

Iran Vows to Give Crushing Response to Any Israeli Aggression

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Report



Canada's election marred by rising Islamophobia

Throughout Canada's general election campaign, the ruling Liberals party and opposition Conservative Party had been neck and neck in the polls, at times trading the lead within the margin of error. Canadian Muslims, who account for 3.2 percent of the country's population, can play a decisive role.

As politicians groom this section of voters, Muslims say they have not done enough to tackle anti-Muslim hate crime. According to the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), during the last five years, the country has suffered more mass killings motivated by Islamophobia than any other nation in the G7.

The NCCM says that while the current Liberal government has acted to address Islamophobia by taking a stance with a view to dismantling white supremacist groups, there are still wide gaps that have not been addressed. The council noted that none of the federal leaders in the run-up to elections has committed to fighting Quebec's Bill 21 in court.

Quebec's Bill 21 was adopted in 2019 and bans civil servants including teachers, police officers and government lawyers, from wearing religious symbols at work such as the hijab.

Since 2017, 11 Canadian Muslims have been killed in three deadly attacks driven by Islamophobia.

In 2017, a terrorist stormed a mosque in Quebec City, killing six Muslim worshippers and injuring several others, the worst anti-Muslim terror attack in Canadian and United States history.

In September 2020, an alleged neo-Nazi terrorist fatally stabbed Mohamed-Aslim Zafis, 58, in an unprovoked attack outside of a Toronto Mosque where he volunteered as a caretaker.

Mosques such as al-Rashid have been met with vandalism and threats. Earlier this month, the Langley Islamic Centre in British Columbia received an anonymous note, threatening the mosque to shut down within two months, or else a Christ-church-inspired terror attack would ensue.

Noor al-Henedy, the director of communications and public relations at al-Rashid Mosque in Edmonton, Alberta told al-Jazeera that while federal party leaders have all been verbally supportive, especially after Islamophobic attacks, "Not a lot of work is happening on the ground." Page 5

Report



Let's be patient with Alzheimer's patients

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Paying attention to the elderly and treating them with respect and dignity is one of the strategies that can be effective in preventing the occurrence of Alzheimer's disease.

Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an overall term that describes a group of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 60 to 80 percent of cases.

Some one million people are diagnosed with Alzheimer's nationwide, which has undoubtedly increased due to the coronavirus pandemic and its complications, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has said.

Einollahi made the remarks in a statement on the occasion of World Alzheimer's Day, annually held September 21, which is held with the theme of 'Know Dementia, Know Alzheimer's', this year.

Alzheimer's is a complication of old age that destroys the gray matter cells of the brain with age and impairs memory, he said, concluding that people should increase their awareness to be patient when treating with Alzheimer's patients.

Aging Iran and dementia

According to global statistics, it is estimated that every 7 minutes one person develops dementia in Iran, the figure will rise considerably during the next three decades due to Iran's aging population.

Literacy is one of the most important factors in preventing Alzheimer's disease. Also, due to the increase in noise pollution, hearing impairment may occur in old age, and we strongly recommend the use of hearing aids for elderly people so that they can communicate with others and not be isolated. Page 7



China sees AUKUS as a step toward new cold war: ex-Lebanese ambassador to Canada

By M. A. Saki

TEHRAN – A former Lebanese ambassador to Canada, Chile and Poland says that China is being irritated by the AUKUS pact, considering it as a step towards a new cold war.

"China is upset with the AUKUS pact as Beijing considers it a 'clear provocation' by the U.S. Australia's opting for American submarines which will most probably be deployed in the South China Sea adds to the Chinese unhappiness. China will see

this move by the U.S. as a new step toward a renewed cold war," Massoud Maalouf tells the Tehran Times.

Australia, the UK, and U.S. and have announced a historic security pact in what is seen Page 5

Iran's Q1 GDP growth at 6.2%: CBI

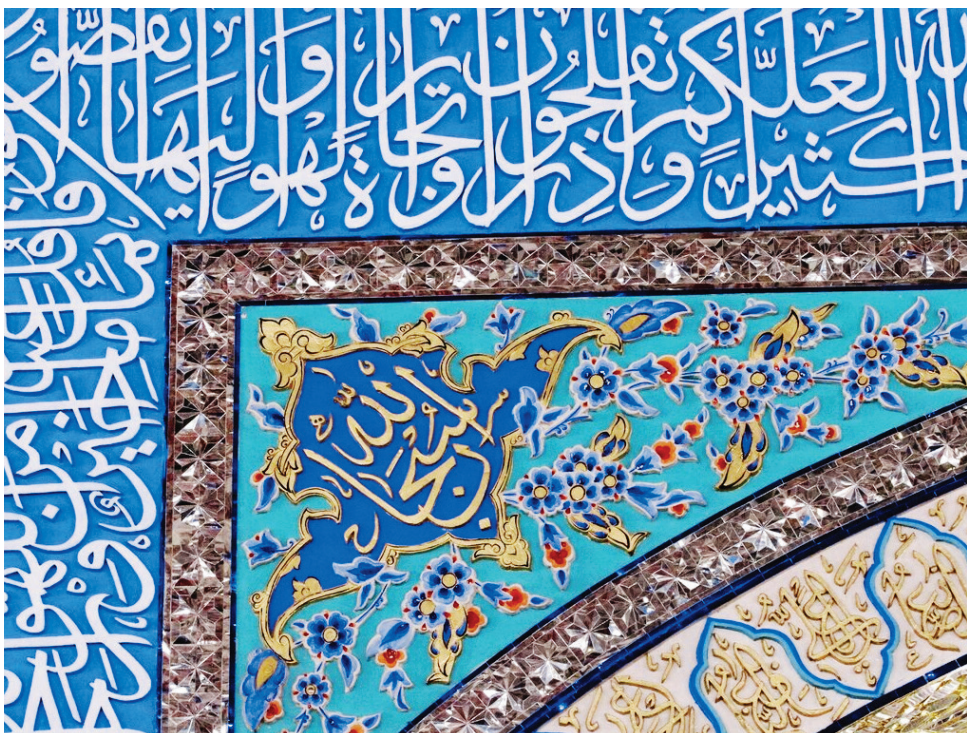
TEHRAN – The Central Bank of Iran (CBI), in its latest report, has put the growth of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) at 6.2 percent.

According to the mentioned data, the figure was 4.7 percent with oil excluded, IRNA reported.

Based on the mentioned data, the country's GDP

stood at 3.477 quadrillion rials (about \$82.7 billion) with oil, while the figure excluding oil was 3.148 quadrillion rials (about \$74.95 billion).

During the said period, with the exception of the agricultural sector which experienced negative growth of 0.9 percent due to the drought and reduced crop production, other economic sectors, including oil, industries, and mining and services respectively grew by 23.3, 2.1, and 7.0 percent, respectively.



Dar-o-Rahmat portico, outstanding Islamic-Iranian architecture

This portico was built over a span of 10 years in Imam Reza's holy shrine in Mashhad. Islamic-Iranian architecture can be seen throughout the holy shrines across Iran. Calligraphy, mirrorwork and plasterwork are main symbols of Iranian-Islamic architecture.

Yazdani, Taylor to renew rivalry at 2021 World Championships

TEHRAN – Iranian wrestler Hassan Yazdani and American David Taylor will renew their rivalry at the 2021 World Championships in Oslo, Norway.

Wrestling fans will be hard-pressed to find an opening where a star isn't on the mat on October 2, but the conversation will indeed be on the potential fourth meeting between Olympic champions Taylor and Yazdani 86kg. uww.org reported.

Taylor and Yazdani met on August 5 in the

86kg Tokyo Olympic gold-medal match. 'The Magic Man' trailed 'The Greatest' for the entirety of the match before he caught the Iranian on his heels with less than 10 seconds left and scored the match-deciding takedown. Taylor's win in Tokyo was his third consecutive win over the two-time world champ and Rio Olympic gold medalist.

Taylor's latest victory came four years after securing his first win over the then-reigning Olympic champion. He pinned Yazdani at the '17

World Cup in Kermanshah, Iran. He extended his win streak to 2-0 with a five-point win over Yazdani in their first-round match at the '18 Budapest World Championships.

Yazdani earned a gold medal at the 2014 Junior World Championships in the 66 kg division, by defeating his American opponent Aaron Pico in the final.[2] The following year, he placed second at the Senior World Championships, losing to Magomedrasul Gazimagomedov of Russia in the finals by a score of 10-3. Page 3

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Interview



Full membership in SCO will enhance Tehran's soft security: analyst

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – A geopolitical analyst says that Iran's full membership at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will improve the Islamic Republic's soft security in the region.

"The U.S. and the West always oppose the improvement of Iran's relations with others since that helps it better withstand their so-called 'maximum pressure' campaigns," Andrew Korybko tells the Tehran Times.

"Iran's full membership in the SCO will enhance its soft security by enabling it to more effectively manage the chaotic situation in neighboring Afghanistan," Korybko notes.

He also says Iran's "socio-economic situation might also continue improving with time too as the SCO members pioneer new connectivity corridors through China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI)."

After 15 years Iran became a full member of the SCO by eight permanent members of the group. It happened as the SCO leaders met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on September 16-17.

After the technical and legal process concludes – which could take up to two years – Iran will formally join that group that accounts for about one-third of the world's land and exports trillions of dollars annually – as it counts China, Russia, India and Pakistan, in addition to some Central Asian states, among its members.

"Those West Asian players that are opposed to Iran's historical regional role will realize that it's impossible to isolate it like they've been trying to do," Korybko argues.

"The Islamic Republic is now officially part of the most effective security organization in Eurasia," the geopolitical analyst adds.

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you see the importance and position of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization? Is it an Asian NATO?

The SCO is the opposite of an Asian NATO. First, there's no mutual defense clause. Second, the organization is strictly defensive and not aimed against any other countries. And third, its members are united in their opposition to the shared unconventional threats of separatism, terrorism, and extremism while also jointly working together to advance their collective socio-economic development through trade and connectivity. It represents a new form of partner relations between states and is perfectly suited for the trends of the emerging Multipolar World Order. Page 5

Iran, UK FMs meet in New York

TEHRAN — The British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss was to meet Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in New York on Monday to discuss detained British nationals in Iran and the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Truss will meet Abdollahian at the UN General Assembly in New York today (20 September 2021), the British government website said.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed on Sunday that Abdollahian will hold bilateral meeting with foreign ministers of the countries still signatory to the JCPOA. The West is pushing for Iran's return to the Vienna talks for a possible revival of the deal that was abandoned by the U.S. in May 2018.

Israel makes accusations against Iran out of desperation: defense minister

TEHRAN - Iran's Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Mohammad-Reza Ashtiani has reacted strongly to recent statements by Israeli leaders, threatening a "crushing response" to any imprudent move.

In his remarks on Monday, the newly-appointed minister said Iran has repeatedly stressed that its defensive power and progress in new technologies are meant to ensure national security and respond to any external aggression.

"The enemies of the Iranian nation will definitely receive a crushing response for any imprudent and reckless action and will incur heavy costs," General Ashtiani asserted, according to Press TV.

He said the Islamic Republic is determined to confront the enemy at all fronts, adding that its enduring power will mark "many other glorious victories".

Taking a swipe at the Israeli regime, Ashtiani said Tel Aviv is resorting to accusations and rhetoric against Iran "out of desperation".

He said Israel has always faced defeat from the Iranian nation, and it only has the temerity to show hatred and resentment to the "oppressed and defenseless women and children" in Palestine.

The minister reaffirmed Iran's resolve to keep up progress in the areas of defense and military development based on Tehran's defense doctrine.

His remarks come days after Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh dismissed allegations by the Israeli regime and some Arab states against Iran's nuclear program and its regional influence.

"Outlaw Israeli regime—sitting on illicit nukes & refusing to join NPT—again threatens NPT member Iran; a nation with world's most inspected nuclear program," Khatibzadeh wrote on Twitter on Sept. 11. "The West's darling is a habitual extortioner. But world has woken up to its destabilizing nature. Iran reserves right to respond."

The tweet was in response to Israeli foreign minister's threat against Iran. During his visit to Moscow earlier this month, Yair Lapid claimed that Iran is building a nuclear weapon and made military threats against Iran.

"The world needs to stop Iran from getting a



nuclear capability, no matter the price," Lapid said. "If the world doesn't do it, Israel reserves the right to act."

Israel's war of words against the Islamic Republic has intensified in recent months, especially after an attack on an Israeli-managed tanker off the coast of Oman last month.

"We are working to rally the world, but at the same time we also know to act alone," Israeli premier Naftali Bennett said following the attack, pointing his finger at Iran.

Iran said it would respond promptly and strongly to any threat against its security, while rejecting accusations of complicity in the attack.

The escalation of tensions between Iran and the regime in Tel Aviv comes amidst a stalemate over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as Iran nuclear deal.

The U.S. government unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 deal in May 2018, despite Iran complying fully with its commitments under the deal.

Six rounds of talks between Tehran and other remaining signatories to the accord were held in the Austrian capital Vienna, without any definite breakthrough. The talks, which started in April, were suspended in June as Iran was going through a transition of government.

Iran maintains that the Americans must make the first move by lifting sanctions and unconditionally returning to the deal before Tehran's reversal of measures taken in the last two years.

However, the Biden administration, under the pressure of the Israeli regime, has so far failed to honor its commitment of reversing measures taken by the former U.S. Trump administration.

President: Ministries must take advantage of SCO membership

TEHRAN — Speaking at a cabinet meeting on Sunday, President Ebrahim Raisi said Iran's foreign policy is centered on comprehensive relations with neighbors and regional countries.

The president made the remarks after he took part in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on April 16-17.

It was Raisi's first foreign trip in the capacity of president. At the summit, Iran was officially accepted as a member of the SCO.

"Today, with regard to the huge potentials that are created within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, all ministries are obliged to take advantage of the cooperation potentials and use them in the path of economic growth of the country," Raisi stated.

Iran was accepted by the current permanent members of the SCO, which are China, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, India and Pakistan.

"Today, the Shanghai member states know the ground for cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran more than ever and feel that they can have better and more cooperation with Iran; and in talks they emphasized deepening the level of cooperation with Tehran," the president underlined.

Raisi insisted on the need accelerate efforts to activate Chabahar port as the gateway to Central Asia.

"Chabahar port is a gateway for connecting with Asian countries and the world, so accelerating its development and operation is very important."

The president also referred to the consultations held to strengthen bilateral cooperation with Tajikistan and said, "The two countries have deep-rooted cultural connections and beliefs, and during this visit, the two sides decided to start a new chapter in relations between the two countries."

Raisi held talks with Tajik officials including President Emomali Rahmon on Saturday. During the two-day SCO conference, Raisi also held with heads of state of certain countries, including Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Armenia. Leaders of Russia, China and India addressed the conference virtually.

Among the regional organizations, the SCO has attracted Iran's attention since its formation in 2001. It centered on two major world powers, China and Russia. Now, Iran's membership in the organization is a harbinger of expanding economic-political cooperation in the region.

Nuclear chief: It's necessary that IAEA maintain independence and professionalism

Terrorist acts against nuclear facilities need to be condemned by IAEA and member states, Eslami suggests

TEHRAN — Mohammad Eslami, chief of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), says it is essential that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) avoid a political approach toward Iran's nuclear program, advising the UN nuclear watchdog to act independently and professionally.

"It is necessary that the IAEA avoid politicization and maintain its independence, impartiality and professionalism," Eslami told the 65th General Conference of the IAEA on Monday which is attended by representatives of 171 countries.

Eslami, who has visited Vienna, also said Iran is determined to continue its peaceful nuclear program. He added no one can stop Iran's nuclear activities that are continuing in accordance with international regulations.

Iran's new nuclear chief criticized the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, saying that the U.S. exit breached UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

The following is an excerpt of Eslami's address to the IAEA conference:

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was concluded in order to remove the impediments of Iran's progress, is a clear example of Iran's goodwill which the United States not only violated with complete disregard, but also through its unilateral policies, violated provisions of the JCPOA and UNSC resolution 2231 and withdrew from the Deal. The so-called maximum pressure policy was doomed to fail and the U.S. should abandon its addiction to unilateral sanctions and respect international law.

As a result of the unilateral policies, the U.S. violated the text and spirit of the JCPOA and UNSC resolution 2231 and withdrew from the Deal.

Unfortunately, the U.S. has not sufficed to re-imposing its previously lifted unilateral sanctions, but also exerted and continues to exert pressures on the others, be it public or private, to follow suit, in defiance of the UNSC Resolution 2231 (2015). These pressures and sanctions are not necessarily restricted to trade-related matters, but also extended to the peaceful and humanitarian applications of the nuclear science and technology, even by imposing sanctions



on radiopharmaceutical production facilities and Iran's Nuclear Regulatory Body, in contradiction with the letters and spirit of the IAEA Statute. Such an irresponsible and inhuman behavior by the U.S. is endangering the lives of hundreds of thousands of patients in dire need of those radiopharmaceuticals.

Despite all difficulties, the Islamic Republic of Iran, promised and assured by the remaining parties of implementation of their commitments,

decided to remain in the deal and continue to constructively and closely work with the Agency, while not benefiting from the deal. This fact has been verified by the IAEA for 15 consecutive times.

Although, Iran has always cooperated with the Agency, at the same time, it is necessary that the IAEA avoids politicization and maintain its independence, impartiality and professionalism.

We reiterate our conviction that the main remedy for the existing threats emanating from the nuclear weapons, lies within full and verifiable nuclear disarmament. We call for full implementation of Article VI of NPT and express our deep regret that not only the nuclear weapon States stand firm on retaining their arsenals and delivery systems, but also some of them actively pursue to modernize them.

Success in achieving global secu-

rity, first and foremost, depends on the effective compliance of nuclear-weapon states with their obligations under NPT, including through desisting discriminatory approaches and policies. We believe, as a matter of principle, that the meaningful promotion of global and regional peace and stability hinges, inter alia, on disarmament alongside with strengthening of the non-proliferation regime.

Iran as the initiator of establishing a nuclear

“Israel continues to assassinate nuclear scientists and thereby endangering integrity and credibility of NPT and IAEA.”

weapon free zone in the Middle East since 1974, reiterates its deep concern over Israeli clandestine military nuclear program. Unfortunately, despite the adoption of the resolution of the NPT Review Conference in 1995 and also its followed-on Action Plans in 2000 and 2010, the Zionist regime still has not put its nuclear activities and facilities under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement of the Agency, continued its terrorist acts against peaceful nuclear installations, assassinated nuclear scientists and thereby endangering stability and the security of the region as well as the integrity and credibility of the NPT and the IAEA.

Nuclear safety has always been among our highest priorities and we attach great importance to strengthening the relevant safety regulations. The Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms that the responsibility for nuclear

safety and nuclear security rest, entirely with the Member States.

Simultaneously, Iran's nuclear safety regulatory has established a good cooperation and assistance linkage with the IAEA, which we sincerely appreciate its support. Iran is also committed to take advantage of lessons learnt by other countries including through actively participating in, and holding workshops and technical meetings in this regard.

On the nuclear security, we believe that the undertaken measures should neither hamper the international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities, nor should it undermine the established responsibilities of the Agency under its Technical Cooperation Program. We believe that issues related to terrorism and cyber-attacks are the most significant nuclear security threats. The sabotage and terrorist acts against nuclear facilities need to be condemned by the Agency and its Member States. As you know, my country's IAEA safeguarded installations have been under sabotage and terrorist attacks for several times. It is clear that Iran will defend itself by all possible means and manners, but it is a necessity that the world community unequivocally and strongly condemn and take a stand on the act of terrorism against safeguarded nuclear installations.

In conclusion, we look forward to a day when the motto of peaceful use of nuclear energy for all and nuclear weapon for none, is universally recognized and materialized. This message, if realized, would accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.

I would also like to stress that Iran is cradle of civilization and a peace-loving country which historically has contributed to the global science and technology. In this context, we are determined to pursue our nuclear program and activities which are exclusively for peaceful purposes and as stated by our President during SHANGHAI Summit on 17th September 2021, "nothing could halt the Iranian peaceful nuclear activities which will be conducted in the framework of international rules and regulations".

Iran's membership in SCO strengthened prospect of Asian cooperation: expert

TEHRAN - A senior expert on strategic issues says Iran's change of membership from observer to permanent in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has strengthened the perspective of Iran's cooperation with the organization bilaterally and multilaterally.

In an interview with IRNA published on Sunday, Hamed Vafaei explained the grounds for Iran's membership in the SCO.

"There were obstacles to Iran's permanent membership in this organization, which were removed in interaction with other members," Vafaei remarks.

The legal process for Iran's membership in the organization has begun, and China and Russia, as the two heavyweight members, have supported Iran's permanent membership, the expert said.

He stated that regional and international developments were also effective in accepting Iran in the SCO, adding that one of the examples of these developments was the withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan.

"The Shanghai organization is a regional organization with a history of security issues and concerns. Given the need to create a security and political balance in the geopolitics of Central Asia and the Middle East, the organization considered it necessary to invite Iran as a permanent member to achieve this balance."

Although at first all the countries in the region welcomed the U.S. withdrawal, in any case, this development will create some security gaps and a division of powers between international and regional players, the China expert added.

"Therefore, accepting Iran's permanent membership can be examined in the framework of the Shanghai organization's internal affairs and how they interact with Iran and change the international and regional environment."

Regarding the regional and international implications of Iran's membership in the SCO, Vafaei said changes are taking place in the international system, which is referred to as the change of atmosphere from unilateralism to multilateralism.

Today, the world is going through a process that can be called the depletion of power potential from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the analyst highlighted, stressing that developments are taking place in the world and the unsuccessful withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan is one of the obvious results and examples.

The expert said in such an atmosphere, organizations and regional powers and poles and various powers seek to reconsider their role in this new environment.

"There is no doubt on the important role of the



Islamic Republic in the region and the effects of our policies on relations with different countries and this is acknowledged by both enemies and friends."

He said it is natural that a regional organization like the SCO, which in some cases analyzes its identity against organizations such as NATO, if there is a vacuum due to non-presence of an important country like Iran, it will not be able to play its role effectively.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the expert reiterated that the SCO, by involving Iran due to the country's influence on popular movements in the region, would have a greater weight.

If the Shanghai pact is interested in playing a role in the regional coordinates, it definitely needs the presence of Iran as a permanent member, Vafaei noted. "This can definitely be in the regional interest of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and this organization will benefit from the regional and international capacities of the Islamic Republic."

Regarding the prospects of economic, political and security cooperation between Iran and the SCO, he said, Iran's presence in this organization can be analyzed from several aspects.

"First, in terms of bilateral relations, the Islamic Republic of Iran has relations with each member of the organization and regulates these relations based on national interests. The second dimension is the organization as a whole, in which countries pursue collective ideas, interests, and goals defined in the organization."

The third dimension which he said is "very important" is "the multilateral relations within the Shanghai organization."

"We already have a structure within the organization; for example, China, Russia and Mongolia had interactions in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization."

Therefore, Iran has a very broad perspective for

cooperation in these three areas, Vafaei underscored.

The faculty member of the University of Tehran also highlighted the time-consuming legal process of Iran's permanent membership in the SCO.

"What we can do is take advantage of this golden opportunity of several months to define areas of cooperation in various fields and interests in bilateral, multilateral and collective areas and create a think tank to plan these issues."

The expert believes that in the field of bilateral relations, strengthening relations with each of the member countries can have benefits for Iran.

By strengthening relations with the SCO, Iran can also propose initiatives in line with the collective interests of all members, Vafaei underlined.

Regarding the dimension of multilateralism within the organization, the China expert said Iran can also sign trilateral agreements with China and Russia, or have multilateral agreements with China, Russia and India, or in any other possible way, in a way that agreements be in line with the interests of each member and the organization as a whole.

"Iran should seize this golden opportunity to set off future interactions with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization."

Afghanistan developments

Vafaei also referred to the situation in Afghanistan, saying developments in Afghanistan is one of the current concerns of the SCO members, especially those neighboring the country.

"By reviewing the statements of the officials of the various member states of the Shanghai organization, we find out that one of the key words in the speeches of the presidents and heads of states of the member states of the organization was the developments in Afghanistan."

The point that was emphasized by the leaders at the Shanghai summit in Dushanbe is the features of the future government of Afghanistan, the expert noted. "Members of the Shanghai organization, on the other hand, are happy with the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, but at the same time, they are concerned about the future of Afghanistan."

The SCO leaders met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on September 16-17. Iran's president, Ebrahim Raisi, also attended the meeting. Some other SCO leaders, such as Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, addressed the conference virtually.

The university professor said the heads of state in the SCO meeting insisted that the next Afghan government should be inclusive and views of all ethnic groups with different tendencies should be taken into consideration.

"My view is that if an inclusive, and compre-

hensive government is formed in Afghanistan, the members of the Shanghai organization, including Afghanistan's neighbors, will help this government, but if a government is formed outside this framework, this organization and its various members, including the Islamic Republic of Iran and China will face problems."

It is on the agenda of all SCO members to resolve this Afghan crisis, he added.

SCO membership and the nuclear talks

Regarding the effects of Iran's permanent membership in the SCO on its relations with the West, Vafaei said: "It is too early to discuss the impact of Iran's permanent membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization because the process of Iran's permanent membership is legally time consuming."

On the effect of the SCO membership on Tehran's relations with the West, he said the priorities, needs, and plans of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization must be first assessed.

This issue is not directly related to the Iranian nuclear issue, Vafaei noted.

He said although different issues in foreign policy would affect each other, they must be viewed separately.

Iran and the P4+1 group (the four permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany that are still party to the 2015 nuclear deal) have consulted on how to revive the deal in the past and would continue the talks in Vienna in the future, Vafaei added.

"The Shanghai Cooperation Organization's main priority is a regional security, and the Iranian nuclear issue is an issue between Iran and the countries it interacts with. Iran's permanent membership in the organization, and since China and Russia are present in both the Shanghai organization and the nuclear talks, could have an impact on the nuclear talks, but in terms of content, I do not think it will have an impact."

The expert emphasized that if the issue of Iran's nuclear program in some cases raises security concerns for Iran or for other members of the SCO, then the organization may have demands from Iran.

On the other hand, he said, Iran may make some demands from the organization for support or in protest.

"So in the future, it may be possible to do something diplomatically with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, but I do not think it will have a direct impact."

Conflicts between members of SCO manageable

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Outcome of previous Vienna talks must be determined, MP says

TEHRAN — Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, the spokesman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis), says first the result of the previous rounds of the Vienna talks should be determined and then new negotiations should begin.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in his remarks on September 14 said while the Raisi administration is naturally in the process of consultations on how to continue the Vienna talks, it has reiterated that it will welcome negotiations that have tangible results and secure the rights and interests of the Iranian people.

Abdollahian said on September 7 that Iran seeks “wise and solid negotiations” for reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran welcomes negotiations that guarantee the rights and interests of the Iranian nation, Abdollahian added.

“We believe in wise and solid negotiations that secure rights of the nation and will actively take measures towards that goal,” Abdollahian said in a meeting with heads of foreign diplomatic missions in Tehran.

The chief diplomat added Iran negotiations that only waste time would not be beneficial.

Talking to the Mehr news agency published on Sunday, Abbaszadeh Meshkini said that the Westerners are to blame for the failure of the nuclear talks.

“If the nuclear talks reach a stalemate, it is the fault of the Westerners, because we negotiated with them and signed the JCPOA agreement, but they did not fulfill the obligations they had signed.”

He noted: “The Western member states of the JCPOA acted contrary to the provisions of this agreement and not



only did not lift the sanctions, but also tightened sanctions.”

Due to sanctions, including financial ones, Iran was not able to import medicine and medical supplies in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic. The cruel sanctions prompted former Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif to say “the world can no longer be silent as U.S. Economic Terrorism is supplanted by its Medical Terrorism.”

Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to put limits its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

The spokesman has said that the JCPOA is an agreement under which Iran scaled back and suspended a number of its nuclear activities, accepted monitoring of its nuclear sites beyond the safeguard agreement so that Westerners lift sanctions on Iran in return.

“We fulfilled all our obligations, but they did not fulfill and unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA, and naturally they must return to this agreement and implement

their obligations so that we can fulfill all our obligations in the deal,” Abbaszadeh Meshkini stated.

One year after the U.S. quit the nuclear deal and returned sanctions, Iran announced that its “strategic patience” is over and started to gradually remove bans on its nuclear program.

The U.S. under Donald Trump abandoned the multilateral nuclear agreement in May 2018 and Iran started compensatory measures in May 2019. Even at the time Iran announced if the remaining members of the JCPOA, particularly the European sides, compensate Iran for the U.S. sanctions it will reverse its decision. However, the Europeans did nothing and the Trump administration under its “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran added new sanctions to the extent that it declared a total ban on Iran’s oil export.

Abbaszadeh Meshkini say there is no reason for Iran to unilaterally fulfill commitments under the JCPOA.

“When Westerners are not living up to

their obligations, we do not have to act unilaterally on all of our commitments in the JCPOA.”

In December 2020 the Iranian parliament approved a legislation obliging the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran to accelerate nuclear activities unless the sanctions are removed.

The parliamentary spokesman said by passing such a law the parliament did not allow the one-way road of the JCPOA to continue.

Abbaszadeh Meshkini emphasized that now the ball is in the West’s court.

On the other hand, he stated, the Islamic Republic’s demand is “quite clear” according to which the West must honor its obligations in lifting sanctions on Iran.

“If they respond to the transparent, logical and unambiguous requests of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we have no problem in continuing the negotiations and it is important that the interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran are taken into account,” the MP reiterated.

Negotiations for reviving the JCPOA began in April in Vienna. Six rounds of talks were held until June. The talks were intended to bring the U.S., as the violator of the deal, back into compliance.

Though significant progresses were made, the U.S. side, which was participating in the talks indirectly, raised new issues which were not related to the JCPOA. The raising of new issues, including Iran’s defensive missile program, led the negotiators fail to restore the agreement.

Since June 20 no talks have been held between Iran, the other remaining parties to the JCPOA – Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China – and the United States. The talks were suspended until the new government in Iran starts its work.

SPORTS

Yazdani, Taylor to renew rivalry at 2021 World Championships

From Page 1 ► After bumping up to 74 kg, Yazdani claimed gold at the 2016 Rio Olympics, defeating Aniuar Geduev 6–6 with criteria by scoring the final points.

After once again bumping up in weight, Yazdani won gold at the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games in the 86 kg division. He defeated former Olympic gold medalist Sharif Sharifov with a score of 11-0 and 2016 Olympic silver medalist Selim Ya’ar with the same score en route to becoming champion.

In July 2017, Yazdani won the Iran Freestyle Wrestling Nationals at 86 kg, defeating Alireza Karimi 5-0 on his path to victory. This gained him a place at the 2017 World Wrestling Championships in Paris. In 2017 World Wrestling Championships in Paris, Hassan Yazdani participated in 86 kg. He became the champion with decisive wins, 4 out of 5 matches including the final with technical superiority. In the entire championship, Yazdani gave out only two points. Right after the matches, he stated that he “came to Paris for a decisive gold, with no ifs or buts”.

Iran to start 2022 AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualification on Wednesday

TEHRAN –0 Iran women’s football team will begin the 2022 AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualification on Wednesday with a match against Bangladesh.

Uzbekistan hosts the 2022 AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualification Group G matches.

Bangladesh was originally chosen to host the competition but the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has named Uzbekistan as hosts.



Iran, Jordan and Bangladesh are in Group G.

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

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

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

Iran draw the U.S. at Indoor Hockey World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran have been drawn with the U.S. at the 2022 Men’s FIH Indoor Hockey World Cup.

Iran are pitted against hosts Belgium, the U.S., Germany, Namibia and Netherlands in Pool B.

Group A consists of Argentina, Czech Republic, Austria, Kazakhstan, RFHF (Russia) and South Africa.

Australia and New Zealand withdrew from the World Cup due to coronavirus-related travel restrictions in both countries.

Namibia and the U.S. have replaced the two countries in the men’s indoor event, with their places in the women’s tournament given to Canada and South Africa.

Iran will start the campaign with a match against Belgium on Feb. 2.

The 2022 Men’s FIH Indoor Hockey World Cup will be the sixth edition of this tournament and played from Feb. 2 to 6, 2022 in Liège, Belgium.

It was originally scheduled for February 2021, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Zahra Nemati proves greatness through consistency

TEHRAN – No other individual archer from Rio 2016 returned to the top of the Paralympic podium in Tokyo apart from Zahra Nemati, Paralympic.org wrote.

By winning the women’s recurve open, the Iranian secured her third consecutive Paralympic title. She did so in a nail-biting shoot-off with Italy’s Vincenza Pettrilli, hitting a 10 with her last arrow to win the title. South Africa’s Margaret Harriman was the only other Para archer to win gold at consecutive Paralympic gold medals, doing so in at the 1960, 1964, 1968 and 1972 Paralympic Games.

The achievement not only speaks of Nemati’s excellence in the sport overtime, but also what it means around the world. She first shot into the global radar by becoming the first woman from Iran to win a gold medal at either the Olympic or Paralympic Games back in 2012, and has used her platform to speak up about women in sports and disability.

Now she has another platform – being voted one of six on the IPC Athletes’ Council during Tokyo 2020 – to make an impact beyond archery.

Iran the best Asian team in FIVB World Ranking

TEHRAN – Iran are the best Asian volleyball team in the FIVB World Ranking.

The Iranian team sit in the 10th place in the world, a place above Japan.

Behrouz Ataei’s men defended their title at the Asian Volleyball Championship on Sunday, overpowering Japan 3-0 in the final match.

Brazil sit top of the table, followed by Poland, Russia, France and Italy.

According to volleyball’s world governing body FIVB, the new dynamic ranking system will respond in real time after each competition day.

Leader praises Iranian volleyballers after Asian title

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei appreciated the Iranian men’s volleyball team on winning the Asian crown for the fourth time.

Ayatollah Khamenei on Monday issued a letter of appreciation to the Iranian men’s volleyball team on the occasion of their victory in the 2021 Asian Volleyball Championship.

The text of the message is as follows:

“The brilliant victory of the National Volleyball Team is very sweet for the Iranian nation. I sincerely thank you dear youth and your Iranian coach,” the Leader wrote in his message.

On Sunday, the Iranian volleyballers, headed by Behrouz Ataei, beat Japan 3-0 at the Chiba Port Arena in the final match of the 21st Asian Senior Men’s Volleyball Championship.

In the past 21 Asian championships, only five different teams have captured the eventual titles.

Japan has won nine titles, while Iran and Korea claimed four, China seized three and Australia won one.

It’s the first time Iran wins a title in Asian Senior Men’s Volleyball Championship with an Iranian coach.

Taremi scores a brace as Porto beat Moreirense

TEHRAN – Porto football team defeated Moreirense 5-0 in Matchday 6 of the Primeira Liga thanks to goals from Mehdi Taremi and Luis Diaz.

Taremi opened the scoring for the host at the Estadio do Dragao in the 34th minute from the penalty spot.

Diaz scored twice in the 51st and 65th minute and Taremi made it 4-1 in the 71st minute.

Pepe scored Poro’s fifth goal in 77th minute.

Porto sit third in the table, one point behind leader Benfica.

Legislator: Raisi administration seeks to thwart sanctions



TEHRAN – A member of the National Security Committee of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) says the approach of the Raisi administration is to promote economic capacity at home and to negotiate at international stage, and this will neutralize the sanctions.

In an interview with the Mehr news agency published on Monday, Ebrahim Rezaei reacted to the remarks by some reformists that resolving people’s problems requires negotiations with the West.

“The pro-Western approach in linking sanctions and economic problems has two aspects, part of which is the result their discourse” that seek development at home outside borders “and partly the result of their tactics. Of course, these two categories are not far apart and may be the product of each other,” Rezaei remarked.

The MP noted that understanding of some in the “pro-Western” camp for economic progress is to “connect the category of economy to the West”, and since they are aware that a resolution of problems without the West will weaken their status, they seek a pro-West policy in order to “keep their current alive”.

“Pro-West reformists seek to hide their weaknesses”

The member of the parliamentary committee stated: “Accordingly, they believe that all problems should be tied to the West so that their managerial flaws, weaknesses and corruptions are not seen.”

Iran vows to give crushing response to any Israeli aggression

TEHRAN – Iran has warned that it will deliver a severe blow to Israel in case it dared commit aggression against Iran amid a deadlock over reviving a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

New Iranian Defense Minister General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani has made his debut remarks reacting strongly to recent Israeli threats against Iran, vowing a crushing response to Tel Aviv in case it attacked Iran.

He said Iran’s defense power and its technological advancements have been developed to be used only in defending the country’s borders and responding to any possible threats and acts of aggression.

Taking a swipe at enemies for their absurd statements, the Iranian defense minister said the enemies are resorting to rants and accusations out of desperation. General Ashtiani also said that the enemies, particularly Israel, are prattling about Iran. He said Israel has always faced defeat from the Iranian nation, and it only has the temerity to show hatred and resentment to the “oppressed and defenseless women and children” in Palestine.

Underlining Iran’s determination to

keep up military and defense progress, the defense minister warned that “the enemies of the Iranian nation will definitely receive a crushing response for any imprudent and reckless action and will incur heavy costs.”

The remarks came in response to repeated threatening statements by Israeli officials against Iran. Leveling various accusations against Iran’s nuclear program, these officials threatened to attack Iran in case the world failed to “stop” Iran.

During a recent visit to Moscow, Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid accused Iran of pursuing a nuclear weapon and said that if the world doesn’t stop Iran, Israel will do so.

“The world needs to stop Iran from getting a nuclear capability, no matter the price,” Lapid said, adding, “if the world doesn’t do it, Israel reserves the right to act”

The Israeli bluster drew a response from Iran.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry, strongly rejected the Israeli allegations. He rejected Israeli threats against Iran’s nuclear program, underlining that Iran retains the right to respond to any Israeli aggression.

“Outlaw Israeli regime—sitting on illicit nukes & refusing to join NPT—again threatens NPT member Iran; a nation w world’s most inspected nuclear program,” he said on Twitter.

Khatibzadeh added, “The West’s darling is a habitual extortioner. But world has woken up to its destabilizing nature. Iran reserves right to respond.”

The Israeli-Iranian war of words came amid a flurry of diplomatic efforts to resume the stalled Vienna nuclear talks over possible revival of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The JCPOA is also expected to be on the agenda of Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian during his visit to New York where he will meet the foreign minister of all the remaining signatories to the 2015 deal. Abdollahian has travelled to New York to participate in the meeting of the UN General Assembly. Khatibzadeh said the new Iranian foreign minister will have about 45 meetings in New York.

Pundits believe that Israel’s bluster may be intended to ramp up pressure on Iran in order

Emphasis on capacity building and negotiations in international arena is the principle followed by the Raisi administration.

Iran's Q1 GDP growth at 6.2%: CBI

From page 1 ► According to the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), Iran's gross domestic product excluding oil grew 3.3 percent in the fourth quarter of the previous Iranian calendar year (December 21, 2020-March 20, 2021) compared to the same period in the preceding year, while the figure including oil grew 6.8 percent.

As reported, the country's non-oil GDP reached 1.57 quadrillion rials (about \$37.5 billion) in the mentioned three months.

The SCI data indicated that the country's inflation rate was 36.4 percent in the mentioned time span.

In a report published in March, the CBI had put the country's GDP growth in the first nine months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20 -December 20, 2020) at 2.2 percent.



According to the mentioned data, the figure was 1.9 percent excluding oil.

Back in December 2020, former CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati had announced that the country's GDP growth - both with and without oil - became positive.

Trade with ECO members rises 38% in 5 months yr/yr

TEHRAN - Iran's trade with the members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) reached \$4.976 billion in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22) to register a 38 percent increase year on year, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said.

According to Rouhollah Latfi, the volume of trade with the mentioned countries also increased by eight percent in comparison to the previous year's same five months, IRNA reported.

As reported, during the mentioned five months Iran traded

over 7,944,322 tons of commodities with ECO member countries including Turkey, Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Iran exported 6,107,311 tons of commodities worth over \$2.953 billion to the said nations in the mentioned period.

He said major export destinations of the Iranian goods in the said union were Turkey with about \$1.106 billion of imports, Afghanistan with \$855 million, Pakistan with \$421 million, Uzbekistan with \$174 million, and Azerbaijan with \$161 million.



Meanwhile, the country imported 1,837,011 tons of goods valued at over \$2.014 billion from the ECO member countries, with Turkey, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan being the top sources of imported goods.

According to Latifi, more than 23.723 million tons of goods worth \$11.71 billion were traded between Iran and the ECO member countries during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), of which the share of exports was 18.419 million tons of goods worth \$6.890 billion and the share of

imports from these countries was 5.312 million tons worth \$4.819 billion.

The value of Iran's total non-oil trade during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year stood at \$34 billion, which indicates a 38-percent growth in terms of value and 14 percent growth in terms of weight as compared to the previous year's same time span.

The Economic Cooperation Organization or ECO is an Asian political and economic intergovernmental organization that was founded in 1985 in Tehran by the leaders of Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Growth returns to stock market

TEHRAN- After several days of drops, TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is Iran's major stock exchange, climbed 7,279 points to 1.427 million on Monday.

As reported, over 6.251 billion securities worth 43.734 trillion rials (about \$1.041 billion) were traded at the TSE on Monday.

The first market's index rose 5,688 points and the second market's index gained 13,556 points.

TEDPIX lost 38,000 points, or 2.5 percent, to 1.488 million, in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

During the past week, the indices of State Retirement Fund, Social Security Investment Company, Sepid Makian Company, Behsaz Kashaneh Tehran Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed indices.

outcomes of the mentioned meeting that we are witnessing its realization today, he stated.

Shafeie continued by stating that this exhibition is an opportunity to introduce the capabilities and the latest technologies and advances in the industrial and manufacturing fields of the two countries, adding: "Exhibitors should make the most of this opportunity. The goal should not be just to buy and sell goods, rather, creating a space for the exchange of new ideas and thoughts with the approach of creating innovative ideas in the field of joint ventures and establishing long-term economic relations with a view to natural capacities and facilities in Iran and Oman."

This exhibition is one of the



including the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic and the need to review and revive relations and interactions were discussed."

"Holding virtual meetings and exhibitions, developing transit cooperation, removing banking barriers and creating a mechanism

for financial and monetary exchanges in order to take advantage of the potential of the two sides' private sectors and using barter trade mechanism were also among the subjects discussed during our online meeting," he added.

Iran-Oman 1st virtual expo launched

TEHRAN - The first Iran-Oman VirtualExpo was launched on Monday by the Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

The online exhibition is scheduled to be held until September 26, on the platform of Iran Virtual Expo, the ICCIMA portal reported.

Participated by more than 130 Iranian and Omani companies, the exhibition was inaugurated in a ceremony attended by the Ambassador of Sultanate of Oman to Iran Ibrahim bin Ahmad bin Mohammad Al-Moeini, the ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie,

the Head of Iran-Oman Chamber of Commerce Mohsen Zarabi, and the OCCI Chairman Redha bin Juma Al Saleh.

Speaking in the opening ceremony, Shafeie underlined the significance of the mentioned exhibition, saying: "Holding this online exhibition during the pandemic shows the firm determination of the Iranian and Omani chambers of commerce to develop trade and industrial relations between the two countries."

Referring to his webinar meeting with the chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry six months ago, the official said: "In that meeting, various aspects of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries,

Exporting 2m tons of fruits on agenda



TEHRAN - Head of Tehran Fruit and Vegetable Traders Union has said his union is planning to export over two million tons of fruits in the current Iranian calendar year (ends in March 2022), ILNA reported.

"This year, our total production will be 4.5 million tons, of which 2.5 million tons will be consumed domestically, and another two million is intended for export, and we are planning to export to Russia, Iraq, Armenia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan," Mostafa Daraei-Nejad said.

Referring to the situation of the fruit and vegetable market, the official said: "There are about 67 items of fruits and vegetables in the market, none of which we lack. We have only 2.5 million tons of fruit production in Mazandaran province."

He put the domestic citrus consumption in the country at 1.5 million tons annually, saying that considering the production of 2.5 million tons of the mentioned products in the country it is possible to export one million tons every year.

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

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

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

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

Refineries' production capacity, quality to rise

TEHRAN- Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji announced the ministry's two major plans for boosting the production capacity and quality of the country's refineries.

Regarding the current government's plan to develop refining industries and build petro-refineries, the minister said: "Considering the current production capacity of petroleum products in the country's oil refineries and various uses, increasing refining capacity is undoubtedly a need, so we have two plans in mind."

He added: "The first plan is to increase the capacity of existing refineries (both those that have crude oil feed and those that use gas condensate) in terms of quality and quantity of oil products, and the second plan is to build new refineries or petro-refineries."

Despite all the external challenges like the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. sanctions, the Iranian oil and gas sector has been developing at a fast pace and the country is passing new milestones in this industry every day.

Various sectors of Iran's oil and gas industry including exploration, production, processing, and distribution are all among the world's top charts and the country is taking new steps to develop the industry even further.

Among different sectors of this industry, refining is a major one being seriously paid attention for development.

In a visit to Tehran Refinery on September 10,

the oil minister said that the country's oil refining capacity will be increased by 1.5 folds by the end of the current government's incumbency (in four years).

He mentioned promoting quantity and quality of the current refineries' products and construction of new refineries as some major plans of the Oil Ministry in the new government.

According to the defined schedule for the quantitative and qualitative development of existing refineries and planning for the construction of new refineries in the next four to five years, the country's daily oil refining capacity will increase by one and a half times to 3.5 million barrels, the minister stated.

"Following the improvement of the quality of petroleum products and the increase of the quality of gasoline and gas oil, which is very important for us in the field of environment, the discussion of quantitative and qualitative development plans of refineries is seriously on the agenda of the current government," he added.

Putting the country's current refining capacity of oil and gas condensate at 2.2 million barrels per day (bpd), the official said the figure is planned to reach over 3.5 million bpd.

While development of oil refineries is a top agenda, gas refineries development is also being pursued seriously.

Among the latest achievements of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), the significant increase in the



gas refining and processing capacity is one that has been under the spotlight in recent years.

With the new developments in the country's giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, and the increase in the gas production from this field, the Oil Ministry has been taking serious measures for the development of the country's gas refineries to process the extracted gas.

Bid Boland Refinery, in the southwest of Iran, is an outstanding example in this due.

The refinery, which was inaugurated by the previous president Hasan Rouhani in mid-January, has been put into operation with the aim of increasing the production of sweet gas, reducing the consumption of petroleum products, production of propane, butane, and gas condensate, the export of by-products, the supply of natural gas to urban areas, and supplying ethane required by petrochemical units in the region.

The refinery, which took 36 months to complete, has a daily processing capacity of more than 56

million cubic meters of associated gas and when operating at full capacity it will generate \$700 million of revenue every year.

This complex receives about 13.500 tons of sour gas per year from NGL 900 and 1000 Plants while receiving 2.25 million tons of sweet gas from NGL 1200 and 1300 Plants.

As the largest gas refinery project in West Asia, Bid Boland will have an annual production capacity of 10.4 million tons of methane, 1.5 million tons of ethane, one million tons of propane, 600,000 tons of gas condensates, and 500,000 tons of butane.

Bid Boland Refinery project has been nominated for the International Project Management Association (IPMA)'s Global Project Excellence Award at the energy sector; it was also awarded as Iran's top mega project by the Ninth National Project Management Award.

Tabriz Oil Refinery in northwestern Iran is another noticeable example.

The refinery's managing director has said his company is taking new steps for placing among Asia's top ten refineries in the coming years.

"In line with the second stage of the company's strategic planning which began in the second half of the previous [Iranian calendar] year (September 22, 2020) new steps are being taken for Tabriz Refinery to place among Asia's top ten refineries," Gholamreza Baqeri said last month in a press conference.

While the Oil Ministry is taking big steps for the development of refining industry, new investment is also required in this regard.

TPO prepares instruction package for allocating facilities to export companies

TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has announced the finalization of the instructions for the implementation of Article 3 of the Non-Oil Export Support Package for the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) which deals with paying facilities to export oriented companies.

According to Alireza Peyman Pak, allocated by the National Development Fund (NDF), the mentioned facilities will be in the form of rial loans for working capital allocations and also foreign currency facilities in the form of buyer and seller credits.

"Based on the provisions of the mentioned instructions, which has been prepared using the opinions of the major sectors affecting the country's foreign trade, we tried to make the process of allocating and paying working capital facilities online and in the shortest possible time, and all information and evaluations are done through the system in a purposeful and transparent manner," Peyman Pak said regarding the mentioned allocations.

IME to set up a separate hall for cement trades next week

TEHRAN- Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) will set up a separate hall for the cement trades next week, the exchange's director for market operation announced on Monday.

As the IME reported, according to this notification, from Saturday (September 25) all cement trades will be held separately in the dedicated cement hall in the total trading system (TTS) platform at 11:30 AM.

It is worth mentioning that following the announcement of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade on banning the purchase and supply of cement outside the commodity exchange and determining the time for the presence of buyers and sellers of cement in the commodity exchange, the process of admission of cement companies and buyers of cement in the exchange accelerated.

From the beginning of the supply of cement in the commodity exchange, which dates back to June 30, a total of 10.74 million tons of cement were offered in the IME, which was accompanied by a demand of 12,196 million tons and at the end 8.785 million tons were traded.

The market of cement, which is one of the most important constructional



materials, has witnessed huge turmoil in Iran in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), 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 year, fell to 12 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, 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."

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.

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.

Canada’s election marred by rising Islamophobia

From page 1 ► Al-Henedy says the government of Alberta did provide the Mosque with some support but it was “more on a grassroots organization scale, not on a national or provincial scale”

“I don’t want to say that words no longer matter, but they’re no longer powerful enough. We need changes on the ground. We need this problem to be taken seriously because we can’t afford to lose any more lives.”

Statistics and surveys show that reported hate crimes against Muslims surged in Canada after the September 2001 attacks in United States, along with negative attitudes toward those of Islamic faith. And while the number of reports ebbed and flowed over the past 20 years, it never went back down to pre-9/11 levels.

A 2003 report from the Canadian Islamic Congress cited by researchers showed how quickly anti-Muslim hate crimes increased just a year after the 9/11 attacks.

Over 170 hate crimes were reported to the group in 2002, according to the report. In the year 2000, there were only 11 such reports, marking a nearly 1,500 per cent increase in just two years.

In 2002, the Canadian Council on American Islamic Relations, now the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), found nearly two-thirds of Canadian Muslims it surveyed had experienced “bias or discrimination” in the year since the 9/11 attacks. One-third told the group that their lives had gotten worse since that day, and felt Canadians disliked them.

The NCCM says “it’s become systemic since then and what we’re seeing now is that not only is it growing, but it’s also evolving.”

Statistics Canada data on police-reported hate crimes between 2009 and 2020, the most complete data available, shows a slow but steady increase of anti-Muslim incidents across Canada for the first half of the



2010s, from 36 reports in 2009 to 99 in 2014.

An official with the Canadian Anti-Hate Network says “there’s always what I’m going to call a ‘flavor of the month’ when it comes to who’s being targeted” by hate crimes and abuse”

During that time, The Canadian Anti-Hate Network says the seeds of the modern Islamophobic movement were being sown. “The first real rallying cry was the opposition to Motion 103” it said, referring to the non-binding motion in Parliament denouncing Islamophobia that was introduced in late 2016 and passed the following year.

“Everything we’ve sort of seen since then has grown out of that: the anti-government, anti-leftist elite opposition that evolved into the Yellow Vests and all these activist groups... that are based, when it comes to the racist right, in anti-Muslim hate.”

Critics also point to other flashpoints like the Stephen Harper-led Conservative government vowing to establish a “barbaric cultural practices hotline” during the 2015 election, which was criticized for feeding anti-Islamic sentiment.

The Canadian Anti-Hate Network also says “the prevailing narrative of all this sentiment was this vast conspiracy that Muslims were trying

to infiltrate and take over the West and commit a white genocide, or at least change the culture... and some politicians fed into that.”

The mid-2010s also saw some of the worst attacks on Muslims and their places of worship in Canada’s history: the attack on Muslim students at Queen’s University in 2014; the Peterborough, Ontario Mosque arson in 2015.

It all culminated in the 2017 shooting at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Quebec City, where six Muslims were killed and 19 more were injured.

Throughout this period, Muslim women, a visible target due to the wearing of Hijabs, were attacked in cities across the country, with many attackers tearing off or attempting to remove the victims’ headscarves.

The NCCM says the rise of social media has allowed hate groups to form, grow and plot attacks much more easily while radicalizing new recruits, helping to explain the more recent rise in hate crimes.

“That’s why we’ve called for action against online hate, particularly when we found that social media and online forums were key motivators for the Quebec City Mosque shooting,” the group says “and we’ve seen some progress, but it’s even more critical now.”

A spree of attacks on Muslim women has been reported in cities like Edmonton, while mosques are still being threatened. Last week, a Langley Mosque received a letter threatening a mass shooting similar to the one in Christchurch, New Zealand, which killed 51 Muslim worshippers in 2019.

The sustained level of anti-Muslim crimes was brought into stark relief this past June, when four family members, including a 15-year-old daughter, were hit by a truck in London, Ontario. Police later said the victims were targeted because of their Islamic faith.

The London attack sparked national outcry, leading the federal government to hold a national summit on Islamophobia with several Muslim organizations.

While the summit led to pledges by the Canadian government, including tackling online hate and more outreach and education, experts say much more work needs to be done.

Ms Thobani, a University of British Columbia professor argues “until we have an honest reckoning about why we went to war in Afghanistan, how our heightened border policies are aligned with anti-immigrant sentiment, we will still see these kinds of attacks and threats... It’s all tied back to the war on terror.”

Not long after what police called a targeted hate crime against a Muslim family in London, Ontario left four members dead and a nine-year-old boy orphaned, the cries of grief morphed into calls for action.

Community advocates called for steps to be taken to tackle rising Islamophobia. Because while there has been some progress, advocates say the government needs to do much more.

Experts also say there’s a lot of work to be done within communities to address the roughly “two-thirds” of hate crimes that go unreported, according to Statistics Canada.

Full membership in SCO will enhance Tehran’s soft security: analyst

From page 1 ► **What are the implications of Iran’s full membership in the Shanghai pact for the U.S. and West in large?**

The U.S. and the West always oppose the improvement of Iran’s relations with others since that helps it better withstand their so-called “maximum pressure” campaigns. Iran’s full membership in the SCO will enhance its soft security by enabling it to more effectively manage the chaotic situation in neighboring Afghanistan. The country’s socio-economic situation might also continue improving with time too as the SCO members pioneer new connectivity corridors through China’s Belt & Road Initiative (BRI).

What changes might be brought about by Iran’s membership in the organization and how will this affect Iran’s regional position?

Those West Asian players that are opposed to Iran’s historical regional role will realize that it’s impossible to isolate it like they’ve been trying to do. The Islamic Republic is now officially part of the most effective security organization in Eurasia. It’s the first time that a West Asian nation has formally joined the SCO so Iran’s experiences integrating into the group will set the standard that other countries from the region might follow if they too end up becoming full members sometime in the future.

The U.S. and the UK are planning to send strategic and technical teams to Australia to help the country procure nuclear-powered submarines. How can the Shanghai Cooperation Organization help China to counter this move?

The SCO cannot do anything about the new AUKUS military alliance. It doesn’t have the mandate, capabilities, nor intention. The SCO isn’t a mutual defense pact, after all, so none of its members are obligated to help one another, let alone when it comes to countering conventional threats like that one. China will do what’s needed within responsible and legal means to safeguard its national security interests. It’s also strong enough that it doesn’t need the SCO members’ support when



responding to this.

What will be Afghanistan’s position in the SCO now that the Taliban have taken power in Afghanistan?

Afghanistan remains an observer and is unlikely to attain full membership any time in the coming future since its de facto Taliban-led government isn’t internationally recognized. Most countries such as Russia continue to designate it as a terrorist group although the Kremlin still pragmatically engages with them in the interests of peace and security. The SCO countries must come together to stave off Afghanistan’s impending humanitarian crisis which could produce a regional refugee one and also create fertile ground for ISIS-K to expand.

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Israel’s nuclear program, not Iran’s, is the problem

By John Wight

It is remarkable when you think about it: the grotesque hypocrisy of the West, and the U.S. in particular when it comes to the unconditional support provided to Israel.

We are talking, after all, about an entity, which since its inception, has existed in open violation of international law, responsible on a near-daily basis for the crimes of ethnic cleansing, occupation, collective punishment, detention without trial, military aggression, invasion, and the mass killing of civilians, including women and children.

Less mentioned is the nuclear arsenal Israel has developed in conjunction with the West, and which it retains beyond the scrutiny of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or any other international body. Israel is believed to have begun the full-scale production of nuclear weapons in 1967, after the Six-Day War, but it was thought to have acquired its first operational weapon the year before, in 1966.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), established to control the proliferation of nuclear weapons, came into being in 1968, a year after Israel began producing nuclear warheads on a mass scale, and still to this day Israel is not a signatory. Iran, which possesses not one nuclear weapon, is an NPT signatory, along with another 190 countries in the world.

Here, again, Israel has chosen the path of exceptionalism and deceit in its engagement with the rest of the world. And here, again, it does so with the acquiescence of Washington and its allies.

Thanks to the courage of dissident Israeli nuclear technician, Mordechai Vanunu, we also know that Israel in the 1970s aided the white supremacist apartheid state of South Africa to develop a nuclear weapon, able to do so as a non-signatory to the NPT.

The reason why all this is so important is that it makes the unyielding pressure Iran has come under to allow the IAEA to monitor its own nuclear energy program in its proper context – a major sign of abject hypocrisy and double standards applied by the West and the U.S.

The recent interim permit the new government in Tehran gave to the IAEA to reset its monitoring devices at the country’s nuclear facilities, amounts to a major concession. It confirms that the new government is going above and beyond in its efforts to resurrect the JCPOA, despite the fact that it was the rogue Trump regime that sabotaged it, largely at the behest of Israel.

Even more egregious has been Israel’s attempts to sabotage Iran’s nuclear program with the assassination of some of its nuclear scientists; assassinations thought to have been carried out in cooperation with the MEK, an organization responsible for countless terrorist attacks in Iran going all the way back to the 1980s.

In April this year, a bomb went off at the Natanz nuclear enrichment facility, temporarily shutting

down one of its sheds. Again, this was almost certainly the work of Israel’s notorious rogue security outfit, Mossad. Given that the bombing was carried out in advance of Iran entering talks with the U.S., UK, France, Germany, China and Russia to revive the JCPOA, this was an act of terrorism against not only Iran but the other governments concerned.

If Tehran decided to ramp up its nuclear program with the objective of producing a nuclear weapon, it would at this juncture be entirely within its rights, with Israel’s nuclear arsenal being tantamount to a dagger pointed at Iran’s heart. The absurdity of the West portraying Iran as unfit to possess nuclear weapons at the same time as it gives Israel its de facto blessing to possess them is extraordinary and yet more proof that the real issue which ails our world is not the lack of democracy within some states, but the lack of democracy between states.

The hypocrisy when it comes to Israel’s ability to operate as a rogue entity cannot be ignored or excused any longer. It is the primary source of instability in the region and impedes the drive for peace, security and progress. However, only the most naive could allow themselves to believe that Israel, no matter the regime, is interested in any of those aims. Its real aim has long been division, domination and hegemony.

Washington shares the same regional agenda; the attempt by the Biden administration to impose non-nuclear related conditions on sanctions relief and the resumption of the JCPOA leaves no doubt about it. Those conditions include questions surrounding Iran’s ballistic missile program and its ‘power projection’ in the region.

Power projection is a reference to Iran’s close relationship with Hezbollah and its support for the Palestinian resistance in Gaza, not forgetting its indispensable role in Syria in recent years.

Here’s the rub though. No Israeli attacks and incursions into Lebanon in the 1970s and 80s, no Hezbollah. No Israeli oppression of the Palestinians, no Palestinian resistance. For, in the last analysis, the truth enshrined in these words of Frantz Fanon is still today unshakeable: “In the colonial context, the settler-only ends his work of breaking the native when the latter admits loudly the supremacy of the white man’s values.”

Only when a U.S. administration appears in Washington willing to face the truth that Israel, not Iran, is the region’s rogue entity, and act upon it, will any meaningful progress be made. And with this in mind, a major test of the Biden administration will be how it responds to the recent publicly issued threat made by the Israeli military’s Chief of General Staff Avi Kochavi, to carry out military action against Iran’s nuclear program, going on to say that plans in this regard have been “greatly accelerated.”

Such madness confirms that Israel is not in need of an arsenal of nuclear weapons, it is in desperate need of an army of psychiatrists.

(Source: Press TV)

China sees AUKUS as a step toward new cold war: ex-Lebanese ambassador to Canada

From page 1 ► as an effort to counter China. It will let Australia build nuclear-powered submarines for the first time, using technology provided by the U.S.

The AUKUS pact, which will also cover AI and other technologies, is one of the countries’ biggest defense partnerships in decades, analysts say.

China has condemned the agreement as “extremely irresponsible”.

“Tensions between China and the AUKUS countries are expected to rise because these three countries have expressed increased support to Taiwan, which China considers as part of its national territory. Taiwan welcomed and thanked the U.S. and Australia for their ‘firm and open’ support,” Maalouf remarks.

Following is the text of the interview:

What are the implications of the Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) talks over a plan to share technology for nuclear-powered submarines?

It is well known that the most important foreign policy challenge to the Biden administration is China. Biden himself cited this in his speech during his first visit to the U.S. State Department on February 4, 2021, soon after taking office.

The new defense pact between Australia, UK and the U.S. that is known as AUKUS may be one of the U.S. administration’s reactions to this challenge and to counter China’s rising influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

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The West, particularly the U.S., is trying to restrict Iran’s nuclear program under the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of nuclear weapons but at the same time they are going to provide nuclear-powered submarines to Australia. Add to it Israel’s nuclear weapon arsenals. How can this double standard be justified?

Paris cancels French, UK defense ministers’ meeting amid submarine row

France has canceled an official meeting scheduled for this week between its Minister of the Armed Forces Florence Parly and UK Secretary of State for Defense Ben Wallace amid simmering tensions over a submarine row, a source in the French foreign office has said.

The move comes in the wake of a new security pact under which the US and the UK shall provide Australia with the advanced technology of nuclear-powered submarines, effectively sidelining France.

The “meeting planned for this week in London... will not take place due to the French canceling”, said the ministry source, who wanted to be anonymous.

Australia had selected French shipbuilder Naval Group in 2016 to build a new submarine fleet worth \$40 billion to replace its Collins submarines. However, its decision to tear up the contract with France in favor of American nuclear-powered vessels, sparked outrage in Paris last week, with President Emmanuel Macron recalling its ambassadors to the US and Australia in an unprecedented display of outrage.



Australia recently canceled its order of diesel-powered submarines concluded with France a few years ago. Australia decided to replace them with nuclear-powered submarines from the U.S. These American submarines, which are more powerful and can stay underwater much longer than the diesel-powered ones, are not supposed to carry nuclear weapons. Therefore, they allegedly do not constitute a violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT restricts only the spread of nuclear weapons and does not preclude countries, including Iran, from using nuclear power for pacific objectives.

Why has France described the pact between the U.S. and Australia as a betrayal? Don’t you think the European states share Washington’s concerns about China’s rise?

France is upset with this development for several reasons:

– France has had historic alliances, interests and influence in the Indo-China region.

France felt betrayed by the U.S. and Australia for concluding a defense treaty in that region without consulting Paris or without including them, at least in some way, in the deal. France has publicly said it felt stabbed in the back. The inclusion of the United Kingdom into this pact added insult to injury.

– Australia has suddenly canceled a USD \$66 billion deal with France which will seriously affect France’s

Under the new partnership, known as AUKUS, the three countries have agreed to enhance the development of joint capabilities and technology sharing, and foster deeper integration of security and defense-related science, technology, industrial bases and supply chains.

An official source in the UK Ministry of Defense neither confirmed nor denied the cancellation of the meeting, adding that “the UK remains in conversation with French counterparts about the meetings.”

Meanwhile, the US and the UK have requested early talks with Macron in an apparent bid to smooth tensions with Paris.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson tried to appease France’s concerns about the deal on Sunday, by stressing that the pact was “not meant to be exclusionary... it’s not something that anybody needs to worry about and particularly not our French friends”.

“We want explanations,” French government spokesman Gabriel Attal said, adding that the US had to answer for “what looks a lot like a major breach of

defense industry.

– In April 2022, presidential elections will take place in France and President Macron wants to appear as a serious and strong candidate who preserves France’s interests around the world. His interventions in the East Mediterranean Sea against Turkey, in the catastrophic disintegration of Lebanon and his participation in organizing the Baghdad summit late last month is evidence that he is trying to elevate France’s role in world affairs.

Given the recent trans-Atlantic disputes, do you think the EU would go its separate way as some observers are talking about a European NATO?

There are some calls within Europe to act more independently, especially after the exit of Great Britain from the European Union. The alignment of Great Britain with the U.S. in the AUKUS pact added to the call for more independence on the part of the European Union (EU). But the EU-U.S. ties are very strong with Europe relying on the U.S. for its defense. This makes a European NATO very difficult to achieve, at least in the foreseeable future. Europe does not seem ready at the moment to separate itself militarily from the U.S.

In your view, what would be China’s response to this provocative move? Do you think that accepting Iran as a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is part of China’s reaction?

China is upset with the AUKUS pact as Beijing considers it a “clear provocation” by the U.S. Australia’s opting for American submarines which will most probably be deployed in the South China Sea adds to the Chinese unhappiness. China will see this move by the U.S. as a new step toward a renewed cold war.

It will not be that easy for China to accept Iran in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a full member given that Afghanistan, Belarus and Mongolia have observer status as well. Will these three countries be consulted by China on the possibility of accepting Iran as a full member of the SCO? Will they be invited by China to become full members too? It all depends on how China evaluates these new regional developments in terms of its national security.

trust.” According to Attal, Biden has requested a phone call with Macron, which would happen “in the coming days.”

Speaking to the France 2 television on Saturday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said the recall of the ambassadors, which happened for the first time in the history of relations between the two countries, was “to show how unhappy we are and that there is a serious crisis between us,” adding that “there has been lying, duplicity, a major breach of trust and contempt.”

In response, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Sunday, he understood France’s disappointment, but that he did in no way regret having put “Australia’s national interest first.”

Although Paris regards Washington as the prime mover in the security pact, it is unlikely that Britain can escape the worsening diplomatic fallout completely.

Le Drian has depicted London’s role as “a bit like the third wheel” in the pact, saying “we know their constant opportunism.”

New archaeological season begins at Tepe Sagz Abad



TEHRAN - A new round of archaeological excavation has recently commenced at on a millennia-old cemetery situated in Tepe Sagz Abad in Buin Zahra county, Qazvin province, west-central Iran.

In the project, a detailed chronology and stratigraphy of the Iron Age cemetery will be provided in order to investigate burial practices and methods of the time, Mostafa Dehpahlavan who led the excavation project said on Monday.

Through previous excavations, 65 graves were uncovered, showing three types of burials, he added.

In all graves remains of animals such as goats, immature sheep, cows, camels and horses were found, which points to the burial of animals alongside the human corpse, the archaeologist explained.

Other objects were also found in the graves, such as cylinder seals, metal ornaments, earthenware and stone containers that date from the Iron Age, he mentioned.

He also noted that the current archaeological season is being carried out observing health

protocols and social distancing rules.

In 2019, dozens of cylinder seals, which once belonged to Assyria, kingdom of northern Mesopotamia were discovered in the cemetery.

Based on research on the spheres of physical anthropology, genetic, ancient zoology, and rare burial traditions, we obtained an ample evidence that suggests cultural, political and economic interactions of the inhabitants with remote areas of the western edge of the Iranian plateau, Dehpahlavan explained.

The historical site of Sagz Abad was mentioned by Venetian explorer and writer Marco Polo in the 13th century.

The historical site of Sagz Abad is one of the oldest archaeological sites in the whole world. It was mentioned by Venetian explorer and writer Marco Polo in the 13th century; however, it seems the site is much older as several Iron Age relics have been discovered during several excavations in the region.

Once the capital of the Persian Empire under Safavids from 1548-98, Qazvin is currently a major tourist destination with wonderfully restored historical sites, some quirky museums, and a handful of decent eating options.

Historical bazaar of Zanjan undergoes restoration once again



TEHRAN - The historical bazaar of Zanjan in northwestern Iran has undergone some rehabilitation works once again, the provincial tourism chief has said.

"The maintenance and restoration of historical monuments are essential for maintaining culture, so Zanjan's historical bazaar is constantly being restored," Amir Arjmand announced on Monday, CHTN reported.

Repairing Bazaar's arches and domes, flooring, reconstruction of walls, and

strengthening the walls have been done so far, the official added.

To date, all restoration projects have been carried out in close collaboration with the shop owners, he noted.

The Qajar-era (1789-1925) bazaar has five mosques, two caravanserais, and two bathhouses as well as over 900 stores. Due to changes in weather conditions in the city of Zanjan, the bazaar has been designed in such a way that external climatic variations are not perceived at all.

In the Iranian culture, bazaars have been traditional public spaces in the Iranian cities with great contributions to commercial activities in the urban life meanwhile their extended activities can be traced to social, cultural, political, and religious roles.

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

Iranian handicrafts: traditional dyeing

TEHRAN - Dyeing has been practiced in Iran for hundreds of years in which textile products such as fibers, yarns, fabrics, or clothes are soaked in a calculated mixture of pigments and other components.

The famed Pazyryk rug, found in 1949 in the grave of a Scythian nobleman in the Bolshoy Ulugan dry valley of the Altai Mountains in Kazakhstan, originally belongs to the Achaemenid-era Persia (c. 550 - 330 BC). It bears colors yellow, red, blue, and green proving the long history of dyeing in Iran.

Safavid era (1501-1736) is known to have witnessed the development of dyeing and carpet handicrafts. Some of the colors that were used at that time are crimson red, blue, green, pale yellow, and orange, and what is interesting is that

the Safavid colors were very similar to the pigments that are used today, according to Visit Iran.

Using their own creativity, the dyers have mixed the pigments, making hues that are slightly different from each other. For example, two colors of violet and red are mixed to make a very bright magenta. Then by adding rich yellow pigments, it turns into persimmon orange.

The dyeing process is done in multiple steps. Firstly, the wool or silk is soaked in warm water for about two hours to be prepared for absorption. Then they are washed in 30-35 centigrade water and detergents, and later rinsed and dried. The next step is to add different types of alum known as green, white, and black to nearly boiling water.



Alum is a chemical sulfate that raises the absorption of pigments and the stability of color. The amount of alum and duration of this step depends mainly on the intended color.

For the next step, the dyeing pot is raised to about 100 centigrade. The yarns and the

From page 1 ► After the death of Cambyses, the Magian usurper Gaumata, who did not belong to the Achaemenid dynasty, usurped the throne. The adherents of the Persian royal house, however, helped Darius to become a king; he killed the usurper on 29 September 522. Almost immediately, the subjects of the empire revolted. When Darius was suppressing these rebellions and stayed in Babylon, the Median leader Phraortes made his bid for power (December 522). His revolt soon spread to Armenia, Assyria, Parthia, and Hyrcania.

However, the Persian garrison in Parthia still held out. It was commanded by Darius' father Hystaspes. On 8 March 521, the Parthians and their allies, the Hyrcanians, attacked the Persian garrison, but they were defeated. Not much later, Darius was able to relieve his father, according to Livius.org; a website on ancient history written and maintained since 1996 by the Dutch historian Jona Lendering.

This was the first appearance in the history of the Hyrcanians. In the fifth century, the Greek researcher Herodotus of Halicarnassus mentions them several times in his Histories. He has a confused report on irrigation, a note which may be compared to the statement of the second-century historian Polybius of Megalopolis that the Persians had built large irrigation works.

In the confused years after the death of king Artaxerxes I



Hyrcanian cup, decorated with gazelles (early first millennium BC)

Hyrcania, a fertile land with rich, turbulent history

Makrocheir (r.465-424), three of his sons succeeded to the throne: Xerxes II, Sogdianus, and Darius II. The latter was satrap in Hyrcania and may have used troops from Hyrcania and the "upper satrapies", that is Aria,

Parthia, Arachosia, Bactria, and Sogdia.

Hyrcania makes its reappearance in history when the Macedonian king Alexander the Great (r.336-323) invaded Asia.

Hyrcanians are mentioned

during the battle of Gaugamela (1 October 331), and in August 329, when the last Persian king, Darius III Codomannus, was dead, many Persian noblemen fled to Hyrcania, where they surrendered to Alexander (a.o. Artabazus).

After Alexander's reign, his kingdom fell apart and Hyrcania became part of the new empire of the Seleucid rulers, a Macedonian-Greek dynasty. At the end of the third century BC, northeastern nomads belonging to the tribe of the Parni invaded Parthia and Hyrcania. Although Parthia was forever lost to the Seleucids, Hyrcania was in the last decade of the third century reconquered by king Antiochus III the Great (r.222-187). After a generation, however, Hyrcania was lost again.

To the Parthians - the new name of the Parni - Hyrcania was an important part of the empire, situated between their Parthian territories and their homeland on the steppe. The Parthian kings certainly used a Hyrcanian town as their summer residence. Nonetheless, it was not an uncontested part of their empire; for example, it is known to have revolted in 58 CE.

It is possible - and seems increasingly likely - that during the Sasanian period, a wall was built to defend Hyrcania against the nomads of the Central-Asian steppe. The ruins of the wall north of the river Gorgan are visible today and are called the "Wall of Alexander", although they are in fact younger.

Handicrafts promotion in Sabzevar leads to sustainable employment, official says

TEHRAN- The promotion of handicrafts and indigenous arts in Sabzevar county, the northeastern province of Khorasan Razavi, will ultimately lead to sustainable employment opportunities for the locals, Sabzevar's governor has announced.

"Spectacular handicrafts, ancient arts, and indigenous crafts in Sabzevar will provide sustainable employment for local citizens if they are properly promoted and revived," CHTN quoted Seyyed Mojtaba Alavi Moqaddam as saying on Monday.

There are many good handicraft workshops all over the county, and it is the responsibility of the relevant organizations to ensure that they are supported and problems are resolved so they can continue to thrive, the official added.

The expansion of production in these workshops, as well as the promotion of different handicrafts fields, can lead these products to the big markets of the capital and other big cities of the country, which can result in economic growth and development of the workshops, he noted.

Sabzevar, located in the west of Khorasan Razavi province, has over 100 historical and natural sites inscribed on the national heritage list.

The history of Sabzevar goes back to the



first millennium BC. After the Mongol invasion of Iran, the city was the first part of Iran that moved towards its freedom, under the lead of the Sarbedaran movement.

In the 14th century, Timur, the Turco-Mongol conqueror and the founder of the Timurid Empire, invaded Iran, and despite the brave defense of people in Sabzevar, the city was destroyed quite completely. It is said that about 90,000 people having been massacred by Timur. After killing all men in the town, he cut their heads and made three pyramids of the heads in a city square, which is known as Sarberiz (literally means place of heads) square nowadays.

Iranian handicrafts

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

entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

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

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

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

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

Iranian masters of filigree to participate at Dubai Expo



northwestern city of Zanajn is the most famous.

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

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

to be superb works of art.

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

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

Dubai Expo

Expo 2020 originally was scheduled for October 20, 2020 -April 10, 2021, but due to the outbreaks of the coronavirus, the event has been postponed. However, the organizers keep the name Expo 2020 for marketing and branding purposes.

Throughout the years, World Expos have been global events dedicated to sharing top-notch

innovation, showcasing groundbreaking inventions, and discovering resolutions to fundamental challenges by facing humanity. They are organized every five years and last for six months.

Experts 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.

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 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Lipar, a tiny lake in pink

TEHRAN - Lipar is a small lake in southeast Iran that usually turns pink.

An off-the-radar tourist destination, the lake and a nearby lagoon of the same name boast beautiful and unique landscapes, a potential attraction for domestic tourists and foreign travelers.

They are situated some 20 kilometers east of Chabahar in Sistan-Baluchestan province. Chabahar is a humid port city commonly considered as one of the warmest places in Iran.

Due to the special type of soil surrounding the lake, its water surface seems to shine with pink color during some five months of the year and it reportedly covers an area of 10 hectares.

Some environmental experts believe the pink color of the lake is due to planktonic activities. The presence of large plant planktons in the region, and the abundance of organic and materials, in some seasons, lead to a significant increase in biological production.

Water levels of the seasonal lake routinely depend on the amount of rainfall. Gaz shrubs, whim, and straw are amongst its topmost vegetation. It is also home to flamingos, pelicans, white and gray hawks amongst other



birds.

Chabahar is a beautiful unknown destination as well, even to most Iranians. There are good reasons for visiting the region; hospitable people, their unique culture, lifestyle, rituals, historical sights, the scenic Oman Sea, its stunning rare nature surround, and the Chabahar Free Trade-Industrial Zone.

The monsoon winds, which flow from the Indian subcontinent in summer, make Chabahar the coolest southern port in the summer and the warmest part of Iran in the winter.

Plan prepared to support families with multiple births

TEHRAN – A program has been prepared to support families with multiple births in line with population growth policies, deputy head of Welfare Organization, has announced.

This plan has been developed with the aim of developing social justice and providing social welfare for families with multiple births, IRNA quoted Habibollah Masoudi Farid as saying on Monday.

The Welfare Organization now covers more than 16,000 families with triplets or more, each will receive monthly allowances of up to 10 million rials (nearly \$238 at the official rate of 42,000 rials), he stated.

In addition to the monthly pension, families with multiple children benefit from other services of the organization, including grants for employment or low-interest loans for employment.

Also, 11,500 families with twins are covered by the Organization, receiving monthly pensions, as well as other benefits and services of the organization.

Population growth policies

Some 14 policies to support child-



bearing and the family were announced by the Leader in [the Iranian calendar year] 1389 (March 2014–March 2015) when he stressed that social, cultural, and economic development should be done in accordance with these general policies to support families.

The policies address the need

to increase the population and the various dimensions of it, including childbearing, facilitating marriage and strengthening the family, reproductive health, promoting the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle, empowering young people, honoring the elderly, and the environment, which can lead to an increase in the quantity and quality of the popula-

tion if it is timely and continuous implemented.

The Majlis (Iranian Parliament) approved on March 16 to implement a population growth and family support plan for 7 years to change the declining trend of childbearing.

The plan stipulates health insurance for infertile couples, providing services and facilities to working women, providing health and nutrition support packages to mothers and children, educational opportunities for student mothers, providing livelihood support to families, and ongoing medical services to pregnant women.

The Welfare Organization now covers more than 16,000 families with triplets or more.

Spikogen predicted to be effective against delta variant

TEHRAN – The researchers predict that the Iranian-Australian Spikogen vaccine will be effective against the coronavirus delta mutant, Payam Tabarsi, a researcher of the project, has announced.

The vaccine has proved to be effective against the British strain, he further stated.

The results of the second phase of the human test showed that this vaccine provides more than 80 percent immunity and produces good levels of antibodies, he highlighted.

The vaccine also has 87 percent of the ability to neutralize the virus, which is a very important issue, Tabarsi said.

The third phase of the human test has been completed and it is expected that the final results of this phase will be presented to the Ministry of Health within a month.

He estimated the monthly capacity of the Sinogen pharmaceutical company to produce the vaccine at three million doses.

The first phase of the study was performed on volunteer Australians and received the necessary approval, the second phase was administrated to 400



Iranians, which has had no serious side effects, Tabarsi said.

Vaccines against viruses can be divided into three main categories: live attenuated, inactivated/killed, and subunit vaccines. Recombinant protein subunit vaccines are composed of at least 1 type of viral antigen. These vaccines are significantly more secure than live attenuated and inactivated vaccines.

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

Spikogen proved to be effective against the British strain.

Iran, China expanding scientific, research co-op

TEHRAN – Iran and China are currently developing scientific and research cooperation in three ways, Mehr reported on Monday.

Joint scientific and technological collaborations between Iranian researchers and other countries are developing every day. Scientific interaction with Chinese researchers is an example of such collaboration.

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has always considered the development of international scientific and academic relations.

Cooperation has been developed with three Chinese organizations, including the Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Science and Technology of China, and the National Natural Science Foundation of China.

Over the past six years, the Research and Technology Support Fund has partnered with the Chinese Academy of Sciences through the publication of a call for funding from the Silk Road Science Fund.

So far, 6 joint calls have been published. Accordingly, the fund and the academy will support a maximum of three joint projects between Iranian and Chinese researchers.

This call is announced and implemented in line with joint research activities between Iranian researchers and researchers of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in the form of “joint research and development projects” and “joint workshops”.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Technology of China, 10 studies between researchers from the two countries are supported.

The first collaboration between Iran and the National Natural Science Foundation of China took place this year. Accordingly, 15 joint projects between researchers from the two countries are to be supported for implementation. These are joint research projects in the three disciplines of life sciences, materials



sciences, and mathematics.

Iranian knowledge-based firms

The Innovation and Prosperity Fund affiliated with the Vice Presidency of Science and Technology has earmarked a sum of 170 trillion rials (nearly \$4 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to support knowledge-based companies over the past 4 years.

There are currently 6,263 knowledge-based companies operating in the country, offering advanced

products and services in various fields of technology to domestic and foreign markets, and some of them have entered international markets, Siavash Maleki, deputy head of the Fund stated.

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

Fauna of Iran

(Part 6)

Vipers are well camouflaged, and are predators, and may thus be trod upon by unwary humans and livestock. The cobra, *Naja oxiana*, an Oriental species that occurs in northeastern Persia, is an active forager and may be drawn to villages by the presence of rodents.

Most snake species belong to the family Colubridae. Many are diurnal and forage actively for their prey; perhaps just as many, including vipers, are primarily nocturnal, at least during the hottest seasons. The Persian Gulf waters are rich in species of sea snakes, which prey primarily on fish; all are dangerously venomous and pose a hazard to net fishermen.

The relations of Persian snakes are primarily Western Palearctic, particularly at the generic level. A few genera are Holarctic in distribution, for example, Coluber, Elaphe, and Agkistrodon. No species is Holarctic, however. Eryx, Natrix, Malpolon, Telescopus, Vipera, and Echis are Western Palearctic genera, Eirenis and Pseudocrastes Iranian in their primary distribution. Spalerosophis, Lytorhynchus, Walterinnesia, and Cerastes are Saharo-Sindian, whereas Lycodon, Oligodon, Boiga, and Naja are Oriental.

The sea-snake genera are widely distributed along the shores of the Indian Ocean. At the species level the relations are far more complex.

There are few turtles in Persia. They include two aquatic species, the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) in the northwest, extending along the southern shore of the Caspian, and the Mediterranean stripe-necked turtle (*Mauremys caspica*) in the permanent streams, ponds, and lakes of western and northern Persia.

A third aquatic species, *Rafetus euphraticus*, a soft-shelled turtle of the Tigris and Euphrates drainages occurs in the Karun River and possibly some other drainages of the western Zagros. Adapted to arid regions are the herbivorous terrestrial tortoises *Testudo graeca iberica* and *Testudo graeca zarudnyi*, distributed over the western and central Persian plateau.

Also extending onto the central plateau in Khorasan is the Irano-Turanian species *Testudo* (or *Agriemys*) *horsfieldii*. Widespread pantropical marine turtles, *Caretta caretta*, *Chelonia mydas*, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, *Lepidochelys olivacea*, and *Dermochelys coriacea*, have been recorded in the Persian Gulf or are



likely to occur there (Anderson, 1979).

A single species of crocodile (q.v.), the marsh or mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), an Indian species, dwells in isolation in the Sarbā z River of southeastern Persian Baluchistan (Anderson, 1979).

Birds and mammals. There are very few species or even subspecies of birds and mammals that are as narrowly restricted in distribution as are the lizards, for example. A number of familiar animals are in fact Holarctic in distribution. Examples include the wolf, red fox, lynx, brown bear, golden eagle, osprey, and various migratory waterfowl. Many other species represent Holarctic genera.

Scott (1989) found that of 324 species of birds breeding in Persia only 24 are Palearctic, with restricted ranges in the Middle East. He noted that 131 Persian species occur widely in the Palearctic region; in addition, there are 81 Western Palearctic species, reaching the easternmost extremities of their ranges in Persia, whereas 19 are typically Eastern Palearctic, reaching the westernmost tips of their ranges in Persia.

He distinguished 25 species as characteristic of the Saharo-Sindian desert belt. He considered the birds of southern Persian Baluchistan and the southern Persian Gulf coast predominantly Oriental, with 29 breeding species of primary distribution in the Oriental region reaching the northwestern extremities of their ranges in Persia, whereas in southwestern Persia there is a small Afrotropical influence, with 6 breeding species of primarily African distribution. Nine species of sea and shore birds that occur throughout the Indian Ocean breed on islands in the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormoz.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

Let’s be patient with Alzheimer’s patients

From page 1 ► It is important to prevent head injuries in childhood; and diseases such as high blood pressure, hyperlipidemia, etc. after the age of 40 can be a risk factor for Alzheimer’s disease, because leaving these chronic diseases untreated, can even damage the cerebrovascular vessels.

Dementia prevalence worldwide

Every 3 seconds someone in the world is affected by Alzheimer’s. Worldwide there are some 50 million people who suffer from dementia, which includes Alzheimer’s. This is more than the population of Spain and the number is steadily increasing.

More than \$1.1 trillion is now being spent on Alzheimer’s disease worldwide.

The estimated proportion of the general population aged 60 and over with dementia at a given time is between 5-8 percent.

Within the next 20 years, the number of peo-

ple affected by dementia will likely double. More than 130 million people will be afflicted by 2050. This is according to data from the latest World Alzheimer’s Report published annually by Alzheimer’s disease International (ADI), the worldwide federation of Alzheimer’s associations in London.

Dementia results from a variety of diseases and injuries that primarily or secondarily affect the brain, such as Alzheimer’s disease or stroke.

Dementia has significant social and economic implications in terms of direct medical and social care costs, and the costs of informal care. In 2015, the total global societal cost of dementia was estimated to be \$818 billion, equivalent to 1.1 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP). The total cost as a proportion of GDP varied from 0.2 percent in low- and middle-income countries to 1.4 percent in high-income countries.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON SEPTEMBER 20

New cases	17,397
New deaths	344
Total cases	5,442,232
Total deaths	117,526
New hospitalized patients	2,593
Patients in critical condition	6,707
Total recovered patients	4,792,117
Diagnostic tests conducted	31,113,929
Doses of vaccine injected	43,423,948

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Northern forests store 3.6bcm water annually in Iran

The forests of northern Iran storing 3.6 billion cubic meters of water play an important role in strengthening the aquifers.

Apart from physical care of natural resources, biological protection of these resources is also on the agenda of the Forests, Rangelands and Watershed Management Organization (FRWMO), Abbas Ali Nobakht, deputy head of FRWMO, said on Wednesday.

In this regard, development, rehabilitation and enrichment operations in more than 232,000 hectares of rangeland, desert and forest lands of the country are underway, he added.

Referring to the northern forests of the country, especially Golestan province, as the reserves of the rarest plant species, Nobakht noted that the importance of these natural resources is so high that some European countries requested to receive seeds of plant species of northern Iran.

جنگل‌های شمال ایران سالانه سه میلیارد و ۶۰۰ میلیون متر مکعب آب ذخیره می کنند

جنگل‌های شمال ایران با ذخیره سالانه سه میلیارد و ۶۰۰ میلیون متر مکعب آب نقش بسزایی در تقویت سفره‌های زیرزمینی دارد.

به گزارش ایرنا، عباسعلی نوبخت معاون سازمان جنگل‌ها، مراتع و آبخیزداری روز چهارشنبه بیان کرد: در کنار مراقبت‌های فیزیکی از منابع طبیعی، صیانت و حفاظت بیولوژیکی از این منابع نیز در دستور کار سازمان جنگل‌ها قرار دارد که در این خصوص اmsال عملیات توسعه، احیا و غنی سازی در بیش از ۲۳۲ هزار هکتار از اراضی مرتعی، بیابانی و جنگلی کشور در حال انجام است.

نوبخت با بیان اینکه جنگل‌های شمال کشور بویژه استان گلستان ذخیره‌گاه نادرترین گونه‌های گیاهی هستند، اضافه کرد: اهمیت عرصه‌ها به حدی بالا است که برخی کشورهای اروپایی در مکاتبه با سازمان جنگل‌ها خواستار دریافت بذر گونه‌های جنگلی شمال ایران هستند.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Overlook and forgive the weaknesses of the generous people because if they fall down, Allah will help them.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times» Noon:12:57 Evening: 19:21 Dawn: 5:28 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:52 (tomorrow)

Iranian languages and scripts: Earliest evidence



Assyrian king Shalmaneser III receives tribute from Sua, king of Gilzanu.

Part 1 Archeological identities of the proto-Indo-Iranians and proto-Iranians

The Indo-Aryan and Iranian tribes separated about 2000 BCE, but attempts to correlate the proto-Indo-Iranians with archeological sites are all problematic. Theories about this also have to take into account the presence of Indo-Iranian words in typically Indic phonetic form in the Near East in the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE.

The archeological identity of the early Iranians is also a problem. Several scenarios have been considered, but recently the so-called Bactrian-Margiana Archeological Complex (BMAC) in Bronze-Age Central Asia has been proposed as that of the Iranians.

The archeological picture of Central Asia and the Iranian Plateau is quite sketchy, however; most of the exploration has taken place in the area of modern Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and there are still large, unexplored areas that contain potentially crucial evidence, notably most of Khorasan, but also the area to the northeast of the Caspian Sea.

The archeological picture of the BMAC, notably its spread throughout the Plateau, is therefore not yet known in all its details and is constantly changing.

References in the texts (Rigveda and Avesta) to material culture are also problematic, since much of the terminology and many of the expressions do not belong specifically to the individual Indian and Iranian, but to the Indo-Iranian, literary tradition.

On these controversial issues, see now the detailed discussion with comments by various scholars in Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2002. For theories about archeological and ethnic-linguistic correlations in Central Asia, see also Lamberg-Karlovsky's detailed review (2005).

The earliest documentary evidence for an Indo-Iranian presence also to the south of Central Asia comes from the Ancient Near East. The El-Amarna tablets from Palestine (mid-15th century BCE) contain the Indo-Iranian-looking royal names Artamanya and Suwardata ("given by the Sun").

In the early 14th century BCE, a treaty was concluded between the Hittite king Suppiluliuma and the Hurrite king of the Mitanni, Matiwaza, in which the Mitanni gods are listed, among them: Mitra-Varuna, Indra, and the two Nasatyas (all known from the Old Indic pantheon).

Finally, a text by a Mitanni named Kikkuli about horses and horseracing written in Hittite contains technical terms such as aika-vartana "one turn/round."

The 20th-century discussion about these words has centered around the question of whether these are Indo-Iranian, before Ilr: s became Iranian h (cf. Olnd.suvar, Olr. huwar "sun"), or simply Indic words, with aika "one"; cf. Olnd.eka-, but OIran. aiwa- (Pers.yakis from ek from aiwaka-). On these forms, see, most recently, Carruba (2000).

Part of the problem is how to explain the presence of Indo-Aryans in this area at a time

when the Indo-Aryan population of Central Asia was, presumably, well on its way into India.

Today, however, there is a tendency not to underestimate the mobility of people in these early times, and one possible explanation for the Indo-Aryan presence may be that they had been "imported" (invited or captured) from Central Asia as experts in horse matters.

The evidence of the Young Avesta

The Avestan texts contain no historical allusions and can therefore not be dated exactly, but Old Avestan is a language closely akin to the oldest Indic language, used in the oldest parts of the Rigveda, and should therefore probably be dated to about the same time.

This date is also somewhat debated, though within a relatively small time span, and it seems probable that the oldest Vedic poems were composed over several centuries around the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE.

Similarly, Young Avestan is grammatically close to Old Persian, which ceased being spoken in the 5th-4th centuries BCE. These two languages were therefore probably spoken throughout the first half of the first millennium BCE.

The Young Avesta contains a few geographical names, all belonging to roughly the area between Chorasmia and the Helmand, that is, the modern Central Asian republics and Afghanistan. We are therefore entitled to conclude that Young Avestan reflects the language spoken primarily by tribes from that area.

The dialect position of the language also indicates that the language of the Avesta must have belonged to, or transmitted by, tribes from northern Iran.

Persians, Medes, and Scythians

The Iranian immigration onto the Plateau probably proceeded in several "waves" and along different routes, and Iranian tribes may have been established throughout the Plateau by the beginning of the 1st millennium, except perhaps the southernmost parts.

Several scenarios for the Iranian immigrations have been proposed along with, allegedly, corroborating archeological evidence.

The earliest evidence for Persian and Median presence on the Plateau comes from the Assyrian records. In the descriptions of campaigns by Assyrian kings, peoples they came into contact with or subdued are commonly mentioned.

These records, therefore, give us a good chronology, although the geography is only approximate. Often, the peoples can be located only within a very general area, and personal names are rare.

Here, Parsuwash and Matai are first mentioned in the 9th century in the area of Lake Urmia in the records of Shalmaneser III (858-824 BCE), who, in 835 BCE, is said to have received tributes from 27 kings of Parsuwash.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

TEHRAN – In his latest documentary "Lost Whispers in the Distance" Budapest-based Iranian filmmaker Mansur Foruzesh has turned the spotlight on the hard lives of refugees in Europe, particularly those who are Iranians.

To make this documentary, which was financed by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, Foruzesh had to negotiate with 15 countries, and only one—Serbia—allowed him to visit a refugee camp located in the northwestern city of Šid.

"The atmosphere within the camp was like something from fifty or sixty years ago; it did not have much in the way of facilities. Over the three weeks I spent making the film there, seven refugees died," Foruzesh said in a meeting held at the Mehr News Agency in Tehran on Saturday to promote his film.

He said that one of the refugees was electrocuted while hiding himself under a train enroute to Serbia, while another Iranian refugee had frozen to death while attempting to walk to Europe in the harsh winter cold.

"The conditions were much worse in an Afghan refugee camp. Just as we arrived at the camp, one of the refugees beheaded another. Nerve-racking tension totally dominated the atmosphere of the camp, however, in 'Lost Whispers in the Distance', I avoided any prejudice and I did not want to convince someone to do something," he added.

Foruzesh said that opportunities to solve problems are missed in Iran due to the attitudes of officials to politicize issues.

"We are faced with barriers when we make a film. They tell us, 'You are not allowed to cross these barriers. Consequently, the film is limited in scope and only a small segment of a formidable issue can be examined. Meanwhile, our society

“Lost Whispers in the Distance” explores refugee misery in Europe



Filmmaker Mansur Foruzesh autographs a poster for "Lost Whispers in the Distance" in a meeting held in Tehran on September 18, 2021 to promote the documentary. (Mehr/Ali Haddadi-Asl)

has shown a great capability for understanding, and we live in an era in which we should respect critical perspectives," he noted.

Foruzesh has asked the Art Bureau to provide some arrangements for relevant officials to watch the documentary.

"I have repeatedly requested the officials to demonstrate concern over the refugee issue and increase their knowledge about the problem," he said.

"There should be a strong collective will to tackle the issue and find a solution. It's not my

Iran’s “White Clad” joins 2022 Oscars long list for shorts

TEHRAN – "White Clad" by Iranian director Reza Fahimi has been added to the long list of movies competing to receive a nomination for the best short film Oscar in 2022.

The film achieved the status after winning the grand prize of the 37th Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) in January, the Iranian Youth Cinema Society (IYCS) that is the main organizer of the festival announced on Monday.

"White Clad", a production of the Iranian Youth Cinema Society by Reza Fahimi, follows an old woman who brings some goat's cheese to Ahmad, a ten-year-old boy, so that he can give it to his father, who is a teacher, as a gift to urge him to intervene and stop the hanging of the woman's son.

The IYCS announced in July that the Tehran International Short Film had been designated as an Oscar-qualifying festival for the Academy Awards' Best Short Film category.

"There are few festivals in Asia having this honor, for example, Egypt in North Africa and Japan, South Korea, Singapore and India are the sole countries having Oscar qualifying festivals," said IYCS director Sadeq Musavi who is also the director of the festival.

"At present, there are over 10,000 festivals being organized across the world, most of them are ineligible. Meanwhile, the Tehran short festival has earned notable status in the world, although the festival is not decidedly well known, it can be considered as the most important short film festival in West Asia," he added.

He said that the Tehran short festival is the only event offering free admission, and added, "Free registration will be set aside after the restrictions on international payments are lifted, and, like other festivals, we will collect a registration fee from participants and the festival will be able to cover all its expenses."

Religion Today Film Festival picks nine movies from Iran

TEHRAN – A lineup of nine movies by Iranian filmmakers will be competing in the 24th edition of the Religion Today Film Festival.

The festival will take place in the Italian town of Trento from September 22 to 29. This year's festival has focused on films on travel and pilgrimage.

"Before Darkness" by Mosayyeb Hanai is a highlight of the lineup.

The short drama is about an Afghan woman who hides her child because she does not have enough money to take her across Iran's border. In the middle of the way, her plan is exposed. She has to make a difficult decision.

"Holy Bread" will be screened in the documentary category.

Directed by Rahim Zabih, the film tells the story of the hard life of people who smuggle goods in order to support their families. Because



A scene from "The Blue Girl" by Keivan Majidi.

of this, they are forced to hike arduously in the mountains, putting their lives on the line. The father of a household may be swept to his death by an avalanche, or hit by a soldier's bullets.

The section also features "I Won't Remain Alone" directed by Yaser Talebi.

An elderly disabled couple living

in a small village in the northern part of Iran, faces an unfathomable tragedy when their youngest son falls into a coma after an accident. Defying the Islamic traditions of burial, overcoming problems of red tape, and turning devastation into hope, the parents agree to donate their son's organs. Five years after their brave decision, a film crew

duty as a filmmaker to offer a solution to the issue; I'm not a social reformist. I've simply raised the issue of refugees with people," added Foruzesh, who is also the director of the short dramas "When I Killed the Cat" and "A Few Knots Away".

Former Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamidreza Asefi, who also served as Iran's ambassador to the U.A.E., Germany and France, also attended the meeting.

In his speech, he pointed to the difference between the meanings of the words "refugee" and "immigrant."

"There are numerous Iranian people living abroad as immigrants, many of whom are the honor of our country. There are numerous Iranian physicians, businessmen and students who have chosen to live abroad," he said.

"Although we would prefer that they live in Iran, they nevertheless have chosen to live outside the country, and hence, they are not refugees," he noted.

Asefi listed high unemployment, higher cost of living and discrimination in Iran as factors that cause people to leave their homeland. However, he noted that many of the people who immigrate find the destination country to be drastically different from "the dreamland" they had anticipated in their imaginations.

Producer Seyyed Mohammad-Mehdi Dezfuli said, "Due to the higher cost of living in the country, many Iranian people leave their homeland and sometimes they fail to find their dreamland or live in conditions much worse than those that they had experienced in Iran."

He expressed his hope that more films would be produced about refugee life to raise people's awareness of the issue.



A scene from "White Clad" directed by Reza Fahimi.

visits them and records their slow path of reconciliation with death – or rather, their acquaintance with eternal life.

The feature-length drama "The Blue Girl" by Keivan Majidi will also be competing in the festival.

The story of the film is set in a remote village in the rocky mountains of Kurdistan, where everyone is in love with football, but there is no level field upon which to play the game. The children decide to climb up the mountain in order to find somewhere to play the game.

"Mandali" by Meqdad Jalali, "Clay" by Ardalan Zinati, "Congenital" directed by Saman Hosseinpour and Ako Zandkarimi, "Dabur" by Saeid Nejati, and "Hands" by Amen Sahrai will also be screened at the festival.

Iranian producer Elaheh Nobakht is a member of the jury of the festival.

“The First Stone” cast into Persian bookstores



A poster for the Persian translation of Carsten Jensen's novel "The First Stone".

TEHRAN – Danish author Carsten Jensen's novel "The First Stone" has been published in Persian.

Published in two volumes by Hanuz in Tehran, the book has been rendered into Persian by Vafa Dabiri Abkenari.

In the tradition of the great war novels of literature, Jensen's acclaimed novel takes the reader on a powerful and unforgettable journey into the heart of contemporary warfare.

A platoon of young men and women enlist to fight in Afghanistan, driven by a desire for justice and a need to test themselves under extreme circumstances. Soon they face a challenge that no military training has prepared them for, and simple survival becomes their only mission.

Foremost among them is Hannah, a tough

young soldier whose dedication and ferocity convince her fellow soldiers of the righteousness of their mission.

Manipulated into committing acts of violence against their own allies, they become notorious among Afghans as "Western jihadis". With American drones mysteriously being shot down from the sky, the soldiers begin to realize they are pawns in an audacious experiment.

Jensen was born in 1952. He first made his name as a columnist and literary critic for the Copenhagen daily Politiken, and has written novels, essays and travel books.

Jensen was awarded the Golden Laurels for "I Have Seen the World Begin" and the Danske Banks Litteraturpris, Denmark's most prestigious literary award, for "We, the Drowned".