

MBZ in Ankara: Deciphering Emirati Mentality

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Turkish FM holds talks in Iran

TEHRAN – Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu arrived in Tehran on Monday and met with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir Abdollahian. The two ministers discussed a range of issues.

The meeting was held at the Iranian foreign ministry and was attended by a number of Iranian and Turkish officials along with the two countries' foreign ministers.

Turkish President Erdogan to visit Tehran

After the meeting, Amir Abdollahian and Cavusoglu held a joint press conference. During the presser, the Iranian foreign minister said he had a useful and important discussion with his Turkish counterpart.

"Today, we had useful and important talks on the development of relations between the two countries. We agreed on expert talks with diplomats from both sides to draw up a new roadmap for long-term cooperation between Tehran and Ankara," Amir Abdollahian said, noting, "We hope that in the future visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Tehran, we will be able to finalize the document containing the roadmap for long-term cooperation between the two countries."

He added, "We agreed to start our diplomatic talks on the provisions of the roadmap for long-term cooperation between the two countries, and we hope that this document will be signed in the presence of the presidents of the two countries during the next visit of the Turkish president to Iran." ▶ Page 3

Interview

Iran expert Mohases believes Dragan Skocic exceeded expectations

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN – Iran football pundit, Morteza Mohases, believes that Dragan Skocic and Iran national team have exceeded expectations with their successful run.

Iran will face Syria at the King Abdullah II Stadium in neutral Jordan on Tuesday.

With four wins and a draw from five games, the 'Persian Leopards' are well-placed to reach Qatar's 2022 World Cup Finals.

"Every game has its special conditions and needs a different strategy. The caching staff must have a 'game model' for every match," Morteza Mohases explained in his interview with Tehran Times.

A 2-1 dramatic win against Lebanon on Thursday, left them at the top of Group A in the Asian qualifiers with 13 points.

"Iran started with one forward in the first half of the game against Lebanon, and it caused difficulties for our national team. I am sure that the technical staff learned a valuable lesson from the match against Lebanon, and we will have a different first half against Syria. The first half in each game is a crucial time that we should not waste with risky decisions," Mohases said.

"Dragan Skocic has done a great job with the national team so far, and he exceeded the expectations. It is also true about the national team players who have been amazing, stoking talk that they are the best team and best players in Asia." ▶ Page 3

Emirati football team literally "geared up" for a game in Lebanon, but why?

TEHRAN— In a shocking move, the UAE football team brought advanced weapons to Lebanon without being searched.

On November 14, the UAE football team arrived at the Rafic Hariri International Airport in Beirut to play against the Lebanese national team on November 16.

So far, so good. But things got complicated when news circulated that the UAE football team has brought a security team with them as well. Reports on social media and local eyewitnesses say that around 40 people were in the security team.

Iran's special envoy visits Kabul, says U.S. backs ISIS

TEHRAN — Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan said on Monday that after the defeat in Afghanistan, the United States is trying to support the ISIS terrorist group, IRNA reported.

"The aggressor country, which intended to rule Afghanistan for the past 20 years, is now trying to strengthen the takfiri groups in Afghanistan after its defeat," Hassan Kazemi Qomi said.

Arriving in Kabul on Monday morning at the head of a high-level delegation, the Iranian diplomat told reporters that the purpose of his visit was to discuss political, economic, security and Afghan refugee issues with the interim government's officials.

"We respect the will of the Afghan people and our position is in line with the wishes of the Afghan people," Kazemi Qomi told a reporter when asked about recognizing the Taliban government.

He also said certain countries are seeking to launch "proxy war" in Afghanistan under the pretext of fighting terrorism. ▶ Page 2

IAEA chief Grossi to visit Iran soon, to meet FM Amir Abdollahian

TEHRAN – The Iranian Foreign Ministry announced on Monday that International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi will visit Tehran soon and will hold talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

"In addition to head of the Atomic Energy Organization (of Iran), Mr. Grossi will also meet with Mr. Amir Abdollahian," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told a regular news briefing.

"He (Grossi) has close contacts with the Atomic Energy Organization of our country and our colleagues at (Iran's) embassy in Vi-

enna. He has been invited and the date has been offered to him. And he will soon depart for Iran," Khatibzadeh stated.

Grossi's trip to Iran will most likely take place before the next meeting of the IAEA's board of governors, which will start on November 22.

News of on Grossi's invitation comes as diplomats from Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), will resume talks Vienna on November 29 to discuss ways to lift the illegal U.S. sanctions on Iran. ▶ Page 2

Foreign aid to Afghan refugees in Iran is small: UNHCR

TEHRAN – The amount of assistance provided by international organizations to address the needs of Afghan refugees in Iran is small, and most of the support is provided by the Iranian government and people, Ivo Freijesen, UNHCR Representative in Iran.

Most of the support and care for Afghan refugees is now on Iran and its neighboring countries, Freijesen said, adding, reducing the support of international organizations to address the needs of Afghan refugees living in Iran should be referred to UN member states

for necessary decisions, IRNA reported.

However, part of the international assistance to Afghan refugees has been provided in the past, so that some of the migrants have been resettled in urban structures, and another part is related to the new period of migration from this country.

To this end, one center has now been set up to house Afghan refugees in Sistan-Baluchestan and two in Khorasan Razavi province, he stated. ▶ Page 7

Steel exports rise 30% in 7 months yr/yr

TEHRAN- Iran exported over 5.912 million tons of steel during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), which was 30 percent more than the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

Based on the latest data released by the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), of the mentioned figure 1.486 million tons was the share of steel profiles which also registered a 44-percent rise year on year, IRNA reported.

Exports of rebar, which had the largest share of total exports of steel products, in the first seven months of this year increased by 57 percent compared to the same period last year to reach 1.307 million tons.

Exports of flat steel sections also increased by 18 percent during the said period to stand at 369,000 tons. Also, the export of sponge iron during the mentioned period increased by 279 percent to reach 698,000 tons.

According to ISPA, Iranian exports of steel during the previous Iranian calendar year declined 13.1 percent compared to the figure for the preceding year.

Based on the association's data, the country exported nine million tons of steel in the previous year while the exports in that year

stood at 10.362 million tons.

Over 2.839 million tons of steel products were also exported in the mentioned year, registering an 18-percent decline year on year.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

The production capacity of the country's steel chain increased from 123 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 230 million tons in the previous year (ended on March 20).

According to the latest World Steel Association (WSA) report released in early September, the production of crude steel in Iran reached 17.8 million tons during January-July, 2021 to register a 9.9 percent growth year on year.

The WSA's report put the crude steel output by the world's top 64 producers at 1.165 billion tons in the mentioned time span, registering an increase of 12.4 percent.



Raisi: Iran, Turkey should promote their cooperation to international level

TEHRAN — In a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in Tehran on Monday, President Ebrahim Raisi suggested that Iran and Turkey should expand their cooperation to international level.

"Regional cooperation between the two countries should be turned into international cooperation, and given the important position of the two countries, this interaction can be effective in global community." ▶ Page 2

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Iran qualify for 2022 World Cup as first team, Lebanese sports analyst predicts

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Pointing to Iran's dramatic win over Lebanon, a Lebanese sports analyst says that it was an important step in the qualification process towards the 2022 World Cup Qatar 2022.

In a match held at the Saida Municipal Stadium in Sidon on Thursday, Iran football team beat the national team of Lebanon in 2022 FIFA World Cup Qualifier 2-1.

With this precious win, the 'Persian Leopards' cemented their place at top of group A with 13 points.

South Korea are second with 11 points and Lebanon sit third with five points.

"Gaining the three points from Lebanon is an indication of the Iranian team's insistence on qualifying as the leader of Group A," Mazen Naim told Tehran Times.

"I think it is an important step in the qualification process towards the 2022 World Cup Qatar, and I predict that Iran will qualify for the event as the first team," he said.

"Since the draw took place, it was clear that Iran and South Korea would qualify from this group," Naim remarks. ▶ Page 3

IAEA chief Grossi to visit Iran soon, to meet FM Amir Abdollahian

From page 1 ► The talks had been put on hold since June 20 as Iran was seeing a transition in which a new government came to power.

The Iranian parliament has limited the IAEA's access to Iran's nuclear sites in retaliation to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018 and imposition of toughest sanctions in history on the Islamic Republic.

Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to scale down its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions on Iran. The IAEA was tasked to monitor Iran's compliance with the JCPOA.

Iran remained fully committed to the JCPOA one year after the U.S. quit the deal. However, in May 2019 Iran announced that its strategic patience is over and started to gradually remove ban on its nuclear activities. At the time Iran announced if the European parties to the nuclear agreement fulfil their obligation under the agreement it will reverse its decision. However, the European failed to honor their commitments.

Despite limiting the IAEA's access to nuclear sites, Iran is continuing its cooperation with the UN watchdog body within the framework of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

U.S. needs to change approach if wants to join P4+1

Khatibzadeh also said the Vienna talks are aimed to remove sanctions on Iran in inconsistent with the JCPOA.

He reiterated Tehran's long-held position that all the sanctions that the United States have been imposing on Iran illegally "must be lifted".

Returning sanctions on Iran was a violation of international law as the nuclear deal is endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump quit the nuclear in line with his "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

Talks to restore the JCPOA started in April as U.S. President Joe Biden said his administration is willing to rejoin the JCPOA. The talks on return of the U.S. to the agreement started in April. Six rounds of talks were held until June 20.

"There have been some disagreements in the six rounds of the Vienna talks," Khatibzadeh said.

He noted that Iran's focus in Vienna will be on lifting all sanctions imposed by the United States illegally.

"We are aware of the intention of the United States, which is to join the P4+1, and they need to change their approach," the Foreign Ministry spokesman remarked.

P4+1 refers to the permanent members of the

UN Security Council (Russia, China, France, Britain) and Germany.

The diplomat then went on to say that what is important for Iran is the lifting of sanctions, and what is considered as a "verification" of the lifting of sanctions and the "necessary guarantees" will be summarized in the review process and emphasized in the discussions.

Iran only talks about regional issues with neighbors

About Robert Malley's visit to the West Asia region and Iran's dealings with neighbors, the ministry spokesman said "Iran travels and consults with all countries in the region" with the exception of a few that cut ties with Iran.

He cited visits and consultations with Persian Gulf countries such as Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Pakistan, and others as examples.

"The visits between Tehran and these countries indicates close relations. If you (the reporter) mean Iran consulting about the Vienna talks with the regional countries, we only talk to the regional countries about regional issues," Khatibzadeh reiterated.

What is important is how to reach a good agreement

The spokesman also responded to a question about Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani's visit to certain European capitals and the starting point of the Vienna talks, saying, "Bagheri's visit to Europe was done as the political deputy and he is the senior negotiator and the three countries that he traveled to, are present in the Vienna talks."

The diplomat added that Bagheri met with the senior negotiators of the UK, France, and Germany as well as other officials to discuss bilateral relations.

Khatibzadeh said Bagheri's tour had three dimensions. He met with bilateral and regional officials as well as senior negotiators.

"What is important is how to reach a good agreement in Vienna. Where the dialogue takes place is a secondary and minor issue," he pointed out.

"The United States needs to change its approach and to ensure that we have the real guarantees necessary for the lifting of the sanctions against the Iranian people," the spokesman emphasized.

Tehran observes Biden's behavior

In response to a question about Biden's letter to remove Iran from the global oil market, the spokesman noted that all these behaviors are carefully observed in Tehran, and the Vienna talks will go forward accordingly.

Raisi said Daesh is acting as U.S. proxy.

Stating that the presence of this terrorist group anywhere in the region is to the detriment of nations, Raisi noted that the fight against terrorism and organized crime can be the focus of cooperation between Tehran and Ankara, and Iran is ready to improve cooperation in this area.

Referring to the Turkish foreign minister's remarks on joint cooperation with Iran to stabilize and develop trade relations in the South Caucasus region, Raisi said Iran shares deep and long-standing religious and cultural bonds with the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey.

He then emphasized, "We should not allow some foreign actions to damage relations."

For his part, Cavusoglu said that Turkey considers the new government in Iran as pragmatic and is determined to increase the level of cooperation with Tehran.

Noting that Turkey attaches importance to stability as well as trade in the South Caucasus, the Turkish foreign minister said, "We seek to establish and strengthen joint cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran to increase stability and trade relations in the South Caucasus."

Referring to the developments in the region, he also called for cooperation with Iran in the fight against terrorism and the establishment of stability and peace in the region.

Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan visits Kabul, says U.S. supports ISIS



From page 1 ► Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan also expressed hope that with formation of a strong government in Afghanistan, stability would prevail in the region.

The diplomat went on to say that "Afghanistan, like the Islamic Republic of Iran, is facing oppressive Western sanctions and the two countries will try to cooperate more by ensuring security in the borders."

The Iranian envoy in his remarks underlined that Iran had always stood by the people of Afghanistan and today stands by the people of Afghanistan in all aspects of security, economy and politics.

Referring to the U.S. defeat in Afghanistan, the envoy said some countries are exploiting terrorism to launch a proxy war in Afghanistan.

Earlier, the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Kabul announced the trip on its official Twitter account. It said, "Kazemi is scheduled to

talk with senior Taliban officials on various issues such as regional issues, refugees, humanitarian aid, formation of an inclusive government and especially economic issues. Helping the Afghan people is a priority before the cold season."

Iran worried about extremism and terrorism in Afghanistan

Speaking at his weekly press briefing on Monday, Saeed Khatibzadeh, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, said that Qom's trip to Kabul will address the current and future status of the people of Afghanistan.

He then said that Iran has tried to make the Afghan people bear the least impact from the developments in Afghanistan and the catastrophic departure of the United States from the country.

The diplomat noted that the responsibilities of this governing body will be discussed.

"We are concerned about extremism and terrorism, and we have witnessed the disgusting act of terrorism in attacking worshippers, and it is the direct responsibility of the governing body to protect the security of worshippers and the people of Afghanistan," he insisted.

He then said that Iran has news of the presence of ISIS in Afghanistan, which is worrying and is one of the topics that will be discussed during the trip by the special envoy to Afghanistan.

ISIS has been targeting worshippers since the Taliban took power in August. Its suicidal attacks on worshippers in Kunduz (northern Afghanistan) on October 8 and Kandahar (southern Afghanistan) on October 15 were horrific.

It also attacked a military hospital in Kabul on November 2. At least 25 people were killed and more than a dozen were wounded during the

attack.

The attack, which included armed gunmen and at least one suicide bomber, targeted the 400-bed Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan military hospital.

Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Taliban, said the attack was carried out by several members of ISIS, including a suicide bomber who detonated his explosives at the gate to the hospital. A car full of explosives outside the hospital also exploded, wounding dozens, and several Taliban fighters were killed and wounded in the ensuing gun battle, Mujahid said.

Iran hosted the meeting of the foreign ministers of countries neighboring Afghanistan on October 27. The participants at the conference insisted on the need for security in Afghanistan and formation of an inclusive government among other issues.

Emirati football team literally "geared up" for a game in Lebanon, but why?

From page 1 ► "After circulating the news of the arrival of an Emirati security team to Rafic Hariri International Airport in possession of weapons, the office of the Minister of Interior and Municipalities is interested in clarifying that the Emirati security team came to Lebanon to secure the protection and escort of the UAE football team, which is playing a match with the Lebanese national team next Tuesday," Mawlawi said.

He then said that the entry of weapons was verified, adding, "The security team in Lebanon had previously obtained approval from both the Ministry of National Defense and the Lebanese Army Command to bring in the weapons that were verified before their entry, provided that the same procedure takes place when the security delegation leaves Lebanon."

Strange statistics are being circulated in social media about the weapons the UAE team has brought into Beirut, but one thing is certain: They brought in advanced weapons. But why?

After an interview of Lebanese Information Minister

George Kordahi was aired on the Qatari Al Jazeera channel, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and UAE expelled the Lebanese envoys to their capitals.

Kordahi had said in an interview conducted on August 5 that fighters allied with Yemen's Ansarallah movement are "merely defending themselves against an external aggression."

Kordahi went on to say that "homes, villages, funerals, and weddings were being bombed" by the Saudi-led coalition, adding that the seven-year war in Yemen has been "futile" and that "it is time for it to end."

Kordahi has said his remarks were his own personal views and were made well before his appointment as minister, adding that he was committed to his government's policy.

"I am against Arab-Arab wars... I reject the accusation of hostility towards Saudi Arabia," Kordahi told media.

Kordahi's comments were made on 5 August during an interview on an online show affiliated with

Qatar's Al Jazeera network, almost a month before he was named information minister.

After the Lebanese ambassador was expelled from Abu Dhabi, the UAE government issued a travel ban for its citizens against Lebanon.

Many political pundits believe that the UAE team has brought in weapons and a security team to portray Lebanon as unsafe in the public opinion's minds.

These experts are also on the belief that the UAE has gone into the trouble of taking some extreme and unnecessary measures to do so. Bringing in the weapons was too far for that matter.

It had been expected that the Lebanese authorities would not have acted biasedly towards such matters. However, some pundits believe that the Lebanese government wants to get in good terms with the Persian Gulf countries after they cut the diplomatic cords with Lebanon. Hence, this move was part of this plot.

Whatever the reason may be, Lebanon is safer than what the UAE thinks, and it's expected from the Lebanese authorities to act fairly in similar situations.

VP visits victims of Hormozgan earthquake

TEHRAN - On Monday morning, First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber visited the victims of the Sunday afternoon earthquakes in the southern province of Hormozgan and talked to them in one of the hospitals in Bandar Abbas, the provincial capital.

The ministers of health and energy

were accompanying the first vice president.

The First Vice President also visited the emergency accommodation of the earthquake-hit people in the Persian Gulf Martyrs Stadium and Martyr Mohammadi Hospital in Bandar Abbas.

He also toured the earthquake-

stricken areas of Gishan and Abshirin in Fin county.

An earthquake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale hit at 15:37 local time on Sunday, leaving one dead and dozens injured.

The tremor occurred at a depth of 15 kilometers and was also felt in the

neighboring province of Kerman as well as Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf, the Institute of Geophysics, affiliated with the University of Tehran, reported.

A number of houses in rural areas of Fin have been damaged. There were also reports of power and telecommunication outages in some parts of Hormozgan.

Raisi: Iran, Turkey should promote their cooperation to international level

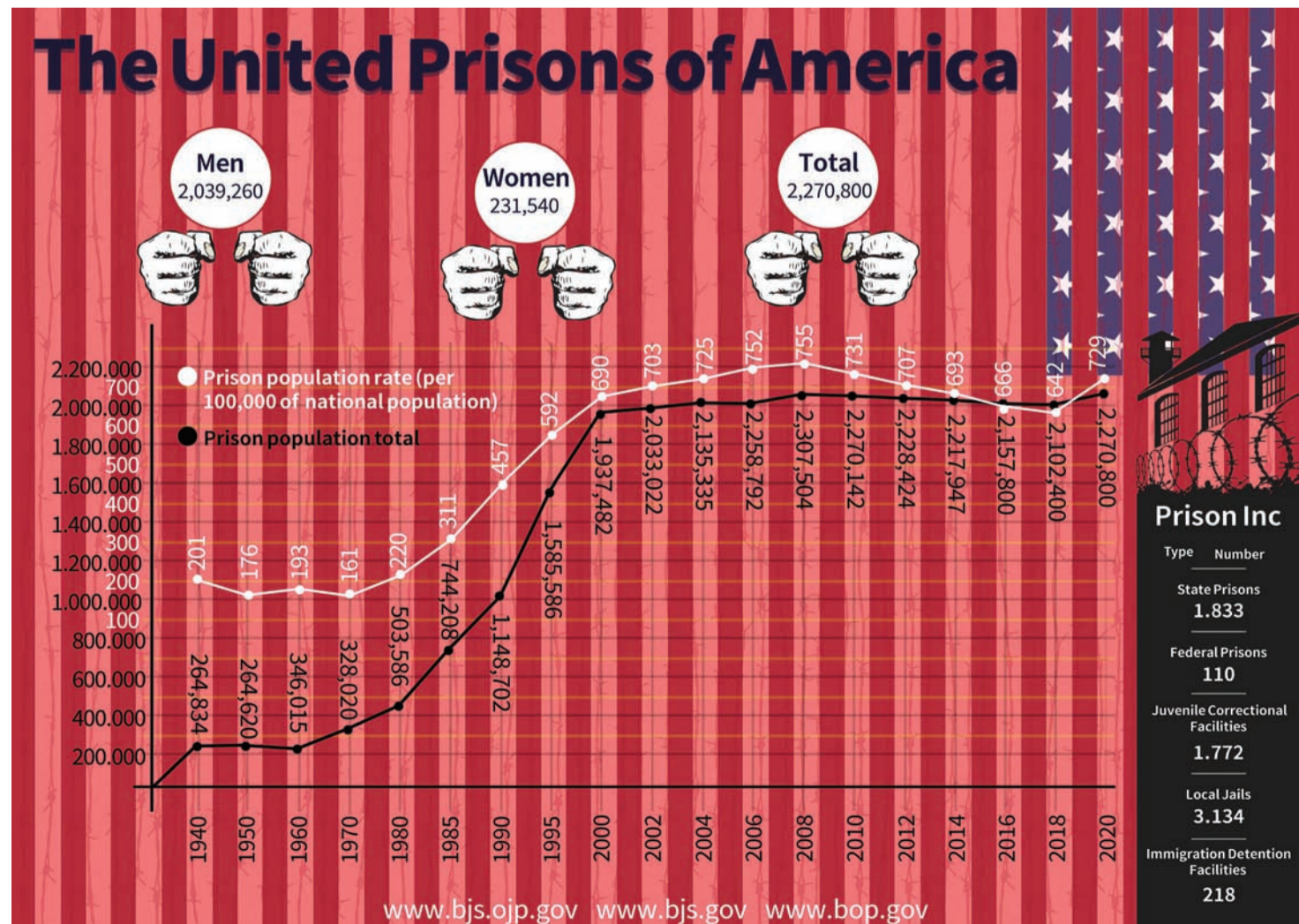
From page 1 ► The president also said close relations between Iran and Turkey will be in the interest of peace and stability in the region.

Raisi referred to development of relations between the two countries, especially in areas of trade and economy, as beneficial to both nations, saying, "By finalizing the roadmap for cooperation development, that the draft of which is on the agenda of the two countries, Iran and Turkey are ready to upgrade relations from the current level to all-inclusive cooperation."

The president also said Iran is of the view that the countries in the region are able to solve their disputes without foreign interference, saying, "The presence of outsiders brought nothing but insecurity and tension between the nations and governments of the region, as the twenty-year presence of the United States in Afghanistan resulted in nothing but murder, bloodshed and destruction."

The president added later it became "clear that Afghanistan's problems could be solved by the people of this country and with the help of their neighbors."

The president also stressed that Daesh's actions are detrimental to all countries in the region, saying that as stated by U.S. officials, Daesh was created by them and, naturally, they act upon order by the Americans to kill."



TEHRAN – After years of frayed relations with several countries in the region, the United Arab Emirates is launching a new foreign policy drive aimed to repair the oil-rich country's foreign relations at a time when regional powers begin to take on a new role on the regional chessboard.

But the refashioned Emirati foreign policy has remarkably missed out on Iran.

On Monday, as Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu arrived in Tehran for talks on a range of bilateral and regional issues, Western media broke the news that Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, the UAE's de facto ruler, will pay a rare visit to Turkey after a decade of bitter rivalry between Abu Dhabi and Ankara in the broader region.

Citing two Turkish officials, Reuters said the visit will include talks with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. It will be the highest-level meeting between the two countries since the breakout of what came to be known as the Arab Spring a decade ago when Turkey and the UAE supported opposing sides in many Arab countries such as Egypt, Libya, Sudan, and Tunisia.

The first sign of significant thaw in UAE-Turkey relations emerged in late August, when Erdogan received the Abu Dhabi crown prince's right-hand man, Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed, in Ankara. Two weeks later, Erdogan and bin Zayed spoke over the phone.

It was then when the Turkish president joyfully announced that the UAE would make a significant investment in Turkey. Improvement of ties between the two countries

MBZ in Ankara: deciphering Emirati mentality



came against a backdrop of wider de-escalation in the region. Saudi Arabia cooled tensions with Turkey, Qatar, and to some extent Iran; Turkey and Egypt held several rounds of talks to defuse tensions; Qatar and Egypt buried the hatchet; and finally, the UAE, together with Jordan and with the tacit support of Saudi Arabia, took a major step in bringing Syria to the so-called Arab fold.

But this broader inclination to put aside differences would fail to explain the whys and wherefores of the new Emirati push if not seen within the bigger picture of the newly-re-calibrated Emirati foreign policy.

The tiny Persian Gulf nation has undertaken a quiet, yet strategic,

reassessment of its foreign policy in light of the changing dynamics of the region. The first result of the assessment is the redefinition of the UAE's position in the Arab world and of the interests of the UAE and Arabs in general and the perceived threats to these interests.

In Emirati strategic thinking, the Arab world is not immune to infiltration by regional powers that could use certain ideologies to gain a foothold in some Arab states. Therefore, the UAE should block all the pathways for such an infiltration.

After years of unrelenting efforts, the UAE feels that it has clinched a victory over Turkey in many Arab states where the two rivals have been involved in geopolitical

competition. The Turkish-aligned Muslim Brotherhood, the UAE's sworn enemy, has been marginalized or toppled in Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya. And that happened with the direct involvement of the UAE.

As a result, Turkey turned into less imminent danger. The economic woes facing Turkey have only fortified this feeling in the UAE, prompting the Emiratis to offer Erdogan a helping hand economically and strengthening their influence in Ankara in preparation for the post-Erdogan era.

Thus, now it's time to counter more urgent threats coming from other regional players. The most urgent threat, according to Emirati thinking, comes from Iran. Many media outlets and academics closely affiliated with the UAE have, directly or indirectly, pointed to this assessment. The most recent example was the UAE foreign minister's visit to Syria, which was portrayed as an effort to undermine Iran's influence there. The UAE's normalization of ties with Israel, the historic enemy of Arabs, is another example.

But the Emirati assessment regarding Iran is totally wrong and could put the UAE on a dangerous path that would only destabilize the region. It's incomprehensible to many observers why the UAE continues to keep Iran at bay when other regional powers, namely Turkey and Saudi Arabia, are in the process of repairing or strengthening ties with it.

Iran has announced its new policy of neighborhood since President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi took office in August.

Turkish FM holds talks in Iran

Iran and Turkey agree to draw up new roadmap for long-term cooperation

From Page 1 ► The Iranian foreign minister noted, "We had useful and good discussions on various regional and international issues."

Amir Abdollahian said his talks with Cavusoglu focused on developments in Afghanistan, the need to develop stability, security and calm in the West Asian region and to pay attention to the neighborliness policy of the two countries. He added that they underlined that the Iranian and Turkish governments are "pragmatic" and that they "must quickly remove any possible obstacles in the way of relations between the two countries."

The Iranian foreign minister said, "In this meeting, we reached joint mechanisms to accelerate bilateral cooperation. There is a lot of potential in the field of mutual investments and private sector activities in both countries. At the same time, limited obstacles and problems were identified in the path of the two countries' traders, and we agreed to take the necessary action as soon as possible."

He added, "The relations between the two countries are historical, friendly and cordial, and we will pay special attention to these historical and deep relations between the two countries in the development of cooperation."

Amir Abdollahian continued, "In today's talks, we paid special attention to the development of economic and trade cooperation and the increase of cooperation in the field of energy, the facilitation of transit traffic and the strengthening of cross-border trade and consular issues, and fortunately we do not see any serious obstacles to accelerating this cooperation."

He added, "What has overshadowed some of the bilateral relations over the past two years is due to the coronavirus conditions prevailing



in the world."

The Iranian foreign minister also noted that the issue of environmental protection and dealing with environmental threats, which is one of the concerns of the world today, is of interest to both countries.

The Turkish foreign minister, in turn, voiced Turkey's readiness to develop relations with Iran. "Turkey is always ready to provide any services with its brother. As Mr. Amir Abdollahian said, we reviewed the development of cooperation in all areas, and at the same time today, we talked with my brother Hussein between the delegations to prepare the seventh High Cooperation Council between the two countries. And at the suggestion of the Iranian side, a long-term roadmap between the two countries will be prepared and signed on the sidelines of the council," Cavusoglu said.

He added, "Various documents on illegal immigration, smuggling and other border issues were discussed. This year, the volume of trade has increased by 71%, which is promising, but we are far from our goals and we need to do more. We are considering the expansion of preferential trade frameworks between the two countries and we are trying to bring the 6-year negotiations to this conclusion."

He also said that sanctions against Iran are

"cruel" and the sides about it. "Those who left the JCPOA must return to this framework and lift the unilateral sanctions they imposed on Iran. I would like to congratulate you on the start of the talks and I hope that the talks in Vienna will be successful," the Turkish foreign minister said.

He continued, "Currently, there is cooperation between the two countries not only on bilateral issues but also on regional issues such as Afghanistan, Iraq and stability in the South Caucasus. We are ready to cooperate with Iran in the framework of the proposed 3+3 format."

The 3+3 format includes Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia and their three big neighbors—Russia, Turkey, and Iran. The format is intended to end territorial disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The top Turkish went on to say that "we are for stability in Iraq and we condemn the attack on the Iraqi Prime Minister. Regarding Syria, we hope to hold high-level meetings. We are in line with Iran about Afghanistan and its stability. We are very concerned about the situation in Afghanistan and the humanitarian situation in this country, and we believe that the establishment of an inclusive government can be the solution."

Commenting on the Turkish president's upcoming visit to Iran, Cavusoglu said, "This trip will take place before the end of the year and we must make the necessary preparations. In Iran and Turkey, result-oriented governments are at work, and this trip is not just for a meeting, but to accelerate relations between the two countries."



Iranian Navy chief departs for France

TEHRAN — The commander of the Iranian Navy has traveled to France at the invitation of his French counterpart to attend the 8th summit of naval commanders, IRNA reported on Monday.



has chaired the IONS summit for two years and is currently chairing the IONS Security Committee.

"We have attended this summit with two goals; first, we present a report on the activities of the Security Committee and future plans, including planning for holding naval exercises with the collaboration of the Indian Ocean

states, and we have written a book that will be the common language for conducting operations at sea."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Admiral Irani said Iran has prepared a document that it will present to the commanders of the navies of the Indian Ocean littoral states during the summit in France.

The high-ranking military official noted, "What we will pursue on the sidelines of the IONS summit will be holding bilateral, trilateral and multilateral meetings with the highest priority to improve the level of maritime relations."

Rear Admiral Irani described the "language of the sea" as the common language of all countries

and said, "Security and peace are dictated by the sea to the world and all countries can stand together without intermediaries."

The Iranian admiral pointed out that the Islamic Republic had proven to the world during the last decade that it had the ability to restore security in the northern Indian Ocean with great authority.

The commander went on to say that this strategic activity of the Iranian Navy has always been taken into account by international organizations.

"We were tasked with having a special presence in the fight against maritime terrorism which is underway with authority."

Iran expert Mohases believes Dragan Skocic exceeded expectations

From Page 1 ► "I also agree that in terms of intelligence, physical strength, game reading, and technical abilities, the Iranian players are among, if not the, best in Asia," added the member of FIFA and AFC Panel of Coaching Instructors.

Speaking about the game against Syria, he said: "As I mentioned earlier, the first half will be significant to get the desired result. If we dominate the game in the first half, then the breaks at halftime will allow the head coach to improve the situation. The coaches have three tasks for the second half: determining or changing the strategy, changing the players, and changing the players' tactical behavior."

"Skocic made smart substitutions during the past games and could create tactical changes that helped the team. I hope Iran national team continue their successful run to reach the 2022 World Cup with ease," concluded Mohases.

Iran qualify for 2022 World Cup as first team, Lebanese sports analyst predicts

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

What is your comment on the result of the match between Iran and Lebanon? What were the expectations about this match?

The result of the match was predictable because the Iran football team are a candidate to qualify, and the expectations were in their favor.

However, the way they won, and specifically turning the table in the last minutes of the match, was not expected. The Lebanese outfit took a lead and was expected to show their ability in the rest of the match, by resorting to harsh defense, which could break Iran's attacking system.

But in sum, the Iran's football team, given their high level of proficiency, managed to come away with all three precious points of the match in their course to qualify for the World Cup.

How do you see the level and performance of the Iran national football team?

Gaining the three points from Lebanon is an indication of the Iranian team's insistence on qualifying as the leaders of the group.

I think it is an important step in the qualification process towards the World Cup Qatar 2022, and I predict that Iran will qualify for the World Cup in the next two matches.

How do you evaluate the performance of the Lebanon national football team and what are the expectations regarding Lebanon's qualification for the finals next year in Qatar?

The chances of the Lebanese team to qualify for the play-off and achieve third place in the first group are still within reach, as Lebanon football team and their Emirati, Syrian and Iraqi counterparts are in the same level, and even the Lebanese are ahead of these teams in some aspects, especially since it will host the next four matches, and this will constitute a motivation and can raise the morale for all players and coaching staff.

As for evaluating Lebanon's performance against Iran, it is difficult to judge this point, because the level and differences between the two teams are many, and we cannot compare the performance of the Lebanese team with Iran.

The Iranians ask about the performance of some Lebanese players when they were trying to waste time in the last minutes of the match before the Iranian players score two goals. What is your comment on that?

The Iranian people have the right to express their anger at the way the Lebanese players managed the match.

But there was no other way for Lebanon to maintain progress, especially since the difference between the two teams is big.

It is expected for Lebanon players to waste time in such matches, because technical solutions wouldn't help due to the high level of the Iranian team.

Iran aim to extend winning streak in World Cup qualification

TEHRAN - Group A leaders Islamic Republic of Iran will aim to cement their position in the summer when they take on bottom-placed side Syria at King Abdullah II on Matchday Six of the AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to Qatar on Tuesday.

Having been so evenly matched in the 2018 qualifiers, drawing both their games, the two sides have had contrasting fortunes this time around.

Syria replaced Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul with local tactician Nizar Mahrous following the conclusion of the second round of the qualifiers and have since not won a single competitive match, drawing two and losing three including a 1-0 opening day reversal against their upcoming opponents. As a result, the Qasioun Eagles find themselves rooted to the bottom of their group - a far cry from four years earlier when they finished third and advanced to the playoff round.

Croatian Dragan Skocic, meanwhile, led Team Melli to the top of their second round group after taking charge in February with the Iranians having won four of their five third round matches, only dropping points to Korea Republic in a 1-1 home draw last month, the-afc.com reported.

The two sides have a rich history of meeting in FIFA World Cup qualifiers, with their first encounter dating back to 1973 when they exchanged 1-0 wins in the West Germany 1974 qualifiers. They have since met in qualifiers to 1978, 1994, 1998, 2010 and 2018, but Syria's win in 1973 remains their only victory over the



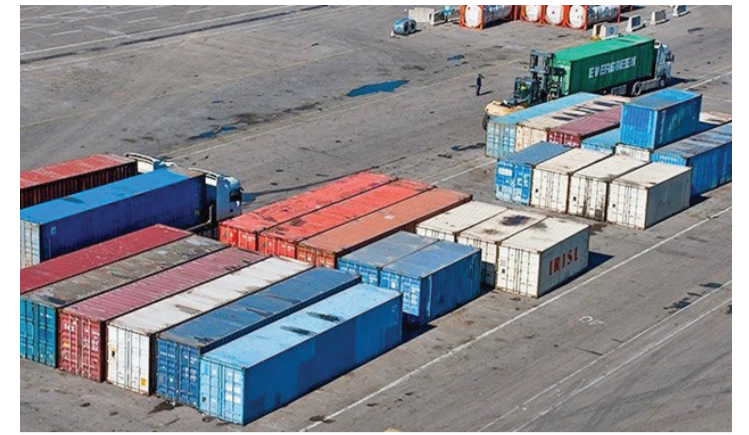
Iranians in the qualifiers, with the other 12 encounters ending in six Iranian wins and as many draws.

In the reverse fixture on the opening matchday, Syria defended resolutely but a second-half strike from Alireza Jahanbakhsh secured a home win at Azadi Stadium. The Feyenoord Rotterdam striker has since added two more goals to top the scorers' charts at this stage of the qualifiers. Meanwhile, Syria's leading scorers Omar Al Soma and Omar Kharbin have two goals each, combining for 80 percent of their side's goals in Group A.

Both sides saw late goals in their most recent outing on Thursday, for the Iranians it was two from Sardar Azmoun and Ahmad Nourollahi that secured a hard fought 2-1 victory against Lebanon, while for Syria the goal came in their net, with Amir Al Ammari equalizing for Iraq with four minutes to go to cancel out Al Soma's opener five minutes earlier.



Over \$11.5b of basic goods imported in 7 months



Govt. plans to avoid pre-ordered pricing in stock market: SEO head



TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has said the government is following new strategies to avoid pre-ordered pricing in the stock market in the long term, IRNA reported.

"The government's policy, in the long run, is to avoid pre-ordered pricing. This policy has been repeatedly stressed by the president and the government's economic team and has been placed on the government's agenda," Majid Eshqi said on Sunday.

According to the official, supply and demand should be the only determining factor for setting the price for a share.

"We need to move away from imperative policies so that companies can be profitable in the long-term," he said.

Over the past 15 months, continuous fluctuations in the Iranian stock market have led shareholders, experts, and scholars to believe that the government should not interfere in the stock market, saying the government's pre-ordered and unrealistic

pricing of some state-owned shares is the main reason for the capital market's current downward trend.

The government has been claiming that the decisions made for this market are not aimed at interfering in stock exchange transactions or directing the market, but are efforts for reducing the bubble created in the market and to prevent further decline of the stock market index.

Despite the skepticism, after the supportive measures taken by the government, the stock market has been gradually getting back on track and experts believe that the market is regaining people's trust.

In early July, Market Expert Reza Alavi said that the inflow of liquidity into the market and the increase in the value of transactions indicate that people are once again trusting the capital market.

"At present, other markets such as gold, foreign currency, and cars are not attractive enough for investors, and the stock market is still a good place for people's investments," Alavi said.

"After the [presidential] election debates, people have come to the conclusion that the stock market is one of the priorities of the new government, and for this reason, they have re-trusted this market, and as a result, the inflow of new capital into the market has increased," he noted.

Saffron export stands at \$60m in 7 months

TEHRAN- Iran's saffron export stood at \$60 million during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), Spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Ruhollah Latifi announced.

The official has previously announced that Iranian saffron farmers exported 324,589 tons of products worth over \$190 million to 60 foreign destinations during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to Latifi, over 78 percent of the mentioned exports in terms of value were made to five major customers of the Iranian saffron, IRNA reported.

Hong Kong with 74,578 kilograms (kg) worth \$46.626 million of imports, the United Arab Emirates with 59,791 kg valued at \$33.942 million, Spain with 49,025 kg worth \$26.44 million, China with 40,139 kg and a value of \$22.504 million, and Afghanistan with 33,781 kg and a value of \$19.168 million were Iran's top saffron buyers in the mentioned period.

The IRICA spokesman said that the mentioned five countries accounted for 79 percent of the Islamic republic's total saffron

exports in terms of weight.

Iran is one of the world's top saffron producers and over 90 percent of its production is exported to foreign destinations.

Based on a multilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) and three of the country's banks in early October 2020, 10 trillion rials (about \$238.09 million) was allocated for supporting the saffron industry.

The MOU was signed by PBO's Deputy Head Hamid Pour-Mohammadi and the managing directors of Agriculture Bank, Mellat Bank, and Export Development Bank of Iran.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Pour-Mohammadi noted that the mentioned funding would be provided to saffron producers and processors in the form of bank facilities to support the production of saffron and the packing and processing of this product which has been impacted by the outbreak of coronavirus.

According to the official, the interest rate of the mentioned facilities would be 18 percent, of which PBO has agreed to pay three percent.

TEDPIX loses 26,000 points on Monday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 26,174 points to 1.416 million on Monday.

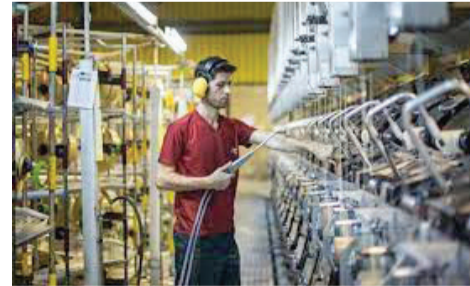
As reported, over 5.226 billion securities worth 41.677 trillion rials (about \$992.3 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index fell 22,794 points, and the second market's index dropped 41,338 points.

TEDPIX rose 58,000 points (4.1 percent) to 1.456 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

During the past week, the indices of Isfahan Refining Company, National Iranian Copper Industries Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Social Security Investment Company, Bandar Abbas Refining Company, Iran Khodro Group, and Saipa Company were the most widely followed ones.

It's over two years that stock market in Iran has been playing an outstanding role in the attraction of the people's investment.



TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 44 idle industrial units returned to the production cycle in East Azarbaijan province, northwest of Iran, in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22).

Rahim Babaei, the deputy head of the province's Industrial Parks Company, also said that 33 more units are planned to return to the production cycle in the province by the year end.

The official further announced that 1.31 trillion rials (about \$31.19 million) has been invested for the development of infrastructure in the industrial parks of the province in the first half of the year.

Over \$11.5b of basic goods imported in 7 months

TEHRAN – Iran's import of basic commodities in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22) stood at over \$11.5 billion, which was 63 percent more than the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

As reported by ISNA, the import of 25 groups of such commodities in the first half of the year (March

21-September 22) was 14.3 million tons worth \$8.8 billion.

Central Bank of Iran (CBI) allocated \$1 billion for the import of basic goods on Saturday (November 13), Mostafa Qamari-Vafa, the new head of the CBI's public relations department, wrote on the social media.

The CBI has supplied \$9.5 billion for importing basic goods as well as medicine in the first six months

of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), another official with the bank has previously announced.

As reported by IRIB, Shiva Ravehi said the government allocated \$8 billion for the supply of basic goods and medicine in the current fiscal year's budget bill, all of which has been supplied in the first half of the year and \$1.5 billion has also been

supplied for the imports of Covid-19 vaccine.

"The \$9.5 billion that has been provided this year is almost equal to the total currency provided for the imports of basic goods in the previous calendar year (ended on March 20); this shows that this year we performed better in terms of meeting the real needs of the country," she said.

Iran REC 2021 slated to start on November 20

TEHRAN – The 6th edition of Iran's International Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition (Iran REC 2021) is scheduled to be held during November 20-21 in Tehran by Iran Renewable Energy Association, the portal of the Energy Ministry, Paven, reported.

This international conference and exhibition will be held with the aim of examining the challenges facing the development of renewable energies in Iran and providing solutions to improve the business environment in this area during the coronavirus pandemic and amid sanctions.

The event is going to cover various areas and topics including the policies and programs of the 13th government for the development of renewable energy, the challenges of the renewable energy market in the country and ways out of the current situation, new financing methods and encouraging large industries to invest in renewable power plants to supply electricity, renewable energy industry policies, and the latest developments in the renewable energy technology across the world.



As reported, at the opening of the exhibition, the country's top companies active in the field of renewables will be rewarded with the National Renewable Energy Award which has been designed and provided by the Iran Renewable Energy Association in collaboration with the Energy Ministry, Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA), Vice Presidency for Science and Technology and other relevant organizations.

This award is aimed at motivating the development of renewable energy in the country, raising public awareness about renewable energies, recognizing successful

national examples of renewable energy development and helping to form and complete the renewable energy ecosystem in the country.

Renewables account for about seven percent of Iran's total power generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

Based on Iran's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), the country was aiming for 5,000 megawatts (MW) increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

But in the final year of the plan, only one-fifth of the figure has been achieved.

Iran was supposed to become a regional hub in the field of energy in the past Iranian calendar decade (March 2011-March 2021), but evidence shows that the country is facing a shortage even in the supply of electricity inside the country, an issue that many believe that could be achieved by developing renewable energy and increasing efficiency of the thermal power plants.

PGSR continues normal operation after earthquake hits southern Iran

TEHRAN – Managing Director of Iran's Persian Gulf Star Oil Company (PGSOC) has announced that the recent earthquake in southern Hormozgan province has not damaged any of the facilities at the Persian Gulf Star Refinery (PGSR) and the refinery is operating at full capacity.

As Mehr News Agency reported, Mohammad-Ali Dadvar stated that all facilities and operational units of the PGSR, which is responsible for producing 50 percent of the country's fuel basket, are operating normally after two strong earthquakes hit Hormozgan Province on Sunday.

"Due to the possibility of aftershocks, a meeting of the refinery's crisis committee was held soon after the earthquake and the necessary resolutions



were implemented in order to ensure the safety of the employees and the stability of the refinery," Dadvar said.

According to the official, the PGSR staff are on full alert to solve any possible problems, to ensure the safe continuation of production operations and to prevent any interruption.

An earthquake measuring

6.4 on the Richter scale hit Fin county, southern Hormozgan Province, at 15:37 local time on Sunday.

Persian Gulf Star Refinery in Iran's southern province of Hormozgan is the first of its kind designed based on gas condensate feedstock received from the South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in

the Persian Gulf.

As the largest processing facility for gas condensate in West Asia, PGSR is planned to play a big role to turn Iran into an exporter of gasoline.

This refinery has increased Iran's gasoline production to 110 million liters per day, while the country's consumption is 74 million liters.

PGSR has made Iran independent in gasoline production, while an exporter of the product, which has been a big step to nullify the U.S. sanctions.

The refinery's exported products during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21) were 120 percent more than the products exported in the same period of time in the past year.

44 idle industrial units revived in East Azarbaijan in H1

Emphasizing that reviving the idle production units and helping the completion of the semi-finished projects are on the agenda of his company's activities, Babaei mentioned identifying the idle units and their problems, planning for supporting them and removing their problems as the major measures in this due.

As announced by the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), in the last Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), 1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to the production cycle in the industrial parks with a financing of 35 trillion rials (over \$833 million), providing employment for 27,000 people.

With the aim of reactivating stagnant units or units that are operating below capacity, 900 consultants from the private sector and knowledge-based companies were selected in the form of industry clinics across the country to recognize the weaknesses of these units, Ali Rasouljan has previously stated.

"Despite the two major challenges of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic, which

imposed severe restrictions on the country, we tried to activate domestic capacities by turning to localizing the technology of manufacturing parts and equipment," he added.

Sanctions have caused problems for financial exchanges and the export of goods to other countries, he said, adding, "The negative effects of coronavirus pandemic on various parts of the country, including industry, are not hidden from anyone, and the economic growth of some countries has reached below zero during this period."

Iran is proud that despite these restrictions and pressure from these two important challenges, its industry has grown by more than seven percent, according to the statistics and reports from various sectors, the official further highlighted.

Also, as announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, over 6,500 new industrial units were established across the country during the past year which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the official has said: "In the year that has been dedicated to the

1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to production cycle in past year

production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and executive bodies should be towards supporting the country's industrial and mining units."

Niaraki pointed to a 40-percent increase in the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the previous year, saying: "The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest in the productive sectors."

He also mentioned an 85-percent rise in the allocation of land for establishing industrial units across the country and noted that over 4,500 hectares of land were handed over to applicants in the previous calendar year.

TEHRAN - International charity organization Oxfam has accused AstraZeneca of breaking its promises after the pharmaceutical company said it plans to start making a profit from its COVID-19 vaccine despite having previously pledged to sell at a very modest price.

AstraZeneca has clinched the first its deals that will see the company make profit from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The move means the firm has not only backed away from its previous position of a completely non-profit model. Until now, the Anglo-Swedish company has not been making a profit from the coronavirus jab and declared it would not do so during the pandemic. It also puts a stain on the company's image at a time when the entire African continent and other poorer nations are struggling to obtain vaccines for their populations leading to fatalities that can easily be prevented. The humanitarian aspect of the matter does not appear to be of major concern to several major pharmaceutical companies who are placing profit over human lives.

The profits these companies are making might be short term but the the history books don't forget and that is something that will never go away.

The company had initially been praised by many international organizations for selling at modest prices during an international crisis and putting profits aside.

AstraZeneca now stands to go from hero to villain.

According to the latest financial results, AstraZeneca vaccines have indeed proved to have a low income on earnings so far this year. Now, as new orders are received, Britain's biggest pharma firm expects the vaccine to move to "modest profitability."

Explaining the change of plan, chief executive Pascal Soriot told reporters: "we started this project to help... but we also said that at some stage in the future, we will transition to commercial orders"

He claims, "It will never be high priced because we want the vaccine to remain affordable to everybody around the world." Soriot further tried to justify the move by saying the virus was becoming "endemic," a term for a disease or condition that is regularly found among particular people or in a certain area; a part of everyday life.

But the goal of the World Health



Organization is to procure much more vaccines for its COVAX program that goes on to deliver them to poorer countries free of charge so that the virus does not become part of everyday life.

Another problem is poorer nations or COVAX will only be able to buy a limited number of vaccines for distribution to poorer nations if they are being sold at a more expensive price.

The timing raises questions as well.

Europe is bracing itself for another covid wave. Record figures have been registered over the past few weeks with infections and fatalities increasing significantly. Partial lockdowns have already started in some countries.

As it turns out Western made vaccines have a short shelf time.

The antibodies of two doses are fading away and governments are racing to purchase third booster shots.

With new deals awaiting, it is the perfect time to cash in for the pharmaceutical companies who can sell at high prices to wealthy nations that can afford to buy. Soriot however, is standing by AstraZeneca's move saying, "I absolutely don't regret it."

The company says when including partners that the AstraZeneca has sub-licensed to make the vaccine it has released 1.5bn doses for supply in more than 170 countries. It said that it was "now expecting to progressively transition the vaccine to modest profitability as new orders are received."

For the third quarter the vaccine did make a small positive contribution to earnings. AstraZeneca said its revenues for the quarter has risen by 50% to \$9.87bn. But profits fell short of expectations, something that may also have played play a role in the

change of the financial plans.

AstraZeneca was quick to point out that, when speaking to reporters, Soriot had emphasized that its key focus remained delivering on its no-profit commitments. Time will tell whether that commitment will stay in place. Charity groups are not optimistic.

In response to the AstraZeneca's announcement, Anna Marriott, Oxfam's Health Policy Manager and spokesperson for the People's Vaccine Alliance denounced the firm saying "AstraZeneca is breaking its repeated and celebrated public promises of a non-profit vaccine for all countries for the duration of this pandemic and to never to make a profit in any low- and middle-income country from this publicly funded vaccine. It is turning its back on these commitments at a time when the pandemic still rages and 98 percent of people in the poorest countries are not yet fully vaccinated."

She also argued that while AstraZeneca has said the vaccine will remain non-profit for developing nations "[Oxfam] understand that 75 middle-income countries including Indonesia, The Philippines, South Africa and Zimbabwe are excluded from their commitment. AstraZeneca must immediately and unequivocally confirm that it will not profit from any sales of the vaccine for any low or middle-income country whether via bilateral deals or COVAX."

Anna Marriott noted that "with the number of people dying from COVID-19 rapidly rising above five million and given the development of this vaccine was 97 per cent funded by taxpayers and charities there can be no justification for this decision."

"It is time for the Oxford University to partner with the

World Health Organization so that this life-saving publicly funded vaccine technology can be shared as a global public good and produced by as many capable manufacturers around the world as possible.

In a very recent report Amnesty International said six top manufacturers of the COVID-19 vaccine "are fuelling an unprecedented human rights crisis through their refusal to waive intellectual property rights and share vaccine technology."

In the report titled "A Double Dose of Inequality" the rights group denounced AstraZeneca, BioNTech, Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, Novavax and Pfizer for "wheeling and dealing in favor of wealthy states."

It said, "Broken promises from pharmaceutical corporations and rich country governments have been an enduring theme of this pandemic when it comes to vaccine access."

The announcement by AstraZeneca comes on the backdrop of its U.S. rival Pfizer announcing that it expects to enjoy major profits in the sales of its COVID-19 vaccine. Those sales are expected to total \$36bn this year.

Amnesty added that "Pfizer has been able to earn billions of dollars in revenue in the last three months alone, while failing to provide vaccines to billions of people, is a failure of catastrophic proportions. Not only has the vast majority of its vaccines gone to high and upper-middle-income countries but Pfizer has also consistently refused to waive its intellectual property rights and share vaccine technology, while at the same time benefitting from billions of dollars in government funding and advance orders from wealthy countries."

"The apparently unquenchable thirst for profits of big pharmaceutical companies, like Pfizer, is fuelling an unprecedented human rights crisis."

This is while all medical experts agree that vaccinating the globe is the only pathway out of the Pandemic.

However, some pharmaceutical firms do not seem that bothered for the Pandemic to finish, as long as they are cashing in, critics are saying they actually appear quite comfortable to lay back and count the profits.

Tensions with Lebanon: What really frightens Saudi Arabia



In comments given to "Barlamanashaab" (the People's Parliament) in August, Kordahi said that the Houthis were acting in self-defense and called the Saudi-backed aggression 'futile.'

The passing remarks - resurfacing on social media on 26 October - prompted the sudden uproar by Saudi Arabia which demanded Kordahi's resignation, also recalling its ambassador, followed by three other Persian Gulf states -Kuwait, the UAE, and Bahrain.

At face value, Kordahi's statements weren't any more controversial than typical 'human rights' based condemnation of the Saudi regime's actions by Western leaders or elected officials who didn't shy of slamming Riyadh for its perpetration of war crimes.

Yet Lebanon, like Yemen, has served as a particular site of humiliation and embarrassment for the Saudi regime. More frustrating to the Saudis is the symbolic humiliation of the information minister, formerly employed as a game show host on MBC, one of many Saudi-funded outlets in Lebanon. MBC's October 27 declaration to move its headquarters to Saudi Arabia operated under the pretext of Kordahi's comments, yet was a transition in the making for years that came at the helm of Saudi domestic and regional insecurity.

Lebanese TV stations associated with Saudi support beforehand have defunded or withdrawn their support from stations that had been under their support. Future TV and the Daily Star, both prominent news platforms in Lebanon with the former directly linked to Hariri's political party and the latter purchased by a holding close to the Hariri family, were forced to close in 2019 and last week respectively.

As the post-March 2015 siege on Yemen wound to an impending defeat by the Saudi aggression against the Ansarullah resistance, the Saudi aggression tightened up its pressure against Yemen's civilians through a brutal blockade that has caused a massive famine and cholera epidemic.

The comments resurfaced in the context of Saudi losses in Ma'arib and the growing insecurity over Lebanon brewing with the Saudi regime for over a decade. Hezbollah, the Lebanese resistance group that has stood in solidarity with the Ansarullah, is viewed as the representative of all obstacles to complete Saudi political and economic hegemony in Lebanon. The claims that Lebanon is "Hezbollah controlled" and "afflicted with the dominance of Iran's proxies", as Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan said in an interview to Saudi-funded Al-Araby al-Jadeed, of Lebanon and in reference to the resistance group, represent a projection of insecurities for the declining Saudi influence in the country, whose decades of investment and financing of media, institutions, and terror groups have failed to produce their intended results, and as we see in recent years, have utterly backfired.

The Saudi disinvestment from TV channels in Lebanon coincided with the US and Saudi loss of support to its political proxies in the country. By 2015, Saudi Arabia had rescinded its heavy-handed support of Hariri and

Geagea, the latter intensifying his pleas to the US for weapons and support.

After Switzerland, the UAE and Saudi Arabia were Lebanon's second and third largest export markets in 2019, making up around 15% and 7% respectively of total exports. Saudi Arabia's recent ban on all imports from Lebanon is in step with its April ban of Lebanese produce under the farcical pretext of "drug smuggling," a decision that was supported by Kuwait, the UAE, and Oman. Blacklisting and economically blockading Lebanon over the presence of Hezbollah also accompanies the increasing economic ties the Persian Gulf is cementing with the Zionist entity.

Riyadh's demands for the Lebanese government to "reduce" Hezbollah's role in Lebanon, an undemocratic demand shared by the Kingdom's Western allies, far precedes the last few weeks. It is an objective pressed by Riyadh for decades, in line with its regional and international allies for decades and especially after 2008, when in the face of Saudi-backed provocations through the Hariri-led Future Movement, Hezbollah was proven to have remained just as steadfast domestically as they had against Israel in 2006.

Since the aftermath of the 2009 Doha agreement, in an economic campaign that only intensified after 2016, Saudi Arabia and its allies began to cut their inflows of aid and money on which Lebanon developed a dependency since the 1990s. From 2009 onward, hundreds of Shia workers in the UAE were expelled and deported, and that year, Bahrain opened up a secret embassy for Tel Aviv.

Aside from the response of some Lebanese officials, including Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdullah Bou Habib who terms the demands "impossible," Saudi Arabia's existential crisis does not emanate from the supposed "Hezbollah" dominance over the Lebanese state, which still remains largely under the economic, institutional, and administrative control of the US, but of the persistent and threatening steadfastness of the resistance group that only becomes more emboldened when confronted with challenges and aggression. In Lebanon, Saudi and its allies fear the preparedness of Hezbollah, as the party's official Hashem Safieddine said on October 3, in removing American occupation (and by default, Saudi influence) from Lebanese state institutions.

It was during this week in 2017 that the Saudi regime captured then-Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri at the Riyadh Ritz Carlton Hotel and tortured him in a forced resignation, frustrated at the former prime minister's incompetency and inability in thwarting Hezbollah. With the four-year anniversary of the former prime minister's kidnapping taking place this week, the resurfacing of Kordahi's month-old comments represents the Arab Quartet's regional political objectives - from failing in Syria post-2011 and Yemen post-2015 - finally being laid to rest in Lebanon.

Julia M.K. is a Beirut-based analyst, writer, and political commentator. Along with regular appearances on PressTV, her work has also appeared in Al-Mayadeen, Al-Akhbar, Mirat al-Jazeera, Counterpunch, and elsewhere.

Afghan FM confirms Kabul 'mediating' talks between Pakistan, TTP

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan - The Taliban is acting as a mediator between the Pakistani government and the Pakistan Taliban, known by the acronym TTP, Afghanistan's acting foreign minister has said.

In an interview to the BBC's Urdu service on Sunday, Amir Khan Muttaqi said the Afghan Taliban had stepped in at the "request" of both parties.

"No final agreement has been reached; however, the start has been very good, and in the first part of the [talks] there has been an agreement on a one-month ceasefire," said Muttaqi.

"Both sides agreed that talks will remain ongoing."

Last month, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan revealed that Pakistan had begun negotiations with the TTP after the Taliban takeover of Kabul in August. Tens of thousands of civilians, security forces and fighters have been killed in the past 14 years of armed rebellion waged by the TTP.

The Taliban and the TTP are two distinct groups, with separate leadership structures and objectives, although their ideologies are similar and the TTP has aided the Taliban in its fight against US-led NATO forces in the past.

Formed in 2007, the TTP is an umbrella organisation of armed groups formed across Pakistan's northwest that seeks to impose a strict interpretation of Islamic law on the country.



The group has carried out some of the bloodiest attacks on Pakistani soil in the country's history, including a 2014 assault on a school that killed more than 135 schoolchildren.

In 2014, Pakistani security forces launched a widescale military operation against the TTP, successfully displacing it from its erstwhile headquarters in the North Waziristan district, and significantly degrading its operational capability. Since then, analysts and security officials say, the group has mainly been based in eastern Afghanistan.

Since the Taliban takeover of Kabul in August, attacks on Pakistani security forces and some civilians in the North and South Waziristan districts have spiked, according to data from the South Asia Terrorism Portal research organisation.

Last week, Pakistani Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry confirmed that a monthlong ceasefire agreement had been

reached between the TTP and the Pakistani government, an apparent result of the talks Afghan Minister Muttaqi referenced on Sunday.

The ceasefire will expire on December 9, TTP spokesman Muhammad Khurasani said.

In his wide-ranging interview with the BBC, Muttaqi acknowledged that ISIL (ISIS) armed group was a threat, but said his government had taken steps to control the situation.

"When we conquered Kabul, Daesh [a common alternate name for ISIL] began to raise its head in [some] areas but the Taliban government has taken the best actions to control them. We have now restricted Daesh in most areas," he said.

"There are sometimes incidents in some places, like mosques, which can happen anywhere in the world."

On Friday, at least three people were killed and 15 wounded when a bomb exploded during midday prayers in the Spin Ghar area of Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province.

On Saturday, an attack on a mainly Shia Muslim neighbourhood in the capital Kabul killed at least one person and left four others wounded.

A local ISIL affiliate, the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, ISKP (ISIS-K), has claimed responsibility for a series of attacks in Afghanistan since August, particularly targeting the Shia minority.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

UNESCO-tagged Uramanat, ancient hills in Kordestan made national heritage



TEHRAN – The UNESCO-tagged Cultural Landscape of Uramanat, along with three ancient hills and a historical mansion in Kordestan province have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts on Monday announced the inscriptions in separate letters to the governor-general of the western province, CHTN reported.

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.

Uramanat, also called 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.

The name Kordestan refers to the region's principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuk period), that name was given to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains.

It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran's Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century.

Castle to turn into anthropology museum

TEHRAN – The historical castle of Sardar Afshar in Takab county, northwestern West Azarbaijan province is planned to be turned into an anthropology museum, Takab's Governor has said.

“Takab county has the greatest amount of cultural and historical assets in the province, and to demonstrate this heritage and historical identity, a museum of anthropology is necessary,” Amir Sotudifar announced on Sunday.

With an area of one acre, the Qajar-era (1789–1925) Sardar Afshar Castle is a suitable monument to be turned into a museum, the official added.

From very early history to modern times, defensive walls have often been necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest.

Fortifications in antiquity were designed primarily to defeat attempts at the escalade, and to the defense of territories in warfare, and were also used to solidify rule in a region during peacetime.

Uruk in ancient Sumer (Mesopotamia) is one of the world's oldest known walled cities. The Ancient Egyptians also built fortresses on the frontiers of the Nile Valley to protect against invaders from neighboring territories.

Many of the fortifications of the ancient



world were built with mud brick, often leaving them no more than mounds of dirt for today's archaeologists.

West Azarbaijan embraces a variety of lush natural sceneries, cultural heritage sites, and museums including the UNESCO sites of Takht-e Soleyman and Qareh Klise (St. Thaddeus Monastery), Tepe Hasanlu, and the ruined Bastam Citadel.

The region was home to several ancient civilizations. According to Britannica, it was conquered by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander's generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. Ultimately, the area returned to the Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE.

Historical sabat in Meybod undergoes urgent restoration

TEHRAN – A historical sabat in the ancient town of Meybod, central Yazd province, has undergone urgent restoration, Meybod's tourism chief has announced.

Due to the recent rains in Meybod and the destruction of parts of this sabat, urgent restoration was undertaken in order to prevent further damage, CHTN quoted Mehrdad Zolfaqari as saying on Monday.

The project involves repairing the damaged parts, strengthening walls and rooftop using cob material, and restoring arches, the official added.

Sabat is an arched structure built between the opposite buildings on both sides of a narrow street in tropical and desert areas and it creates shade and a cool place for passers-by. Due to its semi-covered nature, this structure creates

air blinds in summer, which cools the air inside sabat and in winter makes the air warmer.

According to UNESCO, Meybod is a remarkable example of the viability and transmission of human being's collective thoughts from different generations to the present one. “What is significant in the city of Meybod is the regularity in city planning. The anatomy and spatial structure of the city show original plans which conform with the old Iranian city planning.”

Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, Yazd enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a “don't miss” destination by almost all of its



visitors. The city is full of mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

It is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each dis-

Cultural heritage experts on standby following Hormozgan earthquake

TEHRAN – Cultural heritage experts are on standby following a powerful 6.4 magnitude earthquake that rattled Fin county, southern Hormozgan province, on Sunday.

Due to the severity of the earthquake and the significance of historical buildings, teams of experts have been dispatched to the region to inspect any possible harms to historical sites of the province, the provincial tourism chief Sohrab Banavand announced on Monday.

So far, there have been no reports of damage to historical monuments, the official added.

Two people are confirmed dead and three injured, after the earthquake occurred at a depth of 15 kilometers and was felt in the neighboring province of Kerman and Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf.

In rural areas of Fin, a number of houses have been damaged. There were also reports of power and telecommunication outages in some parts of Hormozgan.

According to regional media,



A view of historical Fin Castle in Fin county, Southern Hormozgan province.

the force of the quake was so strong that tremors measuring 2.3 on the Richter scale could be felt across the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Known as the province of islands, Hormozgan province is located on the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf. It embraces scenic islands among which Kish,

Hormuz, Hengam, and Qeshm are the most beautiful ones and top tourist destinations in southern Iran.

Over the past couple of decades, the coral Kish Island has become a beach resort where visitors can swim, shop, and sample a laid-back and relatively liberated local lifestyle. It is home to

free-trade-zone status, with ever-growing hotels, shopping centers, apartment blocks, and retail complexes.

Hormuz, which is mostly barren and hilly, is situated some eight kilometers off the coast on the Strait of Hormuz, which attracts many tourists by its colorful mountains, silver sand shores, and great local people.

Hengam Island has scenery rocky shores, serene sunset, and kind natives, which can attract travelers who enjoy a relaxing trip by spending time on this tranquil island.

Qeshm Island is a heaven for eco-tourists as it embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines. The island also features geologically eye-catching canyons, hills, caves, and valleys, most of which are protected as part of the UNESCO-tagged Qeshm Island Geopark, itself a haven for nature-lovers.

Bishapur's Anahita Temple insulated

TEHRAN – An insulation work has recently been completed on the ancient temple of Anahita in Bishapur, southern Fars province, a local tourism official has announced.

One of the unique remnants of the early Sassanid era (224 CE–651), the temple was insulated to prevent water from penetrating its corridors, Mohammad Salehpour said on Monday.

Over a period of three weeks, cultural heritage experts insulated the roof of the monument with mud and lime materials, the official added.

The Anahita Temple is the name of one of two archaeological sites in Iran popularly thought to have been attributed to the ancient deity Anahita. The larger and more widely known of the two is located at Kangavar in Kermanshah province. The other is located at Bishapur.

Anahita, also known as Anaitis, and Anahit, was an ancient Iranian goddess of royalty, water, and fertility; she is particularly associated with the last.

Possibly of Mesopotamian origin, her cult was made prominent by Artaxerxes II, and statues and temples were set up in her honor throughout the Persian empire.

A common cult of the various peoples of the empire at that time, it persisted in Asia Minor long afterward. In the Avesta she is called Ardivi Sura Anahita (“Damp, Strong, Untainted”); this seems to be an amalgam of two originally separate deities, according to Britannica.



In Greece, Anahiti was identified with Athena and Artemis. She is mentioned in the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, the Avesta, note, and three Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions from the reign of Artaxerxes II Mnemon (r.404–358 BCE). There were sanctuaries for Anahita in Bactra, in Ec-batana, in Artaxata, in Zela, and Hierocaesarea, according to Livius.org; a website on ancient history written and maintained since 1996 by the Dutch historian Jona Lendering.

The goddess is also represented in Darabgird and Taq-e Bostan. Modern scholars have suggested that Anahita was also venerated at Kangavar, Qadamgah, and Bishapur, where sanctuaries have been found that can plausibly be identified as water temples. However, not every aquatic deity automatically equates with Anahita, so there is room for doubt.

A glimpse of ancient city of Bishapur

Bishapur (literally, “The city of Shapur”) was the grand capital of the Sassanid king, Shapur I whose armies defeated the Romans three times.

Like an arch bridge at Shushtar, much of Bishapur was allegedly built by Roman soldiers taken captive after their Emperor Valerian was defeated in c. 260 CE.

Bishapur is situated south of modern Fariyan, just off the ancient road between Persis and Elam, which connected the Sasanian capitals Istakhr (close to Persepolis) and Firuzabad to Susa and Ctesiphon. The city was built near a river crossing.

The site has been partly excavated so far, revealing the Palace of Shapur and the nearby Temple of Anahita, where a stairway leads underground to a pool around which the faithful once walked and prayed. Bishapur was not a completely novel settlement: archaeologists have found remains from the Elamite and Parthian ages.

Many architectural aspects of Bishapur look Roman and do not belong to Iranian building traditions. An example is what specialists call the “Hippodamian Plan”, which means that the city looks like a gridiron, while Iranian cities usually were circular.

The city, surrounded by walls that may have stood some ten meters high, was inhabited by some 50,000 to 80,000 people.

Bishapur remained an important city until the Arab invasion of Persia and the rise of Islam in the second quarter of the seventh century. It became a center of Islamic learning (a madrassah has been excavated) and there were still people living over here in the tenth century, but the decline had started in the seventh century.

\$142m invested in West Azarbaijan tourism

TEHRAN – Some six trillion rials (\$142.8 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been invested in the tourism sector of West Azarbaijan, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

Across the province, 60 projects are currently underway, with a progress rate of more than 50 percent, Jalil Jabbari said on Saturday, CHTN reported.

Through the implementation of the projects, 1,500 job opportunities will be created in the northwestern province within three years, the official added.

The province's cultural heritage department is currently focused on developing water tourism and modern tourism, such as building glass bridges, suspension bridges, and zip lines, he mentioned.

He also noted that the province's tourism sector is open to private investments.

Back in October, the official announced that the province will increase its accommodation capacity by 974 rooms and 2007 beds through the opening of the ongoing hotel projects.

Back in April, the official announced that tourism-related projects generated 1,767 job opportunities across the province during the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ends March 21).

“The largest number of jobs is related to the issuance of licenses for handicraft producers, which has



A view of Lake Takht-e Soleyman in Takab, West Azarbaijan province

led to the employment of 549 persons,” he noted.

West Azarbaijan embraces a variety of lush natural sceneries, cultural heritage sites, and museums including the UNESCO sites of Takht-e Soleyman and Qareh Klise (St. Thaddeus Monastery), Tepe Hasanlu, and the ruined Bastam Citadel.

The region was home to several ancient civilizations. According to Britannica, it was conquered by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander's generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. Ultimately, the area returned to the Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE.

Benefactors donate \$2m to construct schools

TEHRAN – School building benefactors have allocated a sum of 85 billion rials (around \$2 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to construct educational spaces across the country, IRNA reported on Monday.

“Brick-by-brick” national plan started early last year (March 2020 – March 2021), aiming to attract public participation for school construction in deprived areas even by buying a brick.

In order to implement this project, 1.3 million women, students, and volunteer groups participated, Mohammad-Ali Ghorchi-Beigi, deputy director of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, said.

Currently, the construction of schools has started in 31 provinces of the country, he further stated.

Iran has many school-building benefactors amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country.

A total of 36 trillion rials (nearly \$857 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to renovate the schools nationwide over the past 8 years, Seyed Mohammad-Ali Afshani, former head of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, said.

According to Nasser Ghofli, the director of the School-Building Donors Association, 400 school-building charities have been registered in the



Iran has many school-building benefactors amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country.

country so far.

107,000 schools need renovation nationwide

There are some 107,000 schools nationwide with 530,000 classes, 160,000 of which are dilapidated, not meeting safety standards, accounting for 30 percent of the schools nationwide.

Mehroolah Rakhshanimehr, director of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipment said in August 2020 that some 30 percent of the country's schools have been constructed by school-building benefactors and there are 450

school-building charities in Iran.

Iran has many school-building benefactors amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country.

About 10 percent of charitable schools are built with the participation of charities abroad. This is a valuable asset, which should be promoted.

The Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools started operating in the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), which received a budget of 8.5 trillion rials (about \$200 million).

Smuggled goods worth \$9.5m seized nationwide

TEHRAN – Smuggled goods worth 400 billion rials (nearly \$9.5 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) have been seized across the country over the past week, Hadi Rafiei Kia, the police chief, said on Monday.

Customs police detectives were stationed in official bases with smart monitoring systems to identify the smuggled shipments, he stated.

The smuggled items include basic goods, home appliances, electronic equipment, car, and mobile phone accessories, clothes, ILNA reported.

He went on to say that 13 vehicles and 19 criminals were arrested during the implementation of the plan.

\$20-25 billion of smuggled goods annually

Every year, \$20-25 billion worth of goods are smuggled in and out of the country, which, if stopped, will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, Hassan Norouzi, a member of the Parliament, has said.



In the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), \$12 billion was smuggled into Iran and \$900 million out of the country, according to the Headquarters for Combating the Smuggling of Commodities and Foreign Exchange.

According to some reports, over ten million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran on a daily basis, adding up to 3.65 billion liters every year. Other reports put the number higher. On

December 19, 2018, a government spokesman said every day 11.5 million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran. Ali Adyani, a member of the Iranian Parliament's Energy Committee has quoted various sources as putting the figure at 10, 15, and even 20 million liters a day.

Mohammad Hassan Nejad, another member of the committee, says the smuggled fuel amounts to 22 million liters per day. With a 50 cent per liter profit, the total daily income adds up to 400 trillion rials annually or \$3.3 billion, nearly the same as the country's annual development budget.

In addition to gasoline smuggling, other fuels such as kerosene and diesel are also smuggled; not in lesser quantities.

In June 2020, the first phase of the national anti-smuggling plan was implemented with the priority of customs, tobacco, and transit goods nationwide.

Newly-identified fish named after “Ali Daei”

TEHRAN – A new species of fish discovered by an Iranian-German research team was named after former Iranian professional footballer and top goalscorer “Ali Daei” due to his humanitarian activities after the 2018 earthquake in the western province of Kermanshah, which is the sole habitat of the fish.

Until now, the “Glyptothorax alidaei” species was only found in headwater streams in the upper Karkheh drainage, Seymareh river in southwest Kermanshah.

Some 5 species of catfish have

been discovered and introduced during 10-year research, Mehr reported on Monday.

Iranian and German researchers have worked on the fish species in the catchment area of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq and published an article

Ali Daei is the scorer of 109 goals for Iran.

in Zootaxa journal discovering unknown species of this family.

New fish species are named in respect to the prominent people in the biological sciences, great poets such as Ferdowsi, Hafez, Amirkabir, Professor Samiei, and Mohammad Reza Shajarian.

Ali Daei is the scorer of 109 goals for Iran and is the highest goal scorer of the world after Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo.

He represented Iran national football team from 1993 to 2006.

Daei played for three German clubs



Arminia Bielefeld, Bayern Munich and Hertha BSC from 1997 to 2002.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Bikes to hold %3.5 share in Tehran transportation

Bikes will carry out 3.5 percent of the capital's total transportation, as the national document on bike transport development has proposed, deputy mayor for traffic and transport affairs at Tehran Municipality has stated.

A five-year plan to develop biking in the capital has been proposed aiming to promote biking, develop bike lanes and curb air pollution.

Currently, the document is under review by the traffic council to be approved, ISNA quoted Mohsen Pourseyed Aqaei as saying on Saturday.

As per the document, some 120 kilometers of the roads will be accessible for the bicycle riders each year, he added.

The reason behind the failure of bicycle schemes in past recent years was that the technology was overlooked in the schemes so that the cyclists had to return to the bike renting stations and give back the bikes, while today, using the new technologies, bicycle use has been facilitated for the citizen, he explained.

انجام ۳.۵ درصد از سفرهای تهران با دوچرخه

معاون حمل و نقل ترافیک شهرداری تهران از تدوین سند دوچرخه پایتخت خبر داد، براساس این سند، می بایست ۳.۵ درصد از سفرهای تهران با دوچرخه انجام شود.

محسن پورسیدآقایی در گفت و گو با ایسنا، با بیان اینکه سند توسعه دوچرخه در دستور کار قرار دارد گفت: در حال حاضر این سند سند ۵ساله در شورای ترافیک پایتخت در حال بررسی است که در صورت تصویب دوچرخه سواری ترویج و توسعه می یابد.

وی با بیان اینکه سالانه ۱۲۰ کیلومتر به مسیر دوچرخه اضافه می شود، در پاسخ به سوالی در مورد سرنوشت دوچرخه های قبلی شهرداری گفت: دلیل شکست طرح های دوچرخه در گذشته این بود که به تکنولوژی های روز دنیا توجه نشده بود بگونه ای که راکبان باید به مبداء سفر برگشته و دوچرخه را تحویل می دادند اما امروز با اتکاء به تکنولوژیهای جدید، استفاده از دوچرخه برای شهروندان تسهیل شده است.

Foreign aid to Afghan refugees in Iran is small: UNHCR

From page 1 ▶ Freijson traveled to Mashhad on Monday with five other heads of international organizations to address the latest situation of Afghan refugees.

The number of Afghan citizens with residence permits in Khorasan Razavi is 350,000, 96 percent of whom live in Mashhad city.

Due to the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and the possibility of a new wave of refugees, the Islamic Republic will not be able to accept newcomers due to existing restrictions and lack of necessary facilities, he lamented.

In 2021 alone, UNHCR is directly aware of some 18,000 Afghans who newly arrived in Iran using irregular routes, although the total number that has entered the country is likely to be significantly higher. Since the beginning of the year, over 660,000 persons were newly displaced within Afghanistan itself.

Iran hosting world's fourth-largest refugee community

Iran is hosting the world's fourth-largest refugee community. The country has generously hosted approximately 1 million refugees for the past 30 years. The majority, which mainly came from Afghanistan and Iraq, live in urban areas. Approximately 31,000 of the most vulnerable refugees live in 20 settlements located throughout the country.

Based on the latest statistics, over 3 million Afghans are living in Iran – some 780,000 Afghan refugees, over 2 million undocumented Afghans, and another 600,000 Afghan passport-holders with Iranian visas.



However, in light of the pandemic, all refugees, even those undocumented, benefited from access to free primary health services and free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like Iranian nationals.

The same happened for the vaccination when the country has generously considered refugees over the age of 75 for vaccination against coronavirus.

In order to support the refugees living in the country, the seventh phase of the health insurance plan will cover 120,000 vulnerable refugees through a memorandum of understanding signed between the Health Insurance Organization and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In Iran, UNHCR is seeking \$16.2 million for its COVID-19 emergency, while requires an additional \$98.7 million to support Iran in maintaining and sustaining its commendable inclusive refugee policies, under the umbrella of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).

In 2021 alone, UNHCR is directly aware of some 18,000 Afghans who newly arrived in Iran using irregular routes.

Can climate change affect your health?

One of the lesser-known consequences of the climate crisis is the impact that rising temperatures will have on our health.

Just weeks before the Cop26 climate conference started scientists and medical professionals warned that unless urgent action is taken to prevent climate change it could have wide-ranging consequences for health outcomes.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) released a report arguing that the burning of fossil fuels “is killing us” and that climate change “is the biggest single threat to humanity”.

The report added that climate change is leading to death and illness from increasingly extreme weather such as heatwaves and floods, disruptions to food systems, increases in disease spread and mental health issues.

In Canada, this week a doctor suffering from breathing issues has been the first patient worldwide suffering from ‘climate change’, as his symptoms were due to poor air quality and heatwaves.

1. From extreme heat to worsening hunger and water shortages, accelerating climate change will have a far reaching impact on health, experts have said.

The WHO estimates that between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause around 250, 000 additional deaths per year, from malnu-

trition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress.

A lot of these deaths are linked to the occurrence of extreme weather events such as heatwaves, flooding and storms, that disrupt food systems and also cause various illnesses.

Andy Haines, a professor of environmental change and public health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, told Cop26 that climate change is already driving diverse health threats around the world.

For example, the ranges of insect-carried diseases such as malaria and dengue are altering as weather patterns shift, and heat deaths are swiftly rising, with over a third of those recorded from 1990-2018 attributed to climate change, he said.

The rising toll of wildfires, floods, droughts and extreme heat have hit the headlines in recent years and have a torrid impact on our physical health.

But these events are also having “really devastating effects” on mental health, alongside worries among many people about the future under worsening climate change, Haines added.

As permafrost melts in the fast-warming Arctic, it could even expose “Methuselah organisms” – long frozen and potentially deadly bacteria and viruses, he said.

“As we release these we don't know what is going to happen to human health,” he added.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON NOVEMBER 15

New cases	7,494
New deaths	105
Total cases	6,045,212
Total deaths	128,272
New hospitalized patients	1,060
Patients in critical condition	3,491
Total recovered patients	5,708,253
Diagnostic tests conducted	37,146,083
Doses of vaccine injected	99,042,609

