. This causes the market of this product to be affected by stock market rates and creates a price distortion.

The Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has announced that all companies are obliged to offer all their products on the exchange. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development and the Standard Organization are opposed to offering cement on the exchange.

It is said that the entry of cement into the stock market has been adopted and implemented without observing the rules and laws of the country.

Cement is one of the basic commodities that should be offered in the commodity exchange.

Bank loans to economic sectors up over 51% in 5 months

TEHRAN- Iranian banking system has paid 9.007 quadrillion rials (over \$214.47 billion) of facilities to domestic economic sectors in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), registering a 51.3-percent rise from the same period in the previous year, IRNA reported.

According to the data provided by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), banks had paid 5.952 quadrillion rials (about \$141.7 billion) of facilities to various

economic sectors in the previous calendar year's first five months.

As reported, working capital loans paid to different economic sectors in the mentioned five months were above 6.103 quadrillion rials (about \$145.3 billion), accounting for 67.8 percent of the total provided facilities.

During the said period, the country's mining and industry sector received over 2.191 quadrillion rials (about \$53.185 billion) in the form of

working capital loans, accounting for 35.9 percent of the total such facilities.

Back in July, the CBI had announced that over 4.976 quadrillion rials (over \$118.4 billion) of facilities were paid to various economic sectors in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), registering a 71.3-percent rise from the same period in the previous year.

According to CBI, the country's banking system offered 18.989 qua-

drillion rials (about \$452.1 billion) facilities to domestic economic sectors in the previous Iranian calendar year of 1399 (ended on March 20), 94.8-percent more than the figure for its preceding year.

CBI has defined supporting production as one of its major plans over the past two years.

Former CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati has repeatedly stressed that supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of

the country's banking system.

In early May 2019, Hemmati had outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

CBI's plans take two major approaches, one of which is to secure finance for production activities and also to provide the working capital needed for such activities.

TSE's main index gains 6,000 points in a week

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 6,000 points, or less than one percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.526 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

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

A capital market analyst has said the trades at the Tehran Stock Exchange are going to follow an upward trend in the remaining months of the current Iranian calendar year (ends in March 2022).

"Based on the forecasts, it seems that the stock market trading will experience a positive trend and be upward by the end of this year due to the current inflation in the country's economy," Soheil Kolahchi told IRNA on Monday.

Emphasizing the parameters affecting stock market transactions, he said: "A few days of correction in the market paved the way for the return

of the upward trend in stock trading, in this regard, the future of this market in the medium term can be considered as upward."

"Another issue that can affect the stock market in the near future is the nuclear deal and the outcome of the negotiations, which can to some extent affect the trading process in this market," the expert added.

Kolahchi further stressed the need to change some of the regulations in the stock market and said: "Issues such as the base volume and the amplitude in the market are among the topics whose change has been discussed many times."

Back in July, Market Analyst Mehdi Bayat-Manesh had said that TEDPIX, the TSE's main index, is going to improve in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year.

Bayat-Manesh noted that considering the current trend of capital inflow into the market TEDPIX is expected to rise in the mentioned period.

According to Bayat-Manesh, the government policies for supporting the upward trend of the market should continue in the coming months in order to ensure this upward trend.

Tehran, Astrakhan to cooperate in shipbuilding

TEHRAN - Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali met with Sergey Milushkin, the director-general of Special Economic Zone Lotus in Russia's Astrakhan on Thursday during which the two sides discussed cooperation in various sectors including manufacturing and overhauling cargo vessels.

As IRNA reported, the meeting was held on the sidelines of Jalali's visit to the mentioned zone.

Following the meeting, Milushkin said: "We had fruitful negotiations on the construction of ships for Iran [to be used] on the north-south corridor, as well as the participation and investment of Iranian companies in this economic zone."

The Iranian side is interested in repairing and building ships in this zone and we are ready to cooperate in this field, he stated.

The official also called for the cooperation of Iranian businessmen and companies in the Astrakhan region and said: "[Iranian] Companies can operate here without any restrictions and



with special incentives and exemptions."

During the visit to the Lotus SEZ in Astrakhan, Jalali also told IRNA that he visited three major sites in the region, including a safflower processing unit, a factory for the production of infrastructure related to road and airport runways, as well as a huge shipyard for constructing vessels and overhauling them.

"It was also decided that the Russian side

would prepare and submit a draft of the facilities that they would grant to the Iranian side, such as bank loans and credit lines for purchasing vessels or establishing joint ventures in the field of shipbuilding," Jalali said.

During his meeting with Milushkin, Jalali also stressed the need for taking the necessary measures for completing the North-South corridor as soon as possible.

The Russian official for his part, called for the establishment of a single operator among the three countries of Iran, Russia, and India to focus on the issues related to the North-South corridor, and said that in this regard, he will soon have a visit to Iran and then to India.

"If we reach an agreement in 2022, the corridor could be completed a year later," Milushkin said.

Welcoming the proposals of the Russian side, Jalali emphasized the importance of this corridor and added that many meetings have been held to complete this corridor over the past year.

U.S. efforts to promote democracy in the world have failed: Hunter

From page 1 ► The order lays out specific timelines over the next six months for the release of the documents, with some set to be released as early as next week's 20th anniversary of the terror attacks. Information should only remain classified if its release would pose a clear national security risk, and shouldn't remain classified "in order to conceal violations of law, inefficiency, or administrative error or to prevent embarrassment to a person, organization, or agency."

Some critics are doubtful the White House involvement in the process may put the U.S.-Saudi ties at risk.

"It is not clear how much of the files regarding possible Saudi complicity in the 9/11 attacks would be declassified," Hunter remarks.

Here the question is raised to what extent America is ready to sacrifice its cozy ties with Saudi Arabia to appease the family members of the September 11 victims who have long sought U.S. government documents related to whether Saudi Arabia aided or financed any of the 19 people associated with al-Qaeda who carried out the devastating attack.

Hunter adds, "A hostile Saudi Arabia could cause difficulties for the U.S. in the region. Thus, the U.S. will try to balance the need to respond to peoples' concerns and the need to maintain good relations with Riyadh."

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you see the impact of U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan on Biden's popularity and status in America? Some polls show a decline in Biden's popularity. Some fellow Democrats also slam the modality of U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Most Americans agree with President Biden's decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Reservations relate to the process of this withdrawal, which was characterized by some problems.



Some Americans, especially members of the military who served in Afghanistan, feel betrayed and feel their sacrifices had been useless. But the U.S. is currently facing other challenges, such as fires, hurricanes, and floods. The Covid pandemic is also still not completely over. I believe that most Americans' views of President Biden would be determined by how he handles these challenges rather than the issue of withdrawal from Afghanistan. Of course, if the Taliban were to sponsor terrorist acts against the U.S., attitudes might change.

To what extent does the American public care about foreign policy? For example, escalation over Iran's nuclear program?

The U.S. public is concerned about issues of war and peace and the activities of those countries that in one form or another challenge U.S. security and economic interests. In this context, China's rise is of special concern. The American public does not want Iran armed

with nuclear weapons and it also does not want another war. They would prefer a diplomatic solution to the Iran nuclear dossier.

Biden orders declassification review of documents related to Sept. 11 attacks in response to calls from the victims for revealing secret evidence. Can it help Biden restore public confidence? How far may the U.S. administration go in telling the truth in this regard?

It is not clear how much of the files regarding possible Saudi complicity in the 9/11 attacks would be declassified. The U.S. still needs to be on good terms with Riyadh because of its interests in the Middle East (West Asia). A hostile Saudi Arabia could cause difficulties for the U.S. in the region. Thus, the U.S. will try to balance the need to respond to peoples' concerns and the need to maintain good relations with Riyadh.

The U.S. administration is used to blame its foes for human rights violations while turning a blind eye to what Saudi Arabia and its other allies commit. How do you read this behavior?

All states face dilemmas in balancing their interests and their values and ideals. The U.S. is no exception. Often, the U.S. has had to disregard some of its universal values in order to safeguard the security and other interests.

Saudi Arabia has been helpful to the U.S. in the context of the Middle East (West Asia). Therefore, Washington has not been as harsh on Riyadh regarding its human rights violations and the lack of democracy as on those countries that have challenged its interests and have pursued anti-American policies.

Other countries also face such dilemmas. For example, most Muslim states that have good relations with China have ignored Beijing's persecution of its Muslim Uighur population, because they have not wanted to antagonize China.

Successive U.S. administrations have failed to create a balance between interests and fundamental values. At least in foreign policy, it seems a complete failure. What is your take?

In foreign policy, as with everything else in life, total success is impossible. The United States is no exception to this rule. Certainly, its efforts to promote democracy and respect for human rights in many parts of the world have failed. The main reason has been because, in some parts of the world, these concepts have not yet established deep roots in local cultures.

But in other places, such as Eastern Europe, U.S. efforts, together with those of the EU, have had more success in establishing functioning democracies and respect for human rights. However, the struggle for rights is an unending process and other people should not wait for any great power, U.S., or any other power, to assume responsibility for their safeguard.

Israel steps up prison break search

Israeli security forces are expanding their massive search for six Palestinian men who escaped from the infamous high-security Gilboa prison.

The regime's forces have flooded its troops in the occupied territories searching for escapees.

Israel continued its search in settlements and the occupied West Bank. The army sent reinforcements to the West Bank, after placing it under "general closure", with much of the focus centered on Jenin, the home of prominent escapee Zakaria Zubeidi.

Palestinians, protesting in support of the prisoners in Hebron and other parts of the occupied territories have been met with vicious attacks by Israeli troops.

Israel has been accused of cracking down on other Palestinian prisoners following the prison break.

Rights groups have accused Tel Aviv of collective punishment after regime officials transferred hundreds of other inmates to other prisons in the backdrop of the prison break. They have called on the international community to ensure the safety of all Palestinian prisoners. Israel says those transferred are convicted or suspected of "anti-Israeli" activities with the regime fearing similar tunnels had been dug.

Palestinian detainees have lit fires at multiple prisons in recent days in response to Tel Aviv's crackdown on other prisoners after the Israel Prison Service also suspended family visitation rights.

Resistance movements have warned Israel of dire consequences if any of the Palestinians that escaped are killed or the families of the escapees are further harassed or arrested.

Palestinians regard all prisoners jailed by Israel as heroes in the wider struggle for statehood. Israel regards Palestinians involved in "anti-Israeli" activities as criminals and is concerned Monday's escape could ignite clashes in the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip.

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, the spokesman for President Mahmoud Abbas, says the prisoners in Israeli detention are a red line, and that there will be no peace or stability without their release.

He says "Israel's continued violation of Palestinian rights and defiance of international legitimacy will not lead to any peace, but rather will contribute to the continuation of tension and instability in the region."

Meanwhile, an Israeli injunction is in effect prohibiting Israeli media from publishing any details



of the jailbreak investigation after local media report on the scramble to recover from the embarrassing lapse.

Israel has announced a formal inquiry into lapses that enabled the six Palestinians to escape, as it pressed on with a manhunt for the escapees.

Israeli Minister, Omer Bar Lev, said in a statement that he and Prime Minister Naftali Bennett had agreed to form a commission of inquiry led by a retired judge into the Gilboa prison incident.

Touring another prison, Bar Lev vowed "to leave no stone unturned in order to find out what caused this failure".

Former prison service commissioner, Orit Adato, has admitted to reporters that the escape amounted to "a huge crisis" for the IPS. Adato said a key area of focus for the IPS should be the intelligence failure to uncover the escape plan early on.

She says "the intelligence (personnel) inside prison didn't know anything, which is really a problem".

The six Palestinian men escaped on Monday through a hole in the floor of a prison cell. The inmates, five of whom are members of the Islamic Jihad movement and one of the Fatah group, have either been convicted or are suspected of allegedly planning or carrying out attacks against Israelis.

Four were serving life sentences after their conviction on charges of planning or carrying out attacks against Israeli settlers. Another man was held under a special detention order, and the sixth was awaiting a verdict in his trial.

They fled Israel's heavily protected Gilboa prison through a tunnel dug beneath a sink in a cell, dealing a heavy blow to Israel's purported security might.

U.S. Capitol fence to return ahead of protests

In the latest sign of the ongoing polarization in the United States, police in Washington are going to reinstall a tall fence around the U.S. Capitol. Two sources familiar with the security plan say the measure comes ahead of next week's planned rally by supporters of the roughly 600 people charged in connection with the January 6 insurrection involving supporters of former President Donald Trump.

The fence was constructed following the riot and was taken down in July, six months later. It will go back up ahead of the scheduled September 18 rally dubbed "Justice for J6" rally in support of the people facing a range of criminal charges stemming from the violence, according to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

One of the sources, a Democratic congressional aide, says the information has been collected indicating several right-wing groups are planning to participate in the rally and might be "targeting policemen."

The groups could include the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys (far-right white militias) the aide said. The January 6 rioters had sought to block Congress from formally certifying President Joe Biden's 2020 election victory over Trump, who claimed widespread voting fraud and vote-rigging.

The rioters fought with police, beating some officers, as they smashed their way into the Capitol, sending lawmakers and then-Vice President Mike Pence fleeing for safety.

Four people died on the day of the riot, one fatally shot by police and three from medical emergencies. A Capitol Police officer who had been attacked by protesters died the following day.

Four police officers who took part in the defense of the Capitol later committed suicide.

According to the congressional aide, the permit for next week's rally specifies a maximum of 500 people gathering at the Capitol but more are expected. The U.S. Capitol Police said in a statement, that a "robust security posture" is planned for the rally that will include a beefed-up security presence.

The two sources said they did not know whether National Guard troops would be deployed as well. Around 20,000 troops were sent to the Capitol complex after local law enforcement officers were overwhelmed by the January 6 insurrection.

Coincidentally, the September 18 rally comes on a Saturday during a congressional recess. Most lawmakers are expected to be in their home states or traveling elsewhere.

How post-9/11 U.S. 'war on terror' spawned terrorism

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

The nasty, brutish, and long-drawn-out American war on terror, that began in the wake of the 9/11 attacks 20 years ago, has only spawned more terrorism and insecurity.

The military invasion of Afghanistan started with the Pentagon carpet-bombing the landlocked country with B-52 heavy bombers and gunships.

The disastrously misjudged and disproportionate response to the cataclysmic events of 9/11 found expression in the so-called 'global war on terror', which has since consumed tens of thousands of lives, from Afghanistan to Iraq and beyond.

The nasty, brutish, and long-drawn-out war on terror has only spawned more terrorism, despite successive regimes in Washington and their Western allies trying to conceal the truth.

Twenty years on, the war-ravaged country again finds itself at a crossroads. The ragtag fighters are back in power, Al-Qaeda is still around and thriving, while the Daesh militant group has quietly and stunningly made its way from Iraq and Syria to Afghanistan.

That's how America's ominous presence breeds terrorism rather than annihilating it.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Americans vowed to crush every terrorist group of the global reach, including Al-Qaeda. George Bush famously declared on September 20, 2001, that the U.S. war on terror begins with Al-Qaeda but does not end there. The impudence was clearly evident.

The invasion of Afghanistan — less than a month after four hijacked American planes crashed into landmark buildings in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, killing 2,977 people — was reckless, poorly planned and shoddily executed.

As the U.S. dispatched long-range B-52

Stratofortress strategic bombers, AC-130 specter gunships, and MQ-9 reaper drones to flatten the Tora Bora cave complex in eastern Afghanistan, where Bin Laden was reported to be hiding, Barbara Lee was the only U.S. Congresswoman to vote against authorizing what was to turn into America's longest war in history.

Barbara was labeled a traitor by those who championed the military invasion that incurred an astronomically high cost, with innocent Afghan civilians bearing the brunt.

The mindless war found support among both the Republicans and the Democrats, as they rallied behind George Bush and his hawkish Defense Secretary to exact the 'revenge'.

The bombing campaign was launched on October 7, 2001, on the pretext of decimating the Taliban and Al-Qaeda and capturing the 9/11 mastermind Osama Bin Laden — the former CIA ally and the founder of al-Qaeda — who was apparently hosted by the Taliban.

The core objective of the three-week bombing campaign, dubbed Operation Enduring Freedom, was achieved in less than three months, but the Americans decided against quitting.

There was certainly more to it, beyond the bluff and bluster of fighting terrorism.

If eliminating Al-Qaeda and the Taliban or taking out Osama Bin Laden were prime objectives of the military invasion, the U.S.-led allied troops would have called it quits long ago. But the aim was to occupy Afghanistan, to make the mineral-rich country strategically located between Central and South Asia subservient to

the West.

It was clear from the way Bush and Rumsfeld snubbed the Taliban's offer of a truce to avoid confrontation. Before the bombardment began, the group offered to hand over Bin Laden to a third country for trial and even agreed to lay down arms and recognize the U.S.-backed government in Kabul led by Hamid Karzai.

The offers were spurned, leading to a 20-year military adventure that ended in the worst U.S. military and strategic debacle.

The American public who initially supported the idea of military action against the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks eventually became its fierce opponents as the futile war dragged on, metamorphosing into the worst U.S. foreign policy disaster.

For 20 years, the war in Afghanistan remained an enigma for the successive U.S. administrations, from George Bush to Joe Biden.

After invading the country and destroying it beyond recognition, George Bush abandoned Afghanistan and launched another costly military adventure in neighboring Iraq in 2003. Both experiments proved counter-productive.

His successor Barack Obama refocused on Afghanistan, killing Bin Laden ten years after the 9/11 attacks, not in the mountains of Afghanistan but in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad, a short jog from a military base. Obama then began the drawdown but stopped short of complete withdrawal.

Years later, his successor Donald Trump signed a deal with the Taliban, pledging to withdraw the American forces. It was the same

“For 20 years, the war in Afghanistan remained an enigma for the successive US administrations, from George Bush to Joe Biden.”

Guterres urges “dialogue” with Taliban

risk dying of hunger”

Guterres has stressed there are “no guarantees” about what might come out of talks but that discussion is a must “if we want Afghanistan not to be a center of terrorism if we want women and girls to not lose all the rights acquired during the previous period if we want different ethnic groups to be able to feel represented”.

He has not ruled out traveling to Afghanistan, one day, if the conditions are right, saying “until now, in the discussions that we have had, there is at least a receptivity to talk”

Guterres also says the UN wishes “an inclusive government” where all components of Afghan society are represented, but “this first preliminary government” announced a few days ago “does not give that impression”.

“We need respect for human rights, women and girls. Terrorism must have no base in Afghanistan to launch operations in other countries and the Taliban must cooperate in the struggle against drugs”

He says Afghanistan must be governed “in peace and stability, with the rights of the people respected.”

Guterres adds that the Taliban wants recognition, financial support and sanctions to be abolished. The United States has frozen around \$10 billion in Afghanistan's assets, which experts say Washington will use as leverage against the Taliban.

“That gives certain leverage to the international community” Guterres agreed, adding that “an economic collapse situation which could create appalling humanitarian consequences” must be avoided.

Guterres suggested that it is possible to foresee the granting of “financial instruments” to Kabul

that would not be subject to current sanctions.

“It is in the interest of the international community and I am not talking about the lifting of sanctions or recognition. I am talking about targeted measures to allow the Afghan economy to breathe”

In the weeks leading up to the August 31 U.S. led withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Taliban made a lightning advance across the country capturing the capital Kabul, as the former Afghan government and army collapsed despite 20 years of U.S. support.

(Source: Press TV)

Iran seeks ICESCO label for one of its oldest mosques



From page 1 ► The prayer hall of a mosque is where the rich and poor, prominent and ordinary people, all stand and bow together in the same rows. Women may participate in the prayers, but they must occupy a separate space or chamber in the mosque. No statues, ritual objects, or pictures are used in mosques. The only decorations permitted are inscriptions of Quranic verses and the names of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions.

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO, formerly ISESCO) is a specialized organization that operates under the aegis of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and is concerned with fields of education, science, culture and communication in Islamic countries to support and strengthen relations among the member states.

Headquartered in Rabat, Morocco, ICESCO

was founded by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in May 1979. It has 54 member states.

Initiative to support cultural heritage

Last year, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization started publishing sets of video clips on cultural heritage topics, as part of its "ICESCO Digital Heritage" Initiative and "Distance Culture" Program.

The initiative seeks to remotely train and build the capacities of the staff working in heritage fields and ensure the public's benefit therefrom and it is aimed to cover goals such as the general principles of the documentation of intangible heritage and national inventories; museum management in the Islamic world; documentation of cultural heritage; and management of risks, crises, and disasters in heritage sites and museums.

Techniques of inscribing heritage sites and landmarks on the Islamic World Heritage List (IWHL) and the World Heritage List (WHL); rehabilitation of endangered handicrafts; and protection of underwater cultural heritage are amongst other goals the organization pursues.

According to ICESCO, these programs is expected to form part of its efforts to support the member states and their competent authorities in the fight against coronavirus (COVID-19) and find alternative solutions to ensure the sustainability of their educational, scientific and cultural undertakings during this "difficult period".

Iraq to double Iranians' visa quota for Arbadeen ritual

TEHRAN – Iraq has doubled its previously declared visa quota for the Iranian nationals willing to attend the Arbadeen pilgrimage.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, who is scheduled to visit the Islamic Republic in near future, has recently approved to grant "another 30,000 visas" to Iranian pilgrims, ISNA reported on Friday.

"Given the importance of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Iraqi government, as well as the inseparable friendship and unity of the two nations, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has granted 30,000 visas to Iranian pilgrims in addition to another 30,000 visas which was previously dedicated to the friendly neighbor," the news agency quoted a high-ranking Iraqi official.

Last week, the Iraqi Higher Committee for Health & National Safety announced that country would be hosting some 30,000 Iranian pilgrims for the religious ritual. Furthermore, the committee said in a statement that, in addition to 30,000 Iranian pilgrims, a total of 10,000 pilgrims will also be accepted from Arab countries and the rest of the world.

It clarified in a statement that the pilgrims have to travel to Iraq only through the country's international airports. The pilgrims can travel to Iraq



provided that they hold a negative COVID-19 test taken 72 hours before arrival in the country, the statement said.

Iran asks Iraq to ease tests on arrival

An Iranian official has requested that Iraq facilitate the travel of Iranian pilgrims for the Arbadeen event by abolishing the mandatory coronavirus tests upon arrival in Iraq and allowing them to return home by land, Tasnim reported on Wednesday.

In a meeting with Iraq's ambassador to Tehran, the director of an Iranian headquarters the Arbadeen pilgrimage called on the Baghdad government to facilitate the Arbadeen travels and reduce the costs of travel.

"Considering that all of the Iranian pilgrims will be required to present the result of an official test for the coronavirus ahead of the trip, Tehran asks Baghdad to cancel the mandatory PCR tests

at the airports of Iraq so that the pilgrims would not have to pay an extra \$40," Hossein Zolfagari added.

The Iranian official further expressed the Islamic Republic's readiness to open the land border crossings for the return of the Arbadeen pilgrims to reduce the travel costs, ask Iraq to consider the option.

All Iranians permitted to travel to Iraq for the Arbadeen season will have to present a negative PCR test taken at most 72 hours before the trip, which must be made by plane.

In 2020, Baghdad decided to bar all foreign pilgrims from visiting Iraq for the Arbadeen season due to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

The annual Arbadeen pilgrimage, aka Arbadeen trek, is a characteristic spiritual exercise in which hundreds of thousands of Shia and Sunni Muslims, even Christians and Zoroastrians, etc. from various nationalities participate.

The religious treks will be destined to Karbala, where Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is laid to rest.

The event marks an end to the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of the Imam and his loyal companions at the Battle of Karbala on Muharram 10 in the year 61 AH (680 CE).

Accommodation centers' employees to be vaccinated against coronavirus

TEHRAN – All employees of accommodation centers across Iran are scheduled to be vaccinated against the novel coronavirus, the head of the Association of Iranian Hoteliers has announced.

"There has been vaccination of hoteliers and hotel staffs for some time, but only a very small number have received both doses of the vaccine," ISNA quoted Jamshid Hamzehzadeh as saying on Friday.

"To vaccinate staffs of all accommodation centers, including eco-lodges, apartment hotels, and guest houses, as well as hotels, more coordination with the Ministry of Health is needed," he added.

Last June, the official announced that the outbreak of the coronavirus inflicted a loss of 60,000 billion rials (about \$1.4 billion at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) on the Iranian hospitality industry in only four months.

"Although hotels and accommodation centers have reopened, coronavirus's damage to this section of the tourism industry is still going on," he noted.

COVID-19 causes damage to Iran tourism

Back in July ISNA reported that the tourism industry of the country



has suffered a loss of some 320 trillion rials (\$7.6 billion at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

The pandemic has also ruined more than 44,000 jobs in a once budding travel sector of the country, the report added.

Experts believe accommodation centers suffered the most as a result of the outbreak of the coronavirus in Iran and its subsequent unemployment and financial losses.

The following statistics cover the period between February 2020 and the spring of 2021:

– The accommodation centers took some 280 trillion rials (\$6.6 billion)

hit from the virus, while over 21,000 workers in these centers have lost their jobs over the mentioned time.

– Tourism agencies became the second most affected group in the tourism industry, with over 10 trillion rials (\$238 million) of damage and more than 6,000 unemployed people since the outbreak.

Government care and support packages

Last October, the deputy tourism chief, Vali Teymouri, announced that a new support package was approved

to pay loans to businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Depending on the type and activity of the businesses, they could benefit from at least 160 million rials (\$3,800 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to nine billion rials (\$214,000) of bank loans with a 12-percent interest rate, he said.

The loans would be allocated to tourist guides, travel agencies, tourism transport companies, tourism educational institutions, eco-lodges and traditional accommodations, hotels, apartment hotels, motels, and guesthouses as well as traditional accommodation centers, tourism complexes, and recreational centers, the official explained.

The pandemic has ruined hundreds of thousands of jobs in a once budding travel sector of the country.

population that makes a living through tourism, who are needed to be considered in ministry's decisions."

Back in August, Teymouri

announced that the tourism ministry had approved a total budget of 4,920 billion rials (over \$117 million) to support corona-affected tourism businesses, covering as much as 36,000 people working in the tourism sector.

Tourism industry in a critical situation

Former tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan in October warned that Iran's cultural heritage and tourism would be in a critical situation if the crises caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus continue.

Last August, the tourism minister said that the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. "Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning."

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

Deputy minister shares details of Iran pavilion at Expo 2020



TEHRAN – As the first of nine blocks of Iran's pavilion at the Dubai Expo 2020, the tourism pavilion of the Islamic Republic will be the main entrance, the deputy tourism minister has announced.

Covering an area of 2,000 square meters, the pavilion of Iran consists of nine sections or blocks, the first of which is the tourist block, which is 57 square meters, IRNA quoted Vali Teymouri as saying on Sunday

The tourism section is the entryway to the other sections of the Iranian pavilion and visitors must leave from this block to reach the other sections, the official added.

Participants from Iran should try to provide quality programs as well as providing a proper introduction of the Islamic Republic at the Expo so that there will be a steady flow of tourists into the country in the near future, he noted.

He also noted that there will be an area in the pavilion dedicated to the music, films, and performances and a variety of provincial and private sector companies and hotels will have the opportunity to present and perform there.

Iranian islands arranged to host Expo visitors

Back in August, the official announced that the Iranian islands of Kish and Qeshm are ready to

welcome visitors and participants of the Dubai Expo 2020.

"Dubai's short distance from Iran's southern cities and islands means that expo visitors and foreign tourists can easily travel to and enter the country's free zones during the six-month event."

Considering more than 192 countries participating and more than 25 million visitors anticipated, the expo would be a great opportunity to promote Iranian tourism, the official said.

Teymouri said that Iran will attend the event with the motto of "Iran, An Ancient and Stable Civilization with a Diversity of Ethnicities" to introduce the Iranian rich culture to the visitors. Taking part in the Expo is also intended to promote economic, social, and cultural links with the countries attending the event, he mentioned.

Postponement

Expo 2020 was originally scheduled for 20 October 2020 – 10 April 2021. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the United Arab Emirates, the new dates are 1 October 2021 – 31 March 2022.

Throughout the years, World Expos have been global events dedicated to sharing top-notch innovation, showcasing ground-breaking inventions, and discovering resolutions to fundamental challenges by facing humanity. They are organized every five years and last for six months.

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

Persian handicrafts: Kapu-bafi

TEHRAN- The art of Kapu-bafi, or weaving Kapu, comes from Khuzestan, a southern province of Iran. Kapu refers to any sphere or crouched object, but as a craft, it describes handwoven spheres that may have lids, too.

The weaving method involves weaving leaflets of palm trees around an object that resembles straw called a kertak, which is a tropical and swampy plant.

The stem of Kertak is flexible and articulate like that of wheat, and Kertak does not require animal feeding or pests to flourish. Thus, it increases the durability of Kapu. The leaflets are woven around the core of Kertak.

The Kapu is woven by the masterful hands of women in Khuzestan and all of the materials are natural and found in this province. To enhance the beauty of their products, the weavers have begun incorporating colorful woolen in their Kapu in recent years.

Leaflets from young palm trees are woven into Kapu because they have not been exposed to sunlight for a



long time. Then they are soaked in water for a day.

Based on their material, the Kapu are divided into three categories:

"Tamam Pish", which is made entirely of palm leaves or "Pish" and has no woven components.

"Tamam Kamva" is completely made of wool, without leaves, and finally, a combination of leaves and wool.

In the past, they were made in three sizes of small, medium, and large - while today, there are many sizes in between, such as extra-small or extra-large, to meet market demands.

Kapu is also made into different utensils, which adds to its diversity. Today, vases, coasters, and fruit

bowls can be made from Kapu. Because Kapu's core fibers, the Kartak, are sensitive to humidity, they should be kept dry.

The oil-rich province embraces two other World Heritage sites: Susa and Tchogha Zanbil. 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.

Agritourism farms to open to sightseers in Gonbad-e Kavus

TEHRAN – Five agritourism farms are being developed in the rural landscapes of Gonbad-e Kavus aimed to draw further nature lovers and vacationers to the northern Iranian county.

"Five agricultural tourism farms will be set up for the first time in the rural areas of this border county by the private sector," Gonbad-e Kavus' tourism chief said on Thursday, IRNA reported.



In addition to cultivation and production activities, farmers will be hosting tourists for several hours a day in recreational spaces on their farms, showing them different stages of their work, the official explained.

Such agritourism farms are expected to generate additional income for both farmers and local communities, the official said.

Agritourism and nature-tourism enterprises might include outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, wildlife study, horseback riding), educational experiences (cannery tours, cooking classes, or tea or coffee tasting), entertainment (harvest festivals or barn dances), hospitality services (farm stays, guided tours, or outfitter services), and on-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands).

It is a relatively new branch of the travel industry in which tourists stay with local people in rural areas. Farm/ranch recreation refers to activities conducted on private agricultural lands, which might include fee-hunting and fishing, overnight stays, educational activities, etc.

Experts believe that in addition to the customer services jobs, agritourism pays special attention to the production sector, saying agricultural tourism is much more important and practical than other branches of tourism because it creates a new chain and diversity in the field of production and services.

Agritourism is a subset of a larger industry called rural tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers' markets, non-profit agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside.

Located in the lush green Golestan province, Gonbad-e Kavus is home to many historical sites and monuments including the UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus, which is a one-millennium-old brick tower known as an exemplar and innovative design of the early-Islamic-era architecture.

Experts believe the majestic tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. According to UNESCO, Gonbad-e Qabus bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

Iran to pursue removal of apps by Google Play

TEHRAN – Following the removal of some Iranian applications from Google Play, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has issued a statement, saying that it will pursue the issue through the responsible international bodies.

A few days ago, the news of the removal of two Iranian applications on the Google Play platform surprised Iranian social media users. Earlier, another famous app was wiped out of Google Play.

The Ministry of Communications strongly condemns the unilateral-

ism of U.S. platforms and the unfair sanctions against the country's technology and cyberspace ecosystem, IRIB news agency reported on Friday.

All possible capacities will be used to realize the rights of Iranian platforms in the international arena, according to Issa Zarepour, Minister of Communications and Information Technology.

Removing famous Iranian applications from the Google Play Store is a new and big challenge for Iranian startups.

Of course, the removal of Iranian



Removing Iranian applications from the Google Play Store is a new and big challenge for domestic startups.

applications from Apple and Google Store platforms is not a new story and dates back to 2017. Due to U.S. sanctions against the Islamic Republic, Apple widely removed Iranian applications from the Apple Store, and users of iOS devices faced serious problems.

At that time, Google Play has followed Apple's lead in removing Iranian apps from its store for a short time, but later the situation returned to normal.

Tehran's alley named after Afghanistan's Panjshir

TEHRAN – The City Council of Tehran has named an alley in the northern part of the capital city after Afghanistan's Panjshir in order to show sympathy with the people of Afghanistan who are fighting against the Taliban forces, Mehr reported.

Two other streets in Tehran have been already named after other parts of Afghanistan, namely Kandahar and Herat.

Panjshir was the last holdout of anti-Taliban forces in the country and the only province the Taliban had not seized during their blitz across Afghanistan last month.

On September 6, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said that the blockade of the Panjshir Valley in the north of Kabul by the Taliban contravenes international law and humanitarian law.

Mass vaccination gathering pace

From page 1 ► Mass vaccination against COVID-19 started on Iranian citizens with the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine on February 9.

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

Iran is also producing vaccines jointly with two countries of Cuba and Australia.

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.

Iran plans to increase vaccination centers, and import more doses of the vaccine.

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

Global windfarm installations expected to surge after Covid drop, says report

Windfarm installations are expected to double to record global levels this year, after a short-lived Covid-19 slowdown, according to the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC).

The group's annual report found that the world's offshore windfarm capacity grew by 6.1GW last year, down slightly from a record 6.24GW in 2019, but would rebound to more than 12GW in 2021 powered by an offshore wind boom in China.

China led the world in new installations for the third year in a row with more than 36GW of offshore wind grid connected in 2020, and remains on track to surpass the UK as the world's biggest offshore wind market by the end of the decade.

The world's second largest economy connected more than 36GW of offshore wind to its electricity grid last year, almost half the global total, while installations in smaller Asian countries such as Taiwan and Vietnam stalled due to Covid-19 delays.

GWEC has forecast a fresh record year for offshore wind growth in 2021 as China's wind industry rushes to install 7.5GW before the expiry of government subsidies at the end of this year.

The future of the industry's growth is also expected to be powered by a record year for offshore



wind financing, according to the report, after the \$8bn investment in the world's biggest offshore windfarm off the UK's Yorkshire coast.

The Dogger Bank offshore windfarm, to be built by SSE and Norwegian energy giant Equinor, will use the biggest turbines in the world to generate enough renewable electricity to power 4.5m UK homes.

Ben Backwell, the chief executive of GWEC said the offshore wind industry has continued "to break records, reduce prices, and innovate to new heights and depths" while generating socio-economic benefits.

"But as the G20 recognised at its most recent

summit, we are in a climate emergency and we can no longer be content with simply breaking records – the scale of growth we need to achieve for the future of our planet goes beyond anything we have seen before," he added.

GWEC expects the offshore wind industry to deliver 235GW of new capacity over the next decade under current government policies, more than seven times the existing global offshore wind total, but warned that the pace of growth will need to accelerate to meet global climate targets.

The report has called for "a step-change in political action" in order to streamline planning and permitting regimes and reduce red tape.

Under analysis undertaken by the International Energy Agency and the International Renewable Energy Agency the world may need up to 2,000 GW of offshore wind by 2050 to have a chance of keeping global temperature from rising above 1.5C of pre-industrial levels, which is crucial to avert catastrophic levels of global heating.

"The offshore industry believes they can meet this challenge, but there is a clear target and policy gap that countries need to fill for the industry to deliver," Backwell said.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Special plan prepared to attract overseas Iranian researchers

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has prepared a special plan to attract scientists and researchers living abroad, IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

The project aims to promote "supporting technological activities and startups", "postdoctoral facilities", "supporting employment in innovation centers and accelerators as a trainer and consultant", "providing facilities for opportunity studies", "providing housing facilities", "supporting employment in reputable domestic companies", "support for lectures and specialized workshops" and "support for cooperation as invited and appointed professors".

It is estimated that about one percent of all Iranian students are studying abroad, which is not above the international average of around 3 percent.

طرح ویژه برای جذب پژوهشگران ایرانی مقیم خارج

جذب محققان و پژوهشگران خارج از کشور یکی از اولویت‌های کشور محسوب می‌شود و در این راستا معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری طرحی ویژه پیشنهاد کرده است.

به گزارش ایرنا، معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، این طرح شامل «حمایت از فعالیت‌های فناورانه و ایجاد شرکت‌های نوپا»، «تسهیلات پسا دکتری»، «حمایت از اشتغال در مراکز نوآوری و شتابدهنده‌ها به عنوان مربی و مشاور»، «تسهیلات دوره فرصت مطالعاتی»، «تسهیلات مسکن»، «حمایت از اشتغال در شرکت‌های معتبر داخلی»، «حمایت از برگزاری سخنرانی و کارگاه‌های تخصصی» و «حمایت از همکاری به عنوان اساتید مدعو و معین» است.

بر اساس برآوردها نزدیک یک درصد از کل مجموع دانشجویان ایرانی در خارج از کشور تحصیل می‌کنند. این رقم در مقایسه با میانگین بین‌المللی که حدود ۳ درصد است، رقم بالایی محسوب نمی‌شود.

Flora of Iran

(Part 12)

Extensive salt marshes occur along the Persian Gulf coast, owing to the influx of seawater and salt deposits on shore.

Determining factors in the distribution of the halophyte vegetation are the warm, dry climate and the influence of the tides. A typical zonal organization can be described here from Bandar-e Amir (Frey and Probst, 1986; Frey et al., 1985).

In the tidal area there is a narrow band of Avicennia marina mangroves, with marked regional differences. The adjacent zone, underwater only during the spring tides, is characterized by a very strong concentration of salt and is thus without vegetation.

Next is a belt of Halocnemum strobilaceum, which, in the areas farthest from the coast, is bordered by scant salt-resistant shrubbery and herbs (Chenopodiaceae and species of Zygophyllum, Frankenia, Spergularia, and Atriplex). The adjacent open dwarf-scrub formations, rich in therophytes with isolated bushes and trees (species of Acacia, Prosopis spicigera), are largely unaffected by the influx of salt water.

The southern Caspian coastal zone has a very humid climate in the west. The annual precipitation declines toward the east, and in Gorgan there is a dry period in the summer. Correspondingly, the salinity of the soil is higher in the eastern coastal lands (e.g., the gulf of Gorgan) than in the west, where there are low-lying plains with tamarisks and species of Halocnemum, Salsola, Atriplex. The estuary of the Gorgan River at the southwestern corner of the Caspian Sea is typically occupied by salt marshes.

Annual communities. In general, wherever growing conditions, especially aridity, are so severe that dwarf scrub and perennial grasses can no longer flourish or occur only in very sparse clumps, annuals determine the character of vegetation after rainfall.

Particularly prominent among these species-rich annual communities are representatives of the genera Cylpeola, Aethionema, Erophila, Medicago, Trigonella, Cerastium, Spergularia, Spergula, Arenaria, Silene, Erodium, Papaver, Glaucium, Hypecoum, Roemeria, Filago, Anthemis, Senecio, Gnaphalium, Lactuca, Sonchus, and Plantago.

Vegetation on the dunes of the interior highland. Dune vegetation, like that near Yazd or between Birjand and Mashhad in Khorasan, has still not been sufficiently studied. Characteristic species are Stipagrostis pennata, Calligonum stenopterum, Calligonum bungei, species of Heliotropium and Salsola, Carex physodes, and Ephedra strobilacea (Zohary, 1963).

Deserts. The definition of "desert" varies among geobotanists. Various Russian botanists identify as desert any area that receives less than 150 mm of annual precipitation. According to that definition, the greater part of the central Persian highland is desert. It seems more reasonable to adopt Zohary's definition (1973), according to which deserts are areas in which direct precipitation does not suffice to support plant growth.

The vegetation in these areas is very diffuse, limited to depressions, funnels, and dried-up watercourses. In the two largest endorheic basins of the Persian highland the two great deserts of Persia have developed. In the north is the Dasht-e Kavir, an immense salt desert entirely without vegetation in its center, and in the south the Dasht-e Lout, one of the hottest deserts on earth, with summer temperatures above 50° C.

The vegetation of the Dasht-e Lout was studied by Mobayen (1975) and Leonard (1991-92). Species of tamarisk (e.g., Tamarix aphylla, Tamarix macrocarpa, Haloxylon ammodendron, Prosopis spicigera, species of Calligonum, and Seidlitzia rosmarinus) press to the very edge of the vast un-



vegetated area.

According to Zohary, vegetation is entirely lacking in salt deserts which receive less than 100 mm annual rainfall and have no additional sweet water. Around them a characteristic zonal arrangement of vegetation can frequently be observed: on the outer margins tamarisk bushes along with Seidlitzia rosmarinus, Prosopis farcta and Artemisia herba-alba (of which there is a halophytic variety); then a zone of Halocnemum strobilaceum, which extends to the edge of the barren salt surfaces.

Alpine vegetation. There is still insufficient information on the plant formations at alpine levels. In the Alborz the lower boundary of the alpine belt lies at about 3,200 m, in the Zagros at 3,500 m. The species and the ecology of the alpine plant formations, including communities of alpine herbaceous plants, areas of permafrost, cliffs, rocks, and scree were studied only by Gili (1939) and recently by Klein (Klein, 1982; Klein and Lacoste, 1994).

In the Alborz, at 2400 m subalpine meadows consisting of typical Euro-Siberian taxa such as Alchemilla plicatissima, Tanacetum coccineum, Ranunculus buhsei, Trifolium canescens, Silene tenella, Erigeron caucasicus, and Veronica rechingeri often replace the destroyed beech forests. They belong to the Alchemilletum plicatissimae and are intermixed with thorn cushions. They are replaced above 3500 m by the chionophilous communities (Oxytropidetata persicae) which correspond to the climatic climax of the lower alpine belt.

Geophytes

In the present description of vegetation units only plant forms like trees, shrubs, dwarf scrub, thorn cushions, herbaceous plants, and annuals have been considered. So far the geophytes, which propagate by means of underground buds, have not been mentioned, for there are no tracts of purely geophytic vegetation. However, they do play an important role in the vegetation of the Near East and Central Asia, as they are particularly well acclimated to the harsh summer droughts and cold winters. Hoarded nutrients permit geophytes to propagate and bloom very quickly in spring, taking full advantage of the short periods favorable to vegetation. Thus on the southern Caspian coast Scilla hohenerkeri, Crocus caspicus, Galanthustrans caucasicus, and Gagea reticulata bloom in very early spring. At higher elevations species of Erythronium are the early bloomers of the beech forests.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

The greater part of the central Persian highland is desert.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON SEPTEMBER 10

New cases	21,114
New deaths	445
Total cases	5,258,913
Total deaths	113,380
New hospitalized patients	3,187
Patients in critical condition	7,418
Total recovered patients	4,509,905
Diagnostic tests conducted	30,017,378
Doses of vaccine injected	33,449,589

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SEPTEMBER 11, 2021

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

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

Prayer Times» Noon:13:02 Evening: 19:40 Dawn: 5:17 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:42 (tomorrow)

Art in Iran: Neolithic to Median

Part 11

The most important of these fortresses was the one called today Bastam, Rusahinili in antiquity, which flourished in the seventh century BC.

It was probably a royal residence comparable in size to two such fortresses, one on Lake Van, the other near it in Turkey. At Bastam characteristics of Urartian stone architecture are exemplified; these are of importance for the understanding of some of the architectural features in the Achaemenid structures of Persepolis, which differed from the usual Near Eastern tradition in using dressed stone, little employed in the predominantly mud brick architecture of earlier times as at Hasanlu and Chogha Zanbil.

For example, the rock cut bedding for stone foundations of mud brick walls was noted by W. Kleiss below the fortification wall at Persepolis; this consisted of a socle of dressed ashlar masonry on which rested the mud brick walls of the upper construction.

Perhaps even the planning of the fortification walls with strong corner towers and salients at regular, carefully planned intervals goes back ultimately to the accomplished Urartian fortification architecture.



A figurine discovered from the Zivieh archaeological site.

market, seem to be older than the objects made of gold; they may therefore come from different finds. An interesting ivory plaque shows two figures apparently concluding a treaty, carved in the local style of Hasanlu.

This may mean that the style was more widely distributed than our knowledge has so far permitted us to assume. Most of the ivory works associated with this group, however, depend on Assyrian motifs, though often with a patterning which is reminiscent of metalwork. The date of these ivories cannot be set before Tiglathpileser III (744-727 BC) and probably falls into the reign of that king, at the latest in that of Sargon II (721-705 BC).

Goldwork said to come from Zivieh is exemplified here by an epaulette. The piece can be related to several examples of such goldwork published by Godard.

The monsters which appear in the broad border: sphinx, lion griffin, winged bull (with and without horned feather crown), horned lion dragon with scorpion's tail, are all found in the so called pectoral from Zivieh and in several other pieces of

gold repousse, said to come from the same site. Incidentally, the same monsters are also found at Persepolis in various contexts, from gate figures to opponents of the royal hero.

The central figure in the Pomerance epaulette is a bird of prey with spread wings and curled up crest. Below his head, perhaps meant to be in the grasp of his beak, is a human head. Facing the big bird is a small defiant lion. Two small animals are clutched in the bird's talons.

The representation was doubtless meant to benefit the wearer for whom the piece was made; perhaps it was a portent of victory. The bird is paralleled in Urartian art.

This is a powerful indication for classifying works of this type as Urartian, thereby taking up a suggestion made earlier by H. J. Kantor. The Syrian influence in this Urartian art, strongly stressed by M. N. van Loon is as important an ingredient as the later Scythian.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

Book published on Ayatollah Khamenei’s speeches ‘during Holy Month of Ramadan in 1974’

From Page 1 “Faith, Monotheism, Prophecy, and Guardianship” were the fourth topics that had been discussed in the series of speeches and lectures of Leader of the Islamic Revolution with an innovative and coherent approach. In addition to a general clarification of principles of Islamic thought, the book also showed well the intellectual foundations of Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution.

But at the end of the book, the sweetness that the reader was feeling in his soul from reading this book was accompanied by a deep regret, the regret for the vacancy of discussing the topic of resurrection at the end of this book, which despite the fact that Leader of the Islamic Revolution promised to discuss this issue in one of these meetings, but

did not find the opportunity to fulfill this promise.

In general, it was this regret and need that motivated for compilation of this magnificent book.

It is worth mentioning that the wise Leader of the Islamic Revolution has mentioned the issue of “resurrection” on various occasions sporadically up to the present time, so it was necessary to put together a format that could be included in the book entitled “Outline of Islamic Thought in Holy Quran”.

The view of compilers of this magnificent book has been to complete the book of “Outlining and Reconstructing the Resurrection Section” of this book.

Although some differences in terms of entering and addressing issues and changes related to the



tone and expression of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution is undeniable with the original book of “Outlining the Islamic Thought”, the proportion of the content of this work will

be quite obvious with the content of the book entitled “Outline of Islamic Thought in Holy Quran” for the reader due to the intellectual coherence of Ayatollah Khamenei.

Intl. webinars on “Modern Islamic Civilization” to be held

The head of the International Section of Secretariat of “Modern Islamic Civilization” said that webinars on the subject of “Modern Islamic Civilization” will be held in various Asian and European countries in the very near future with the participation of Muslim and non-Muslim university professors.

Recently, a permanent secretariat entitled “Secretariat of Modern Islamic Civilization” has been established in the Leader’s Representative Office at the University of Tehran, in which, the International Section of this Secretariat holds several international webinars on the subject of “Modern Islamic Civilization” in different countries.

To learn more about the details, we reached out to Mr. Mohammad Mehdi Shariatmadar former Cultural Attache of the Iranian Embassy to Lebanon and Official in Charge of the International Section of the Secretariat of “Modern Islamic Civilization”.

Regarding the way of establishment of this Secretariat and its members, Shariatmadar said, “Some time ago, a group of professors and elites in the field of Islamic civilization started a work spontaneously but after a while, the Leader’s Representative Office at the University of Tehran became aware of this project and threw its weight behind the secretariat.”

What the elites started was to generalize and deepen the discourse of scientific movement, software movement, and Modern Islamic Civilization, he said, adding, “Of course, the issue of Modern Islamic Civilization has always had and still has pros and cons, so that we pay attention to and respect both positions.”

“In many countries, we have scientists and professors who have worked in the field of history of Islamic civilization and have ideas about the revival of Islamic civilization. For this reason, we, in the International Section of this Secretariat, decided to hold a series of international webinars. So far, agreements have been reached with two or three countries, and we are going to negotiate and hold meetings with several other countries.”



The former Iranian cultural attaché in Lebanon stated, “In these webinars, not only Muslim scholars are invited to attend in the meetings, but also any thinker who has worked in the field of history and history of Islamic civilization and has something to say is also invited to these meetings in order to exchange views and express different attitudes.”

It should be noted that these meetings are held at the request of the host country and it is up to the organization of that host country to decide how to hold the meeting, he said, adding that the first webinar was organized by the Center for Studies and Research affiliated with the Holy Shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) and Ibn Rushd College in the University of Baghdad.

The next webinar will be held in Lebanon by the Lebanese Institute of Theological Education and Philosophical Studies, he added.

“We also reached an agreement in Tunisia, but due to the internal situation in Tunisia, the program has been postponed for the time being, and we hope that it will be held soon. We have talked to various institutions in several European countries, but the program has not yet been determined.”

“We are trying to invite professors with different views (Muslim and non-Muslim) in the webinars to broaden the scope of the discussion. For example, in the webinar that was held in Iraq, two Iraqi professors, a Lebanese professor, and several other people from different countries attended

Iran nominated for four awards at Asian Film Awards

The Asian Film Awards announced its nominees in the 2021 Asian Film Festival and the Islamic Republic of Iran was nominated for four awards.

The 15th edition of Asian Film Awards announced the nominees for the 2021 Awards and the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with nominees from countries including China, Japan, and South Korea, was nominated for four awards.

Iranian cinema has been nominated for four Asian Film Awards as follows, the nomination of Best New Director for Ahmad Bahrami’s “Silent Plain” Film, the nomination of Best New Leading Actor for Ruhollah Zamani for his role in “Sun” Film, the nomination of Hassan Hasandoust in the section of the Best Editor for “Sun” Film and nomination of Masoud Amini Tirani

for the Best Cinematography for “Silent Plain” Film.

This year, China is for Asian Film Award with “One Second” Film directed by Yi-Mou Zhang, South Korea with Lee Joon-ik’s “Fish Book,” Film and Chaitanya Tamhane’s “Disciple” from India, Ryusuke Hamaguchi’s “Wheel of Fortune” and “Spy Wife” directed by Kiyoshi Kurosawa from Japan has been nominated for Best Awards.

Yi-Mou Zhang is nominated for the best director award for “One Second” Film, Lee Joon-ik for “Fish Book” Film, Ryusuke Hamaguchi for “Wheel of Fortune” Film, Kiyoshi Kurosawa for “Spy Wife” Film and Adilkhan Yerzhanov from Kazakhstan for “Yellow Cat” Film.

This year, the awards announce their winners again concurrent with



Busan International Film Festival. The awards ceremony will be held on October 8, 2021, in a combination of both in-person and online forms.

In 2020, the 14th Asian Film Award was transferred to Busan International Film Festival for the first time and was held online (video conference) due to the spread of coronavirus, COVID-19, pandemic.

It should be noted that Hong Kong and Macao hosted the event in previous years.

Bushehr becomes Quranic capital of country

Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO) director has said that Bushehr province has been turned into the Quranic capital of the country.

It is very valuable that Bushehr province has been introduced as the Quranic capital of the country because this southern province enjoys significant capacities and capability in this regard, Hojatoleslam Mohammad Qomi, Head of Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO), stated.

Speaking in a meeting of the Public Culture Council of Bushehr on Thursday, Hojatoleslam Qomi went on to say that taking popular management of mosques into more serious consideration and paying more attention to Association of Combatant Clerics to the structure should be more powerful and upgraded than before.

Hojatoleslam Qomi, who is a member of the Higher Council of Islamic Revolution, said, “Due to the cultural richness that exists in cultural organizations of Bushehr province, a Cultural Chamber must be set up in this southern province in order to pursue pertinent issues, challenges, and requirements.”

Head of Public Culture Council of Bushehr Province Ayatollah Gholam-Ali Safaei Bushehri was the next speaker who said that introduction of the southern province of Bushehr as a Quranic capital in the country is a great honor for this province.

Drastic and effective measures were taken in Bushehr province regarding the introduction of this province as Quranic capital of the country, he said, adding, “It is expected that responsible officials will make their utmost effort in line with realizing most objectives in this regard.”

Given the approach of reopening of New School Year (First of Mehr which falls on Sept. 22) and also training - educational centers in this province, concerned officials must make their utmost efforts and take necessary measures in this field.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader’s representative and Friday prayers leader of Bushehr pointed to the activities of clergymen in the cultural field and stated that relevant clerics should hold monthly meetings with mosques to find their needs and problems and address their problems in line with solving them as



soon as possible.

He put the current number of mosques in Bushehr province at 1,750 and added that 50 exemplary mosques should be selected in this province every three months and 200 exemplary mosques should be selected and introduced annually based on indicators.

Stating that a special program should be compiled regarding the Holy Quran and performing prayers at the Education Organization of the province, he recommended concerned officials to pay due attention to mosques in cultural arenas and put them (mosques) as a principle in their activities.