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Opinion

Output maintenance crisis: alarm bells ringing for world's top gas reserve

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN – Holding nearly 18 percent of the global gas reserves, Iran is one of the most hydrocarbon-rich areas in the world, and the country's giant South Pars gas field (which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf) is by far the world's largest natural gas field.

South Pars covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters and the remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in the Arab country's territorial waters.

Although until recently the Islamic Republic was mostly focused on the development of its oil reserves, considering the global shift toward natural gas and the significant rise in the domestic demand, the government started following a new strategy to develop both sectors alongside each other.

As the crown jewel of Iran's gas industry, the South Pars gas field became the focal point of the Oil Ministry's gas industry development programs, and over two decades after the beginning of the field's development, it has nearly reached its full potential. ▶ Page 4

3 Asian countries top export destinations for Iranian nanoproducts

TEHRAN – Among the 41 countries buying Iranian nanoproducts, three Asian countries, namely Iraq, Turkey, and Afghanistan, have the highest imports, IRNA reported on Monday.

The expansion of export programs by the Nanotechnology Innovation Council in recent years has led to the entry of Iranian goods, equipment, and services to global markets.

However, in recent years, due to currency fluctuations and export barriers related to sanctions, Iran's exports of nano-products to other countries have decreased.

Some 41 countries are purchasers of Iranian-made nano-products, and among various industrial sectors, the largest share of exports (about 48%) is related to the construction sector, worth \$6.10 million.

Optoelectronics with 23 percent, medicine, health, polymer, and composite with 7 percent, and textile with 6.5 percent have the highest share of export, respectively.

According to the Nanotechnology Innovation Council, the three countries of Iraq, Turkey, and Afghanistan are the most important export destinations for Iranian nano products. ▶ Page 7

Interview

Yezidis are originally Iranians who refused to be influenced by Zarathustra: professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Philip G. Kreyenbroek, professor and director of Iranian Studies at the Georg August University of Göttingen from 1996-2017, says that Yezidis are remnants of Iranian tribes who refused to be influenced by the Daeva cult or by Zarathustra.

"Besides the group of early Iranians who came into direct contact with the Daeva cult and refused to bow to it, there were other tribes who continued to follow the ancient religion without being influenced by the Daeva cult or by Zarathustra," Kreyenbroek tells the Tehran Times.

"Some of these groups moved westwards from an area north of the Iranian-Afghan border and settled in western parts of modern Iran, northern Iraq, and eastern Turkey." ▶ Page 5

Sudan Coup Sparks Concerns Over Israel's Interference

▶ Page 3



Beirut has good ties with Iran, Lebanon FM says

TEHRAN — The Lebanese foreign minister says that his country has good relations with Iran and is taking steps to strengthen these relations.

Highlighting his country's relations with the Islamic Republic, Abdullah Bou Habib said, "We have good relations with Iran and we are working to improve it," the Mehr news agency reported on Monday, quoting Al-Manar.

The Lebanese foreign minister added at the same time Beirut welcomes relations with the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

"We believe that the talks between Tehran and Riyadh will have a positive impact on Beirut as well."

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian visited Lebanon on October 7-8. While in Beirut, he reaffirmed Tehran's strong support for Lebanon, saying the Islamic Republic is ready to play an active role in promoting Lebanon's development projects.

During the trip, Amir Abdollahian held meetings with high-ranking Lebanese officials, including President Michel Aoun, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri and Prime Minister

Najib Mikati.

The Lebanese foreign minister went on to say that the October 14 events in Beirut negatively affected the government's measures.

Bou Habib was referring to the gunfire in Beirut in which seven people were killed and 32 others injured. It began during a peaceful protest by the Hezbollah and Amal loyalists against the judge investigating last year's huge blast at Beirut's port. Christian snipers from the Lebanese Forces (LF) faction led by Samir Geagea fired at the crowd. ▶ Page 2

Iran sets new rules to resume foreign tourist arrivals

TEHRAN – Iranian officials have announced new rules for foreign tourists interested in visiting the country, CHTN reported on Monday.

As of October 23, direct and indirect entry and exit of nationals of Iran and other countries (both groups and individuals) from/to air and land borders are no longer restricted by presenting a valid vaccination card and following protocols approved by the Ministry of Health, the report added.

A health certificate with a negative coronavirus PCR test result, issued at most 96 hours before arrival, is required for travelers.

Direct or indirect travel from/to high-risk countries designated by the World Health Organization is excluded from this regulation.

The Ministry of Health will announce the level of restrictions or bans on travels if disease processes in neighboring countries change.

The Ministry of Tourism is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this instruction, and if any violations are observed, the authorities will be notified.

Earlier this week, the deputy tourism minister Ali-Asghar Shalbafian announced that the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control agreed to reopen the country's borders to foreign tourists, based on the new conditions prevailing in the country after crossing the fifth wave of the pandemic, increasing vaccinations, and at the request of the tourism ministry. ▶ Page 6



President Raisi gives Sadeghzadeh Pahlevani's armband

TEHRAN – Iran President Ebrahim Raisi gave Jaber Sadeghzadeh special Bazonband (Armband).

Sadeghzadeh won Iran's Pahlevani Wrestling Championship for the seventh time on Sunday. Pahlevan of Iran is an annual Pahlevani Wrestling competition held in Iran, in which athletes from across the country participate to achieve the title.

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Report

Shortage in UK farmers, bus drivers reflect broader crisis

TEHRAN – British farmers are being forced to slash production as a vast shortfall in workers has caused an "unprecedented" amount of food to be thrown into landfills this year.

The food supply shortage is set to come at a time when imports of products from the EU are under pressure because of problems at customs checks and border controls, which have been repeatedly postponed after Brexit.

Shoppers will bear the brunt of the shortage; they have been advised to brace for more empty shelves at the supermarkets and a significant food price inflation rate. Production in the UK has fallen while more goods and food items are being imported.

The drastic shortage of labor has added to a growing list of problems for UK farmers. They are also dealing with soaring costs for shipping, energy and fertilizer while supermarkets battle to keep prices down as they compete in the market with chains that offer better prices for goods.

Farmers say they have been forced to throw millions of pounds of products to waste bins, including tomatoes, blueberries, raspberries, apples, salad leaves, and flowers.

The National Farmers' Union has called on the government to take immediate measures to address the crisis. The Union says farmers are making decisions now about which plant to grow for next year and cannot afford to plant crops that will go to waste.

The entire food industry is now estimated to need an extra half-million workers to plant and harvest food, pack and process it. Otherwise, retailers, restaurants and people's homes will not get the deliveries they need further disrupting the supply chain to ordinary people. ▶ Page 5

"Cylinder" qualifies for Oscars at Tehran festival amid claims of "extravagance"

By Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi Sabet

TEHRAN – Iranian drama "Cylinder" qualified for Academy Awards consideration by winning the 38th Tehran International Short Film Festival's grand prix Sunday evening as the Cinema Organization of Iran's director sharply criticized organizers for "promoting extravagance and aristocracy."

In this movie directed by Amir Pazirofteh, a teenage boy, regardless of his interest and talent in soccer, must obey a father who is obsessed with money. The father prevents his son from going to the football competition by any means. Eventually, after a consistent struggle, the match day arrives and the boy decides to reach the final match in any way possible with the help of his friend. ▶ Page 8

Raisi receives credentials of six new ambassadors

‘Europeans shouldn’t act in a way that U.S. would feel Europe is its sphere of influence’

TEHRAN — President Ebrahim Raisi had a busy day on Monday when he received the credentials of six new ambassadors.

The president began his day by receiving the credentials of the new Kyrgyz ambassador to Tehran.

Speaking after receiving the credentials of the new Kyrgyz ambassador to Tehran, Raisi said that considering the two countries’ membership in various regional organizations, including ECO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, there are good grounds for bilateral cooperation in trade and transit.

The president stressed that the current level of trade and economic relations between the two countries is not acceptable and the level of cooperation should be improved by tapping the existing capacities.

Ayatollah Raisi said that the two countries could design a new program to improve relations, adding, “Constructive cooperation between Iran and Kyrgyzstan can improve the level of interaction in regional and international organizations.”

Kyrgyzstan’s new ambassador to Tehran also congratulated Iran on the start of the process of permanent membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, saying, “Iran’s presence as a main member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization can pave the way for further development of Tehran-Bishkek relations.”

He described trade relations, joint ventures and transit as the most important capacities available for expanding the interactions between the two countries and said the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations is a good opportunity to devise solutions for expanding the field of relations between the two countries in various fields.

Ebrahim Raisi also accepted Belgian, Finnish, and Swiss, Azeri ambassadors’ credentials.

In the meeting with the new Belgian envoy to Tehran, Raisi said that Iran is interested in expanding cooperation with Belgium and Europe in large in the economic and trade fields, but “we should not allow outsiders influence these relations.”

Stating that the Islamic Republic were adhering strictly to its nuclear obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal, Raisi said, “In spite of this fact, European countries did not fulfil their obligations to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). European countries, whether regarding the deal or in other matters, should not act in such a way that the United States would feel that Europe is its sphere of influence.”

The president added that the United States seeks to develop and impose its oppressive will on the world, but other countries should not allow American unilateralism and encroachment continue in different parts of the world.

For his part, the new Belgian ambassador said, “We hope that with the expansion of economic relations, the relations between Tehran and Brussels will be strengthened.”

“Finland wants to return to previous level of ties with Iran”

After accepting Finland envoy’s credentials, Raisi referred to the old history of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Helsinki.

For his part, the new Finnish ambassador described Iran as one of the key actors in the region and expressed desire to cooperate with Iran in resolving regional issues such as Afghanistan. The ambassador also said, “Finland has had good investments in Iran in the past and we want to return to that level of relations now.”

“It is expected that Switzerland to maintain its independent role”

Receiving the credentials of the new Swiss ambassador, Raisi said that the relations between the two countries have always been friendly.

“Switzerland has always played a positive role in maintaining and promoting peace, and it is expected to be able to maintain its independent role in the new era against U.S. unilateralist policies.”

The new Swiss ambassador also said that Iran is a country with an ancient and brilliant civilization. The ambassador added, “Iran and Switzerland have had good relations in political, cultural, economic and scientific fields for more than a hundred years.”

He expressed hope that the conditions would be set for the activities of Swiss companies and economic entrepreneurs in Iran.

On Monday morning, Ali Alizadeh, Azerbaijan’s new ambassador to Iran presented his credentials to the Iranian president.

The credentials were submitted amid disputes between Iran and Azerbaijan regarding transit of goods between Iran and Armenia through a small part of Azerbaijan’s territory.

While receiving the credentials of the new Ambassador of Cyprus to Tehran, the president said, “I hope that with your experience and knowledge, the relations between the two countries will develop by the end of your mission.”

“Relations between the two countries are at a stage that can increase in the economic and trade fields, and I hope these relations will reach an acceptable level,” the president added.

For his part, the new ambassador of Cyprus said that he had previously served as the ambassador to Iran, adding that there are ample potentials for the development of relations between the two countries in economic and trade fields.

Ambassador: Forcing Iranian trucks to pay tolls is against tripartite agreement

‘Iran-Armenia economic relations have not kept pace with political proximity’

TEHRAN- “According to the tripartite talks between Russia, Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan in the ceasefire agreement, the transit road was supposed to have its former status in order to complete the new road,” the Iranian ambassador in Armenia, Abbas Badakhshan Zohuri, has said in an interview with Tasnim published on Monday.

Azerbaijan’s relations with Iran, its large neighbor to the south, have been in flux since the end of last year’s war with Armenia.

The most recent rocky period started when Azerbaijan began charging Iranian trucks toll fees on a road heading for southern Armenia through slices of Azerbaijan’s territory, Eurasianet reported.

At first, Iran remained silent even after Azerbaijani police and customs confirmed the practice. Armenian media reported that some of the trucks targeted had been “transporting cement to Yerevan and Stepanakert”, the de facto capital of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The territory is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but had been controlled by Armenian forces since the first war between the two sides in the 1990s.

North-South transit road

Ambassador Badakhshan Zohuri also spoke about Iran-Armenia relations, as well as developments in the Caucasus and the South-North transit road.

The diplomat said the relations between Iran and Armenia have been at the highest level since the country’s independence in 1991 and despite ups and downs in different governments relations have been proceeding quite well.

“We have a long history of several thousand years with Armenia, and due to the presence of Armenian compatriots, these relations are more cohesive,” Ambassador Badakhshan Zohuri remarked.

However, in comparison with the good political relations between the two countries, the two sides have not had the desired economic relationship as they should, the ambassador remarked.

The ambassador also commented on the relations between the two



neighboring countries since Nikol Pashinyan took the power in Armenia in 2018.

“Three years ago, when the Pashinyan revolution took place, new views were raised and the behavior of the new administration is mainly aimed at the development of Armenia; but it faced war and development planning was hampered. This development process has continued with the re-election of Pashinyan in the elections.”

On remarks by certain politicians and media outlets that Pashinyan is pro-Western and his government may cause problems in relations with Iran, the ambassador said, “In this regard, it should be seen to what extent this country’s dependence in terms of infrastructure allows Pashinyan to become pro-Western. They are more or less paying attention to their independence at the moment, but it does not necessarily mean the going out of Russian support, and much of Armenia’s infrastructure is under Russian control.”

It is not possible to say that the Yerevan government is inclined to the West, the Iranian diplomat highlighted. However, he said, Armenians’ desire to get close to Europe and the United States will continue. “Between the Armenians and the Armenian diaspora, which has a larger population than the population inside Armenia, the country’s connection with the West is growing,” the ambassador commented.

Armenia-Iran relations developed during Pashinyan rule

The ambassador stated that the relations between Armenia and Iran have been developing in all fields during the Pashinyan tenure.

“In the joint commission with Armenia, many issues have been considered that are not comparable to the past, including energy, electricity transfer from Armenia to Iran, transit of goods as well as connection to Eurasia through Armenia, which has provided the grounds for the growth of relations with Armenia.”

Exhibition of Iranian products in Armenia

Badakhshan Zohori pointed to the low volume of trade exchanges between the two countries despite all incentives, saying Iran’s share of trade with Armenia has been very small in recent years which the Iranian side should pay due attention to it.

However, the ambassador said, fortunately good progress was being made, and holding Iranian exhibitions in Armenia is in line with this purpose.

Iran follows connection of Chabahar to Georgia and Black Sea

On the South-North transit road, the diplomat stressed: “We have the Indian Ocean route to Chabahar and the Persian Gulf, and then the rail route to Julfa-Armenia-Georgia and the Black Sea, which is a safe and very suitable route for trade exchange, and countries along this route can make good use of its advantages.”

Iranian ambassador meets acting Taliban foreign minister

TEHRAN - Bahador Aminian, Iran’s ambassador to Kabul, met on Saturday with Taliban’s acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.

During the meeting, Ambassador Aminian said economic woes are the common foe faced by Iran and Afghanistan, Press TV reported.

The ambassador also said Iran is ready to invest in various sectors in Afghanistan to help reconstruct the war-torn country.

Aminian’s meeting with the acting foreign minister took place as Tehran is preparing to host a conference of Afghanistan’s neighbors on Wednesday. The conference will be held at the level of foreign ministers.

“During the meeting, Mr. Aminian said that economic challenge is our common enemy that creates turmoil, & Iran is ready to invest in energy, connectivity, mines, trade, and health sectors in Afghanistan,” the Taliban’s foreign ministry spokesman, Abdul Qahar Balkhi, wrote on his Twitter account.

The spokesman further said Muttaqi had called for particular attention to be paid to address the Afghan refugees’ issues in Iran and provide further facilities for Afghans traveling to Iran via the common border.

Iran is home to over three million Afghan refugees. The fall of the former Afghan government in mid-August has caused a sharp increase in the number of Afghan nationals seeking refuge in neighboring countries, especially Iran.

The Islamic Republic has called on the international community to take on the responsibility of attending to the needs of the Afghan refugees in Afghanistan’s neighboring countries.

Meanwhile, the Iranian president’s special

representative for Afghanistan said earlier that the stability and security of the region and Afghanistan’s neighbors depend on the current situation in Afghanistan.

“If there is stability and security in Afghanistan, stability and security will definitely be spread to other countries. This is the case with instability and insecurity and the spread of terrorism as well,” Hassan Kazemi Qomi said while in Russia to attend the third meeting of the Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan.

The Taliban participated in the Moscow conference. However, it has not been invited to the meeting in Tehran. According to IRNA, Russian Special Presidential Representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov has said that Moscow is making preparations for Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to address the meeting in Tehran. Kabulov did not say whether Lavrov would personally attend the meeting or address it virtually.

“Everyone should help Afghanistan out of such circumstances,” Kazemi Qomi added.

Professor Paul Pillar, a nonresident senior fellow of the Center for Security Studies at Georgetown University, tells the Tehran Times that the main concerns of countries neighboring Afghanistan and those nearby is a “possible export of extremists and extremism from Afghanistan.”

The special representative also said, “We must consider priorities and conditions, because currently Afghanistan is facing security problems and difficult conditions.” He reiterated Iran’s stance that the fate of the Afghan people must be determined by themselves, expressing hope for the formation of a government based on the will of the Afghan people.



Iranian Ambassador to Kabul Bahador Aminian (left) shakes hand with Taliban’s acting foreign minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, on October 23, 2021.

The Taliban were in power from 1996 to 2001, before they were overthrown by the U.S. government in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

Iran hopes that the Taliban’s behavior after regaining power would be different from the last period, repeatedly calling for the formation of an all-inclusive government that secures the rights of all ethnic and religious groups and women.

On September 17, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution renewing the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). It specified the importance of “equal and meaningful participation” of women in public life. The resolution also emphasizes “the importance of the establishment of an inclusive and representative government.”

Meanwhile, a senior UN official has warned that millions of Afghans, including children, could die of starvation unless urgent action is taken to pull Afghanistan back from the brink of collapse, Al Jazeera reported on Monday.

Iran deputy foreign minister to travel to Brussels Wednesday



TEHRAN — Ali Baqeri, Iran’s deputy foreign minister for political affairs, said on Monday that he will travel to Belgium on Wednesday to meet with Enrique Mora, who acts as coordinator for the Vienna nuclear talks on the part of the European Union.

“On Wednesday, I will meet with the JCPOA coordinator in Brussels to continue our talks on result-oriented negotiations.”

He added the continuation of the failed policy of “maximum pressure” certainly will not help remove the obstacles for talks to lift illegal sanctions on Iran. Rather, he said, it will only add to the complexities of the negotiations.

According to the diplomat, Iran is firm to negotiate a complete and effective lifting of illegal sanctions.

Beirut has good ties with Iran, Lebanon FM says

From page 1 ► The top diplomat also referred to the negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and stated that these negotiations would probably start in November.

Referring to the date of parliamentary elections set for March 27, 2022, the Lebanese foreign minister said there was a lot of pressure for holding parliamentary elections in proper time.

“In May 2022, our work is finished in the government. That is why the elections must be held before that date.”

Sudan coup sparks concerns over Israel’s interference

TEHRAN – The Sudanese army general who stage-managed his country’s normalization of diplomatic ties with Israel swept aside the civilian part of Sudan’s government in a coup that has been a long time coming.

As is the case with almost all military coups in the Arab world, the state-run Television of Sudan suddenly cut off regular programming on Monday morning and started airing national songs before airing a televised statement read by General Abdul Fattah al-Burhan who has been a key player in Sudanese politics ever since the overthrow of former dictator Omar al-Bashir in April 2019.

The influential general announced the dissolution of the transition cabinet of ministers led by Prime Minister Abdullah Hamdok. He also dissolved a ruling body known as the Sovereign Council and declared a state of emergency that entails curfews.

In the meantime, the ministers and the prime minister himself were arrested or forced to stay at home in what appeared to be house arrest.

In a sign that Hamdok was barred from any movement, the office of the prime minister issued a statement calling on the people to take to the streets and protect the revolution from the “thieves.”

“We call on the Sudanese people to protest using all peaceful means possible ... to take back their revolution from the thieves,” Hamdok’s office said in a statement, according to Al Jazeera.



Frictions between military and civilian parts of the government increased over the last few weeks, with the civilians accusing the military of playing a role in last month’s attempted coup to remove them from power and undermine the previously agreed to the power-sharing system between the military and the civilian groups.

The government of Sudan has been more or less equally shared between the military and the civilians since 2015 according to an agreement between the two sides on the requirements of the transitions period which was supposed to last until 2023 when the transitional government would be replaced with an elected government.

Based on this agreement, the Sovereign Council was established with members from both sides. Al-Burhan was the chairman of the council. He has been accused by members of the Hamdok government of

trying to disrupt the democratic transition.

In his Monday statement, the general offered assurances that the military will continue the transition process. “The army will continue the democratic transition until the handover of power to an elected civilian government,” he said, noting that “there is a need for the army to protect the security and safety of the country as stipulated in the constitutional declaration.”

But the statement failed to convince the ousted government whose ministers are now in custody. The Sudanese Ministry of Information announced that “what happened in Sudan today is a full-fledged military coup,” calling on the masses to “cut off the road to military action until the coup attempt is overthrown.”

Al-Burhan said the constitutional framework that allowed for power-sharing turned into a source of struggle and that

the military needed to step in to save the country. But this kind of messaging is unlikely to convince his rivals given his close connection with foreign parties who sought to beef up al-Burhan at the expense of the Hamdok government.

Many in Sudan and beyond considered the general as an ally of the United Arab Emirates, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. Al-Burhan himself did nothing to debunk these allegations. Instead, he even exacerbated them by secretly meeting with then Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Uganda last year.

During the meeting, al-Burhan and Netanyahu agreed to cooperate toward normalization between Sudan and Israel, a move that sparked widespread uproar in Sudan and the entire region given the history of enmity between Israel and Sudan. This is a cause for concern for many Sudanese who harbor fears over a growing Israeli influence in their country if al-Burhan succeeds in consolidating power.

Moreover, some Sudanese could even raise questions over the close relationship between al-Burhan and the Americans. The coup took place hours after Jeffrey Feltman, the U.S. special envoy for the Horn of Africa, met with al-Burhan in Khartoum. During the meeting, Feltman presented proposals to enhance the “spirit of partnership” and seek to get the country out of its current crisis. A Sudanese statement stated, “The American envoy, Feltman, presented several proposals that would enhance the spirit of partnership and hard work for the safe exit of the country from its current crisis.”

Iran says ready to cooperate with Islamic states to develop nuclear technology

TEHRAN — The spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has said Tehran is ready to cooperate with Muslim nations to develop nuclear technology for civilian purposes to promote the welfare of Islamic Ummah.

“We are ready to cooperate with the countries of the Islamic world for the development of nuclear technology for the welfare of the people and Islamic societies, so that we can all pave the way for a new Islamic civilization,” Behrouz Kamalvandi said as a group of guests participating at the international Islamic unity conference in Tehran on Saturday paid a visit to the Martyr Fakhri Zadeh Research Reactor, Radiopharmaceutical Production Center of Martyr Shahriari as well as an exhibition of the latest achievements in the nuclear industry.

During the visit, the guests got acquainted with the scientific and research infrastructure, achievements and capabilities of Iran in the field of reactor and radiopharmaceutical production.

Iran hosted the annual Islamic unity meeting on the birth anniversary of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH). The conference was held on Oct.19-24.

At the beginning of the visit, Kamalvandi said: “I am fully convinced that the convergence, integration and cohesion of the thinkers of Islamic lands under the banner of Islam will lead to the unity of the Muslim Ummah and the promotion of the Islamic nations against the ill-wishers, the wicked and the arrogant.”

He stated that the Islamic Ummah was in a crucial historical turning point. On the one hand, Kamalvandi

said, the extraordinary growth of various sciences and technologies has led to welfare of nations and on the other this technology, which is mostly in the hands of the wrong people, has led to monopoly, exploitation and colonization of less privileged nations by the arrogant.

“On the one hand, the establishment of international organizations has facilitated relations and more interaction between the nations of the world in order to solve problems and fill the gap of various shortcomings. And on the other hand, these ostensibly international organizations have become the toy in the hands of the arrogant and make every effort for humiliation and restriction of other nations” stated Kamalvandi, who is the deputy chief of the AEOI for international and legal affairs.

He added: “In this tense atmosphere, the Islamic world, with its renaissance, is not only obliged to develop and advance itself by appealing to new knowledge and technologies, but also by promoting Islamic thought and a monotheistic attitude and trusting in God to pave its progress with an Islamic model based on verses and hadiths and relying on itself and not on others, and this is the path that will eventually lead to a new Islamic civilization.”

Referring to the unilateralism adopted by arrogant countries, the deputy head of the AEOI said: “The Islamic world now has precious assets. These assets are the result

“The Islamic world now has precious assets. These assets are the result of the efforts of thinkers throughout history.”

of the efforts of thinkers throughout history. Undoubtedly, what should emerge from the conference on Islamic unity is the structures and mechanisms of the new Islamic civilization and the explanation and delineation of the way to achieve it in this ambiguous period and in the face of various tensions in the international arena.”

Regarding the great achievements made by Iran in nuclear technology, Kamalvandi said: “We have made every effort here to reach the pinnacles of nuclear science and technology, and in spite of all the opposition and hostility in the international arena, in the nuclear industry, we have achieved great achievements. We have invested everything in the path of achieving these great achievements and we have dedicated our scientists, each of whom was a great man and scholar, to the promotion of Islam and the Islamic Ummah.”

Referring to the ability of Iranian scientists in conquering the peaks of knowledge, Kamalvandi stated: “Undoubtedly, one of the pillars of the new Islamic civilization is science and technology, and this capital can be the factor of unity of the Islamic world and the Islamic lands. Each of us is obliged to do our part and rely on our own resources to do this important thing and to do our Islamic duty by cooperating in this field. Fortunately, today Iran has reached the peaks of progress in all branches and

over the situation of the Iranian nationals in the border area to the Belarusian party. He noted that the Foreign Ministry also pursued the matter through the Belarusian embassy in Tehran.

Khatibzadeh said Iran is confident that the Belarus government will offer sufficient and necessary help to resolve the problem in line with friendly ties between Tehran and Minsk. He noted that the Iranian Foreign Ministry will also continue pursuing the issue seriously.

and that a team from the embassy was sent to the Belarus-Lithuania border to pave the way for the returning of the Iranians to their country. Khatibzadeh added that the team is now in the border area and in collaboration with the regional border authorities is trying to end the predicament of those people as quickly as possible.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman said the embassy has been in constant contact with the relevant Belarusian bodies and has conveyed Tehran’s serious concern

This will be the second regional meeting on Afghanistan. The first meeting was held in Pakistan.

In mid-October meeting, the Iranian foreign ministry spokesman, Saeed Khatibzadeh, said the meeting will focus on forming an inclusive government in Afghanistan.

“The six countries will be focused on how they can help form an inclusive government in Afghanistan with the presence of all ethnic groups, and how they can help shape a future of peace and security in Afghanistan,” Khatibzadeh said.

Earlier in September, Pakistan held a meeting of Afghanistan’s neighbors. The Pakistani Foreign Office in a statement said Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi chaired the meeting attended by China, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

“At the invitation of Pakistan, Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on the Afghan issue among the neighboring countries of Afghanistan will be held in virtual format on 8 September 2021,” it said.

It added the meeting reviewed the evolving situation in Afghanistan to address common challenges and realize emerging opportunities to ensure regional stability and prosperity.

It provided an opportunity to neighbors of Afghanistan to work together for shared objective of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan, which is essential to forge strong economic linkages and realize connectivity agenda, the statement noted.

The meeting was to build upon the discussions, held at the Special Representatives/Envoys level, on 5 September 2021.

IRAN IN FOCUS

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Mahdavia happy with win over Nepal at AFC U23 Asian Cup Qualifier

TEHRAN – Iran U23 football coach Mehdi Mahdavia is satisfied with the win over Nepal at the 2022 AFC U23 Asian Cup qualification.

On Monday, Iran defeated Nepal 4-0 in Group B in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan.



“I am satisfied with my players’ performance but I believe that we could have won the match with more goals. Our players missed their chances against Nepal but will try to capitalize on our opportunities,” Mahdavia said.

Iran are scheduled to meet Lebanon on Thursday.

“We want to earn three points against Lebanon however they are an unknown team for us,” he added.

A total of 42 teams are competing in the qualifiers including host Uzbekistan. However, its results will not be taken into account when the group ranking will be decided.

Each team will play once against each other in the group. The 11 group-winners will directly qualify for the main event, while the four-best runners-up will also go through.

Yamga’s brace leads Esteghlal to win over Zob Ahan

TEHRAN – Arthur Yamga stood up for his team Esteghlal by scoring a brace in his first match and took the Blues to a 2-0 win over Zob Ahan on Monday.

The French winger gave the visiting team a lead in the 28th minute.

Zob Ahan put Esteghlal under pressure to score the equalizer but their strikers lacked the cutting edge.

Yamga once again was on target in Isfahan’s Fooladshahr Stadium just before the final whistle.

In Tabriz, Tractor defeated Sanat Naft 3-0.

Paykan beat newly-promoted Havadar 2-0 in Tehran.

And newly-promoted Fajr Sepasi suffered a 1-0 home loss against Gol Gohar.

Holders Persepolis will take on Nassaji on Wednesday while Foolad meet Aluminum in Arak.

Iran Professional League is the highest division of professional football in the west Asian country. It is the top-level football league in Iran since its foundation in 2001.

Since 2013, the league comprises 16 teams. The winners of IPL and Hazfi Cup automatically qualify for the AFC Champions League group stages. The runners-up and the third-place teams should participate at the AFC Champions League Play-off round.

Persepolis are the most successful club with seven titles in IPL and 14 in total.

Iran’s Women to learn opponents at AFC Asian Cup on Thursday

TEHRAN – Known as Team Melli Baanavaan, Iran will be the only AFC Women’s Asian Cup debutants in Thursday’s draw.

They defeated Bangladesh, then emerged from a thrilling penalty shootout against Jordan to reach the pinnacle of the Asian women’s game for the very first time.

The final 12-team cast for the greatest show in Asian women’s football is now in place after both

Chinese Taipei and Myanmar secured qualification to the AFC Women’s Asian Cup India 2022 on Sunday.

The stage is now set for Thursday’s official India 2022 draw, to be staged in Kuala Lumpur, where the 12 qualified teams will be split into three groups ahead of the tournament’s January 20 kick-off.

Azmoun nets brace as Zenit thrash Spartak Moscow

TEHRAN – In the match of the 12th round of the Russian Premier League of the 2021/2022 season, Zenit St. Petersburg met Spartak Moscow. The match took place at the Gazprom Arena stadium in St. Petersburg and ended in a landslide victory for the hosts with the score of 7:1

Zenit opens the scoring in the 20th minute. Serdar Azmoun, Iranian forward of Zenit, scored the opening goal. Zenit doubled in the standings in the 28th minute. The Brazilian winger scored Claudinho, who sent the ball into the far corner of Maksimenko’s goal with a beautiful dribble shot. At 36 ‘Zenit took the lead to a devastating advantage. The scorer of the goal in the match was Azmun, who scored his second goal.

At 45 ‘Zenit scored the fourth goal, which was scored by Andrey Mostovo.

Spartak pulled a goal back before the halftime. The goal was scored by Quincy.

At 56 ‘Zenit regained a sure advantage of four goals. The fifth goal of the blue-white-blue team was scored by Andrey Mostovoy.

In the 79th minute Zenit scored their sixth goal. Substitute striker Artyom Dzyubawho converted the goal. By the way, at the moment when the penalty was awarded, the Spartak defender was removed from the field. Maximiliano Kofriewho received the second yellow card. At 88 ‘Zenit scored the seventh goal with attempts by the substitute Alessandra Erochin. The referee’s final whistle marked a devastating victory for the team Sergei Semak.

Zenit after 12 rounds of the RPL are the leaders of the Russian championship. Sergey Semak’s team have 26 points from 12 rounds. Spartak have 17 points in 12 games.

Schedule of FIBA Women’s Asia Cup 2021 Division B confirmed

TEHRAN – The schedule and groups for the FIBA Women’s Asia Cup 2021 Division B have been finalized and confirmed ahead of the event to be held from November 7-13.

The competition will be played at the Prince Hamza Hall in Amman, Jordan.

The Group Phase will be played from November 7-9. For the Group Phase, the six (6) teams are separated into two groups of three (3) according to the latest update of the FIBA World Ranking presented by Nike for Women.

The first game of the competition on November 7 will be between Lebanon and Iran at 16:00 (GMT +3). 2017 runners up Kazakhstan will then start their search for promotion to Division A against Indonesia at 19:00 (GMT +3). Hosts Jordan will play their first game against Indonesia later on November 8 against Indonesia, also at 19:00 (GMT +3).

The Final Phase starts on November 10 with two Qualification to Semi-Finals games between teams that finished 2nd and 3rd place in their groups.

The top team from each group will directly advance to the semi-finals which will be played on November 12 after a rest day. The 5th place classification game will also be played as the first game on this day.

The Final of the FIBA Women’s Asia Cup 2021 Division B will then be played on November 13 as well as the 3rd place classification game. The 3rd place game starts at 16:00 (GMT +3) while the Final starts later at 19:00 (GMT +3).

The winner of the FIBA Women’s Asia Cup 2021 Division B gains promotion to play in the Division A for the next edition of the Women’s Asia Cup.

Russia to participate in Tehran meeting on Afghanistan

TEHRAN – A senior Russia diplomat has told Russian state media that his country would take part in a regional meeting in Tehran on Afghanistan.

Russian Special Presidential Representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov has said that Moscow is making preparations for Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to address the meeting, Iran’s state news agency IRNA reported on Monday.

Kabulov did not say whether Lavrov would personally attend the meeting or address it virtually.

Iran will host the meeting on Wednesday and the foreign ministers of Iran, China, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan will attend. Of course, the Chinese Foreign Minister will attend the meeting virtually, according to Fars News.

Iran reaches agreement with Armenia on new transport routes

TEHRAN - Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mirashrafi said good agreements have been reached with Armenia on the development of customs cooperation as well as the use of alternative routes for the transport of goods.

Mirashrafi who visited Moscow on Sunday to attend an international customs conference noted that Iran has diversified its international routes so that no single route could impose a limitation on the country's international trade.

Earlier this month, Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Kheirollah Khademi had announced an agreement between Iran and Armenia for establishing new transit routes, as the two countries are facing problems in trade exchanges through Azerbaijan.

"The alternative transit route for Iranian trucks in Armenia will be asphalted within the next month, and there will be no need to use the previous route which passes through Azerbaijan and requires us to pay tolls to the country," Khademi said.

Azerbaijan is controlling and claiming ownership for approximately 20 km out of a 400 km route between Iran and Armenia

and has imposed strict regulations on Iranian drivers which are posing major problems for them passing through the 20-kilometer section of Armenia's Goris-Kapan Road including paying tolls levied by Azerbaijani border guards.

Mirashrafi further pointed to the positive talks held with the members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) during the conference, saying: "The volume of trade between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union has taken an upward path, and with the agreements reached, we will soon see a leap in trade relations with the member countries of this union."

Referring to the importance of land crossings for the export and import of goods between Iran and Russia, the official said: "Completing the maritime and road infrastructure and providing more customs facilities, especially in the Caspian Sea region, can increase trade [between the two countries]."

In addition to ground roads, Iran has routes in the Caspian Sea through Ro-Ro ships to Azerbaijan Republic, Russia, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, Mirashrafi added.

From page 1 ► However, considering the ever-increasing domestic demand and the natural downward trend of the field's recovery factor, the new issue that is coming under the spotlight is the maintenance of gas production and the need for new technologies and investment to do so.

The field's current condition

According to Mohammad Meshkinfam, the managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the field, South Pars currently supplies about 70 percent of Iran's gas consumption basket.

Over 37 platforms, 340 wells, and 200 kilometers of pipelines have been constructed in the field's offshore section and the field's average daily production currently stands at about 700 mcm.

"Some 700 million cubic meters of gas is produced daily from South Pars while 252 million cubic meters is extracted from other fields and 70 million cubic meters from associated gases," Meshkinfam has said describing the country's gas production status.

"So far 15 percent (or 62 trillion cubic feet) of the field's gas reserves have been extracted and with the existing facilities at South Pars we can only extract 50 percent (or 210 trillion cubic feet) of the field's total accessible reserves" he noted.

Due to the natural decrease in

Output maintenance crisis: alarm bells ringing for world's top gas reserve



the pressure of the South Pars field gas reservoir following its production over the last 20 years, the production rate of this reservoir will inevitably decline in the coming years.

Production outlook and need for investment

According to Meshkinfam, Iran's giant gas field is currently at the peak of its production and from now on, the field's output will decline significantly every year if no preventative measure is taken.

"Gas production from South

other development of other gas fields.

NIOC Head Mohsen Khojasteh Mehr has also pointed to the need for investment to pursue the development goals in the oil and gas industry, saying: "\$65 billion to \$89 billion is needed to implement the country's onshore and offshore oil and gas development projects."

According to Khojasteh Mehr, so far \$80 billion has been invested for the development of South Pars, and \$8.5 billion is also expected to be invested for the development of phase 11 of the field and completing the onshore sections of phases 13, 14, and 22-24.

The NIOC head has said that the various scenarios have been designed for maintaining the country's gas production.

Increasing the production of 10 gas fields in the central oil regions of Iran, development of Kish gas field and its transmission pipeline, development of North Pars gas field, development of South Pars phase 11, developing Farzad A and B gas fields, are among the oil ministry's plans for maintaining the country's natural gas output which in total will add 366 million cubic meters per day to the country's gas production.

Realization of the mentioned projects requires over \$54 billion of investment, and if not implemented, Iran will become a gas importer over the next few years, he stressed.

Uzbekistan eager to use Iran's Chabahar port as trade gateway

TEHRAN - Landlocked Uzbekistan is increasingly expressing interest in using Iran's oceanic Chabahar port as a trade gateway that could help it expand to new overseas markets, Hindustan Times reported quoting senior Uzbek officials.

As reported, the country's authorities have said that Uzbekistan will push ahead with a joint plan with India and Iran to promote connectivity through the Chabahar port, as part of the country's efforts to improve and diversify access to sea routes for trade.

The three countries intend to hold the second meeting of a trilateral working group to discuss the joint use of Chabahar port on Iran's Makran coast for trade and transit, Uzbekistan's deputy foreign minister Furkat Sidikov said on the sidelines of a roundtable in India on foreign policy issues.

He indicated that the recent developments in Afghanistan would not have any impact on the plans of the three countries.

"India is one of our strategic partners and this is an important project," Sidikov said.

The first virtual meeting of the trilateral



working group on the joint use of Chabahar port was held last December, and the three sides will set the date for the second meeting, he added.

Almost 80 percent of Uzbekistan's exports and imports move through northern routes passing through Central Asian states and Russia and it would be beneficial for the country to gain access to the Persian Gulf, Bakhtiyor Mustafayev, deputy director of Uzbekistan's state-backed International Institute for Central Asia has said.

Iran, India, and Uzbekistan held an online meeting on cooperation in Iran's Chabahar Port on December 15, 2020, during which the Uzbek side expressed willingness for

cooperation in Chabahar Port's development projects.

The meeting was jointly chaired by Iran's Deputy Transport Minister Shahram Adamnejad, India's secretary (shipping) Sanjeev Ranjan, and Uzbekistan's Deputy Transport Minister D. Dehkanov.

Chabahar Port, the only Iranian ocean port, is a strategic port with unique opportunities that can attract investments from Iranian and foreign private sectors.

India currently operates one of the terminals of Chabahar port and offers loading and unloading services in the mentioned terminal.

The strategic project has been given a waiver from sanctions imposed by the U.S. on Iran.

The development of the Chabahar Port is important for the economic development of regional countries and in this regard endorsing regional agreements with neighboring countries is of significant importance for Iran so that it can increase its transit share to connect the shores of the Indian Ocean to Russia, northern Central Asia, and the Caucasus.

Over \$468m of facilities paid to production units in H1

TEHRAN - Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has announced that 19,679 trillion rials (over \$468.5 million) of facilities were paid to production units as part of a program for supporting domestic production during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22).

The mentioned payments were made to 215 production units, IRNA reported.

Based on the Industry Ministry data, some 404 production units based in 31 different provinces had registered for bank facilities in the mentioned six months.

As reported, under the framework of this program dubbed "facilities for production and employment", bank facilities are offered to newly established production units or semi-finished industrial projects with over 60 percent of physical progress.

Based on the mentioned program, 201,299 trillion rials of facilities (about \$4.79 billion) have been planned to be paid to production units to support domestic production and maintain or create job opportunities.

Part of the said figure is provided by the National Development Fund (NDF) and part

of it is supplied by the banking system.

Over 7,830 production units have registered for bank facilities since the program started in late Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended in March 2019). The program kicked off in February 2019 by the Industry Ministry in collaboration with the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

Following a major plan for developing the country's production under the frameworks of the resilient economy, the government has defined several projects with the aim of creating 1,032,962 job opportunities.

In this regard, CBI has put supporting production on the agenda as a major plan over the past two years.

Latest CBI data show that the country's banking system paid 12.41 quadrillion rials (over \$295.49 billion) of facilities to domestic economic sectors in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year to register a 57.9-percent rise from the same period in the previous year.

Banks had paid 5,952 quadrillion rials (about \$141.7 billion) of facilities to domestic economic sectors in the previous calendar year's first five months.

Non-oil export from Hormozgan province rises 47% in H1

TEHRAN- The value of non-oil export from Hormozgan province in the south of Iran rose 47 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Abolfazl Akbarpour, the director-general of the customs office of Shahid Rajaee port (Iran's major and most-equipped container port located in Hormozgan), said that 16 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$5.861 billion have been exported from the province in the six-month period of this year, indicating 16 percent growth in terms of weight as well.

He mentioned China, UAE, Thailand, India, Oman and Ghana as the main export destinations and iron ore and concentrate, ethylene polymers, mineral and chemical fertilizers as the major exported items.

The official put the six-month non-oil import at 4 million tons worth \$9.907 billion, with 73 percent rise in terms of value.

He mentioned China, India, UAE, Italy and Germany as the main sources of imports in the first half.

As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 47 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi said that Iran has traded 79.1 million tons of non-oil products worth \$45 billion with other countries in the mentioned

period.

The official put the six-month non-oil exports at 60 million tons valued at \$21.8 billion, with a 61-percent rise in value and a 30-percent growth in weight.

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

He said major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China with about 14.8 million tons worth \$6.5 billion, Iraq with 13.9 million tons worth \$3.8 billion, Turkey with 7.2 million tons worth \$2.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 5.8 million tons worth \$2.2 billion, and Afghanistan with 2.5 million tons worth \$1.0 billion.

The official further announced that Iran has imported 19.1 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$23.1 billion in the first six months of the present year, with a 37-percent growth in value and a 15-percent rise in weight year on year.

Mir-Ashrafi named cellphones, livestock corn, sunflower oil, barley, meal, wheat, soybeans, sugar, palm oil, and rice as the main imported commodities.

The United Arab Emirates with 5.9 million tons of goods worth \$7.3 billion was the top exporter to Iran in the said period, followed by China with 1.5 million tons of goods worth \$5.0 billion, Turkey with 2.1 million tons worth \$2.4 billion, and Switzerland with one million tons worth \$900,000, the official stated.

IME's weekly value of trades increases 18%

TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 1,913 million tons of commodities worth \$543 million was traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), showing 18 percent rise in value and five percent growth in volume of trades as compared to its preceding week.

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange experienced trade of 1,479 million tons of commodities valued at more than \$301 million on its metals and mineral trading floor.

Commodities sold on this floor included one million tons of cement, 329,144 tons of steel, 6,700 tons of copper, 7,250 tons of aluminum, 24 tons of precious metals concentrate, 280 tons of molybdenum sulfur, 100 tons of zinc, 26 kg of gold bars and 19,000 tons of sponge iron.

Furthermore, the IME saw on

both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 429,560 tons of commodities worth more than \$237 million.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 96,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 120,000 tons of bitumen, 81,913 tons of polymeric products, 38,051 tons of chemicals, 48,000 tons of lube cut, 3,047 tons of base oil, 2,500 tons of slops wax, 570 tons of insulation and 40,120 tons of sulfur.

It's worth noting that the IME's agricultural trading floor played host to trading 400 kg of saffron.

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 4,479 tons of commodities traded on it.

As previously reported, 7,222 million tons of commodities worth \$2,008 billion was traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange during the past Iranian calendar month (September 23-October 22).

Over 7.2 million tons of commodities worth \$2.008 billion have been traded at IME in the past Iranian month.

Within this month, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 5,541 million tons of commodities valued at \$1,096 billion.

Commodities sold on this floor included 1,226 million tons of steel, 3,993 million tons of cement, 26,445 tons of copper, 580 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 69 tons of precious metals concentrate, 23,940 tons of aluminum, 215,000 tons of iron ore, 21,870 tons of zinc, 2,000 tons of coke, 49,000 tons of

36.884 trillion rials (about \$878.19 million) were traded at the TSE on Monday.

The first market's index fell 20,766 points, and the second market's index dropped 36,768 points.

TEDPIX rose 2.7 percent in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

TEDPIX loses 23,600 points on Monday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 23,639 points to 1,384 million on Monday.

As reported, over 5.461 billion securities worth

The index gained 39,000 points to 1,436 million in the past week.

During the past week, the indices of Social Security Investment Company, Bandar Abbas Refinery, Isfahan Refining Company, National Iranian Copper Industries Company, Iran Mercantile Exchange, and Sabzevar Pars Steel Complex were the most widely followed ones.

Yezidis are originally Iranians who refused to be influenced by Zarathustra: professor

From page 1 ► Origins of Yazidis are unknown for many people and pundits as some sources talk about their link with Zoroastrianism while extremist groups in Iraq have accused them of being a continuation of tribes that were used to worship the devil.

“Zoroastrianism”, as one of the oldest religions still in existence, could impress many religions and faiths in the world.

It had been the state religion of three Persian dynasties while shaping one of the ancient world's largest empires—the mighty Persia Empire, before the Muslim conquest of Persia in the seventh century AD.

However, the Dutch professor believes that the Yezidi tribes refused to follow Zarathustra's teachings.

“These Iranians continued to worship in the traditional, pre-Zoroastrian manner, and only came into contact with Zoroastrianism much later, when Zoroastrianism became a dominant tradition in western parts of Iran under the Achaemenids,” he remarks.

“I believe that the cultures of the Yezidis and the Yarsan, most of who speak forms of Kurdish, have preserved features of that ancient religion.”

Following is the text of the interview:

Who was Zarathustra, and to what extent did his teachings expand? Did he have the characteristics of a prophet?

Zarathustra was a highly educated priest of the ancient religious tradition, which goes back to the time when the ancestors of the Iranians and northern Indians were still one people (ca.3000-2000 BCE). He defended the



ancient religion, based on the concept of Asha (Truth, Rightness) against pressures to worship alien gods (the Daeva later Div, or ‘demon’), who were not bound by Asha. The majority of early Indian tribes had accepted Deva/ Daeva worship, as we see in their early texts, the Vedas. Zarathustra's people were in close contact with the Deva worshippers but refused to accept their beliefs.

Zarathustra, as a trained priest, was capable of defining the beliefs of his people in his ‘Songs’ (Gatha), in which he describes his direct vision of Lord Wisdom (Ahura Mazda, later Hormazd), whom he worshipped as God, the source of all righteous existence.

Zarathustra's worldview (Daena, later Din) eventually became the basis of a new community that spread all over the Iranian world so that the word Daena/Din came to mean ‘religion’ (Din). A stone who founded a new religion on

the basis of a direct encounter with God, Zarathustra may indeed be called a Prophet, although the concept of ‘prophecy’ is generally associated with the Abrahamic religions.

Is there any links between Zoroastrianism and Yazidism as some experts say Yazidism is an Iranian religion?

Besides the group of early Iranians who came into direct contact with the Daeva cult and refused to bow to it, there were other tribes who continued to follow the ancient religion without being influenced by the Daeva cult or by Zarathustra. Some of these groups moved westwards from an area north of the Iranian-Afghan border and settled in western parts of modern Iran, northern Iraq and eastern Turkey. These Iranians continued to worship in the traditional, pre-Zoroastrian manner and only came into contact with Zoroastrianism much later when Zoroastrianism became a dominant tradition

in western parts of Iran under the Achaemenids. I believe that the cultures of the Yezidis and the Yarsan, most of who speak forms of Kurdish, have preserved features of that ancient religion.

Some Kurdish populations in Iraq, Syria, and Turkey talk in a language close to Persian (Farsi). Are these Kurds originally Iranian?

From a linguistic point of view, certainly. This implies that they are bearers of a culture that shares its roots with those of modern Iranians.

What is the importance of the dualism and conflict between light and darkness in Zoroastrianism and Yazidism?

First of all, the term ‘dualism’ is only partly correct. Both religions believe in the existence of two ‘spheres’ ‘this-worldly’ (getig, zaher) and ‘other-worldly’ (menog, baten). In Zoroastrianism, the struggle between good and evil, light and darkness, true believers and demon worshippers, was felt to be very important. In Yazidism and Yarsanism, it is much less prominent. There, people believe that what happens in this world is ultimately in the hands of the ‘Lord of this World’ and humans can only do their best and try to understand the hidden (baten) reality behind the manifest (zaher).

Do you see any link between Zoroastrianism and East Asian religions like Hinduism?

Yes, Hinduism also goes back to the Indo-Iranian religious tradition, but has changed because it accepted the cult of Devas/Daevas while Zoroastrianism was against this. The early Western Iranians had never heard of them until they were influenced by Zoroastrianism in the Achaemenian period.

Countdown to catastrophe: UN warns of Afghan food crisis

TEHRAN - Millions of people in crisis-stricken Afghanistan are on the brink of starvation with the onset of winter, the UN World Food Program (WFP) has warned.

According to the UN, more than half of Afghanistan's 39 million population is facing acute food insecurity and ‘marching to starvation.’

The World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Director David Beasley told Reuters news agency that 22.8 million people – more than half of Afghanistan's 39 million population – were facing acute food insecurity and “marching to starvation” compared with 14 million just two months ago.

In a statement released on Monday, David Beasley, executive director of the WFP, said the country is “on a countdown to catastrophe.”

“Afghanistan is now among the world's worst humanitarian crises, if not the worst,” Beasley said, warning of a “total disaster” if timely action is not taken.

“This winter, millions of Afghans will be forced to choose between migration and starvation unless we can step up our life-saving assistance,” he added.

Nearly \$10 billion in Afghanistan's national assets have been held by the U.S. Federal Reserve since the Taliban laid siege to Kabul in August and overthrew the US-backed government.

UN chief Antonio Guterres has warned of “make or break moment” for Afghanistan, with the economic institutions slowly breaking down in the country.

According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report, around 23 million Afghans will be facing “crisis” (IPC Phase 3) or “emergency” (IPC Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity, unless basic food needs are met. Phase 4 is one step from a famine.

The food warnings came in the wake of Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid's recent comments on humanitarian crisis facing the country.



Thousands of Afghans have fled their homes since U.S.-led coalition began their withdrawal from Afghanistan.

“We are trying to arrange and distribute, including food and clothing. All worries will be resolved,” Mujahid was quoted as saying by the AFP on Saturday.

“Regarding the drought, we hope to have a wet winter. But if the drought continues, we will take appropriate measures in the spring,” he added.

Children's alarming situation

In his remarks to Reuters on Monday, Beasley raised an alarm over children's situation in the war-torn country. He said children are “going to die” and things are “going to get a lot worse.”

“I don't know how you don't have millions of people, and especially children, dying at the rate we are going with the lack of funding and the collapsing of the economy,” he said.

The food crisis, exacerbated by climate change, was dire in Afghanistan even before the Taliban came to power, whose new government has been blocked from accessing assets held overseas.

“Afghanistan is now among the world's worst humanitarian crises, if not the worst,” Beasley said.

Under the previous US-backed government in Kabul, around 43 percent of the South Asian country's GDP came from foreign aid, according to the World Bank.

But still, as former president Ashraf Ghani admitted July last year, 90 percent of the country's population lives below the poverty line, with less than \$2 daily income.

A report by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in January this year noted that around 18.4 million people in Afghanistan were in need.

Beasley said the frozen funds should be channeled through the agency, in order to be used for management of the crisis.

“You've got to unfreeze these funds so people can survive,” he asserted.

The UN food agency needs up to \$220 million a month to partially feed tens of millions of vulnerable people in Afghanistan as the winter approaches.

Shortage in UK farmers, bus drivers reflect broader crisis



Farmers say they have been forced to throw millions of pounds of products to waste bins.

From page 1 ► Leaders in the food industry have issued a warning that the situation is almost certain to get worse. The National Farmers' Union calls on the government to allow at least 50,000 foreign workers to pick crops and tens of thousands of others to process them.

Companies that process food have been hit harder than the farmers by a fall in the number of workers as post-Brexit immigration rules mean they are not eligible to hire workers on seasonal worker visas to replace those who have already left the country.

A survey by The National Farmers' Union found that fruit and vegetable growers had 34 per cent fewer workers than they needed at the peak of the harvesting season in July and August.

In a concerning early indication of what is set to come next year, one of the UK's largest suppliers of daffodil plants has already decided to throw 300 tons of its underground storage into the waste bins amid fears there will not be any workers to pick them in the spring.

While the government had claimed that Brexit would have created an opportunity to generate a “high-skill, high-wage economy”, fruit and vegetable farmers have pointed out that such a transition would take a long time to become a reality in gardening.

Experts say fruit-picking using robots are far less efficient and more expensive than human beings and will likely take up to seven years until they are a viable alternative. In the meantime, there are fears large numbers of agricultural businesses will cease to exist.

Meanwhile, bus firms suffer severe staff shortages as workers across the country quit “in droves” for better-paid positions driving heavy goods vehicles. Companies are being forced to cancel services because not enough drivers are available.

It comes as a shortage of lorry drivers has left Britain in turmoil as delivery rates plummeted, leading to significant disruption causing stock shortages in supermarkets, chaos at butchers and problems accessing goods from abroad.

The lack of drivers for heavy goods vehicles has made the role much more appealing in terms of wage. Bus drivers can now earn three times more to drive lorries instead.

The Confederation of Passenger Transport UK, which represents two main intercity and Inter-regional bus operators, estimates there are more than 4,000 vacancies for bus and coach drivers at present.

Services affected by the mass exodus have been forced to cancel routes, which is the most felt by passengers.

Experts say the sudden shortfall of drivers has been caused by the ongoing shortage of lorry drivers in the haulage industry and employers throwing money at the problem with shortages instead of helping to fix it.

A senior British Union official says, “the mindset is now if we've got to work in these Victorian conditions, then we might as well get £20 an hour driving the lorry,

as opposed to £10 an hour driving a bus. So the bus drivers are leaving in droves to go to the other industry”.

“The other industry” gained popularity after the UK suffered a fuel shortage that forced the government to deploy soldiers to deploy fuel while issuing special visas to address the fuel and supply chain crisis. However, only a tiny fraction of foreign drivers accepted the short-term visa offer for 5,000 migrant lorry drivers.

The Confederation of Passenger Transport, an advocacy group representing operators of UK buses and coaches, says, “we are talking to the government and its agencies to ensure that the recruitment and training process is as streamlined and efficient as possible. What we now need to see is the requirement for a provisional licence to be issued to begin training abolished and the DVSA (Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency) not to prioritise HGV testing to resolve the shortfall in that sector at the expense of the bus and coach sector”.

There are now driver shortages across the country with managers at bus operator, First West of England, saying the problems are “unlike any other the

The entire food industry is now estimated to need an extra half-million workers.

UK transport industry has faced” and blame a mixture of poaching, Covid, Brexit, and strike action at the government's Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency for the shortages.

This comes as bosses from the haulage, recruitment and food sectors have warned ministers at the Government's Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee that the UK's lorry driver shortage is “not visibly getting better” and could take around a year to recover.

Bus company Trentbarton says, “we haven't made a profit for the last 18 months. Other cost pressures are also going up; so fuel, for example, is costing us £100,000 more so far in 2021 than it did in 2020 because the price of fuel is escalating”.

The worker shortage is expected to become more severe as the number of EU workers with settled status in the UK declines, further decreasing an almost empty labour force.

According to an estimate by the National Farmers Union, around half of non-UK citizens who had been entitled to settled status have chosen not to remain and work in the UK.

Critics say the British government's mishandling of the post-Brexit transition risks causing long-term damage to the UK's supplies, with some companies already deciding to close down their businesses.

As the UK suffers from many shortages, the now 27 nation European Union bloc is moving on. What was once a strong desire by the EU to see how Britain conducts its business post-Brexit has slowly faded away. For Brussels, the mess brought on by the British government's policies does not seem to be an issue at the top of the agenda anymore. In essence, the EU does not appear interested in Britain's fuel crisis or any other shortages.

Flooring project begins at Jameh mosque of Kandovan village



TEHRAN –A flooring project has commenced on parts of the Jameh mosque of the historical village of Kandovan near the city of Tabriz, northwestern East Azarbaijan province.

As part of the organization and improvement effort for the access roads within the historical village, the flooring of the entrance of the Jameh mosque of Kandovan begins, Amir Jodai, a local tourism official said on Monday.

Kandovan village is one of the main tourist centers in the province and so many travelers from all over the country visit it every day, he added.

“That’s why such projects are being continuously conducted in order to provide necessary welfare for tourists.”

Located some 60 kilometers southwest of Tabriz, Kandovan is celebrated for having magnificent rocky architecture which is the result of volcanic activities and hand-carved structures. The village was registered on Iran’s National Heritage list, and it has a worldwide reputation and is the only rocky village in the world that is still inhabited.

It’s known as Kandovan because the rocky houses in this village look like hives. It has been said in the history of Kandovan that the first group to settle in the region were residents of a village called Hilevar, two kilometers away from Kandovan. They migrated to this area escaping from Mongols and started to carve the Karans to build themselves a safe refuge.

The history of this wonderful village dates back to 6000 years ago. Some researchers

on archeology have estimated its age up to 7000 years old.

The village architecture is one of its wonders; the thickness of its walls reaches two meters in some places. The rock acts as energy-efficient material, keeping the house cool during summer and warm during winter. The heights of these rocks are about 40 meters.

There are sharp pyramidal cliffs with holes on their irregular surfaces in this village which have been created due to volcano eruption in the region of the Sahand Mountain Range. The cliffs have shaped hive cells which are also known as Karan. Generally, most of these Karans are two-story in some cases, three and even four floors that they are not related to each other from the inside.

The inhabitants carved every room of the cliff houses like kitchens, halls, and even pens out of stone to make windows for the rooms and later, to decorate them with colorful glasses.

Since the Kandovan is located on the slopes of the Sahand Mountains, it has a great climate and there is plenty of greenery and landscapes around it. The fruitful plains of the region provide nomads with the possibility to breed honey bees and grow medicinal herbs, both are sources of income for the locals. The people of this village are mostly farmers and ranchers.

It is the only rocky village in the world that is still inhabited and currently, 117 families live in the village. The village has a mosque, a public bath, a school, a mall, souvenir shops, buffets, and a restaurant.

Honey is the most famous souvenir of Kandovan. Apricots and sour cherries, dried fruit, rugs, and jajim are other souvenirs of Kandovan.

Mineral water springs of Kandovan are also well-known and basically used for the treatment of kidney disease.

The best season to visit Kandovan is spring and summer. It is not a favorite destination in autumn and winter since it gets so cold. The minimum temperature of Kandovan is 13° C and the maximum is 25° C in summer. Visiting this village will take two hours up to one day.

Iran sets new rules to resume foreign tourist arrivals

From page 1 ► As a condition for entry into the country, the headquarters has instructed all tourists and the host communities to follow all health protocols, the official added.

As the post-coronavirus era emerges, extensive measures have been taken to revive the tourism industry, he noted.

He also expressed hope that issuing tourist visas would result in an upsurge in tourism.

Tourist visas

Back in September, Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami announced that by the order of President Ebrahim Raisi the issuance of tourist visas and the flow of foreign tourists from land and air borders will be resumed from the month of Aban (Oct. 23 – Nov. 21) following 19 months of suspension.

Months of steep recession has taken its toll. Many travel insiders, hoteliers, and tour operators have faced big dilemmas such as bank-



ruptcy, unemployment, debts, and the prospects of not being competitive on the international level.

They now have good grounds of hope as Zarghami announced on September 19 that the country plans to lift visa restrictions to help the severely hit tourism industry.

Meanwhile, the number of people testing positive for COVID-19 has continued to fall in the Islamic Republic, curbing a stubborn fifth

wave of the pandemic, which has seen daily mortalities of up to 700 in recent weeks. As of September 22, the figure dropped to below 300 as the government has devoted a great deal of effort to vaccinate citizens against the nasty virus.

Some experts believe Iran is still somehow “unknown” for many potential travelers due to Western “media war”. Several estimates have been released so far on the

extent of the tourism-related losses incurred by the pandemic. Only months into the outbreak, Zarghami’s predecessor, Ali-Asghar Mounesan, lamented that the number of foreign travelers to Iran was drastically plunged due to the pandemic.

“Tourism of the country was growing before the corona [outbreak], its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, nearing the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent,” Mounesan said. He added 8.7 million foreign nationals visited Iran during the [Iranian] year (1398), adding that Iran was ranked as the second fastest-growing country in tourism based on data compiled by the World Tourism Organization.

Iran is potentially a booming destination for travelers seeking cultural attractions, breathtaking sceneries, and numerous UNESCO-registered sites. 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.

Handicrafts sector offers Uramanat unique opportunity for economic development

TEHRAN –The development of the handicrafts sector would be a good opportunity for economic growth in the UNESCO-tagged Uramanat cultural landscape in western Iran.

The handicraft industry can be a major source of income and wealth in the region, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development, Pouya Talebnia, the director of the cultural landscape said, CHTN reported on Monday.

The quality and diversity of handicraft products in the Uramanat region are exclusive to its artists, the official added.

Arts and crafts have a dual significance in the Uramanat region; firstly, they are entirely produced and supplied by the indigenous people, and secondly, the products are simple and practical, he noted.

Stretched on the slopes of Sarvabad county, and shared between the provinces of Kordestan and Kermanshah, the rural area of Uramanat embraces dense and step-like rows of houses in a way that the roof of each house forms the yard of the upper one, a feature that adds to its charm and attractiveness.

As the cultural landscape covers 300 villages and in terms of architecture and landscape, it is

one of the most beautiful and presentable heritages in the world.

Uraman is considered a cradle of Kurdish art and culture from the days of yore. Pirshalyar, which is named after a legendary local figure, is amongst time-honored celebrations and rituals that are practiced annually across the region.

Wide-ranging 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 a 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 handicrafts: Varni-bafi of Ardabil

TEHRAN –Varni-bafi is an art of weaving a traditional and popular flooring cover in Ardabil province. It is currently being practiced in an area called Dasht-e Moghan, which lies in northwestern Iran.

Varni is a delicate kilim also known as a Sumak. Many experts consider the Varni that is double-sided, as something between carpets and kilims. It requires a skilled weaver with years of experience to produce a Varni.

Varni is woven using “Pudpi-chi”. This is a method of making kilims, where an additional thin thread is woven into the weft and warp yarns. Weft yarns are then inserted and then thin weft is added before they are combed together. The extra weft strengthens the connection between the yarns and creates a stronger weave.

Kilims of this quality are considered to be the most durable in the world. Another weave that is very similar to Varni is



Shirkipich, which is a product of Kerman. The only difference is in the motifs and patterns. Noah’s ark is said to have landed in Azarbaijan, explaining why animal motifs are so popular.

Varni is a nomadic hand-woven art and stems from an ancient tribe known as the Shahsavan in the past, according to Visit Iran.

The famed Safavid king, Shah Abbas I (1571-1629) named the

Shahsavan, which was formed from merging fifty tribes into one, after ordering them to settle in the Azarbaijan region as a defense against the Ottoman Empire. Shahsavan is now known as Ilsavan.

Varani is made more frequently in the winter season since the nomads have settled in one place and have the time. Wool and silk are used for the yarn. Handspun wool or silk

yarns serve as wefts, while cotton, wool, or silk yarns are used as wraps.

The Ardabil nomads use Varni to make saddlebags and horse covers that, in terms of style, motifs (birds and animals), and color palettes, are among the best in Iran. A large saddlebag, which is used to carry the utensils of nomads, is adorned with motifs that are inspired by prehistoric potteries from this area.

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

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



TEHRAN – Despite Isfahan’s widespread fame and its millenary historical sites, there are still parts of the city that are lesser-known to tourists.

One of the less-visited places in the city is the mausoleum of Baba Rokneddin, which is not as well known.

One of the most famous mystics in the eighth century was Baba Rokneddin, whose brick tomb is located at a distance of five kilometers from Naqsh-e Jahan Square, which is the most crowded part of Isfahan.

Located in the cemetery of Takht-e Pullad (Takht-e Fullad), the modest mausoleum is capped by a conical dome. The tomb has a pyramidal structure with twelve panels. The current structure dates from the Safavid era (1501-1736).

misleading routes on the path.

This is a positive aspect of the cave. Khersin is a village in the north of Hormozgan Province with an arid and dry weather in summer and mild mountainous weather in winter. The salt cave is a national natural landmark.



Khersin: most intact salt cave in Hormozgan

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Khersin is one of the few remaining intact salt caves in the southern Iranian province of Hormozgan.

It’s located in Siaho some 80 kilometers from Hormozgan’s provincial capital, Bandar Abbas.

The cave is made up of slippery salt

rocks. Hence, people should be wary when they walk inside the cave. The entrance of the cave is 3 meters high and 4 meters wide. The cave is 178 meters long.

There is a straight corridor inside that leads spelunkers to the bottom of the cave 170 meters away without any

Demographic indicators at ‘alarming’ levels

TEHRAN – Iran’s demographic indicators demonstrate alarming records, as the population growth rate is about 0.6 percent, and it is predicted to reach zero in the next 10-15 years, and then record a negative growth rate, Saleh Ghasemi, a demographic researcher, has said.

The population is a strategic issue that affects all structures of the country, including economy, society, and politics, he stated, adding, the country’s social and economic indicators are always affected by population.

Today, the country’s fertility rate has reached about 1.6 children per woman, however, the fertility rate was 6.5 children per woman, in 1986, he lamented.

He went on to say that the lowest fertility rate in the whole region of West Asia, North Africa, and the region known as MENA is recorded for Iran, ISNA reported on Monday.

“While 1,594,000 births were registered in the [Iranian calendar] year 1394 (March 2015–March 2016), the downward trend continued annually to the point that the number of births reached about one million in the [Iranian calendar] year 1399 (March 2020–March 2021); In other words, we lost more than 550,000 births in a five-year period.

It is predicted that the declining trend of births will continue due to the economic condition and of course changing attitudes and lifestyle of Iranian families,” he further said.

Iran has achieved a demograph-



ic window of opportunity which in all other countries led to economic prosperity so that Iran must seize the opportunity now before its working-age population starts to shrink and get older in the 2050s.

New record of aging population

All countries around the world are moving towards population aging, but Iran will enter the aging phase without gaining economic growth and development, and this will increase the consequences of aging country; In the next three decades, Iran will set a new record in the rate of population aging.

While most of the countries that are in the aging stage today have gone through the path of youth to old age and the stage of aging in a period of 130 to 140 years, but Iran will go through the path of youth to

old age in a period of 30 years.

Referring to the elderly population constituting 10.5 percent of the country’s population, he stated that by 2050, this figure will increase to more than 32 percent. So, in a period of 30 years, we will be a super-aged country or in the stage of aging explosion.

Currently, all these demographic indicators of Iran are on alert, he further regretted.

“Aging will have very serious consequences for the country, the most important of

which will be in the field of economy. When the elderly population rises, the labor force decreases, so that the country will need foreign labor; as the labor force shrinks, so does the GDP, and the dependence on imports increases. With the influx of foreign labor, the outflow

of currency from the country will accelerate.

With the growth of the aging population, the cost of care, health, and treatment of the elderly increases significantly, so that studies show that an elderly person has four times more medical and health care costs than a young person,” he further explained.

On the other hand, as old age increases, pension funds such as social security organizations are exposed to bankruptcy, he lamented.

Population growth, family support

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.

As the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has emphasized that the seventh Five-Year National Development Plan (2021-2026) should focus on population growth, and on the other hand, the Expediency Council seeks a one-year extension of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan, it was decided to implement the plan for 7 years.

3 Asian countries top export destinations for Iranian nanoproducts

From page 1 ► Iran has created centers in six Asian countries for exporting nanotechnology products, including China, India, Indonesia, Syria, Turkey, and Iraq.



Nanotechnology’s trend of development is growing in Iran, as the number of nanoproducts and equipment developed in the previous [Iranian calendar] year (March 20) increased to 750, compared with 647 a year before.

Some 223 product manufacturing companies and 59 equipment manufacturing companies are active in the field of nanotechnology and by the end of last year, which developed a total of 750

products and equipment.

Iran among five pioneers of nanotechnology

Iran has been introduced as the 4th leading country in the world in the field of nanotechnology, publishing 11,546 scientific articles in 2020.

The country held a 6 percent share of the world’s total nanotechnology articles, according to StatNano’s monthly evaluation accomplished in WoS databases.

Iran ranked 43rd among the 100 most vibrant clusters of science and technology (S&T) worldwide for the third consecutive year, according to the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2020 report.

The country experienced a three-level improvement compared to 2019.

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, has said that Iran is playing the leading role in the region in the fields of fintech, ICT, stem cell, aerospace, and is unrivaled in artificial intelligence.

Iranian nanotechnology companies have increased sales by 100 percent over the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019–March 2020), and it is predicted that their revenue will reach up to 80 trillion rials (nearly \$1.9 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), Sattari announced.

Some 41 countries are purchasers of Iranian-made nano-products.

Geologist’s disneyland: Iran’s Hormuz Island made of edible soil and enchanting salt caves

Set off 8km of Iran’s coast is a ruby-red mountain, so rich with minerals that it was called a geologist’s Disneyland, according to natureworldnews website.

The Hormuz Island is Iran’s ‘mysterious, mineral-laden landscape’ with teardrop-shaped shimmering salt dome embedded with over 70 minerals, accounting for its various shades of red, purple, yellow, ochre and blue. The 42 sq km island imparts a story from hundreds of millions of years ago.

“Over the last 500 million years, the salt layers were buried deeply by younger layers of volcanic sediment. Since the salt is buoyant, over time, it has risen through cracks in the overlying rocks to reach the surface and form salt domes,” said Dr Kathryn Goodenough, principal geologist at the British Geological Survey who has previously worked in Iran.

“These thick layers of salt, many kilometers below the land, are actually present across much of the Persian Gulf area,” she adds.

The ochre-stained streams, crimson-hued beaches and enchanting salt caves, are only a result of its geological makeup. It was also thought to be a home of the only edible mountain in the world.

Its minerals can also be of valuable uses. For instance, its red soil called gelack plays an important role in local cuisine, used as spice to curries and local breads tomshi, which means ‘a handful of something’.

“The red soil is used as a sauce,” explained Maryam

Peykani, Farzad’s wife. “This sauce is called soorakh and is spread on flatbread as it is almost cooked.” Apart from that, the mineral is also used by local artists as paint, dye, or creation of ceramics and cosmetics.

There’s so much more to explore beyond the ruby-red mountain, extending more than a kilometer to its pale caves and sharp-edged walls, covered with shimmering salt crystals.

These salts found at the Goddess of Salt mountain have been believed to possess a healing power, soaking up and releasing any negative and positive energy. “After having spent [time] in this valley, you are bound to feel much more invigorated, which is why the valley is also called the Energy Valley,” says Farzad Kay, a tour guide.

In addition, the weathered rocks in the nearby Valley of the Statues, thanks to thousands of years of wind erosion, offers great view like an art gallery, to travelers.

However, the Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran says is not fully discovered by world travelers, with only around 18,000 visitors in 2019, despite its significant historical and natural attractions.

“If more attention is paid to the infrastructural development of Hormuz, this island can be changed to be an important attraction for tourists,” said Ershad Shan, a local.

“We feel responsible for doing our bit for Hormuz. It’s so rare and is a part of our identity,” Shan said. “We feel an urgent need to contribute towards getting the world to take notice of this eco-heritage.”

Travelers entering Iran should provide vaccination evidence

TEHRAN – All passengers who come back to the country should provide evidence that they have received two doses of coronavirus vaccine, otherwise they have to undergo a PCR test, Health Ministry official Mohammad Mehdi Gooya has said.

In case a traveler has not injected both doses of the vaccine, he or she will be tested and quarantined, if necessary, IRNA quoted Gooya as saying on Saturday.

“The cold season is approaching. Considering that schools and universities are reopened, infection cases will increase as the sixth wave of the disease is near, while public vaccination has not been completed,” he explained.

The Ministry of Health has announced that the Delta virus has been found everywhere in the country, and given that the virus is very highly contagious, it can increase the rate of hospitalizations and transmission.

Currently, 22 cities are in the high-risk red zones (the highest category on Iran’s coronavi-

rus risk scale), and 128 cities are in the orange zones, 215 cities are in the yellow zones, and 83 cities are in the blue zones.

That is while, deputy tourism minister Ali-Asghar Shalbafian said on Sunday that the country has reopened its borders to foreign tourists as of October 23 based on the new conditions prevailing in the country after crossing the fifth wave of the pandemic, increasing vaccinations, and at the request of the tourism ministry.

Over 750,000 passengers screened for coronavirus at borders

A total of 750,164 passengers have so far been screened for coronavirus by thermal tests at the country’s official borders since March 10, Mehdi Valipour, head of Relief and Rescue Organization affiliated to the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), said on Monday.

During the aforesaid period, IRCS forces have conducted 91,058 PCR tests and 117,121 rapid tests, he added, IRNA reported.

He went on to say that some 213 individuals, who tested positive, have so far been temporarily quarantined, under a plan to rapidly identify suspected cases of coronavirus and prevent the spread of the disease.

A total of 471 members of the IRCS cooperate for carrying out the plan in 16 provinces across the country, Valipour concluded.

With the cooperation of ministries of health and transport, a plan is being implemented with the goal of rapidly identifying and testing incoming passengers and keeping them in quarantine facilities, if necessary.

Twenty-eight border checkpoints have been selected, including 18 land borders, nine air borders, and three sea borders, all incoming passengers will be tested and referred to the quarantine facilities in case of necessity.

Around 8,000 individuals enter the country via borders on a daily basis.

S. Korea to provide Iran with 1m doses of COVID vaccine

TEHRAN – South Korea will soon offer 1 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine to Iran, on humanitarian grounds, to help address its vaccine shortage, Seoul’s foreign ministry said Monday.

The vaccines will be delivered to Iran on Wednesday to help the nation’s COVID-19 vaccination campaign, the ministry said, Yonhap reported.

As per contracts signed with in-

ternational manufacturers, some 100 million doses of coronavirus vaccine should be imported by the end of 2021, Nasser Riyahi, the head of the Association of Medicine Importers, said in August.

The COVAX facility has pledged to provide Iran with 16.8 million doses of the vaccine, IRIB quoted Riyahi as saying.

Russia has also signed contracts to export 30-50 million doses of the

vaccine to Iran, but it has reneged on the promise, he noted.

“It had been planned to import 50 million doses of Chinese vaccine from Sinopharm, but to date around half of the amount has been delivered.”

World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Iran Jaffar Hussain has said that the process of vaccination against coronavirus in Iran is progressing well.

Iran has recently accelerated its



vaccination rollout and is now administering in the range of one million doses per day. So far, about 40 percent of the population has received both doses.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Mental health screening scheme to be launched at schools

A scheme to determine the prevalence and incidence of psychiatric disorders in students will be implemented at schools across the country by the next school year (starting on September 23), director for education department at the Ministry of Education has said.

Since last year, all students on seventh to ninth grades have undergone the mental health screening, so, we decided to conduct the tests on students on all grades, ISNA quoted Masoud Shokouhi as saying on Saturday.

“The scheme will be launched by the beginning of the next school year,” he added. For the current school year, screening of mental health was carried out in February and the results were presented to consultants for in-school or individual counseling, he said.

غربالگری «سلامت روان دانش آموزان» کلیه مقاطع تحصیلی از مهرماه

مدیرکل امور تربیتی و مشاوره وزارت آموزش و پرورش، اعلام کرد که از مهرماه آینده غربالگری پایه سلامت روان برای همه دانش آموزان در کلیه مقاطع تحصیلی انجام می‌شود. مسعود شکوهی در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا، افزود: تا سال گذشته همه دانش آموزان پایه هفتم، هشتم و بخشی از دانش آموزان پایه نهم مورد سنجش قرار گرفتند.

وی اظهار کرد: غربالگری پایه سلامت روان برای همه دانش آموزان از سال تحصیلی جدید آغاز می‌شود.

مدیرکل امور تربیتی و مشاوره وزارت آموزش و پرورش ادامه داد: برای سال تحصیلی جاری، غربالگری اولیه سلامت روان بهمن ماه سال ۹۷ انجام شد و نتایج آن جهت استفاده مشاورین در برنامه ریزی‌های درون مدرسه‌ای و فردی در اختیارشان قرار گرفت.

