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Iran, Russia Eye Comprehensive Cooperation

► Page 3

Opinion

Iran moving towards self-sufficiency in power plant equipment manufacturing

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN – Over the past few years and especially since the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions, strengthening domestic production and achieving self-reliance has become Iran's major strategy in all areas.

This new strategy has been pursued in various sectors including oil and gas, petrochemicals, and also the electricity sector which is of vital importance for the development of the country.

In this regard, like the previous year, the Energy Ministry has put the indigenization of major equipment and items used in this industry atop agenda in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), which is named the year of "production: Support and elimination of obstacles".

So, all the organizations and entities involved in the energy sector have been tasked to define special programs for supporting the domestic production of equipment and machinery.

As a major player in the country's electricity generation field, Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH) has been one of the pioneers in this due.

According to the Director-General of TPPH's Indigenization Office Ali Isa-Pour, currently, about 80 percent of the sophisticated equipment used in the construction and overhaul of the country's power plants are supplied by domestic producers.

The official noted that last year over 350,000 power plant equipment items were manufactured by domestic companies and supplied to power plants across the country.

"Following the general policies of the government regarding the maximum use of the capacities of domestic companies and empowering them for cutting dependence in the sanctions era, indigenization of the parts and equipment has become a major priority of Thermal Power Plant Holding and its subsidiaries," Isa-Pour said. ► Page 4

Iran ease past Syria in 2022 World Cup qualifier

TEHRAN – Iran football team defeated Syria 3-0 in Group A of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification on Tuesday at the King Abdullah II Stadium in Amman, Jordan.

Sardar Azmoun opened the scoring for Dragan Skocic's team in the 33rd minute.

Ehsan Haji Safi made it 2-0 from the penalty spot in the 42nd minute. With two minutes remaining, Ali Gholizadeh found the back of the net after dribbling past several Syrian defenders in the penalty area.

Earlier on the day, the UAE defeated Lebanon thanks to Ali Mabkhout's late goal.

South Korea also beat Iraq 3-0 in Doha. Lee Jae-Sung, Jeong Woo-Yeong and Heung-Min Son.

Iran lead Group A with 16 points, followed by South Korea. The UAE moved up to six points in third place.

The top two teams in the group will qualify for the 2022 World Cup, while the third-placed team will advance to a playoff against the third-placed team in Group B.

The winners of the playoff will advance to an inter-confederation playoff for a berth in the World Cup.



TEHRAN - This week, the U.S. labor department announced an increase in the consumer price index (a basket of products ranging from gasoline and health care to groceries and rents). The CPI has risen to 6.2% compared with the same period last year. The announcement means the country is now facing the highest annual inflation rate in more than 30 years (since November 1990).

Here are the main figures effecting low and middle income American families: Fuel oil prices soared 12.3% for the month, part of a 59.1% increase over the past year. Energy prices overall rose 4.8% in October and are up 30% for the 12-month period. Used vehicle prices again were a big contributor. ► Page 5

FM says new Iranian govt. firm to increase ties with Italy

TEHRAN — The new administration of Ebrahim Raisi in Iran is determined to expand cooperation with friendly countries such as Italy, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said in a telephone call on Monday night with Luigi Di Maio, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

"The new administration of Iran is determined to develop its cooperation with friendly countries, including Italy, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and relying on the capacities and opportunities inherent in relations," Amir Abdollahian asserted.

Amir Abdollahian also exchanged views about the state of bilateral relations, regional and international developments with his Italian counterpart.

The senior Iranian diplomat described the 160-year-old diplomatic relations between Iran and Italy as a good support for the rising relations between the two countries in various political, economic and cultural dimensions.

Amir Abdollahian expressed satisfaction over the rise of cooperation between the two countries, especially in the fields of industry, agriculture, medicine, science and technology, and the like, by considering the old ties. The Iranian Foreign Minister insisted on maintaining and strengthening the scope of cooperation.

The Iranian minister also pointed to the sending of vaccine by Italy in the form of COVAX to Iran as one of the significant points in the friendly cooperation between the two countries. ► Page 2



Martyr Fatemeh Assadi is buried in Sanandaj
Fatemeh Assadi, who was martyred in 1984 by the opponents of the Islamic Republic system during Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s, was finally buried in Sanandaj, the capital of Kurdistan province, on Monday, November 15. Her body was uncovered on November 8 in the Chehel Cheshmeh mountains of Divandareh. She was born in 1960 in the village of Mamoukh near the city of Divandareh. She is considered the first ever female martyr whose body has been uncovered.

Iran hotel prices soar some 30 percent

TEHRAN – An average of 30 percent has been added to hotel prices in Iran, the Head of the Iranian Hoteliers Association announced on Tuesday.

Changed prices took effect on September 22 and are valid for one year. Jamshid Hamzehzadeh said.

Prices were adjusted based on each hotel situation in terms of standardization and

obtaining a certificate of service quality, the official added.

Normally, prices increase in accordance with the inflation rate, but despite the corona, unemployment, closure of accommodations centers, and travel restrictions, the price of Iranian hotel accommodation only increased by 30 percent, he explained.

There are also plans to review the prices

of hotels in Iran for foreign travelers since foreign visitors pay very low prices due to the changes in the exchange rate and this requires more expert study, he noted.

Last October, the official announced that the hotel prices could have risen by 100 percent if the inflation rate had been taken into account. ► Page 6

Southern Iran to host migratory birds in winter

TEHRAN – Migratory birds have started their wintering trip to coastal areas of southern Bushehr province, IRIB reported on Tuesday.

Bushehr province is a suitable habitat for migratory birds, due to having the largest coastline with the Persian Gulf, pristine and uninhabited islands, a variety of aquatic plants, and food availability.

Flocks of migratory birds migrate from northern to southern regions, and Bushehr province is considered by the International Bird Organization.

More than 120 species from about 20 families of wintering birds have been identified and observed in the province, such as terns, geese, storks, pelicans, sandpipers, cranes, flamingos, herons, large white-headed gulls, and cormorants.

According to last year's census, the number of migratory shorebirds to Bushehr province was about 68,000, which indicates an increase of at least 10 percent compared to a year before. ► Page 7

From Inside

- Iranian president's special envoy consults with Taliban officials P2
- Majlis refuses to endorse proposed education minister P2
- Iran deputy FM discusses Vienna talks with Chinese, Russian counterparts P3
- Tehran hosting intl. home appliance exhibit P4
- New successes achieved in oil sales: oil minister P4
- NIDC implements 2,559 special, technical operations for subsidiaries, private sector P4
- Iraqi tour operators examine medical tourism in Iran P6
- Webinar to explore 100 years of museology in Iran P6
- "Science for All" festival to put nature under the spotlight P7
- 90% of students vaccinated against COVID-19 P7
- Birth rate drops by 8% in 6 months on year P7
- Iranian photographers honored at Zhuhai Intl. Photography Exhibition P8
- "The Wasteland", "Titi" win awards at Nouvelles Images Persanes Festival P8

Interview

Lebanon is subjected to economic terrorism, military analyst says

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – A senior Lebanese political and military analyst says Lebanon is besieged by Persian Gulf Arab states through an economic terrorism.

"Lebanon is indeed subjected to an economic war and economic terrorism in which more than one country are participating," Amine Mohammad Hoteit tells the Tehran Times.

"The reason for this is due to the Saudi claim that Hezbollah is the major side who organized, planned and led the military operations in Yemen and caused the defeat of the Saudi-led aggression," the retired general argues.

After the Saudi move in cutting ties with Lebanon following the Lebanese communication minister's remarks about the Saudi futile war on Yemen, many political observers raised questions about the real reasons of such surprising decision.

It is unexpected that the Riyadh rulers cut relations with a country over unofficial remarks. The irony is that these remarks were made before George Kordahi was appointed as minister.

Hoteit says the Saudi authorities, after their failure in excluding Hezbollah from the government, started pressuring the Lebanese people and Hezbollah as a retaliation. ► Page 5

Story of war against Iraqi invaders in Susangerd novelized

TEHRAN – The story of the war against Iraqi invaders in the Iranian town of Susangerd in 1980 has been novelized by Iranian writer Mehri Gholampour.

The book entitled "57 Days" has been published by the National Museum of the Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense.

It was unveiled in a special ceremony at the museum on Monday.

"Men's role in the [1980-1988 Iran-Iraq] war has been regarded more than women, while about 7000 women were killed in the war," Gholampour said at the ceremony.

"As a woman, I felt a responsibility to write about the key role women played in the hard days of the war," she added.

The events in this story revolve around a woman from Mashhad who moves to Susangerd due to her husband's mission as an officer. Following their arrival, the war breaks out and the town was captured by the Iraqi forces after a number of Arab people of the town turn into traitors against the country. ► Page 8

Lifting sanctions entails practical steps by the West: expert

TEHRAN - An expert on international affairs says the U.S. administration should know that Iran, as it has repeatedly stated, will respond in kind to any step taken by the other parties.

In proportion to a lifting of sanctions and return of other parties to the nuclear deal – JCPOA – Iran will abide by its commitments in the same manner, Hassan Oji wrote in article on Tuesday.

Following is an excerpt of his article about the need for practical steps by the West to fully restore the nuclear agreement:

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed between Iran and the P5+1 countries on July 14, 2015 and confirmed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231. The JCPOA was intended to build trust on Iran's nuclear program, as well as removing economic barriers and lifting sanctions during the presidency of Barack Obama. However, despite the Islamic Republic of Iran's sincere fulfillment of the JCPOA-related commitments, unfortunately, the fulfillment of these commitments was unilaterally violated by the ruling Republican team in the United States.

The team, led by Donald Trump, always called the JCPOA the worst deal with the aim of completely destroying it. It proceeded to illegally withdraw from the agreement and reinstate sanctions, contrary to Security Council Resolution 2231. Trump's unilateral move to impose harsh sanctions based on the policy of "maximum pressure" and "economic terrorism" has done a great harm to the Iranian people and economy.

The maximum pressure, intended to undermine the economic, political and social cohesion of Iran, targeted the economic security of different segments of the people. And even in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. did not abandon any action against the Iranian people.

With the end of a tumultuous four-year term of President Donald Trump's sanctions, and with the new Democratic team in the White House, Biden has been insisted on returning to the nuclear deal from the beginning.

Even in an official memo to CNN in September 2020, he explicitly stated that the United States would return to the nuclear deal if Iran adhered to its strict compliance, but nevertheless after nearly a year, we have been witnessing the new U.S. administration's misguided approach to the Islamic Republic of Iran, so that despite the promises of the new U.S. team, not only we have not seen the lifting of sanctions, but some members of Biden's foreign policy team, including Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, even on live television shows openly see the Biden administration's goal as building a consensus to impose smart sanctions on Iran and isolate Tehran.

The double standards policy of the U.S. President was demonstrated on November 9 as Biden extended U.S. national emergency against Iran for another year. The move once again showed the face of the United States towards Iran that Washington

is unscrupulous and untrustworthy. Undoubtedly, such direct and indirect actions by U.S. officials, who have targeted the health and livelihood of the Iranian people, demonstrate their unwillingness to engage in constructive dialogue in the form of a return to the JCPOA.

The U.S. administration should know that the Islamic Republic of Iran, as it has repeatedly stated, will appropriately respond to any step taken by the other parties and in proportion to a lifting of sanctions and return of other members to their obligations under the nuclear deal, it will abide by its commitments in the same way. Biden, therefore, should be well aware that a U.S. return to the JCPOA means the lifting of very extensive sanctions imposed by the Trump administration on Iran under various laws and executive orders, including oil sanctions and under the pretext of counterterrorism, human rights...

Accordingly, at present, and with the start of negotiations on November 29, the Islamic Republic of Iran will not consent to return of the United States to the JCPOA except for a complete lifting of sanctions and fulfillment of commitments by the United States and Europe. It should be clear to them by now that the extravagant policies of the United States and some of its regional allies will never intimidate Iran into giving up its grand goals of national interest.

Given the breaking of commitments and gross violation of international law and the hostile actions of the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran in recent years, now is the time for the United States to rebuild its image in the eyes of the Iranian people and show its goodwill vis-à-vis the Iranian people as well as the international community with a complete lifting of sanctions. In this regard, the United States needs to consider the following steps to show its goodwill:

- 1- Completely lift sanctions imposed by the United States against our country;
- 2- Commit itself to implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 within the framework of international law;
- 3- Return to the full implementation of the JCPOA and lifting arms sanctions against the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps of Iran and illegal sanctions against Iranian individuals, companies and organizations;
- 4- Withdraw forces from the region and avoid interfering in regional crises;
- 5- It should guarantee that it will not quit the JCPOA agreement again, even if the U.S. governing body changes;
- 6- Apologize and condemn terrorist acts, including the martyrdom of General Qassem Soleimani, who fought against ISIS terrorists;
- 7- Compensate the economic damages caused by the United States to the Islamic Republic of Iran due to the violation of its obligations towards the JCPOA and the UN resolution.

Iranian president's special envoy consults with Taliban officials



TEHRAN — Hassan Kazemi Qomi, the Iranian president's special envoy for Afghanistan, met with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the First Deputy Prime Minister of the caretaker Taliban government, on Tuesday.

"During the meeting, there was a discussion about expanding relations between the two countries and establishing joint cooperation committees in various fields," Annamullah Samangani, the deputy spokesman for the Taliban caretaker government, tweeted.

According to the office of the Taliban's first deputy prime minister, Mullah Baradar viewed the meeting as an important opportunity for Afghanistan and, while appreciating Iran's hosting of Afghan refugees, stressed the need to establish good relations between the two neighbors.

Both sides also discussed political, educational, economic, financial, water and energy issues as well as public welfare, refugee affairs and resumption

of the ongoing projects.

Kazemi Qomi meets Taliban FM

In his first official visit to Kabul as special envoy, Kazemi Qomi also met with the Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Mottaqi.

During the meeting, which took place at the Foreign Ministry, the Iranian special envoy said, "Iran and Afghanistan have a rich history and historical ties, and the Islamic Republic of Iran will not leave the Afghan people alone under any circumstances."

At the beginning of the meeting, the Taliban Foreign Minister expressed hope that the problems facing Afghanistan will be resolved soon.

Kazemi Qomi arrived in Kabul on Monday. Talking to reporters at Kabul airport, he said some countries were using the fight against terrorism as a pretext to launch a proxy war in Afghanistan.

This is the first visit by President Raisi's special envoy to Afghanistan.

FM says new Iranian govt. firm to increase ties with Italy

From page 1 ▶ Referring to the forthcoming talks in Vienna intended to lift the illegal sanctions on Iran, Amir Abdollahian stressed that all parties have reached a common understanding that the United States is the chief culprit for the current situation surrounding the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Amir Abdollahian also said some parties to the JCPOA are also acting irresponsibly by being silent in the face of the U.S. excessive demands and thereby contributed to the emergence of the current unacceptable situation.

Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA – the three European countries of Germany, France and Britain (known as E3) Russia and China – plan to resume nuclear talks in Vienna on November 29 to lift sanctions on Iran. The United States will participate in the talks indirectly. The talks are being resumed after a five-month lull due to the June election in which a new government came to power in Iran.

The high-ranking Iranian diplomat stressed: "The new administration of Iran is a pragmatic and result-oriented



administration. We have shared our views with the negotiating good agreement. This requires a full return of the negotiating parties to their obligations."

Amir Abdollahian was referring to his phone talks with the foreign ministers of the E3 countries, Russia and China. His political deputy Ali Bagheri Kani also traveled to the E3 capitals prior to the November 29 talks. Bagheri also held virtual meetings with his counterparts

from China and Russia.

Regarding Afghanistan, Amir-Abdollahian also reiterated Iran's support for the formation of an inclusive government in this country, and attributed the illegitimate presence and catastrophic departure of the United States for the exacerbation of the crisis in the country and its negative impact on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the influx of refugees, especially toward Iran.

"The new administration of Iran is a pragmatic and result-oriented"

Iran serious to bring an end to all sanctions, Raisi tells Putin

TEHRAN – During a telephone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said the Islamic Republic is serious in the talks to bring an end to all sanctions against the Iranian nation.

The remarks by the president came as Iran and the great powers, including Russia, are set to resume talks in Vienna after a five-month hiatus. The talks are intended to put an end to the illegal sanctions against Iran in accordance to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is very serious in the negotiations and we are equally serious in ensuring the rights of our nation in lifting the sanctions as well," Raisi insisted.

The Iranian president also appreciated Russia's position in defending Iran's nuclear rights.

Raisi also appreciated the call made by Putin and said Iran is seeking to develop trade and economic relations with Russia. Raisi also stressed the need to finalize a comprehensive document on long-term cooperation between Iran and Russia.

"We are ready to finalize a comprehensive document on long-term cooperation between the two countries so that the process of further development of the relations and cooperation between the two countries can be implemented as soon as possible," Raisi stressed.

Raisi also stressed the need for cooperation

between the two countries on regional issues, saying Iran considers the continued presence of outsiders in Syria illegal and against the will of the Syrian people, warning it threatens the stability and security of the country.

Referring to the developments in Afghanistan, the president said, "We consider the presence of Daesh in Afghanistan dangerous for the region and the country, and we must be aware of the dangers of this conspiracy."

Raisi stated that Iran seeks to witness an all-inclusive government with the presence of all ethnic and political groups in Afghanistan, and we believe that the formation of such a government can guarantee the security of the country.

The President welcomed Russia's initiative for stability and peace in the South Caucasus region.

In the telephone conversation, Raisi thanked the Russian President and government for contributing to Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), as well as in providing COVID-19 vaccines.

For his part, Putin stressed that Tehran and Moscow share common positions on many issues

Putin added, "Moscow supports Tehran's proposals in drafting a new document on long-term cooperation between the two countries, and we are determined to make it finalized and implemented as soon as possible."

Emphasizing that Moscow attaches great

importance to improving the level of economic relations and finalizing joint investment programs with Iran, the Russian President said his country is witnessing positive inclinations for increasing the level of bilateral, regional and international cooperation, and there is no doubt that the development of cooperation will accelerate.

Referring to the two countries' cooperation on regional issues, especially the Syria crisis, Putin said, "By working together, we were able to preserve Syria's independence and destroy the terrorist hotspot in the country. Of course, we must continue our close cooperation, especially in various regional areas."

The Russian President also expressed support for the rights of the Iranian people on the nuclear issue and expressed hope that in the future negotiations, the parties would have sufficient political will to get out of the current situation.

Expressing concern over the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh issue, Putin said, "To increase the level of trust and cooperation in the region, we seek to launch a 3+3 consultative mechanism, and we hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran support it."

The Russian President concluded by saying that Russia is determined to continue cooperating in the fight against COVID-19 and sending vaccine shipments to Iran.

Majlis refuses to endorse proposed education minister

TEHRAN - The Iranian parliament on Tuesday refused to vote for proposed education minister Masoud Fayazi.

Out of 260 legislators present in the 290-seat parliament, 140 voted against Fayazi and 115 voted in his favor. Five MPs also abstained.

President Ebrahim Raisi had attended the parliament to defend his nominee for education minister.

Defending his plans, Fayazi said he was committed to implement the "reform document" at the ministry.

During the hearing confirmation, a number of MPs spoke in his favor and some others against.

MP Seyyed Kazem Delkhosh complained that President Raisi had not "consulted" with the Majlis

about his pick for the ministry.

However, MP Abbas Goudarzi said, "Mr. Fayazi has an active mind and has enough mastery over problems of the Ministry of Education and has presented solutions."

Most MPs sitting on the Majlis Education and Research Committee also opposed Fayazi. In a statement read out at the Majlis, they said Fayazi has had no experience of teaching in state-run schools. The statement said Fayazi has had an experience in research activities, especially at the Majlis Research Center, and in his plans presented to the parliament he had pointed to the "priorities" that should be sought at the Education Ministry and referred to the "harms and problems" facing the ministry,



but "there is no reassuring record of his activities in the Ministry of Education."

After the nominee for education minister failed to win the necessary votes, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf asked President Raisi to nominate the candidate for the post in due time.

"Hopefully, Mr. Raisi will name the next proposed minister in the shortest time so that the Majlis also can do its studies," Qalibaf

remarked.

Qalibaf attributed MPs' sensitivity toward education minister nominees to the importance of the ministry, saying there has been such curiosity toward a person who leads the Education Ministry over the past 16 years.

Reza Hajipour, the spokesman for the Majlis Education and Research Committee, said the president has only seven days to nominate a new education minister.

Also on August 25, President Raisi's first nominee for education minister, Hossein Baghghi, failed to win the confidence of parliamentarians. He was the only proposed minister who failed to win vote of confidence. He just won 76 votes.

Iran to host international nuclear energy meeting in early March

TEHRAN - The Research Center for Atomic Technology plans to hold the 28th national and first international conference on nuclear technology on March 2-4.

The conference will be held virtually at the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

The AEOI public relations office announced on Tuesday that those who are willing to participate at the conference can submit their research works to the secretariat of the conference by December 20.

The nuclear energy conference, which is held annually, is considered the greatest

scientific event in the country. For the first time it will be held at international level.

The conference will cover a long list of technical and specialized issues. Subjects such as nuclear management, nuclear rights, nuclear safety and safeguards will be discussed at the meeting.

Iran, Russia eye comprehensive cooperation

TEHRAN – Iran and Russia took one step closer to finalizing a comprehensive document on long-term cooperation à la the one finalized between Tehran and Beijing.

The presidents of Iran and Russia had an “in-depth” telephone conversation on Tuesday in which they discussed a number of issues ranging from Afghanistan and Syria to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and a cooperation document expected to raise Tehran-Moscow ties to a new level.

Iranian and Russian readouts of the conversation both confirmed the extensive nature of the call, with the Russian one describing it as “in-depth.”

Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi appreciated the phone call of his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and expressed Iran’s willingness to develop trade and economic relations with Russia.

The Iranian president then voiced Iran’s readiness to finalize the cooperation document. “We are ready to finalize a comprehensive document on long-term cooperation between the two countries so that the process of further development of the relations and cooperation between the two countries can be implemented as soon as possible,” Ayatollah Raisi told President Putin.

Underlining convergence and synergy between Tehran and Moscow on many international issues, the Iranian president stressed the need for cooperation between the two countries on regional issues, and said, “We



consider the continued presence of outsiders in Syria against the will of the Syrian people and government and illegal because it threatens the stability and security of the country,” according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

Referring to the developments in Afghanistan, Ayatollah Raisi reiterated Iran’s position that an inclusive government should be formed in Kabul. “The Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to establish an all-inclusive government with the presence of all ethnic and political groups, and we believe that the formation of such a government can guarantee the security of the country,” he said.

In addition to Syria and Afghanistan, the two presidents discussed other issues of mutual interest such as the tense situation in the South Caucasus region, the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

On the Caucasus, Ayatollah Raisi told Putin that “any change in the geopolitical state and

changing the borders of the countries in the region is not acceptable.”

On the other side, Putin spoke about Russia’s measures to ensure the ceasefire, unblock economic and transport links and establish peaceful life in the region, according to the Kremlin.

Putin also expressed concern over the situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, according to the Iranian statement about the call. He also said, “To increase the level of trust and cooperation in the region, we seek to launch a 3+3 consultative mechanism, and we hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran supports it.”

Part of the conversation was on the JCPOA. The Russian president expressed support for the rights of the Iranian people on the nuclear issue and expressed hope that in future negotiations, the parties would have sufficient political will to get out of the current situation.

The Kremlin said Russia and Iran are advocating the comprehensive implementation

of the JCPOA within the initially coordinated framework. Putin also expressed hope that the talks on this issue would be constructive.

The scope of conversation once again indicated the extent to which Tehran and Moscow could cooperate. Both countries have a complicated web of joint interests that would be better served with further strengthening of bilateral relations. To this end, Raisi and Putin underlined the need to further boost bilateral ties.

The Iranian president voiced Tehran’s readiness to finalize the comprehensive document. The Russian president, in turn, underlined that Moscow attaches great importance to improving the level of economic relations and finalizing joint investment programs with Iran. He added, “Moscow supports Tehran’s proposals in drafting a new document on long-term cooperation between the two countries, and we are determined to make it finalized and implemented as soon as possible.”

President Putin noted, “We are witnessing positive inclinations for increasing the level of bilateral, regional and international cooperation, and there is no doubt that the development of cooperation will accelerate.”

The comprehensive document, if finalized, would be the second major Iranian agreement with non-Western powers after the 25-year partnership plan between Tehran and Beijing.

Iran deputy FM discusses Vienna talks with Chinese, Russian counterparts

TEHRAN – Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani held talks via video conference on Monday with his Chinese and Russian counterparts Ma Zhaoxu and Sergei Ryabkov on the upcoming talks in Vienna aimed at removing sanctions against Tehran.

During the video call, the Iranian deputy foreign minister referred to the ties between the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, and the People’s Republic of China and the alignment of the three countries’ positions on different international issues, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said.

Bagheri Kani described the meeting as “fruitful” and said it was intended to strengthen convergence among Iran, Russia, and China ahead of the Vienna talks scheduled to be resumed on November 29.

“Convened a fruitful virtual meeting with Chinese and Russian partners; alignment of Iran, China, and Russia in combating unilateralism & strengthening our convergence in future talks were emphasized. It was reiterated that U.S. should remove all unlawful sanctions,” Bagheri Kani said on Twitter.

During the Monday meeting, Bagheri stressed the principled stance by the three countries in promoting multilateralism and countering unilateralism. He stated that the oppressive U.S. sanctions against Iran are the cost of countering unilateralism.

Bagheri said it is necessary that all sanctions contrary to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal) be lifted and actions contrary to Resolution 2231 be reversed in a verifiable manner and in line with Iran’s economic benefits from normalization of its economic and trade relations. He described this as a necessary condition for the success of the forthcoming negotiations.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister referred to the recent consultations in France, Germany, Britain, and Spain on the forthcoming talks, saying the effective removal of illegal U.S. sanctions is a key necessity and a high priority for the forthcoming talks.

In the video call, the deputy foreign ministers of Russia and China emphasized the need for continued consultations and coordination among the three countries on

different issues. They said the U.S. unilateral move to violate the agreement and re-impose sanctions against Iran is the main cause of the current problems in implementing the agreement between Iran and the P5+1.

The meeting came on the heels of a tour of European countries by Bagheri Kani during which he focused on the Vienna talks and the way the Europeans should act in order to bring the talks to a swift conclusion.

Iran’s chief negotiator had toured a number of European countries in a bid to set the stage for what Iranian officials called “result-oriented” talks whose success would only be measured with their effectiveness in removing the U.S. sanctions on Iran.

The deputy foreign minister of Iran met with his counterparts in France, Germany, and the UK ahead of the seventh round of the Vienna talks.

Bagheri Kani said he held serious discussions with his European interlocutors. “During visit to France, Germany, the UK, and Spain, I had serious & constructive discussions on bilateral, regional & int’l issues incl. upcoming negotiations. Also has several interviews with media,” he said on Twitter.

He added, “Effective removal of unlawful sanctions & importance of assurances on non-repetition was emphasized.”

The Iranian Foreign Minister, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, also praised the tour, describing it as successful.

“These days, Dr. Bagheri is engaged in successful talks in Europe. At the negotiating table in Vienna, we are ready to deliver a good agreement. The return of all parties to their commitments is an important and leading principle,” the foreign minister tweeted.

Prior to Bagheri Kani’s visit, Amir Abdollahian held telephone conversations with the foreign ministers of the countries participating in the Vienna talks, including the European trio of France, Germany, and the UK.

The foreign ministers of the three European countries – collectively known as the E3 – pressed Iran on resuming the Vienna talks where they ended on June 20 when the sixth round was concluded under former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

Undaunted by the Europeans’ pressure, the

Iranian foreign minister straightforwardly announced to his European interlocutors that the Vienna talks would resume in a new spirit.

“The Vienna talks’ success is contingent on the removal of all sanctions, the return of all sides to their obligations, giving necessary assurances about the implementation of all talks’ results, and verification of actions by the other sides,” Amir Abdollahian told his British counterpart Liz Truss.

In his conversation with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, the Iranian foreign minister said, “Iran wants a good agreement, but it has requirements, including the other sides fully complying with their commitments and the effective lifting of sanctions.”

Furthermore, Amir Abdollahian appeared underlining the importance of Iran’s missile program. “Iran, like any other country, is entitled to have a defense program as a sovereign right,” he said, adding, “Tehran will move full steam ahead to increase its defense power without paying attention to the United States’ unconstructive sanctions policy.”

In his talks with German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, Amir Abdollahian also said, “On the path to the talks and in media terms, using a language of force and threats is not helpful and the Islamic Republic of Iran will not give in to unfounded propaganda. Any inaccurate comment, which does not comply with the facts, can jeopardize ongoing efforts.”

The Iranian foreign minister reiterated Iran’s position again on Instagram. “The Islamic Republic of Iran is entering the talks with a pragmatic and result-oriented approach and it is determined to reach a good deal, but this entails effective and verifiable removal of sanctions and the return of all sides to full compliance with their commitments,” he said.

Hinting at Iran’s new approach, Amir Abdollahian pointed out that “Iran does not intend to remain stuck in the stalemate of previous talks, as we already have access to those negotiations.”

The next round of talks is planned to be held by end of November after a five-month lull in the Vienna talks. The sixth and last round was held on June 20 with no significant progress made.

SPORTS

Iranian volleyball teams invited to Cornacchia World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran U16 and U19 volleyball teams have been invited to 2022 Cornacchia World Cup.

The event will be held in Pordenone, Italy from April 15 to 18.

Cornacchia World Cup was ideated by Tiziano Cornacchia in 1983, in memory of “grandpa Ferruccio”. Now the tournament is managed with Stefano and Matteo (Tiziano’s sons) and the support of the whole family, who grew up with a unique passion for volleyball.

In four decades, Cornacchia World Cup hosted the most important Italian volleyball Clubs and hundreds of foreign teams from five continents.

Iran basketball team to play Syria: Friendly

TEHRAN – Iran national basketball team will play Syria in a friendly match as part of preparation for the 2023 FIBA Basketball World Cup Asian Qualifiers.

Iran will host Bahrain in Tehran in Group D of the competition on November 26.

Team Melli will play the team three days later in Isa Town.

Mostafa Hashemi’s team will play a friendly match on Wednesday or Thursday with Syria in Tehran.

Syria will also play Iranian club Shahrdari Gorgan.

Fenerbahce eye Iran forward Sardar Azmoun

TEHRAN – Turkish football giants Fenerbahce have rolled up their sleeves to sign Iranian international forward Sardar Azmoun.

Azmoun’s contract will expire at June 2022 and Fenerbahce is hopeful it can convince Russian club Zenit to sign Azmoun in the January transfer window.

Azmoun has been already linked with a move to English and Italian football clubs.

He accompanies Iran national football team in the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification at the moment. Azmoun played a great role in helping Iran beat Lebanon and Syria.

Iran to send three players to World Table Tennis C’ships

TEHRAN – Three table tennis players will represent Iran at the 2021 World Table Tennis Championships (WTT).

Noshad and Nima Alamian and Amir Hossein Hodaie will represent Iran in the prestigious event.

Last year’s World Table Tennis Championships was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Houston in the United States is scheduled to stage this year’s event from November 23 to 29.

Wrestler Mehdizadeh gets four-year ban for positive test

TEHRAN – Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Behnam Mehdizadeh has been banned from the sport for four years after testing positive. He has tested positive for an anabolic steroid Stanozolol. Mehdizadeh will be ineligible for competition for four years from June 27, 2021 to June 26, 2025.

The 130kg wrestler has won three gold medals in 2014, 2017 and 2018 Asian Wrestling Championships.

Stanozolol is a man-made steroid, similar to the a naturally occurring steroid testosterone. Stanozolol is used in the treatment of hereditary angioedema, which causes episodes of swelling of the face, extremities, bowel wall, and throat. Stanozolol may decrease the frequency and severity of these attacks.

UAE keep FIFA World Cup hopes alive

TEHRAN – UAE recorded a 1-0 win over Lebanon at the Saida Municipal Stadium in Sidon, Lebanon, on Tuesday in their Group A World Cup qualifying match.

Prolific striker Ali Mabkhout scored the game’s only goal in the 85th minute from a penalty.

The hard-fought win sent UAE to the third place in the group behind Iran and South Korea, khaleejtimes.com reported.

The top two teams in the group will qualify for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, while the third-placed team will advance to a playoff against the third-placed team in Group B.

The winner of the playoff will advance to an inter-confederation playoff for a berth in the World Cup.

Korea Republic power past Iraq

TEHRAN – Korea Republic clinically dispatched Iraq 3-0 at the Thani bin Jassim Stadium on Matchday Six of the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to Qatar, drawing closer to sealing a top-two spot in Group A.



Iraq headed into the match winless in five games, while Korea Republic had three wins from five and trailed Iran in first place, yet put up a convincing display against the 2007 AFC Asian Cup champions.

The first quarter of an hour saw both sides test the waters, with long range efforts coming from Tottenham Hotspurs forward Son Heung-min and Ibrahim Bayesh, none of which threatened either goals, although Korea Republic had much more of the ball.

Hwang Hee-chan had an unlikely chance at a shot midway through the first half, when a clearance by Ahmed Ibrahim was blocked and the ball fell to the Wolverhampton Wanderers forward, who tried to place a shot but Fahad Talib’s positioning served him well.

With 32 minutes on the clock, the Taeguk Warriors opened the scoring after some elegant build-up play that saw a cross from the right flank aimed towards Kim Jim-su, the left back missed his shot inside the area and was brought down while the ball made its way across to Lee Jae-sung, who smashed a low shot into the bottom corner of Talib’s goal to make it 1-0.

Aymen Hussein was introduced at half time by Iraq head coach Dick Advocaat, and immediately impressed as he tested keeper Kim Seung-gyu twice, the second time requiring Kim to dive as the Umm Salal forward volleyed a shot from the right, with Iraq pushing on for an equalizer.

Paulo Bento’s men got a 70th minute penalty, after substitute Ali Adnan downed Cho Gue-sung in the area as the latter geared to take a shot on goal, with Son converting the subsequent penalty to double his country’s lead with 20 minutes of play to go, as well as adding his 30th international goal. The penalty was taken twice, as VAR had picked up an encroachment offense in the first one.

Korea Republic added their third of the night shortly after, when a four pronged attack of Korean players pressed forward exchanging passes, before Son passed the ball low to the right flank where Hwang was waiting, with the 25 year old then teeing up teammate Jeong Woo-young who scored his first international goal.

The Taeguk warriors moved up to 14 points in second place, eight ahead of third placed side the United Arab Emirates in third. Bento’s men face Lebanon and Syria in the next international break at the end of January, while the Lions of Mesopotamia face IR Iran and Lebanon.

Tehran hosting intl. home appliance exhibit



TEHRAN- The 21st edition of Iran's International Home Appliance Manufacturers Exhibition (HAMEx 2021) was inaugurated in Tehran on Tuesday.

The event will be held at the place of Tehran Permeant International Fairgrounds until Friday.

Over the past few years, the Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has been one of the pioneers in this regard and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years so that this industry's production capacity increased by 24 percent in the past Iranian year, and by 10 percent in its preceding year.

In early April, the secretary of the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran said, "We expected to produce about 12 million units, including small and large appliances in the previous year, however, the figure increased to about 15 million by the yearend, registering a 24 percent growth compared to the preceding year."

"We also had good growth in after-sales service, product quality improvement, indigenization and exports, so that last year \$345 million worth of home appliance products were exported," Abbas Hashemi added.

Pointing to the advantages of home appliance industry in Iran, the official said: "Production of home appliances in the country is an advantage considering cheap energy and workforce and the country's geographical situation", he noted.

The latest data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry indicate that manufacturing of home appliances in Iran has risen 9.7 percent during the first half of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-Septemebtr 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

The ministry's data put the six-month home appliance output at 2.294 million sets.

New successes achieved in oil sales: oil minister

TEHRAN - Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji has said new windows have been opened for the country's oil sales using the existing capacities, Shana reported.

"Fortunately, good success has been achieved in oil sales using existing capacities," Oji said in a meeting with the members of the Parliament Energy Committee on Tuesday.

Back in September, Oji had said his ministry

was determined to increase the country's oil exports despite the U.S. sanctions, adding that the use of oil sanctions as a "political tool" would harm the market.

"There is strong will in Iran to increase oil exports despite the unjust and illegal U.S. sanctions; I promise that good things will happen regarding Iran's oil sales in the coming months," Oji told the state TV.

34 idle industrial units revived in Gilan province in 6 months

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 34 idle industrial units were revived in Gilan province, in the north of Iran, during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22).

Referring to the goal of reviving 68 industrial units of the province during the current year, Manouchehr Sadafi, the deputy head of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said that with the revival of 34 production units in the first six months of this year, the targeted program has been materialized by 50 percent.

Mentioning the activities of about 2,400 industrial units in the province, the official said: "Lack of liquidity, wear and tear of machinery, and supply of raw materials are among the problems of those active in these units."

Expressing that the problems of industrialists are usually common in the country, he said: "In Gilan province, those active in the industry sector are also facing a shortage of industrial land and now we are facing a shortage of land to develop the units and create new units."

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 Rasoulia 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 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 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.

According to the official, there are over 46,000 small and medium-sized industrial units in Iran's industrial parks and zones, of them about 9,200 units are inactive.

Iran moving towards self-sufficiency in power plant equipment manufacturing

From page 1 ▶ The company is also planning to publish the information regarding the domestically manufactured equipment and parts on a special website so that other power plant companies across the country would be able to order the items they might need.

Complete self-sufficiency in building gas power plants

In addition to the mentioned achievements, in some areas, the country has even become fully self-sufficient and is able to export equipment and machinery to other countries.

According to the former Managing Director of Iranian Electrical Power Equipment Manufacturing and Provision Company (known as SATKAB) Mohammad-Vali Alaedini, the country is fully able to produce and export all equipment and services needed for the construction of gas power plants.

"Our ability for manufacturing and supplying water and electricity equipment has reached a point where we



are not only able to fully meet our domestic demand but also export it to other countries," Alaedini said.

He had mentioned Iraq, Armenia, Syria, and Tajikistan as some of the export destinations for Iranian energy equipment and services, adding "We have achieved 80 percent self-sufficiency in construction of other power plant equipment, while in construction of gas power plants, hydroelectric

power plants, and dams we are completely self-sufficient and exporting services to other countries."

Manufacturing world-class gas turbines

As another major step toward complete self-reliance in the energy industry, Iran's MAPNA Group, which is the first and leading West Asia-based general contractor of thermal power plants in the MENA region, has recently announced

that the Islamic Republic is going to become an exporter of new classes of gas turbines in near future.

Speaking on the sidelines of the signing ceremony of a deal for manufacturing an MGT-75 gas turbine for TPPH in late March, MAPNA Head Abbas Ali-Abadi said: "Iran now has the knowledge and technology to design and manufacture a variety of new gas turbines on a global scale."

"We will present this turbine [MGT-75] in the global market soon and it will undoubtedly be well received," Ali-Abadi added.

MAPNA had previously manufactured E-class and F-class turbines such as MGT-70.

Turning the restrictions created by the U.S. sanctions into opportunities, the Islamic Republic which used to import such pieces of equipment from foreign sources such as Germany's Siemens, is now among the world's top manufacturers of power plants with high efficiency.

NIDC implements 2,559 special, technical operations for subsidiaries, private sector

TEHRAN- National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) has implemented 2,559 special and technical operations for the applicant companies, which are subsidiaries of the NIDC, and the private sector during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), an official with the company announced.

Mehran Makvandi, the deputy managing director of NIDC for technical and engineering affairs, said that of the mentioned offered services, 2,042 operations were in the field of technical services management, and 517 operations were special services.

Back in July, NIDC's Director of Renovation and Upgrading Shahram Shamipour had announced that the company had allocated 5.2 trillion rials (about \$123.8 million) for the renovation and upgrading of its drilling rigs and equipment in the company's operational, technical, specialized, and logistical departments.



According to him, the renovation and upgrading operations are aimed at improving the performance of these rigs which are active in the country's oil and gas field development projects.

Shamipour noted that the equipment going through renovation operations include fluid pumps, draw-works machinery, charting tools, pumps for cementing and acidizing trucks, tow trucks, cranes, piping

machines, generators, hydrogen sulfide gas treatment systems, acid-coated storage tanks, and cement transport bunkers.

Considering the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s new strategies for strengthening the presence of domestic companies in the development of the country's oil fields, NIDC, as a major subsidiary of the company, has been supporting such companies by lending them drilling rigs and other necessary equipment.

NIDC managed to carry out 10,182 meters of horizontal and directional drilling in 43 oil and gas wells across the country during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to the Head of NIDC's Special Operations Department Ali Daqaeyqi.

Some 654 meters of core extraction drilling was also conducted in the mentioned period which was a huge achievement for assessing the condition of the country's oil and gas reserves.

Major economic issues discussed at TCCIMA board meeting

TEHRAN- The 28th meeting of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) Board of Representatives was held on Tuesday in which current issues of the country's economy, such as rising inflation, negative investment rates, and inappropriate policies were discussed.

As reported by the TCCIMA portal, the consequences of allocating energy subsidies and the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the country's economy were also reviewed in two separate reports.

The meeting was attended by the TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari and the members of the chamber's board of representatives.

Speaking in the meeting Khansari stressed the need for the government representatives to attend the meetings of the TCCIMA more regularly and to have stronger communication with the private sector.

He noted that the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has not yet introduced the ministry representatives to the chamber and expressed hope that the minister would take the necessary measures in this regard.

Stating that the upward trend of inflation in Iran is still continuing, Khansari noted that inflation was one of the major issues that the government promised to manage.



Referring to the latest data released by the Statistics Center of Iran (SCI) the official said: "Annual inflation up to [the Seventh Iranian calendar month of] Mehr was reported to be 45.4 percent, which although shows a decrease of 0.4 percent compared to the previous month, it is still a high rate."

Point-to-point inflation also reached 39.2 percent in the mentioned month, down 4.5 percent, he said.

"Today, the most important duty of the government and the private sector is to return hope to the society," the official stressed.

He noted that according to official reports, in the first quarter of this year, the capital formation rate has been negative 3.5 percent, and it can be concluded that with the decrease in investment, the economy will also shrink.

"We cannot expect a high economic growth rate unless we have positive invest rates," Khansari added.

TEDPIX slides 7,700 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 7,716 points to 1.408 million on Tuesday.

As reported, over 4.465 billion securities worth 41.187 trillion rials (about \$980.6 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dropped 4,156 points, and the second market's index fell 20,259 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.

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.

"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 November 14.

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.

Lebanon is subjected to economic terrorism, military analyst says

From page 1 ▶ Following is the text of the interview:

What are the reasons for the economic siege on Lebanon by some Persian Gulf countries, while we see a restoration of ties with Syria represented by in Abdullah bin Zayed's visit to Damascus?

The motives and reasons, with regard to the (Persian) Gulf relationships with Lebanon and Syria are different. With regard to Lebanon, don't forget that Beirut is subjected to aggression led by Saudi Arabia followed by other Persian Gulf states.

The reason for this is due to the Saudi claim that Hezbollah is the major side who organized, planned and led the military operations in Yemen and caused the defeat of the Saudi-led aggression.

Therefore, Riyadh wants to punish Beirut, especially Hezbollah, for its so-called role in Yemen. The other possibility is that the Saudis are pressuring Lebanon and Hezbollah to force them to stop the Houthis advances in Yemen in a way that save Saudis' face. The problem when it comes to Lebanon, is Yemen and Saudi Arabia's accusation against Hezbollah and its role in this regard.

The second reason for which Saudi Arabia has besieged Lebanon is due to the Saudis' desire to take the lead in Lebanon, but it finds that in light of the influence that Hezbollah exercises in the country, it cannot achieve its goals.

This shows weakness the Saudis and their clients and followers inside Lebanon. Most of them have been scattered and Saudi policies no longer are desirable in Lebanon, unless for only one person: the leader of the Lebanese Forces.

As for Syria, there are different motives that push the (Persian) Gulf States in general and the Emirates in particular to extend bridge of friendship to Syria. There are three reasons; the first is a (Persian) Gulf states' desire to get out of the losing position after the global war on Syria failed. Secondly, their desire (especially represented by

the UAE) to preserve a seat and foothold for themselves in Syria and its reconstruction sector. The third reason, which is hidden, is that the (Persian) Gulf states want to return to Syria in an effort to limit Iran's influence and relations with Syria under the pretext of consolidating Arab ties with Syria. (Persian)Gulf States make every effort to cut and ruin Persian-Arab relations.

Do you think that Lebanon can survive the current economic crisis in the foreseeable future?

Lebanon is indeed subjected to an economic war and economic terrorism in which more than one country are participating. Let us announce and regret that there are Lebanese sides helping the enemies in this war and terrorism. Therefore, the war on Lebanon has internal and external dimensions, in addition to the corruption and banditry to which the Lebanese economy is exposed.

I think the current economic crisis has no way out in the foreseeable future.

Some temporary and positive steps may be taken that alleviate the crisis, but no essential treatment is looming in Lebanon's horizon.

How can the countries and groups affiliated to the resistance axis - from Iran, Iraq and Syria to Palestine - stand by each other in difficult circumstances?

As is well known, the resistance axis managed to formulate its relations with its components in a tactful and flexible manner within its capabilities and potentials, however, it achieved what was required in this regard.

It is true that this axis does not work as an organization or

alliance similar to the Atlantic Alliance under a unified command or one operations room, but the frameworks that were adopted for coordination and exchange of experiences are sufficient.

Leaders in the various components of this axis can exchange opinions, exchange capabilities, and intervene at the appropriate time, either with advice, or by appropriate military forces. Therefore, I believe that the current framework of the resistance axis meets the requirements.

There are those who say that the Lebanese government was formed with an American-French signal without the consent of Saudi Arabia. Do you think that Saudi Arabia is retaliating by putting pressure on the Lebanese government?

Yes, Saudi Arabia is not content with the current government and its formation because Riyadh's demand was exclusively to expel Hezbollah from the government.

This demand was an impossible since Hezbollah is a major political player in Lebanon, and a government or parliament cannot be formed without Hezbollah's contribution.

Saudi Arabia wants to exclude Hezbollah, therefore, there is a contradiction between Lebanon's reality and Saudi demands. For this reason, Saudi Arabia refused to welcome the new government and rejected any form of dealing with it because Hezbollah is part of it.

As for France and America, the matter is different, because they have realized that the power vacuum in Lebanon is not in their interest.

They know Lebanon may get

out of control if it remains without a government. Therefore, they insisted on forming the government despite its inclusion of Hezbollah.

Is there a paradox between Arab nationalism and resistance? When some parties talk about returning to the Arab incubator, they mean abandoning the axis of resistance. What is your comment?

In fact, there is a difference between Arab nationalism and (Persian) Gulf states' policies, those who fell into the arms of the Zionists and became representatives of the Zionist movement in the Arab world.

As for Arab-nationalism and resistance, the ties between them are close and strong; and the resistance movements since the World War I have always taken Arab-nationalism as a slogan.

Do not forget, for example, what Jamal Abdel Nasser said: "What was taken by force can only be restored by force." It means that we cannot restore Palestine or any occupied land through negotiations, but rather by force, meaning the importance of the resistance and armies.

So, Arab-nationalism and resistance are inseparable. As for the attempts of some to make nationalism the antithesis of resistance, this is a despicable act and against the reality and is not aligned with the history of Arab-nationalism and resistance. But if you say that some of political players in the (Persian) Gulf states deny Arab-nationalism, this is true, and whoever denies Arab-nationalism may deny the resistance.

Take, for example, the Arab National Conference, which is represented by a group of Arab elites and great figures, and in all its statements and positions, it affirms the legitimacy of the resistance, considering that the resistance is the only strategic option to restore Palestine and preserve Arab rights.

Hence, the issue of resistance and Arab-nationalism is a story of intimate relationships.

What's behind the rise in U.S. inflation?

From page 1 ▶ rising 2.5% on the month and 26.4% for the year. New vehicle prices were up 1.4% and 9.8%, respectively.

Food prices also showed a sizeable bounce, up 0.9% and 5.3% respectively. Within the food category, meat, poultry, fish and eggs collectively rose 1.7% for the month and 11.9% year over year.

The Labor Department says wages after inflation fell 0.5% from September to October, the product of a 0.4% increase in average hourly earnings that was more than offset by the Consumer Price Index surge.

Republicans have been quick to attack (repeatedly) President Joe Biden and Democratic lawmakers over the hike in inflation as well as hammering his economic stimulus plans as misguided. Writing on social media, Republican senator for Florida, Marco Rubio lashed out by saying "this will be a winter of high gas prices, shortages and inflation because far left lunatics control our government."

According to the American multinational independent investment bank, Jefferies Group LLC, fueled by a persistent shortage of available workers, wage pressures will take over as the dominant driver of U.S. inflation in the second half of next year

The bank has reported that it believes "the U.S. is entering the tightest labor market conditions since the 1950s" As a result, wage pressures are not likely to ease any time next year, keeping inflation high even as the supply chain bottlenecks ease.

The U.S. is still six million jobs away from returning to the pre-pandemic employment-to-population ratio, a goal that Jefferies Bank says is "no longer attainable."

Before President Joe Biden's virtual meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping began on Monday, two dozen business groups had called on the Biden White House to remove Trump era tariffs on China to help ease the historic inflation. In a letter to Biden, the business groups warned tariffs on China and retaliatory levies are hurting U.S. companies and families by raising costs.

U.S. importers have suffered immensely by paying over \$110 billion in these tariffs since they began under former President Donald Trump, a trend that continued with \$40 billion of that sum paid after Biden came to power.

The letter argued that "these costs, compounded by other inflationary pressures, impose a significant burden on American businesses, farmers and families trying to recover from the effects of the pandemic."

The business groups noted that the U.S. Treasury Secretary acknowledged the easing of trade tensions can help the suffering economy saying "we agree with Secretary Yellen's recent comments that tariffs tend to increase domestic prices and raise costs to consumers and businesses due to higher cost inputs and that lowering U.S. and Chinese tariffs could help ease inflation."

Some financial observers say one of the main reasons for the rise in prices are constraints in commodities with the most demand for consumers, suffering disruptions in the supply chain. The chairman of the American Federal Reserve, Jerome Powell, has echoed that argument. time will tell if that is the source of the problem.

Other economists believe there is a much more sinister reason for the current inflation, a situation that appears to be getting seriously worse by the day and something that falls into the hands of a relatively few business giants who enjoy the economic power to raise prices at their own will.

The argument that these economic experts make is if the markets had been more competitive, then companies would have kept their product prices as low as possible to avoid their competitors from taking customers away.

However, that doesn't appear to be the case anymore in America.

Corporate giants are raising prices instead



Tents are placed along Skid Row in Los Angeles.

of dropping them despite revenues showing they are actually making record profits. It signals the extent of the power they enjoy in the market that these massive companies are able to increase their prices after all the turmoil and economic damage caused by the pandemic to the American people (the record number of unemployment levels, the stimulates packages passed etc.) In fact, these large companies have so much market power that they are able raise prices carte blanche.

With that much freedom to operate with impunity; then analysts would probably say the underlying problem isn't so much to do with rising inflation but rather more to do with not much competition out there for large corporations. Despite that, it has not prevented the very same businesses from using inflation as a pretext and an excuse to raise their prices. And that is something critics would describe as unbelievable greed.

Some companies have announced they will start charging more by claiming they need to increase their own purchasing prices because they too are enduring hefty costs to manufacture a product. However, a deeper look into the same companies' financial books tells us they have been making extremely large amounts of profit before and after inflation rose.

There is a similar trend in the energy markets where demand is growing but supply is not. There isn't that much competition so energy firms have allowed supply to be kept low while prices kept high. In essence, the few energy firms who run the industry can even coordinate among themselves. The same can be said about pharmaceutical companies or airlines.

Ordinary people are the biggest losers. The wealth gap in America is shocking to say the least. Here are some facts: By the start of this year, the richest one percent of Americans held 32% of the

entire nation's wealth, the highest level since records began in 1989. Meanwhile, the bottom 50% held just two percent of the nation's wealth. Since the start of 2020, the richest 1% gained a whopping \$10 trillion. Last year, U.S. billionaires owned nearly \$4 trillion, that is approximately 3.5% of all privately held household wealth in the country. Billionaire wealth was twice the amount of wealth held by the bottom 50% of U.S. households combined, that is around 160 million Americans. The Federal Reserve estimates that the amount of privately held wealth in the U.S. stood at \$112 trillion.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration has been negotiating with the oil industry in an effort keep American households warm this winter. This week, Biden himself acknowledged in a statement that "inflation hurts Americans' pocketbooks, and reversing this trend is a top priority for me."

But these talks will be political survival tactics as there are major concerns already facing the current U.S. administration, so early into its four year term in office.

The President's popularity has not only dropped but nosedived dramatically and the midterm elections are not too far away. Typically, American political parties tend to perform badly in their first term (in the midterm elections) as all their leader's election trail promises that got their President into the Oval Office never actually materialize. Voters quickly realize they have fallen for the same trick again. The level of that voter disappointment will be assessed by just how much of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate the democrats can retain next year.

Refugee crisis, chaos at Belarus-Poland border

TEHRAN - Belarus has sent thousands of desperate migrants to its border with Poland in a bid to antagonize the European Union over sanctions imposed last year, in the wake of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's brutal crackdown on political opponents and protesters.

The influx of migrants, which EU officials say Lukashenko has deliberately provoked as a "hybrid attack" on the EU, comes at a difficult moment for the EU as the bloc struggles with internal tensions of its own, but has so far resulted in an increasingly unified EU response.

Clashes have erupted between stranded refugees and Polish border guards at the Polish-Belarusian border.

The chaos unfolded late morning on Tuesday, with refugees stranded at the Kuznica border crossing reportedly throwing stones at Polish guards.

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The guards responded by using water cannon and tear gas against those who have been trying to cross the border, according to Poland's Ministry of National Defense (MOD).

"The use of force [by Poland] is completely unjustifiable because there are legal procedures which should be used from the very beginning," said Marta Szymanderska from Grupa Granica, a coalition of NGOs which are responding to the humanitarian crisis at the border. "The actions of the Polish forces are not only illegal but also inhuman," she told Al Jazeera.

The MOD said: "The migrants attacked our



Migrants, near a fire on the Belarusian-Polish border in the Grodno region, Belarus.

soldiers and guards with stones and are trying to force the fence to get to the Polish territory.

"Our forces used tear gas to thwart the aggression of migrants."

It was unclear if there were any injuries among refugees, while at least one policeman was wounded.

The Polish Border Guard said: "Illegal migrants have been gathering at the border crossing in Kuznica, at the Belarusian side. New groups, which so far have been squatting at the border, are joining them. An attempt to forcefully cross the border is being prepared. Everything is taking place under the supervision of Belarusian forces."

Earlier on Tuesday, more Polish police and security forces arrived at the border to prevent what Polish authorities claimed was an attempt by migrants to illegally cross into Polish - and European Union - territory.

Video footage posted on social media showed people near the border running away after being sprayed with water cannon.

Thousands of refugees and migrants are stranded between the Polish and Belarusian borders as a

result of an East-West geopolitical crisis between Warsaw and its allies, and Minsk and Moscow.

According to international law, people looking for asylum have the right to claim it at official border crossings.

However, Polish border guards have been denying that right to many asylum seekers who have attempted to cross the border.

Since the crisis unfolded in August, Polish guards have been reportedly pushing back people who managed to cross into the Polish territory from Belarus.

Many refugees are spending weeks in the woodlands which cover the border, trying to leave the border zone and seek asylum.

Polish authorities passed a law which effectively legalizes pushbacks, although the practice remains dubious under international law.

Moreover, the border area has been marked as a state of emergency which means that it is inaccessible to media and NGOs who cannot gather information nor provide migrants with humanitarian assistance.

The international community holds Belarus responsible for the crisis.

Earlier this year, Minsk removed visas for citizens of a number of Middle Eastern and African states and opened numerous tourist agencies offering an easy and cheap way to get to Europe.

Critics of Belarus say the move might be an act of revenge against Poland, which supported last year's protests against longtime ruler President Alexander Lukashenko.

Activists on the ground in Poland, who are providing refugees with food, water and sleeping bags, are alarmed by the developments.

Iran hotel prices soar some 30 percent



From page 1 ▶ In September 2020, Hamzehzadeh announced that considering the number of tourists and travelers, which has decreased drastically, increasing hotel prices does not make sense and will not increase the income of hoteliers.

He added that due to the outbreak of the coronavirus hotels are offering up to 60 percent discounts instead of raising their prices, however, with these amounts of discounts, the occupancy rate of hotels is less than five to seven percent.

Earlier in October, the official said that Iranian hotels are ready to receive foreign tourists while 90 percent of the hotel staff have been vaccinated against the coronavirus.

Earlier this month, the official noted that Ira-

nian hotels have lost 202 trillion rials (some \$4.8 billion at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) of potential revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two-thirds of the hotel staff have lost their jobs as well, he added.

Back in July, ISNA reported that the tourism industry of the country has suffered a loss of some 320 trillion rials (\$7.6 billion at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

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

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

Iran is potentially a booming destination for travelers seeking cultural attractions, breathtaking sceneries, and numerous UNESCO-registered sites. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Webinar to explore 100 years of museology in Iran

TEHRAN – Tens of cultural heritage experts, archaeologists, and curators have been invited to attend a Tehran webinar to discuss 100 years of museology in Iran.

Iranian National Committee of Museums is organizing the event on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Named “100 Years of the Museum in Iran”, the event will be hosted by the National Museum of Iran on November 20, the report added.

Iran is home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to 4000 BC. It also hosts some of the world's oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The name of Iran, formerly known as Persia, mostly conjures up the first Persian Empire, ruled by the Achaemenids (ca. 550 – 330 BC) and sites such as Pasargadae and Persepolis. However, there are tens of prehistorical sites as the Burm-



A view of the National Museum of Iran

City in Sistan-Baluchestan, Tepe Sialk in Kashan, Susa and Tchogha Zanbil in the Khuzestan province, and Ecbatana in Hamedan which predate the Achaemenid period

In a nutshell, the history of Iran can be divided into Pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. The Medes unified the ancient land as a nation and empire in 625 BC. . . the Islamic conquest of Persia (633–656) that put an end to the mighty Sassanid Empire (224–651) was a turning point in the history of the nation.

Visually impaired people toured Khuzestan attractions

TEHRAN – Khuzestan has hosted a group of 20 visually impaired people on a tour across the southwestern province.

“The blind tourists, who came from different cities throughout the province, visited UNESCO-listed Tchogha Zanbil, the archaeological site Haft Tappeh and an eco-lodge unit on Sunday,” a provincial tourism official, Peyman Nabhani, said on Tuesday.

“The tour was organized by the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department in collaboration with the association of the blind as well as several tourism activists,” the official added.

A special focus of the tour was paying attention to the disabled, including their participation in tourism activities and institutionalizing the culture of tourism, he noted.

To ensure that such experiences continue, tour guides and travel agencies should offer blind tourists audible, touchable and movable tours and visits, he explained.

They should also prepare Braille brochures and models of the works that will be visited to help the blind learn about monuments and historical sites, he noted.

Furthermore, the official not-

ed that blind people should be offered these tours so that they can achieve confidence, experience adventure, and enjoy the pleasures of traveling.

UNESCO-registered Tchogha Zanbil, which is a ruined prehistoric ziggurat and a top tourist destination in southwestern Iran, is widely known as the world's best surviving example of Elamite architecture. The ruined ziggurat stands in Khuzestan province, southwest Iran. It was made a UNESCO site in 1979.

According to UNESCO, Tchogha Zanbil is the largest ziggurat outside of Mesopotamia and the best preserved of this type of stepped pyramidal monument. Lonely Planet says that even if you're not a fan of ancient ruins, the great bulk and splendid semi-desert isolation of the site can't fail to impress. Try to catch it in the soft, golden light of late afternoon rather than the harsh midday sun.

The ziggurat is located approximately 30 km southeast of Shush and 80 km north of Ahvaz. Reaching a total height of some 25m, the gigantic monument was used to be surmount-

ed by a temple and estimated to hit 52m during its heyday. Tchogha Zanbil was excavated in six seasons between 1951 and 1961 by Roman Ghirshman, a Russian-born French archaeologist who was specialized in ancient Iran.

Zigurrats, in general, are pyramidal stepped temple towers that bear architectural and religious characteristics of the major cities of Mesopotamia from approximately 2200 until 500 BC. They were usually built with a core of mud brick and an exterior covered with baked brick. Approximately 25 zigurrats are known, being equally divided among Sumer, Babylonia, and Assyria.

Haft-Tappeh (literary meaning “Seven Mounds”) is located 15 kilometers to the south of the ancient city of Susa, itself a highly significant archaeological site in southwest Iran.

Early excavations in Haft-Tappeh conducted by the late Iranian archaeologist Dr. Ezzatollah Negahban yielded a large number of petroglyphs bearing cuneiform inscriptions in Akkadian, belonging to Elamite kings. The petroglyphs

Iraqi tour operators examine medical tourism in Iran

TEHRAN – A delegation of Iraqi tour operators has commenced a familiarization tour across the western Iranian province of Kordestan, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

Seven Iraqi travel agents and tour operators arrived in Kordestan on Tuesday to tour the province to get acquainted with its medical tourism potentials, CHTN quoted Arman Vatandoust as saying on Tuesday.

It is hoped that this trip will lead to the development of cooperation in health tourism sectors in Kordestan, as the province has good capacity in this field, the official added.

The developing health tour-

ism industry is one of the most important fields of Iran's travel sector, which is trying to prove its capabilities and capacities in attracting medical and health tourists to the country.

Many domestic experts believe that medical tourism in Iran is a win-win opportunity both for the country and foreign patients, as they are offered affordable yet quality treatment services and the country gains considerable foreign currency.

Iran's two most popular medical tourist cities are Tehran and Mashhad, but the coronavirus outbreak has significantly reduced the number of travelers.

Iran is one of the major des-



tinations for health tourism in the region, and patients with 55 different nationalities, mostly from neighboring countries including Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan are seeking to use Iran's services and facilities in this field.

Iranian hospitals admitted nearly 70,000 foreign patients over the Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2018 – March 2019) and it made an economic contribution of around \$1.2 billion to the country, according to the medical tourism department at the Ministry of Health.

In April 2018, the rotating

presidency of the International Health Tourism Conference of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was handed to the Islamic Republic for a three-year term.

Mohammad Jahangiri who presides over a national center for developing health tourism said in May 2018 that Iran can annually earn \$7 billion in medical and health tourism, though the sector now brings in only one-seventh or even lesser of the sum.

The Islamic Republic has set its goals to exceed its yearly medical travelers to around 2 million in the Iranian calendar year 1404.

Turkey drops PCR test for fully vaccinated Iranian travelers

TEHRAN – Turkey has agreed to drop mandatory PCR tests for fully vaccinated Iranian travelers, ILNA reported.

Travelers are considered fully vaccinated 14 days after receiving their final dose of a vaccine approved by the World Health Organization (WHO). This applies to the last dose of the two-dose Pfizer vaccine and the single-dose Johnson & Johnson (J&J) jab.

According to new announcements, as of November 15, travelers of Iranian nationalities who want to travel to Turkey from the homeland will be allowed to enter without the need for PCR testing if 14 days passes from the injection of the second dose of vaccines approved by the WHO including Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Sputnik, Sinopharm, Sinovac Sinofarm, Sinovac (or 14 days after a single dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine), the news agency said.

Passengers between the ages of 12 and 18, who are not vaccinated, will need to be tested for COVID-19. If the test is negative, they can proceed with their travels in Turkey. If the test is positive, they will be required to quarantine.

All travelers arriving in Turkey also need to submit a Passenger Locator Form, which re-



quires the passenger's personal information and passport details.

Neighboring Turkey is one of the major destinations for Iranian passengers, according to data compiled by Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

In that regard, some Iranian travel experts have emphasized the need to attain a balance in tourist flow rates between the two nations, saying the Islamic Republic should reach a balance with Turkey in the movement of tourist flow.

Months before the pandemic, Iranian travel agencies introduced a plan to offer stimulus packages and hold familiarization tours for Turkish agencies, tour operators, journalists, and influencers in a bid to attract more

travelers from the neighboring country. “Iran will be organizing familiarization tours for about 100 Turkish tourism agencies after the [complete] reopening of joint borders and resuming [mutual] tourist relations,” according to Mehdi Rezaei, the secretary of the Turkey consortium at the Association of Iranian Travel Agents.

“Fam tours had been planned for Turkish [travel] agencies and media for a period before the virus pandemic. Unfortunately, at the outset of the outbreak, the tours were postponed to another time when mutual travels are resumed,” the secretary explained. “We must go to the heart of Turkey and introduce our country to them. In Iran, there are places that Turks wish to visit, such as the shrines in Neyshabour and Kashan. Many Turks are familiar with Iranian literature and poets, and Hafez's poems are etched in the memory of many of them. We must develop these capacities.”

Travel is going to rebound globally after the virus spread plunged the tourism industry and economy in the global scene for more than a year when passenger traffic on airlines and hotel occupancy rates fell off a cliff compared to the same periods in previous years.

Illegal excavators arrested in Isfahan



TEHRAN – Iranian police have arrested seven illegal diggers in Buin va Miandasht county, the central province of Isfahan.

The accused people were traced and finally arrested while digging in a historical site after police received reports from cultural heritage aficionados about their misdeeds, Buin va Miandasht tourism chief said on Monday.

A metal detector and some excavation tools have been seized from the culprits who were surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, Javad Farhadi announced, CHTN reported.

Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. The ancient city is filled with many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The city has long been nicknamed as

Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into “half the world”; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its ‘life-giving river’, the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside.

The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning “Image of the World”), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning. Built in the early 17th century, the UNESCO-registered square is punctuated with the most interesting sights in Isfahan.

Modern Isfahan is now home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts, however, its inner core wants to be preserved as a priceless gem.

Birth rate drops by 8% in 6 months on year

TEHRAN – The number of births registered in Iran during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21) shows a decrease of eight percent compared to the same period last year.

During the aforementioned period, 533,088 births were registered, compared to 580,623 births recorded last year, according to the Statistical Center of Iran.

Among the infants whose births were registered in the country's population database in the first six months of this year, 288,030 were boys and 269,502 girls.

The average age of mothers in registered births is 29 years and the average age of fathers is 33 years.

Fertility at below-replacement level

The fertility rate declined to 1.71 children in the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021), reaching below the replacement level, according to the report released by the Statistical Center of Iran.

Replacement level is the amount

of fertility needed to keep the population the same from generation to generation. It refers to the total fertility rate that will result in a stable population without it increasing or decreasing.

The fertility rate from 2.07 children in the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), which can be considered fertility at the replacement level.

Today, the country's fertility rate

The fertility rate declined to 1.71 children in the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021), reaching below the replacement level.



has reached about 1.6 children per woman, however, it was 6.5 children per woman, in 1986. The lowest fertility rate in the whole region of West Asia, North Africa, and the MENA region is recorded for Iran.

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

Nicholas Eberstadt, the Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) wrote in an article in July 2020 that the fertility rate in Iran has dropped by 70 percent over the past 30 years, which has been the highest decline in human history.

Seyed Hamed Barakati, deputy health minister for family and school population, said in May that Iran's population growth rate has decreased to less than one per-

cent for the first time over the past four decades.

Population growth, family support

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

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

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

90% of students vaccinated against COVID-19

TEHRAN – A total of 5,730,576 students, equaling 90 percent of the target group aged 12 to 18 nationwide, have received the first doses of coronavirus vaccine, Azam Goudarzi, a health ministry official, said on Tuesday.

To date, 35 percent of the students aged 12 to 18 have received both doses of the vaccine, she added, IRNA reported.

Some 6.3 million students across the country should be inoculated to gain immunity against the virus, she noted.

In the capital city of Tehran, 38.66 percent of students have received the second dose, she said.

With the decline in COVID-19 cases, schools are gradually reopened with a delay of one month or two under health protocols.

Students in tenth, eleventh, and twelfth



grades attended schools on Saturday, while students in seventh, eighth, and ninth grades, as well as elementary students, will go to school from November 22.

All educational centers in Iran have been closed since February 2020.

In order for students to keep in touch with their studies, the Ministry of Education launched a homegrown mobile application on April 9, called SHAD, providing students with distance learning programs. More than 60 percent of students and 94 percent of teachers attended 64 percent of classes through the SHAD app, whose acronym in Persian translates as the Students Education Network.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) also began to broadcast televised educational programs on a daily basis after school closures.

Due to the vaccination and the reduction of transmission, schools are gradually reopened since September, and about 15 million students across the country can benefit from face-to-face education with strict observance of health protocols during school hours.

Southern Iran to host migratory birds in winter

From page 1 ▶ The annual census for migratory birds in Iran begins in the middle of the Iranian calendar month of Dey (December 22-January 20) and ends in the middle of the month of Bahman (January 21-February 19), through which Iran hosts rare species of migratory birds heading from north to the southern countries due to reduced seasonal temperatures and food availability.

Iran's bird species

Hosting over 600 species of birds, Iran is a climatically rich country, so it is said that the number of bird species in Iran is higher than in the whole of Europe. A wide range of wetlands is the reason be-

hind migratory birds choosing Iran for an annual wintering habitat, as a large number of birds fly a thousand miles each year to benefit from this rich climate.

Every year, from early September to late February, Iran hosts rare

Over 120 species from about 20 families of wintering birds identified in Bushehr province.

species of migratory birds heading from north to the southern countries due to reduced seasonal temperatures and food availability.

It is estimated that there are about 50 billion birds in the world out of 9,000 species, many of which are migratory. Accordingly, about five to seven million birds migrate to Iran in different seasons. There are about 530 species of birds in Iran, 320 of which are migratory species, some of which are native species.

Among the various groups of migratory birds wintering in Iran, the largest population belongs to the group of geese, swans, and ducks amounting to 781,499 and the



smallest population of seven are the long-tailed ducks or oldsquaw.

The provinces of Mazandaran and Golestan are the first provinces with the highest number of migratory birds for having sufficient resources, as the movement of migratory birds is closely linked to the seasonal availability of resources.

“Science for All” festival to put nature under the spotlight

TEHRAN – The 7th festival of “Science for All” will open virtually in Tehran on Wednesday with paying special attention to nature and problems created by technology in this area.

Offering a local solution to the problems is the main focus of the festival, ISNA reported.

The festival is held by the National Museum of Science and Technology in partnership with scientific and cultural centers with the aim of providing the people an opportunity to visit scientific achievements and increase public interest in scientific advances.

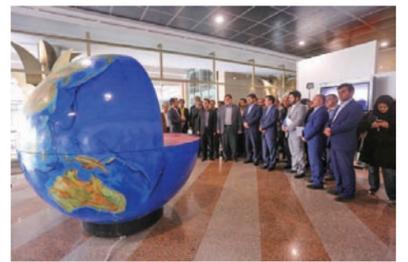
It includes various programs such as science-fiction stories, introducing the best science books from the children's point of view, meeting with experts, computer games on the subject of periodic tables, experiments, and scientific materials, lectures, webcasts of books, science-fiction podcasts accompanied by a play, etc.

The festival is running until November 20.

Knowledge-based firms protect environment

Innovation of knowledge-based and creative companies serves to preserve and protect the environment, Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, has said.

The role of knowledge-based firms in the development of environmentally friendly technologies has proven its effectiveness, and fortunately, most of the national macro-projects supported by the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology have been defined in the field of



environment, Sattari added.

Health, environment, and food are three strategic and priority areas of national projects (knowledge-based and technological projects with commercialization abilities, implementation of which requires the extensive cooperation of various players).

Technology development in Iran

Despite sanctions putting pressure on the country, a unique opportunity was provided for business development and the activity of knowledge-based companies in the country.

Currently, over 7,000 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency.

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

Air pollution is still killing over 300,000 people in Europe each year, says report

Although air quality in Europe has become better in recent years, with fewer negative health impacts, more than 300,000 people still died prematurely due to exposure to fine particulate matter pollution in the European Union in 2019, according to a new report.

The analysis, published by the European Environment Agency (EEA), noted that at least 58 percent of these deaths, or about 178,000, could have been avoided if all European Union Member States had reached the WHO's air quality guideline level of 5 micrograms per cubic metre.

The guideline reflects the atmospheric concentration of ultrasmall particles, those with size less than 2.5 microns, above which adverse health effects are known to occur, the Independent reported.

In 2019, more than 53,500 premature deaths in Germany were caused by fine particulate matter pollution, the report said. This was followed by 49,900 deaths in Italy, 29,800 in France and 23,300 in Spain.

The highest number of such deaths per head of population, it said, was in Poland, where more than 39,300 people died.

Other than fine particulate matter, the analysis also found that more than 40,400 premature deaths were due to chronic nitrogen dioxide exposure, and about 16,800 such deaths were caused by acute ozone exposure.

“Investing in cleaner heating, mobility, agriculture and industry delivers better health, produc-

tivity and quality of life for all Europeans and especially for the most vulnerable,” Hans Bruyninckx, EEA executive director, said in a statement. “These investments save lives and also help accelerate progress towards carbon neutrality and strong biodiversity.”

Earlier studies have shown that air pollution is the single largest environmental health threat in Europe, leading to over a million premature deaths in the 1990s, causing heart diseases, stroke, lung disease and cancer.

With directives enforcing favourable improvement in air quality across the continent, the number of such premature deaths were more than halved to about 450,000 by 2005.

However, the new EEA report said that the recently established new global air quality guidelines by the WHO and the EU Zero Pollution Action Plan can help further reduce the number of premature deaths due to air pollution.

The analysis, published ahead of the EU Clean Air Forum this week, noted that the number of premature deaths due to exposure to fine particulate matter can be reduced by about 55 percent by 2030, as compared to 2005.

“Compared to 2005, in 2019, premature deaths attributed to exposure to fine particulate matter decreased by 33 percent in the EU-27. If this rate of reducing premature deaths is maintained going forward, then the EU is expected to reach the Zero Pollution Action Plan target,” the report noted.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON NOVEMBER 16

New cases	6,430
New deaths	134
Total cases	6,051,642
Total deaths	128,406
New hospitalized patients	1,053
Patients in critical condition	3,477
Total recovered patients	5,720,893
Diagnostic tests conducted	37,254,424
Doses of vaccine injected	99,628,185

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

COVID-19 takes lowest toll on foreign nationals in Iran

Iran had the lowest coronavirus cases and mortality among refugees and foreign nationals compared to the population it is hosting, Mehdi Mahmoudi, Director of Citizens and Immigrants Affairs of the Ministry of Interior has said.

Referring to the measures taken for non-Iranian citizens during the pandemic, he said that since the very beginning, when the country became infected with the disease, the community of foreign nationals in our country was no exception to this issue, and prevention programs and necessary measures have been taken for this group.

“We identified foreign nationals in need and tried to provide them with livelihood assistance, as well as health packages and self-protective items needed to prevent the infection,” he explained.

He further added that every year about 800,000 illegal foreign nationals are arrested and deported.

ایران کمترین تلفات کرونا اتباع خارجی را داشته است

مهدی محمودی مدیرکل امور اتباع و مهاجرین وزارت کشور گفت در خصوص ابتلا به بیماری کرونا در بین اتباع خارجی، ایران کمترین ابتلا و کمترین تلفات را نسبت به جمعیت داشته است.

او در گفت‌وگو با ایلنا درباره اقدامات صورت گرفته برای اتباع غیرایرانی در ایام کرونا گفت: از همان ابتدا که کشور درگیر این بیماری شد، جامعه اتباع خارجی هم در کشور ما مستثنی از این موضوع نبود و برنامه‌های پیشگیری و تمهیدات لازم نیز برای این گروه نیز در نظر گرفته شده است.

اتباع غیرایرانی که نیازمند بودند را شناسایی کرده و تلاش کردیم از نظر معیشتی به این گروه نیز کمک‌هایی صورت بگیرد و همچنین بسته‌های بهداشتی و اقلام مورد نیاز پیشگیری از بیماری کرونا در چندین نوبت به آنها ارائه شده است.

او افزود هر سال حدود ۸۰۰ هزار نفر از اتباع غیرایرانی که به صورت غیرقانونی در کشور هستند دستگیر و طرد می‌شوند.



NOVEMBER 17, 2021

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

An ignorant person will always overdo a thing or neglect it totally.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon: 11:49 Evening: 17:16 Dawn: 5:16 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:43 (tomorrow)

Iran: Myths and legends

Part 7

As the bull and Gayomard died, each emitted sperm; from the bull came cattle and plants; from Gayomard's sperm grew a plant, whose leaves took the form of the first human couple, Mashye and Mashyane.

Despite being admonished by Ohrmazd to do good and not worship the demons, they succumbed to evil's seductions and declared the Evil Spirit the creator—the archetypal Zoroastrian sin.

At first, they refrained from food, then drank milk, then ate meat. For fifty years they refrained from sex; but, when they did copulate, having been led astray by evil, they devoured their children, until Ohrmazd took away the sweetness of children so the population could grow. The theological implications of this creation myth will be discussed below.

Eschatological myths

These are of two aspects of Zoroastrian eschatology: myths associated with the end of an individual's life and what in the Judeo-Christian world is called "the end of the world."

In Zoroastrianism, the latter is termed the renovation, for the end of the world would be the defeat of Ohrmazd.

The individual judgment after death is found in the Gathas, where the prophet states that "the end the Worst Existence shall be for the wicked, but (the House of) Best purpose for the just man". Y. 31.20 refers to "[a] long life of darkness, foul food, the crying of woe—to that existence, O wicked ones, your Inner Self shall lead you by her actions." In Y. 46.10-11 he explicitly refers to the Chinvat bridge (Chinwad puh), when his opponents will be led by their Inner Selves (daena den) to the House of the Lie.

This judgment is expounded in greater detail in later literature. At the first judgment, individuals' good thoughts, words, and deeds are weighed in the balance against their evil thoughts, words, and deeds under the just gaze of Mithra, Sraosha, and Rashnu.

Such an idea is not unique in world mythologies; it is found, for example, in Egypt. The distinctively Zoroastrian element is the consistent emphasis on individual responsibility based on freedom of choice between the forces of good and evil.

This developed from Zoroaster's conviction of his personal encounter with Ahura Mazda; of his personal calling, for which he was set apart from the beginning. After death and before the judgment at the balances, the soul meditates on its thoughts, words, and deeds.

After judgment it is led by the personification of its own conscience or Inner Self to the Chinwad bridge, where the righteous are led to the House of Song, while the wicked fall from the bridge into the House of Darkness.

Zoroastrian theology has no room for a doctrine of one person dying to save others, or of an inscrutable divine will determining the fate of individuals.

Each individual is judged on the balance of one's own good and evil thoughts, words, and deeds. Even in the afterlife the emphasis on individual experience continues.

When the Righteous Viraz (Arda Viraz) experienced his soul journey to heaven and



Detail from Sogdian-Zoroastrian funerary couch from China at Miho Museum, Japan. The images purport to show a soul crossing the Chinwad bridge, a priest and fire and the sagdid dog.

hell, he saw the rewards or punishments matched to each soul's thoughts, words, and deeds (Gignoux).

Zoroastrian funeral rites are ordered so that certain prayers are offered at each stage of the soul's post-mortem progress. For example, the corpse is laid out so its head does not point to the north, the abode of demons whence Nasu came.

Prayers are recited to the yazata Sraosha for the protection of the soul for the first three days after death, while it meditates on its life.

Additional prayers are said on the morning after the third night, when the soul proceeds to its judgment. Again, liturgical practice is legitimated by mythology.

The final judgment

The first judgment was in the immaterial (menog) state, for the material (getig) body remains on earth. As the body is part of the Good Creation, death represents the (temporary) triumph of evil; hence in Zoroastrianism the theological necessity of the resurrection, so that individuals may be judged in body as well as in spirit and so that Ohrmazd's creation is not destroyed.

Some Gathic passages appear to refer to the renovation. Certain details are clearly present—for example, the judgment by the fire and the molten metal which all pass through before entering the restored world: "that requital which Thou wilt assign to the two parties, O Mazda, by Thy bright blazing fire and molten metal to destroy the wicked man, and to save the just."

Y. 31.19 refers to "the requital promised by fire"; Y. 34.4 refers to the fire which shall be "of manifest help to Thy supporter, but of visible harm to Thy enemy"; Y. 43.4 also refers to "the recompenses that Thou wilt give, through the heat of the truth-strong fire to the wicked man and the just when retribution comes for these sinners."

There are also references to the savior or saoshyant (named Astvatereta): Y. 30.8-9 refers to those "who shall deliver the Lie into the hands of Truth. And then may we be those who shall transfigure this world (frasha)."

Elsewhere Zoroaster refers to the saoshyants who "have been appointed opponents of Fury" (Aeshma). Whether these allusions indicate the prophetic origin of the whole schema—for example, a belief in the resurrection—has been doubted by some.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Story of war against Iraqi invaders in Susangerd novelized

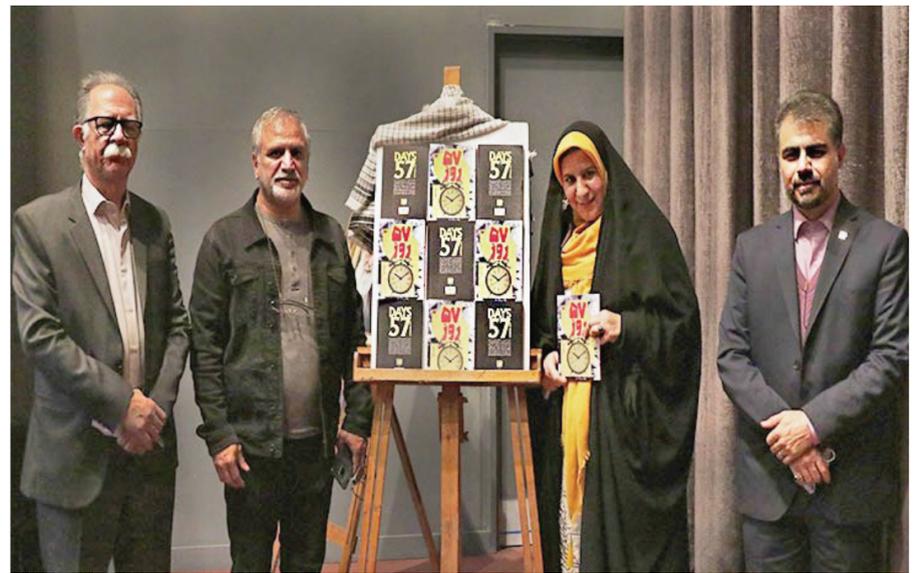
From Page 1 ▶ Speaking at the ceremony, war literature expert Mohammad Hanif said, "By this book, Ms. Gholampur joined the community of novelists, which expect a lot from her."

"This book enjoys a rich factual background, because the writer visited the town for field research to write her book. The story helps readers purify their spirits; it features a simple and compelling narrative as the dialogues enjoy personality," he added.

"It is necessary to write about war to keep the peace; writing about war shows what would happen if a war is imposed on a people and they would not manage to defend their country," he noted.

Located in Khuzestan Province, Susangerd had a population of 15,000 in 1980 when it was captured by Iraqi invaders on September 28, just one week after the war erupted.

Volunteers from Tabriz joined a resistance front that formed in Susangerd and they cleared



Writer Mehri Gholampur (2nd R) and several literati attend a meeting at the National Museum of the Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense on November 15, 2021 to unveil her novel "57 Days". (IBNA/Fateme Mirahmadi)

the town of the Iraqi invaders on November 17.

A park in the town has been named after Tabriz in memory

of the Tabrizi volunteers fought against the Iraqis.

Iranian photographers honored at Zhuhai Intl. Photography Exhibition

TEHRAN – Iranian photographers Ahmad Khatiri, Elmira Foruzani and Mohammad Esteki have won awards at the 4th Zhuhai International Photography Exhibition in China.

The exhibition is organized every year in collaboration with the Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP), the Photographic Society of America (PSA) and Euro Foto Art (EFA).

Khatiri's award-winning photo "Girl Flies in Prayer" received the PSA Gold Medal in the Open Mono Section.

The photo depicts a little girl opening her arms like wings among a group of Muslims during a congregational prayer.

It photo won the FIAP Gold Medal - FIAP blue ribbon J2 at the Vernon-Normandy Photograph Exhibition in France.

Foruzani won the FIAP Bronze Medal in this category for her photo "Accordion Boy", which shows an Iranian boy playing accordion in the hustle and bustle of a street.

Esteki was decorated with the PSA



"Girl Flies in Prayer" by Iranian photographer Ahmad Khatiri won the PSA Gold Medal at the 4th Zhuhai International Photography Exhibition in China.

Honorable Mention in this section for his photo "Cry Underwater", which shows a man attending a Muslim religious mourning ritual.

The winners of the 4th Zhuhai International Photography Exhibition were announced last Tuesday.

The Best Club Award of this exhibition was given to the Focus Photo Club, Iran's branch of the FIAP, while Dutch photographer Marcel

van Balken was selected as the FIAP Best Author.

Van Balken also won the FIAP Silver Medal for the photo "Curves".

In addition, the FIAP Gold Medal in the Open Mono Section was awarded to "Venom" by Hengki Lee from Indonesia.

The EFA Gold Medal went to "Wind Shapes" by Adela-Lia Rusu from Romania, while "Muscular Ballet Pointe" by Barry Wong from Hong Kong won the PSA Silver Medal.

"Bay Area" was the main theme of the exhibition and a large number of photographers also competed in the Open Color Section.

The winning photos and a selection of submissions to the competition will be showcased in an exhibit, which will take place from December 9 to 31 in Zhuhai, a modern city in China's southern Guangdong Province, on the border with Macau.

A jury of the professionals Ali Samei, Stefan Toth, Lai Rongzhao, Peng Bang and Zhang Hui selected the winners from nearly 4000 entries from 44 countries.

"The Wasteland", "Titi" win awards at Nouvelles Images Persanes Festival

TEHRAN – Iranian movies "The Wasteland" and "Titi" have won awards at the Nouvelles Images Persanes Festival in Vitre, France.

Directed by Ahmad Bahrami, "The Wasteland" received the Artistic and Cultural Education Award and an International Jury Prize.

The film follows a remote brick manufacturing factory producing bricks using an ancient method. Many families with different ethnicities work in the factory and the boss seems to hold the key to solving their problems. Forty-year-old Lotfollah, who was born on-site, is the factory supervisor and acts as go-between for the workers and the boss. The boss has



Ali Baqeri acts in a scene from "The Wasteland".

Lotfollah gather all the workers in front of his office. He wants to talk to them about the shutdown of the factory. All that matters now to Lotfollah is to keep Sarvar unharmed, the woman he has been in love with for a long time.

Upon its world premiere at the

Venice festival, "The Wasteland" won three awards, including best film in the Horizons section and the critics' FIPRESCI Prize.

Director Ida Panahandeh's latest drama "Titi" won the audience award of the Nouvelles Images Persanes Festival at the closing ceremony on Monday.

Working in a hospital, Titi encounters Ebrahim, a nuclear physicist suffering from a terminal illness. Taking a liking to Titi, he explains his work to her, and she believes that it is essential to the future of the planet. When he slips into a coma, his wife demands his papers are discarded, but Titi takes them home, where her

husband lines his rabbit cages with them. Eight-month pregnant as a surrogate for a childless couple, Titi wanders into the sea, where her mystical powers are able to bring the professor back to life. As he searches for the papers she took, he enters the world of Titi, and nothing will ever be the same.

"The Island Within" by Ru Hasanov from Azerbaijan also won an International Jury Prize.

In this film, Vitaly enjoys the dusk of his life on an island with thousands of feral horses until his solitude is interrupted by Seymour, an emotionally and physically abused international chess grandmaster.

Persian readers face "The Collapse of Western Civilization"

TEHRAN – "The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from the Future" co-written by Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway has been published in Persian.

Saad is the publisher of the book translated by Mohammad Nasiri.

The year is 2393, and the world is almost unrecognizable. Clear warnings of climate catastrophe went ignored for decades, leading to soaring temperatures, rising sea levels, widespread drought and—finally—the disaster now known as the Great Collapse of 2093, when the disintegration of the West Antarctica Ice Sheet led to mass migration and a complete reshuffling of the global order.

Writing from the Second People's Republic of China on the 300th anniversary of the Great Collapse, a senior scholar presents a gripping and deeply disturbing account of how the children of the Enlightenment—the



A poster for the Persian translation of "The Collapse of Western Civilization".

political and economic elites of the so-called advanced industrial societies—failed to act, and thereby brought about the collapse of Western civilization.

In this haunting, provocative work of science-based fiction, Naomi Oreskes and

Erik M. Conway imagine a world devastated by climate change.

Dramatizing science in ways traditional nonfiction cannot, the book reasserts the importance of scientists and the work they do and reveals the self-serving interests of the so-called "carbon combustion complex" that have turned the practice of science into political fodder.

Based on sound scholarship and yet unafraid to speak boldly, this book provides a welcome moment of clarity amid the cacophony of climate change literature.

Oreskes is an American historian of science. She became a professor at Harvard University in 2013, after 15 years as a professor at the University of California, San Diego.

Conway is the historian at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.