

# Media Hype Belies the West's Seriousness About Vienna Talks

▶ Page 3

Report 

## Iran, UN working to map out new partnership on sustainable development

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – The United Nations and the Iranian government are going to map out a new partnership on sustainable development for the next five years, UN Iran Resident Coordinator, Stefan Priesner, has said.

"We are at a key moment where we are now beginning to map out our partnership on sustainable development for the next five years – we are currently working with Government to develop the new cooperation framework – what we call the UNSDCF, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

The partnership between the UN and Iran goes back a long way. Already in 1950, the UN opened its first office, and today an impressive number of agencies - 18 – is the testimony of large-scale cooperation, he said, addressing a ceremony to mark the 76th anniversary of the United Nations in Tehran on Wednesday.

"And we should acknowledge that Iran has made many notable contributions to the development and humanitarian sphere, including, hosting several million refugees and migrants for over four decades and including them among others in education and health services, and most recently in the COVID national vaccination plan.

Moreover, playing a significant role in stemming the flow of illicit drugs from Afghanistan to the world through the seizure of the largest amounts of hard drugs of any country in the world," he explained.

In Iran in the last few months, the rapid roll-out of the national vaccination plan was commendable, he highlighted. ▶ Page 7

Report 

## Barbados ditches British monarchy

TEHRAN – After a while of deliberating, prolonging the move and marking the date on the calendar, Barbados has officially removed Britain's Queen Elizabeth as the head of state and become a republic. The moment has been long coming, as well as demanded by Barbadians to hold power and elect or nominate their own representative rather than a monarch ruling over the island sitting some 6,700 kilometers away. The terms "royal" and "crown" will be removed from official terminology. The Royal Barbados Police Force will be the Barbados Police Service; "crown lands" will become "state lands." No more crowns here anymore. The people had enough of colonialism. The moment was marked by a 21-gun salute and the playing of the Barbadian national anthem.

The ceremony may have been more symbolic than actual changes. The event was held 55 years to the day since Barbados gained full independence but kept the monarch in the ceremonial role. On the ground, this push for independence began back in the 1950's by Errol Walton Barrow, elected as a member of the Barbados Parliament in 1951. Frustrated by lack of concrete action among officials for sovereignty, he began the movement for the island's independence and Barrow later became the nation's first Prime Minister in the 1960's and would go on to accomplish his mission of gaining independence from Britain. ▶ Page 5

## Lapid in France: Message received?



TEHRAN — Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday to discuss the Vienna talks that are primarily intended to lift sanctions on Iran. He was in the UK on November 28 as well.

Is Israel sending a message to the negoti-

ating sides in Vienna?

"I just finished a long and warm meeting with the President of France, @Emmanuel-Macron. During our meeting, we discussed at length the resumption of talks with Iran," Lapid tweeted after his meeting with the French president.

Lapid told Macron that Israel believes Iran is only buying time at the talks in order to continue advancing its nuclear program and have severe economic sanctions lifted. He also underlined the importance of developing an effective Plan B in the event that discussions fail. ▶ Page 2

## Monthly transit of goods via Iran reaches new record high

TEHRAN- Transit of goods via Iran registered a new record high in the eighth Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 23-November 21), the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that 1.153 million tons of goods were transited via the country in the mentioned month, IRIB reported.

As previously announced by IRICA Head Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi, transit of goods through the country had risen 81 percent during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Mir-Ashrafi said that 6.948 million tons of goods were transited via the country during the seven-month period.

Iran is one of the countries that have a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

In the south of Iran is the Persian Gulf, which is home to the world's major oil-producing countries. This region is considered the energy bottleneck of the world. ▶ Page 4

## Istakhr, once legendary residence of Persian kings

TEHRAN – The ancient city of Istakhr was the seat of local governments and a royal residence of Persian kings during the Sassanid era. Moreover, it acquired importance as a center of priestly wisdom and orthodoxy.

Istakhr rose to fame when Ardashir I, the founder of the Sasanian Empire, chose it as his residence in 224 CE when the Persian nobleman dethroned a lawful ruler in Persia, Artabanus IV, king of the Parthian Empire.

Situated near the legendary Persepolis, which was once the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenids, Istakhr allowed the new Sasanian dynasty to identify itself with a glorious past. The builders of Istakhr often reused architectural elements from the monuments of Persepolis. The Achaemenid royal tombs of Naqsh-e Rostam are not far from Istakhr too. ▶ Page 6



## Qalibaf optimistic about sanctions lifting through diplomacy followed by Raisi admin.

TEHRAN — The speaker of the Iranian Parliament on Wednesday looked optimistic about success of the Vienna talks for lifting sanctions on Iran, noting President Ebrahim Raisi is seeking negotiations based on dignity in line with protecting the rights of the Iranian people. ▶ Page 2

## Sanctions removal working group holds first meeting in Vienna

TEHRAN – A working group established to conduct talks on how to remove U.S. sanctions on Iran held its first meeting on Tuesday morning as agreed during Monday's plenary session of Iran and the P4+1 group of countries.

The sanctions removal working group held at the level of experts and with representatives of Iran, the European Union and the 4+1

group of countries in attendance at Vienna's Coburg Hotel, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

At the meeting, the Iranian negotiators outlined the Islamic Republic of Iran's views and made some fresh proposals as to how to further the negotiations. They also underlined the need to effectively remove the sanctions against the Iranian nation and en-

couraged other members to constructively participate in the talks.

The representatives of other countries attending the session also declared their readiness and seriousness to work on the issue of lifting the bans.

Meanwhile, a one-on-one meeting between head of the Iranian ▶ Page 3

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Interview 

## A failure of Vienna talks unacceptable: ex-White House official

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Frank Von Hippel, who was responsible for national security issues in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy from 1993 to 1994, warns that a failure of the Vienna talks is not acceptable.

"But a failure of the Raisi and Biden administrations to agree is not acceptable," Hippel tells the Tehran Times.

Diplomats from Iran, the P4+1 group of countries –China, Russia, France, and the UK plus Germany, gathered at the Palais Coburg hotel in Vienna amid global fanfare. It means the resumption of the talks after a break of more than five months.

Ali Bagheri Kani, the deputy foreign minister of Iran, and Enrique Mora, EU deputy foreign policy chief, jointly chaired the Monday plenary session.

Western media outlets purposefully depicted the overall situation in Vienna as somber, even before the negotiators reconvened the much-awaited meeting. They warned of Iranian maximalist demands, broached the idea of an interim agreement, and accused Iran of not being serious.

But Hippel believes that the power struggle in Washington makes things more difficult.

"The Democrats and Republicans disagree on everything including the future of democracy in the United States," the former White House official notes. ▶ Page 5

## Golden Pen of Belgrade honors Iranian illustrators Matak, Zakeri

TEHRAN – Iranian illustrators Mohammad-Hosseini (Mason) Matak and Majid Zakeri have won two of three awards at the 51st Golden Pen of Belgrade awards, and the 16th International Biennial of Illustrations.

Slovakian illustrator Jozef Pevolka won the other prize of the event, while Serbian artist Nikolina Radulovic Velic received the grand prix, Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA – Kanoon) announced on Wednesday.

Works by 31 Iranian illustrators have also been published in the catalog of the biennial, whose front cover features an illustration by Iranian artist Nuhsein Sadeqian, the winner of the grand prix of the 50th Golden Pen of Belgrade.

A collection of works by Sadeqian are also on view in an exhibition at the Jade Gallery in the Museum of Applied Arts in Belgrade. The exhibition runs until December 4. ▶ Page 8

## Qalibaf optimistic about sanctions lifting through diplomacy followed by Raisi admin.

From page 1 ► Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf made the remarks at a joint meeting of the parliament and the administration.

"I am sure, with your efforts and measures, in the field of foreign policy and lifting of sanctions, with good and dignified negotiations and a good and fair agreement, the people's rights will be upheld and this cruel sanctions against the resilient nation will be lifted," Qalibaf remarked.

Qalibaf also expressed his gratitude to the president and members of his cabinet for accepting the invitation for holding a 2-hour joint meeting with the parliament.

Qalibaf also hailed the president and other government's officials for their hard work over the past 100 days.

Raisi officially took over as president in August.

Hard work by the government, including trips to provinces, are really commendable, the parliament speaker remarked.

"Of course, there are some criticisms that these trips may increase burdens on the

administration. But we have come to the point many times that provincial trips and being among the people and listening to their concerns is a great blessing. Because the responsibilities and positions should not distract us from the people, and the concerns of the people should be dealt with every day," the senior MP said.

The speaker noted that the MPs are also determined to help resolve people's problems, adding some representatives say that during trips to their constituencies, they get acquainted about the psychological pressure and concerns by the people.

Qalibaf went on to say that the parliament and the administration should be exemplary. "Our cooperation is undoubtedly game changer. The Majlis supports the government and is a sympathetic observer of each of the ministers of the 13th administration."

The parliament speaker underscored, "The parliament considers itself a friend and facilitator of each member of the cabinet and president to solve the problems of the people."

## Lapid in France: Message received?

From page 1 ► "After many years, Israel's position is being heard and Israel's position is firm," he said. "Sanctions on Iran must not be removed. Sanctions must be tightened, a credible military threat must be applied, because only that will stop its nuclear race."

He added, "I'm now concluding three days of talks in London and Paris with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, with the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, Elizabeth Truss, and with the President of France, Emmanuel Macron - on the Iranian nuclear issue, parallel to the nuclear talks in Vienna."

Lapid revealed that the Tel Aviv regime is using all its energy to derail the Vienna talks, pointing to a planned visit to Washington by the regime's war minister.

"Together with Prime Minister Bennett and Defense Minister Gantz, who is traveling to Washington next week, we will continue to work so that the world will fully understand the Iranian threat."

Israel, which is famous in the world for its notoriety, has been trying for about two decades to demonize Iran's nuclear program. Unfortunately, hardliners in the West dance to the tune of Israel.

Earlier, on November 28, Lapid co-wrote an article with British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss in the Daily Telegraph in which they said they

work "night and day" to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power.

Israelis' movements are now becoming more rapid, as prospects to reach an agreement in Vienna have risen.

The move gets stranger, especially when the Elysee Palace announced late on Tuesday that Macron will visit Saudi Arabia and the UAE on Friday.

Macron called Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi on Monday to inform him that all sides are determined to reach a conclusion in Vienna.

He said that France considers the JCPOA as a "common responsibility."

"I have always tried to get all parties back to the deal framework," Macron said.

He added that he has spoken to Biden.

"I have had talks with U.S. President Joe Biden in this regard and we are determined to continue the talks to reach a conclusion."

In the end, the French president stated that Paris intends to continue talks with Iran to make progress in resolving issues.

These actions certainly will not help the negotiations in Vienna, as he is now holding negotiations with the countries opposing the sanctions removal.

The Europeans must act independently during the negotiations and stop relying on what the U.S. says or thinks. However, France and the UK must be wary not to become a window of opportunity for destruction of talks. Israel is seeking to influence the talks through France and the UK. It's best not to let that happen.

TEHRAN — Director of the Office for the Study and Compilation of Iranian History has praised the policy of the new administration of Ebrahim Raisi toward neighboring countries.

"The doctrine of the current administration towards the countries of the region is such that one can expect effective achievements in the region," Abbas Salimi Namin said in an interview with IRNA on Tuesday, citing the tripartite gas agreement between Turkmenistan, Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan as an example.

Salimi Namin added, "Any kind of relationship with neighboring countries, because it is cost-effective and creates security for the parties are effective and helpful. However, sometimes countries lose or neglect this lucrative opportunity while the most stable and effective relationship is the relationship between neighboring countries, and if a country can make good use of this gift, it will best serve the national interests."

Specifically, in dealing with the Republic of Azerbaijan, he said, Iran considers this South Caucasian country "very close" to itself as there is centuries-old affinities between the two countries.

Iran has a special bond with the Republic of Azerbaijan and this policy can make the bond between the two countries "better and stronger", the analyst said.

Salimi Namin said that President Raisi has acted successfully in improving relations with neighboring countries in the short period of his presidency, highlighting that in connection with the Republic of Azerbaijan, relations are rooted in the goodwill of the president, and the tripartite gas contract will definitely have benefits for Iran, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.

He added, "During the past month, we had quite serious and expert talks with these two countries on the issue of gas transportation from Turkmenistan, which fortunately

## Analyst praises Raisi administration's view toward neighbors



led to the signing of this tripartite agreement, in which we annually receive about 1.5 to 2 billion cubic meters of gas from Turkmenistan in the Sarakhs region and deliver it to the Republic of Azerbaijan from Astarra."

The political analyst pointed out that this agreement is the product of communications that are important in today's world.

Such interactions can clear up misunderstandings and thwart the efforts of "sedition centers" in the region.

The analyst claimed the Rouhani administration ignored the potential of regional countries and "this caused a lot of damage to national interests."

"But," he said, "in the current situation, the doctrine of the current administration towards the countries in the region is such that we can expect

impressive results."

### "Empty promises of the West"

He added, "The problem with the previous administration was that it was happy with the empty promises of the West and therefore did not see the need to interact with countries such as the Republic of Azerbaijan and so on."

In the end, Salimi Namin said despite certain differences "the Islamic Republic has a 'benevolent' view of relations, and for this reason, the decision of the 13th administration is to make efforts to establish relations in line with the interests of the sides so that neighbors can, in addition to resolving disputes, work closely together."

Under the gas deal, 1.5 to 2 billion cubic meters of gas will be transported annually; Turkmenistan will supply Iran with gas and then Iran will separately

deliver an equivalent amount of gas to Azerbaijan.

The deal was signed after the end of a bilateral meeting between Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Azeri President Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of the 13th ECO summit in the Turkmen capital.

"From now on, Iranian-Azerbaijani relations will develop in all areas," Aliyev told reporters following the signing, according to eurasianet. "Our peoples are fraternal peoples, our countries are fraternal countries, and the issues discussed today show again that Iranian-Azerbaijani relations are at a very high level."

For his part, Raisi said, "Our relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan are not only neighborly, they are the relations of our hearts. The hearts of the peoples of the two countries beat together."

Talking to reporters, Raisi added, "We must never allow others to interfere in our relations. We must resolve our own problems, work together to advance our relations and deepen mutually beneficial cooperation. Experience so far shows that when we discuss our issues ourselves, we manage to resolve many of them."

Experts believe that the implementation of the deal could encourage other countries in the region to ink similar deals and to use the Islamic Republic's capacities in this regard.

Having the largest high-pressure gas pipeline network after Russia, Iran can play a key role in transferring gas from east to west of Iran and to the neighboring countries such as Azerbaijan.

The deal is also a big step for Iran as it would ensure stable gas supply to the country's northeastern regions which are far away from the sources of natural gas in the country.

Iran has major natural gas fields in the south but has imported gas from Turkmenistan since 1997 for distribution in its northern provinces, especially during the winter.

## 'Achieving agreement in talks dependent on ensuring Iran's interests'

TEHRAN - The deputy chairman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the parliament says if the Western side acknowledges this fact that a success of the Vienna talks is dependent on ensuring the interests of the Iranian people, then there is a hope for success.

However, Abbas Moqtadaei said, if the West loses the opportunity, Iran can use the capacity of the parliamentary ratification - the Strategic Action Law on Protecting the Rights of the Iranian People - which has obliged the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) to expedite nuclear program, IRNA reported on Monday.

Iran and the remaining parties to the 215 nuclear deal - JCPOA - officially started talks in Vienna on Monday after a five-month break. The talks are intended to lift the sanctions on Iran.

Prior to the official talks, preliminary talks were held with some Western parties in recent days.

Moqtadaei said Iranian negotiators act "in accordance with the instructions issued to them at the national level."

The MP from Isfahan stated that the key point for Iran is the issue of ensuring the interests of the Iranian people.

"If the Western side has come to the logic that

if the interests of the Iranian people are not met, Iran will not be forced to make concessions, we can be optimistic about the future of the negotiations. But if they continue to lose the opportunity or ignore the interests of the Iranian people, the Law on Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Rights of the Iranian People, which was adopted last year, will go ahead."

"Therefore, the key issue is for the West and Western countries to accept that reaching an agreement depends on meeting the interests of the Iranian people," he said.

Recalling the history of the Americans in violating their obligations, the deputy chairman of the parliamentary committee noted "as long as the Americans do not accept that they have to abide by norms, international rules and laws" any claim to restore the nuclear deal is "worthless".

Moqtadaei added the Americans "must first make up for the mistake they have made in recent years, and then the Islamic Republic, after verification, will allow them to act in accordance with what Iran recognizes."

Iran has been insisting that a removal of "illegal and inhumane sanctions" is the catalyst to

revitalize the JCPOA.

Iran has also been seeking a guarantee that the U.S. would not leave the nuclear deal again.

Writing in the Financial Times on Sunday, Iranian chief nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani said, Tehran first goal is "to gain a full, guaranteed and verifiable removal of the sanctions that have been imposed on the Iranian people."

Also in an article posted on the Foreign Ministry website on Monday, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said, "Iran is serious, acts in good faith, and considers the practical and tangible result to be the removal of sanctions."

He said other parties must demonstrate "political will in practice".

The foreign minister also said, "I would like to emphasize once again that this opportunity (of negotiations) is not a window that could remain open forever and the U.S. and the three European countries must well understand this. The Islamic Republic of Iran, while making its determined, strong and active diplomatic efforts to remove the oppressive U.S. sanctions, has devised an effective program to neutralize the sanctions in line with its sustainable economic development program."

## Talks between Iran's Eslami, IAEA's Grossi was constructive: MP

TEHRAN — A member of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee says the dialogue between Iran's nuclear chief Mohammad Eslami and Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was constructive.

Eslami, chief of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), attended a meeting of the parliamentary committee on Tuesday and presented a report on the recent visit of Grossi to Tehran.

MP Ebrahim Azizi, in an interview with the Mehr news agency, highlighted the details of the Tuesday meeting with Eslami, saying, "The head of the Atomic Energy Organization attended the meeting and reported on Rafael Grossi's recent visit to Iran. Mohammad Eslami presented a report on the issues raised between the Iranian officials and the director-general of the Agency (IAEA), which indicated that the issues raised by Iranian officials were quite serious



and stemmed from the revolutionary thinking of the administration."

While in Tehran, Grossi held talks on November 23 with Eslami and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

In the meetings with Grossi the Iranian officials underscored that the IAEA should refrain from political behaviors and approaches, the MP quoted Eslami as saying.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the parliamentarian noted, "We emphasize that the Agency should exercise its technical and professional supervision and should not seek politicization. This issue has been one of the important issues and emphases raised by the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and they considered it necessary to reiterate this issue to the director

general of the International Atomic Energy Agency."

Azizi said that in their recent meeting with Grossi, the Iranian officials stressed that the UN nuclear body should not be under the influence of hegemonic regimes and it should perform its professional duties in accordance with law.

The MP went on to say that the AEOI chief had also urged Grossi to adhere to the talks and agreements he had with Iran and when he left Tehran.

According to Azizi, Eslami also reminded that the AEOI is obliged to implement the parliamentary ratification on accelerating nuclear activities in response to sanctions on Iran.

"Grossi has said he does not expect Iran to ignore its own laws. Finally, Eslami described his talks with the Director-General of the Agency as very good and constructive," the parliamentarian concluded.

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# Sanctions removal working group holds first meeting in Vienna

From Page 1 ▶ negotiating team Ali Bagheri Kani and European Union External Action Service Deputy Secretary General Enrique Mora was held on Tuesday afternoon. The two sides reviewed the results of Monday's meeting and also Tuesday's session of the sanctions removal working group and held talks over how to continue the negotiations.

Tuesday's meeting of the sanctions removal was a result of the plenary session in which it was decided that the meeting of the working group would be held before a meeting of another working group tasked to hold talks on Iran's nuclear activities.

During the sanctions removal meeting the Iranian delegation reiterated its determination to achieve the result and made it clear to the other delegations that they should actively and constructively present solutions and proposals, according to Fars News.

The Iranian representatives emphasized that the texts obtained in previous periods only play the role of drafts and all these texts can be renegotiated. Therefore, it is necessary to meet Iran's ideas and demands by presenting innovative plans.

One of the important points raised by Iran was that anything that violated the purpose of the 2015 nuclear deal, that is "normalization of economic and



trade relations with Iran," should be resolved.

Iran emphasized that the two issues of sanctions and nuclear commitments should not be "reciprocal hostages" and that it is necessary to logically resolve the issue of sanctions, which arose from the U.S. action as a violator of the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Fars News added that the meeting was held in a professional environment, and everyone, despite differences of opinion, expressed readiness and seriousness to discuss interaction in lifting sanctions. Several delegations, especially Russia and China, praised the pragmatic approach and clear categorization of Iran's demands.

Earlier, Bagheri Kani himself reiterated that the texts of the previous rounds of talks were only

"drafts" and thus they are not legally binding for Iran. "Nothing is agreed on unless everything has been agreed on," he told reporters on Monday after the plenary session.

"Accordingly, all the discussions that were concluded in the previous six rounds are subject to negotiations and this was agreed by all parties in today's meeting as well," Baqeri Kani said.

According to Bagheri Kani, the cruel and illegal sanctions was to be on the agenda of Tuesday's working group on the removal of sanctions.

"As the Iranian negotiation team enjoys a serious will and practical readiness to reach an agreement, we are optimistic about the future," he added, stating that "because we do not trust the other side, we are not too optimistic."

He added that the participants also agreed that a special working

group should start its work on Tuesday to discuss "the removal of illegal and brutal sanctions" imposed on the Iranian nation, according to Fars News.

"I believe that this is a great achievement that all member states of the 4+1 group accepted Iran's rightful request and emphasized that the state of the U.S. regime's illegal sanctions against our people must be clarified first and then other issues be discussed," Baqeri Kani said.

He also referred to what happened during Monday's meeting. "During the meeting, we emphasized that the main factor behind the current conditions is actions taken by a country, which left the agreement in violation of the accord and the United Nations Security Council resolution [that upheld it], and also reinstated past sanctions [on Iran] in contravention of international law and regulations while imposing new sanctions as well," Baqeri Kani said.

Diplomats from Iran the P4+1 group of countries -China, Russia, France, and the UK plus Germany - gathered at the Palais Coburg hotel in Vienna amid global fanfare. It marked the resumption of the talks after a break of more than five months.

Bagheri Kani, Iran's chief negotiator, and Enrique Mora, the EU deputy foreign policy chief, jointly chaired Monday's plenary session.

## China state newspaper calls for lifting all U.S sanctions on Iran

TEHRAN - A Chinese state-run newspaper has called for the lifting of all U.S. sanctions on Iran, describing the move as a key to reviving the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

In an editorial on Tuesday, China Daily said that there is an opportunity to salvage the nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as both the United States and Iran have shown a greater willingness to keep it alive.

"The hard-won deal was left on life support after the U.S. withdrew from it in 2018 and re-imposed unilateral sanctions on Iran. That the talks, which commenced in Vienna, Austria, on Monday, could happen at all shows all parties involved are still optimistic that dialogue can break the impasse," the Chinese newspaper added.

It said, "To give this positivity some cause for celebration, the two parties concerned should try and heed each other's concerns and make efforts to meet each other half way."

China Daily described the U.S. as the one who is responsible for the original collapse of the JCPOA.

"As the one responsible for the original deal's collapse, the U.S. should lift all sanctions against Iran and third parties in order to show goodwill. Iran, on its part, should comprehensively fulfill the obligations it agreed to in the 2015 deal," the newspaper said.

It further said, "Lifting the sanctions against Iran can serve as a touchstone for the U.S. administration's sincerity in rejoining the international deal. It could also help ease tensions between the U.S. and the Islamic Republic and even win Iran's cooperation over global crude oil prices as the U.S. is now keen to curb its serious inflation by driving down crude oil prices."

China Daily also pointed to China's position toward the Vienna talks. "As party to the Iran talks, China has always been committed to upholding the comprehensive Iran nuclear agreement and intensively communicated and coordinated with Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the U.S. and the European Union to promote the resumption of the negotiations," the editorial stated.

According to China Daily, as long as the

parties concerned engage in the negotiations with good faith and a constructive spirit, there is hope that the ongoing negotiations can come to some arrangement.

It concluded, "At this critical moment, therefore, it is imperative that the parties involved show sincerity and flexibility so that the talks can yield a fruitful outcome. The resumption of the Vienna negotiations is the result of concerted diplomatic efforts. It demonstrates the collective will to uphold the agreement and is consistent with the shared expectation of the international community. This opportunity should not be squandered by intransigence or nonviable demands."

Diplomats from Iran the P4+1 group of countries -China, Russia, France, and the UK plus Germany - gathered Monday at the Palais Coburg hotel in Vienna amid global fanfare. It marked the resumption of the talks after a break of more than five months.

Ali Bagheri Kani, the deputy foreign minister of Iran, and Enrique Mora, the EU deputy foreign policy chief, jointly chaired Monday's plenary session.

## Media hype casts doubt on the West's seriousness about Vienna talks

TEHRAN - After a months-long hiatus, Iranian and Western negotiators ultimately met in the same room but much of the work does not seem to be done in the room. Instead, the Western negotiators seem to prefer forging ahead with media hyperbole.

While many of those who participated in Monday's plenary session in Vienna came out with a clear sense of optimism about the future of the talks, several European diplomats taking part in the meeting sought to ramp up diplomatic pressure on Iran after the meeting.

First, they magnified a media report by an Israeli reporter claiming that Iran is preparing for weapons-grade uranium enrichment. Several Western media outlets, including Reuters and the Wall Street Journal, quoted senior diplomats from France, Germany and Britain as warning Iran against such a move.

The diplomats cautioned that raising the level of uranium enrichment to 90 percent would "seriously imperil" the process of the Vienna talks.

But aside from the 90 percent-enrichment bluff, which was taken by several independent observers with a grain of salt, the European diplomats also took what can be called a "preemptive" stance to determine the agenda of the talks even before they began.

They put the spotlight on a number of issues that can only be decided on in the negotiation process. At issue are draft texts and the duration of the current round of talks as well as a timeline for the whole negotiation of the process.

During Monday's meeting, none of these issues

were discussed in detail. And the meeting primarily focused on the principles and foundation of the upcoming talks. The lead Iranian negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, who co-chaired the plenary session, underlined this immediately after the meeting.

Bagheri Kani made it clear that the draft texts prepared during the past rounds should by no means be defined as legally binding for Iran and that they should be viewed as mere drafts.

"Nothing is agreed on unless everything has been agreed on," he told reporters on Monday after the plenary session.

Iran's chief negotiator reiterated that the texts of the previous rounds of talks were only "drafts" and thus they are not legally binding for Iran.

"Accordingly, all the discussions that were concluded in the previous six rounds are subject to negotiations and this was agreed by all parties in today's meeting as well," Baqeri Kani said.

The other side, however, strived to portray the draft texts as a political commitment by which Iran is bound. The European diplomats told several outlets that roughly 70 to 80 percent of the agreement was complete, with the remaining 20 to 30 percent containing the most difficult questions, such as what to do about Iran's many advanced centrifuges, according to Politico.

Reuters, quoting a senior European diplomat, echoed similar claims. "The diplomat stressed that some of the most difficult issues were among the 20-30% that remain unresolved, including what to do about advanced centrifuges that Iran is using to enrich uranium in defiance of the original



agreement," Reuters said.

Politico went so far as to say that the draft texts are "a master document with political commitments."

In addition to the draft texts, the Europeans also tried to create a sense of urgency in terms of the duration of the talks. While Iran said it prioritizes the lifting of all sanctions and reaching a good agreement over the swift conclusion of the talks, the Europeans stressed the need for a swift conclusion of this round.

"The next 48 hours will be quite important to know and to confirm that hopefully we can pick up there and get into very intensive working mode," the European diplomat told Reuters. "If they don't show us that they're serious this week, then we have a problem."

Of course, Iran has said that it does not oppose reaching a swift, good agreement but at the same time it has underlined that fairness should not be sacrificed on the altar of swiftness.

## SPORTS

### Bonyadifar to officiate Tehran derby

TEHRAN - Moud Bonyadifar will referee the match between Esteghlal and Persepolis football teams.

The Tehran derby will be held on Matchday 8 of Iran Professional League (IPL) in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Saturday.

Bonyadifar, 36, has been officiating in Iran Professional League (IPL) for seven seasons and has been on the international list since 2013.

He will be assisted by Hassan Zahiri and Alireza Ildorom in this match.

Persepolis sit second in the table, two points adrift of leaders Sepahan and Esteghlal are fifth in the standing, one point behind Persepolis.

The Iranian giants have played each other 96 times with Esteghlal narrowly lead the encounters by 26 wins to 25 with 45 draws.

### Iran to leave Tehran for 2021 World Women's Handball C'ship on Thursday

TEHRAN - Iran's women's handball team will travel to Spain on Thursday to compete at the 2021 World Women's Handball Championship.

The Iranian team will start the campaign with a match against Romania.

The match will take place in Spain's Castelló on Friday.

Iran will also meet Norway and Kazakhstan in Group C on Dec. 5 and 7, respectively.

The Iranian side won their berth for the first time in the 2021 AHF Asian Women's Handball Championship in Jordan in September where the Persians came fourth after South Korea, Japan and Kazakhstan.

"We have a lot of hope for the championship in Spain. I know it will be a great experience for my teammates and me. Everything is good and we will try to show a good performance in Spain," said Shaghayegh Bapiri, Iran's top scorer at the AHF Asian Women's Handball Championship, with 32 goals in six games.

The tournament will be held in four Spanish cities namely, Llíria, Torrevieja, Castelló and Granollers from Dec. 1 to 19.

### World champion Azili joins Fooladin Zob Amol

TEHRAN - The 2018 world champion Eldaniz Azili signed for Iranian wrestling club Fooladin Zob Amol.

The Azerbaijani 55kg freestyler has recently won a bronze medal in the 2021 World Wrestling Championships in Oslo, Norway.

The Amol-based club has previously reached an agreement with world champion Hassan Yazdani.

Russian freestyle wrestler Artur Naifonov has already joined another Iranian wrestling team Sahand Aras in late November.

### Hazfi Cup round of 32: Esteghlal, Persepolis learn fate

TEHRAN - Esteghlal and Persepolis football teams learned their opponents at the Iran's 2021-22 Hazfi Cup Round of 32.

The draw ceremony was held on Wednesday in Iran's league Football Organization's headquarters.

Esteghlal will face Iranian second tier Navad Urmia in Tehran while Persepolis meet the First Division side Vista Toorbin in Tehran.

Titleholders Foolad will also play Shahrdiri Noshahr in Ahvaz.

The Iran's Hazfi Cup was founded in 1975 and Esteghlal are the most decorated club with seven titles, followed by Persepolis who have won six titles.

#### Below, are the fixtures of the draw:

- \*Shahin Shahrdiri vs Naft Masjed Soleyman
- \*Paykan vs Qashqai
- \*Mes Rafsanjan vs Tractor
- \*Arman Gohar Sirjan vs Nassaji
- \*Sepahan vs Shahid Oraki Eslamshahr
- \*Padideh vs Esteghlal Molasani
- \*Zob Ahan vs Rayka Babol
- \*Esteghlal vs Navad Urmia
- \*Gol Gohar Sirjan vs Shahrdiri Astara
- \*Foolad vs Shahrdiri Noshahr
- \*Fajr Sepasi vs Aluminum Arak
- \*Sanat Naft vs Shamas Azar Qazvin
- \*Mes Kerman vs Machine Sazi
- \*Khalij Fars Mahshahr vs Havadar Tehran
- \*Persepolis vs Vista Turbine Tehran
- \*Kheybar Khoramabad vs Mes Shar Babak

### Iran victorious over Philippines in Asian Squash Championship

TEHRAN - Iran's women's team defeated the Philippines 3-0 in the 20th Asian Squash Championship on Wednesday.

Iran started the campaign with a 2-1 loss against Malaysia.

Iran are scheduled to play India on Thursday.

The competition started on November 30 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and will finish on December 4.

### Daei meets Australian ambassador Lyndall Sachs

TEHRAN - Iranian legendary footballer met with Lyndall Sachs, Australia's ambassador to Iran, on Wednesday.

Daei presented his autographed Iran National Football Team's jersey to Sachs in the meeting.

They talked about Australia and Iran match in the 1998 FIFA World Cup qualifier.

Sachs, who was a goalkeeper when she was young, also shared memories about her goalkeeping skills.

Australia, as winners of Oceania Zone qualification and Iran as the fourth-placed Asian side, were left to battle it out for the last of the 32 teams on Nov. 29 in Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The Persians booked their place in France after a 3-3 aggregate.

### Iran's Jafari wins silver at 2021 World Para Powerlifting

TEHRAN - Iran's Amir Jafari Arangeh claimed a silver medal at the 2021 World Para Powerlifting Championships on Wednesday.

He finished in second place with 192kg.

Hocine Bettir of Algeria won the gold medal with 194kg.

The bronze medal went to Thomas Kure of Nigeria who lifted 190kg.

The 2021 World Para Powerlifting Championships is a powerlifting competition for athletes with a disability. It is held in Tbilisi, Georgia from Nov. 27 to Dec. 5.

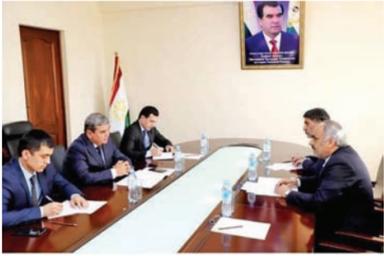
It was previously scheduled to be held in Batumi, Georgia and, before that, it was scheduled to be held in Eger, Hungary.

The tournament is one of the compulsory tournaments to qualify for the 2024 Summer Paralympics in Paris, France.



# Monthly transit of goods via Iran hits new record high

## Iran, Tajikistan confer on implementing agricultural co-op MOU



Iranian Ambassador to Dushanbe Mohammad Taghi Saberi (1st R) and Tajik Agriculture Minister Sulaymon Rizoi Ziyozoda (2nd L)

TEHRAN - Iranian Ambassador to Dushanbe Mohammad Taghi Saberi and the Tajik Agriculture Minister Sulaymon Rizoi Ziyozoda discussed expanding agricultural ties between the two countries and the implementation of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between the two sides for

agricultural cooperation, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

In a post on his social media, Saberi stated that in the meeting with Rizoi Ziyozoda, the two sides reviewed the ways for implementing the agricultural cooperation MOU signed between the two countries during the Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Tajikistan in September.

Bolstering mutual agriculture cooperation and strengthening ties between the two countries in various agricultural sectors were discussed in the meeting, Saberi added.

President Raisi visited Dushanbe to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit on September 18.

Last week, the Iranian Ambassador to Tajikistan met with the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan Zulfiya Davlatzoda in the Tajik capital Dushanbe to discuss promoting ties in the fields of art and culture.

From page 1 ▶ In the north of Iran is the Caspian Sea, which is the best bridge between Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan and can play an important role in trade between these countries.

The country, on the other hand, borders Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan to the west and east.

In other words, it can be said that Iran communicates with 15 countries through land and water borders, and at the same time it can act as a bridge between these countries (with each other and other parts of the world).

These countries have a large population and high income which can be effective as a factor in the development of transit and trade in the region.

The connection of Central Asian countries with the Persian



Gulf, as well as the establishment of trade relations between East Asia and European countries through Iran, is very cost-effective so that many of these countries seek to establish such relations through Iran.

This status has provided the country with many opportuni-

ties and by optimal use of these opportunities through the expansion of the transportation network and reliable and efficient communication, Iran can achieve foreign currency earnings and economic growth, and make transit revenue a suitable alternative to oil export while

improving its strategic position in the region.

Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due. To take full advantage of its location for transit, the country has many plans underway and, on the agenda, to boost its transit capacity.

Some of these plans include developing Shahid Rajaei Port, Iran's largest and most-equipped container port in the south, and also Chabahar Port in the southeast of the country, connecting the ports to the railway network, development of transit via railway, and also some customs measures such as improving transit procedures in the customs offices.

## Iran, Azerbaijan discuss ongoing joint projects

TEHRAN - Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Seyed Abbas Mousavi has said the latest status of 15 major joint projects between the two countries were reviewed in a meeting with the Azeri deputy prime minister.

According to Mousavi, his meeting with Shahin Mustafayev came following the meeting of the Presidents of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Azerbaijan on the sidelines of the 15th ECO Summit in Turkmenistan's capital Ashgabat on Sunday, Mehr News Agency reported.

"One day after the fruitful meeting between President Ebrahim Raisi with Ilham Aliyev, I met with Shahin Mustafayev, first deputy prime minister, to follow up on the agreements reached by the two leaders," Mousavi wrote in a post on his Twitter account.

"The two neighboring countries currently have 15 important joint projects, the latest status of which was reviewed [in the meeting]," he added.

Speaking to the media after his meeting with President Raeisi, Aliyev had announced his country's willingness to expand economic relations with Iran.

On the sidelines of President Raisi's visit to Ashgabat, the Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian also met and held talks with Azeri counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov.

After this meeting, Amir-Abdollahian pointed out that the relations between the two countries of Iran and Azerbaijan go beyond two mere neighbors, describing the two nations as relatives to each other.

## 500 MW capacity of new renewable power plants to be launched by late June 2022

TEHRAN - Iranian Energy Ministry's Spokesman for Electricity Industry Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi has said his ministry plans to construct and put into operation 500 megawatts (MW) of new renewable power plants by the next summer's peak consumption period (Iranian calendar's summer begins on June 22), IRIB reported.

According to Rajabi Mashhadi, his ministry is following a comprehensive program for adding 10,000 MW to the country's power generation capacity over the next four years.

The official noted that most of the mentioned renewable power plants that are expected to be constructed across the country will be solar farms.

He put the current capacity of the country's renewable power plants at 900 MW, saying that such power plants account for a small share of the country's total power generation capacity.

Over the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran have put the country in



a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

In this regard, the Energy Ministry has been following new programs to meet the country's power demand during peak periods and to prevent outages.

Constructing new power plants for major industries are among the mentioned programs that are being pursued seriously by the ministry in collaboration with other related government entities.

Based on Iran's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), the country was aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in re-

newable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

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

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

After the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known commonly as the Iran nuclear deal, in July 2015, many foreign delegations came to Iran for making investments and constructing renewable power plants in the country.

However, following the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions, foreign investment in the country's renewable industry has fallen significantly.

## Export from Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari rises 142% in 8 months yr/yr

TEHRAN - The value of exports from Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province rose 142 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Esmail Allahdadi, the director-general of the province's customs department, said that 76 tons of goods worth \$48 million were exported from the province in the eight-month period, indicating also 231 percent growth in terms of weight.

He named chemical fertilizers, galvanized sheets, home appliances, ceramics, and almond kernels as the main exported items, and Iraq, Turkey, India, Afghanistan, Syria, Armenia, and Pakistan as the major export destinations.

As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 40 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.



Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi has said that Iran traded over 110.3 million tons of non-oil products worth \$63.1 billion with other countries in the mentioned period.

According to the IRICA head, the weight of trade in the mentioned period also grew by 43.5 percent in comparison to the figure for the previous fiscal year.

The official put the eight-month non-oil exports at 83.7 million tons valued at \$31.1 billion, with a 42-percent rise in value and 10.5-percent growth in weight.

Mir-Ashrafi noted that petrochemical products accounted for 43 percent of the total value of the exports in the said time span, with 39.8 million tons worth \$13.3 billion of the said products being exported to foreign markets.

He said major export destina-

tions of the Iranian non-oil goods were China, Iraq, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Afghanistan.

The official further announced that the Islamic Republic imported 26.5 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$32 billion in the first eight months of the present year, with a 38-percent growth in value and a 21-percent rise in weight year on year.

The United Arab Emirates was the top exporter to Iran in the said period, followed by China, Turkey, Germany, and Switzerland, he stated.

According to the IRICA head, out of the total non-oil goods imported into the country in the first eight months of this year, 20.3 million tons worth \$12.4 billion were basic goods, which accounted for 38 percent of the total value of the imports.

Mir-Ashrafi has announced that the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

He has put the weight of non-oil trade at 146.4 million tons, and said that the figure shows a 25-million-ton annual decline, which is the result of sanctions

and coronavirus pandemic.

Iran's non-oil export was 112 million tons valued at \$34.5 billion, and that of import was 34.4 million tons worth \$38.5 billion in the past year, the official added.

Among the country's non-oil export destinations, China was the first, with importing \$8.9 billion worth of products, Iraq was the second with importing \$7.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates the third with importing \$4.6 billion, Turkey the fourth with importing \$2.5 billion, and Afghanistan the fifth with importing \$2.2 billion, Mir-Ashrafi announced, and named gasoline, natural gas, polyethylene, propane, and pistachio as Iran's major exported products during the past year.

He further named Iran's top sources of non-oil imports in the said time, as China with exporting \$9.7 billion worth of products to the Islamic Republic, the UAE with \$9.6 billion, Turkey with \$4.3 billion, India with \$2.1 billion, and Germany with \$1.8 billion, respectively, and mentioned corn, cellphone, rice, oil meal and oil seeds, wheat, and raw oil as the major imported items.

of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), which was three percent more than the output in the same period of time in the past year.

Copper cathode production stood at 24,461 tons in the seventh month of this year, indicating seven percent rise from that of the previous year.

The periodical reports and statistics indicate that Iran's metals sector is progressing both in terms of production and export despite the limitations imposed by the U.S. sanctions.

The country's copper industry is moving forward noticeably, as some outstanding projects are implemented.

Iran has posted outstanding figures in

terms of copper cathode production and export.

Copper cathode is the primary raw material input for the production of copper rod for the wire and cable industry.

In early April, the managing director of National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICIC) announced the discovery of one billion

tons of new copper reserves in the country.

NICIC carried out 101,000 meters of deep drilling to identify new copper reserves across the country in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), which resulted in the discovery of one billion tons of new reserves, Ardeshir Sa'd-Mohammadi said in a press conference.

## Copper cathode production up 3% in 7 months on year

TEHRAN - Iran produced 167,789 tons of copper cathode in the first seven months

## Tehran, Damascus ink trade, industrial cooperation documents

TEHRAN - Iran and Syria have signed four documents to boost cooperation in the fields of trade and industry, especially areas related to standards, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin inked the documents at the end of the two countries' joint economic and industrial committee meetings which were held in the Syrian capital, IRNA quoted the head of the Iranian Trade Promotion Organization, Alireza Peyman Pak, as saying.

Two of the documents were signed for cooperation in the field of standards, he noted.

The official added that during his three-day visit to Syria, Fatemi Amin also visited the Iranian Business Center and Iran Center of Technology and Innovation in Damascus.

He also paid a visit to Adra industrial Park and the joint automobile manufacturing project between Iran and Syria, as well as the Iranian Kaveh Glass Factory in this industrial park, according to Peyman Pak.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Fatemi Amin arrived in Damascus on Monday to attend the Iran-Syria Joint Economic Committee meeting and also to launch the country's exclusive exhibition



in Damascus.

Upon arrival, Fatemi Amin met with the Syrian Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Mohammad Samer al-Khalil.

During his, the minister met with senior Syrian officials, including the minister of Interior, the minister of finance, as well as the minister of oil and mineral resources to discuss ways to expand economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

Over the past few years and since the end of the war in Syria, Tehran and Damascus have been taking major steps for expansion of mutual trade ties, and Syria has become one of the major focal points regarding the Iranian government's plans for boosting non-oil exports to the region.

The two countries have been pursuing the implementation of a free trade agreement signed between the two sides back in 2010 after years of postponement.

# A failure of Vienna talks unacceptable: ex-White House official

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

**How do you assess the resumption of the Vienna talks? Are you optimistic about the results of the talks?**

The negotiators appear to be struggling to keep things from falling apart. I am not optimistic but think the negotiations can be saved if both sides want to do so. The Biden administration does want to save the JCPOA but is constrained by past Congressional actions and the continuing division in Congress. Of course, I don't understand the division of opinions in the Raisi Administration.

**What solutions are on the table? Fully reviving the 2015 pact or a new agreement? What about "less for less"?**

Due to the Raisi administration's skepticism about the Biden administration's ability to deliver true U.S. compliance on sanctions relief in exchange for Iran's return to compliance and due to the pressure from Iran limiting the transparency of its centrifuge production and building an increasing stockpile of 60% enriched weapon-usable uranium, a step-by-step approach is being considered on the U.S. side.

**Do you think the "less for less" policy can help advance the talks in the future while**



**some critics say this is a fruitless effort that only prolongs the negotiations?**

Failure is not an acceptable option. It could too easily lead to war, perhaps initiated by an Israeli bombing attack on Iran's enrichment-related facilities.

**How can Iran and the U.S. reach a common language? Is there any ground in this regard?**

The failure thus far of the negotiations in Vienna may be contrasted with the apparent prog-

ress in Iran's talks with Saudi Arabia. If Iran could agree with its Persian Gulf neighbors on mutual transparency and restrictions on their nuclear programs, this might reinforce the JCPOA. That is what brought an end to the nuclear arms race between Argentina and Brazil in the 1980s.

**How can domestic competitions in the U.S. ruin any chance for reaching a good nuclear pact?**

The power struggle in Washington makes things more difficult. The Democrats and Republicans disagree on everything

including the future of democracy in the United States.

But a failure of the Raisi and Biden administrations to agree is not acceptable. Neither wants war. They must find a path forward!

**"Neither wants war. They must find a path forward!"**

## Barbados ditches British monarchy

From page 1 ► He was also a strong critic of any interference in the internal affairs of the Caribbean. Barrow spoke out fiercely against the U.S. invasion of Grenada Island in 1983 and he strongly condemned some Caribbean leaders who he accused of acting subserviently to foreign powers. Today he is viewed with high regard and respect among Barbadians (and the wider region) who say there would have been no independence had it not been for their late premier's determination and will power and courage to change the status quo.

In attendance at the ceremony to become a republic around 400 years later, was none other than Prince Charles, representing the Queen. That itself has stirred a lot of emotion among Barbadians who protested the move, while others saw it as an opportunity for the country's authorities to raise the issue of compensation. The first English ship arrived on the shores of Barbados in 1625 during the era of the British empire; and then came the terror.

In 1625, just two years after Barbados became a new English colony, the foreign invaders wiped away any traces of the original inhabitants who had resided for centuries and commonly referred to as the Arawaks. Their land was stolen and allocated to those with wealthy backgrounds and connections back in England. But the worst was yet to come; the English turned Barbados into their wider commercial world of slavery. Historian and Professor, Hilary Beckles says "Barbados was the birthplace of British slave society and the most ruthlessly colonized by Britain's ruling elites." Beckles is also the vice-chancellor of the University of the West Indies and a leading figure in the push by all Caribbean islands to secure reparations from the British, added "[the English] made their fortunes from sugar produced by an enslaved, 'disposable' workforce, and this great wealth secured Britain's place as an imperial superpower and caused untold suffering." Those enslaved in Barbados were predominantly black and descended from Africans.

Most of the paperwork revolving around the cruel and inhumane English slave trade did not use names, if any of the slaves rebelled or tried to escape, their identity and description would often appear in an advertisement where money would be offered in exchange for information on the whereabouts of the slaves. The atrocities committed by the English lasted for more than 300 years and even continued well beyond the 1807 abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

The younger generation in the new Republic of Barbados are aware of the key details of the transatlantic slave trade. Their ancestors worked extremely hard after being kidnapped from their West African homes, stripped of their dignity and forced to work on sugar plantations under backbreaking conditions as the property of the English. This barbaric and brutal form of human trafficking, murder, torture, and rape allowed the wealth of the perpetrators of these heinous crimes to



grow. They amassed huge fortunes, something that laid the foundations for multi-generational wealth. Young Barbadians are now aware that over time, those fortunes, gained illegally, were viewed as something so glorious by the slaver owners that the island was commonly referred to as "Little England" and regarded as an almost perfect model for the trade.

This painful legacy still haunts the people of the Barbados. In 2020, a statue of Admiral Nelson, which had been standing in the Capital, Bridgetown for 208 years was pulled down amidst the Black Lives Matter Movement. It was also the nation's latest symbolic break from its colonial past. In July this year protesters in Barbados marched on the family home of a British conservative member of parliament, Richard Drax, demanding he hand over his 621-acre sugar plantation to the people of Barbados. The protesters wanted this as compensation for what they say is his family's 200 years of slave-owning and trading on their Island. Several hundred campaigners attended the protest dubbed "Its time, Mr Drax." The March ended at the gates of the Drax family estate where hundreds of campaigners and activists were in attendance. The British MP says he "deeply, deeply" regrets the role of his ancestors but refused the demands for reparations. Not even selling his family estate (one that he gained through the actions of his ancestors) and handing out the money to a reparation institute.

It's a bit like Prince Charles, representing the Queen at the ceremony where Barbados became a republic and acknowledged "the atrocity of slavery" saying "from the darkest days of our past, and the appalling atrocity of slavery, which forever stains our history." Yet he refused to offer compensation to the Island for the suffering the English inflicted on the people there. The irony here is

the slave trade was endorsed by the British Royal Family. Alongside other rich English families, members of the British Royal Family played a role in this inhumane practice. In 1824, a local newspaper by the name of

The Barbadian reported an official declaration by England's King George that the "Slave Population...will be undeserving of Our Protection if they shall fail to render entire Submission to the Laws, as well as dutiful Obedience to their Masters."

Christopher Prior is an associate professor in colonial and postcolonial history at the UK's University of Southampton; he says "It's a local manifestation of a very global conversation that's being had about the legacy of

the British empire and its colonial exploitation. Barbados' move is another element of our decolonizing moments." There is a possibility the changes in Barbados could trigger the start of a wave of realms cutting ties with the British royal family. Prior says "when the queen eventually passes away, there is going to be an emergence of further conversations, particularly in places like Australia, about whether they want to have Charles [the Queen's son and heir to the throne] as their head of state, I don't want to suggest there's any inevitability, but I think it's extremely likely that the issue of republicanism is not going to be going away anytime soon."

Barbados' decision to ditch the queen follows a wave of protests across the world inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States. The people of Barbados have welcomed their country's move to sever ties with its old imperial rulers as a matter of national pride. A more frank evaluation of Britain's imperial past has helped drive an effort to bring down symbols of racism and colonialism from the city of Bristol in the UK to the Caribbean.

## Palestinian refugee agency facing funding crisis: UNRWA

TEHRAN - The head of the UN's relief agency for Palestinian refugees has warned of the consequence of a major funding crisis, saying it was unable to pay 28,000 employees on time this month and may cut vital services to millions of people.

Speaking to reporters in Jordan on Tuesday, Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), said the staff went on strike after being informed that salaries would be delayed, but halted the action following mediation.

Öif UNRWA health services are compromised in the middle of a global pandemic, COVID-19 vaccination rollout will come to an end. Maternal and childcare will stop, half a million girls and boys not knowing if they can continue learning, and over two million of the poorest Palestinian refugees will not get cash and food assistance, he said.

ÖThe humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees keep increasing while funding to the agency has stagnated since 2013.0

Lazzarini also noted that UNRWA had raised enough donations at a recent conference in Brussels to cover up to 48% of its budget in 2022 and 2023.

The agency, he added, generated \$60 million toward a \$100 million shortfall until the end of the year to keep services running.

ÖIÖm still not yet in a position to say when the November salaries will be paid, he said.



UNRWA is responsible for helping nearly 5.7 million Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well as Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, by running schools, food distribution programs, and health clinics.

**UNRWA is responsible for helping nearly 5.7 million Palestinian refugees.**

It went through a management crisis in 2019, when its previous head resigned amid allegations of sexual misconduct, nepotism and other abuses of authority at the agency.

UNRWA was hit hard in 2018, when former president Donald Trump halted US funding. However, the re-engagement of the US under President Joe Biden has been offset by the lack of commitments from the Persian Gulf Arab states, and by decreases in grants from other countries such as the UK.

Lazzarini said that the resumption of US support for the Palestinian refugee agency this year was offset by a reduction in funding by other donors.

## Yemeni forces shoot down intruding Saudi-led spy drone

Yemeni army forces, supported by allied fighters from the Popular Committees, have intercepted and targeted an unmanned aerial vehicle belonging to the Saudi-led military coalition as it was flying in the skies over Yemen's northwestern province of Amran.

The spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, said in a post published on his Twitter page that Yemeni air defense forces shot down the Chinese-made CH-4 combat drone with a surface-to-air missile as it was carrying out hostilities over al-Amshiyah area of the Harf Sufyan district in the early hours of Wednesday.

The CH-4 drone has a 3,500- to 5,000-kilometer range and a 30- to 40-hour endurance. It is also capable of carrying six missiles and a payload of up to 250 to 345 kilogram.

The unmanned aerial vehicle can fire air-to-ground missile from altitude of 5,000 meters, therefore it can stay outside of effective range of most anti-aircraft guns.

Back on November 13, Saree said on Twitter that Yemeni air defense units had used a "suitable" domestically-developed surface-to-air missile to shoot down a US-built Boeing Insitu ScanEagle spy drone belonging to the invading alliance as it was carrying out hostile acts over the al-Jubah district in Yemen's oil-producing province of Ma'rib.

On November 9, Yemeni army forces and their allies shot down a Saudi ScanEagle reconnaissance drone as the aircraft was flying over the same district of Ma'rib province.

Separately, a high-ranking official from the administration of Yemen's fugitive former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, says the atrocious Saudi-led military campaign to crush the popular Ansarullah resistance movement had come to a dead end, and the Riyadh regime and its allies were about to call it off and declare it a failure.

"It is no longer a secret to anyone what has happened in the aftermath of the Houthi revolt, and the point to which the attempt to restore power in Yemen has come. Things are clearer now. The military campaign has reached a dead end and it is expected to be declared a failure," former Yemeni prime minister and current Speaker of Shura Council, Ahmed Obaid bin Dagher, wrote in a series of posts published on his Twitter page on Tuesday.

He added, "We have in front of us a torn homeland, which is bleeding. A homeland destroyed by war and almost disintegrated into

states and societies."

In response to Dagher's remarks, the spokesman for the Ansarullah movement said Yemeni army troops and Popular Committees fighters were fairly confident from the start that the Riyadh regime and its allies were bound to fail in their military onslaught against Yemen and would obtain none of their objectives.

"Praise be to God! We were quite certain from the onset of the Saudi-led aggression that it was doomed to failure. We informed the Yemeni nation of the fact. We declared that the invasion is not only wicked, but will also make use of proxies to achieve its own goals. We also stated that it would be more in Yemen's best interests to confront foreign intervention than to encourage it," Mohammed Abdul-Salam tweeted on Wednesday.

He added, "Years of war proved the rightness of what the Yemeni people went towards. Yemenis will continue to tread the path. It is necessary to stand up against the Saud-led aggression and siege in order to prevent Yemen from being subjugated to foreign powers. We overtly and covertly invited them to hold negotiations. Our offers, however, fell on deaf ears as they insisted on the war."

Saudi Arabia, backed by the US and other key Western powers, launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing Hadi's government back to power and crushing the Ansarullah movement.

Having failed to reach its professed goals, the war has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead and displaced millions more. It has also destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and spread famine and infectious diseases there.

Despite heavily-armed Saudi Arabia's continuous bombardment of the impoverished country, Yemeni armed forces and the Popular Committees have grown steadily in strength against the Saudi invaders and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down in the country.

Last week, international weekly magazine The Economist wrote in a report that Saudi Arabia was growing desperate to end its disastrous war on its southern neighbor.

The report said while the Yemen conflict has become a "quagmire" for the Riyadh regime, and cost the kingdom untold billions and damaged its relations with key partners, the Yemeni forces think they are winning the conflict.

## Iran, UNWTO discuss rural tourism targets



TEHRAN – On Tuesday, Iran's deputy tourism minister Ali-Asghar Shalbafian and UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili discussed ways to develop bilateral ties and to gain previously-defined rural tourism targets.

Shalbafian briefed national strategies and goals that the Islamic Republic pursues to develop its tourism industry during a meeting held on the sidelines of the 24th General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in Madrid, Spain.

Furthermore, they re-examined an international conference on rural tourism, which Iran plans to hold in its lesser-known provinces of Kermanshah and Kordestan.

Shalbafian and Pololikashvili also exchanged views on the prospects of sustainable tourism both in the COVID and post-COVID eras.

The UNWTO sees rural tourism as a type of activity in which the visitor's experi-

ence is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle, culture, angling, and sightseeing. Such tourism also possesses characteristics such as low population density, a landscape dominated by agriculture and forestry, as well as traditional social structure and lifestyle.

The UN body aims to turn the spotlight on the "uniqueness" of each village to make tourism a means for further development in rural areas. "We want to recognize the uniqueness of each village and showcase the best initiatives to make tourism a means for a better future in rural areas. As we restart tourism, we work to ensure that we leave no one - and no village - behind," according to Pololikashvili.

Having numerous pristine yet diverse natural gifts, Iran has many to offer to nature lovers. For instance, the villages of Kharanaq, Barandaq, and Lark have been nominated for the 'Best Tourism Villages' label, which the World Tourism Organization is projected to grant to a selection of rural destinations across the globe.

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

# Istakhr, once legendary residence of Persian kings

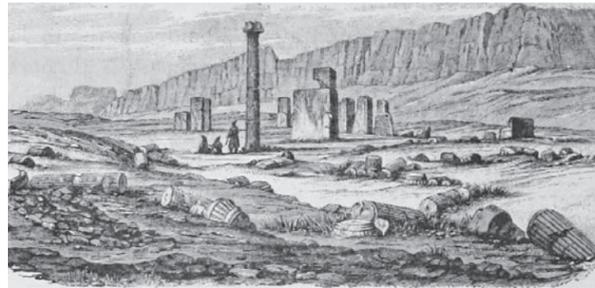
From page 1 ▶ However, the city itself was not completely new: human occupation had started as early as the fourth millennium BC, and the site was certainly occupied in the Bronze Age, by the Achaemenids, by the Seleucids (who used it as a mint town), and by the Parthians, according to livius.org.

The city, which had strong walls, repulsed the first Arab attack in c.644, but was captured and sacked in c.650. Although the site was not abandoned, most people moved to Shiraz (which was founded in 684). Once, as an Islamic town, it was enclosed by fortification walls with rounded towers.

Today, Istakhr is nothing but a plain full of sherds, scattered architectural remains, and a few ruins. The walled-in area measured 1,400 by 650 meters and was surrounded by a ditch that was connected to a nearby river.

The Sassanid era (224 CE-651) is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan that are amongst highlights of the ensemble.

Istakhr remained popular after the fall of Sassanids by Arab innovators. According to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, the geographer Istakhr wrote that in the tenth centu-



A drawing from the ruins of Istakhr in the 19th century

ry, its houses were built of clay, stone, or gypsum according to the wealth of their owners.

Furthermore, Istakhr has yielded many magnificent relics so far. An ancient trash pit at Istakhr proved to be a very valuable source of finds. According to archaeological sources, the entire site is perforated by several sewage or storage wellholes. The holes are often "locked" by caps of brick or stone, and therefore an approximately contemporaneous mixture of broken and discarded pots, personal ornaments, stone and bronze objects, and a large number of coins was preserved in them.

Among the kinds of pottery being unearthed from the Islamic [archaeological] layers, molded ware is found very frequently. These light-green vessels were not only of very high quality but also manifested a unique method of pottery making. The upper and lower halves, with their

sculptured decorations, were always molded separately; the two halves, often showing the same pattern, were then joined together.

Unfortunately, excavations of the site produced only a few of the famous and very rare lusterware vessels with their metallic sheen over a golden-yellowish body. Also from the Islamic period, but less frequent, are pitchers with floral designs in red, yellow, and black. There is considerable controversy about this pottery and whether it was produced in Iran or imported from Mesopotamia.

There were also stone and bronze objects, such as lamps, small vessels, and some utensils used in daily life. Also found were objects of iridescent glass and personal ornaments ranging from clay to gold. Among other finds were clay figurines of animals.

Under the Sasanians, Iranian art experienced a general renaissance.

Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as the palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Saravan. Amongst the most characteristic and striking relics of the Sassanids are rock sculptures carved on abrupt limestone cliffs, for example at Shapur (Bishapour), Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rajab. Metalwork and gem engraving became highly sophisticated. The Sassanid archaeological landscape also represents a highly efficient system of land use and strategic utilization of natural topography in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization. Crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanid historical cities in southern Iran -- titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region"-- to its World Heritage list. The ensemble is comprised of eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan. The World Heritage reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

## Fars province looks to woo Iraqi nationals with fam tours, direct flights

TEHRAN – The Iraqi tour operators and travel insiders are welcomed to visit Fars on a series of familiarization tours across the southern Iranian province, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

To attract more foreign tourists including Iraqi nationals, the province is ready to organize a series of familiarization tours for Iraqi tour operators and travel agents, Seyyed Moayyed Mohsennejad said on Tuesday.

Furthermore, it is necessary to resume the Shiraz-Najaf flights to facilitate the transfer of Iraqi tourists, he added.

He asked Iranian travel agencies for better promotion of Fars province and Shiraz city in terms of religious, health, natural, and historical dimensions.

A group of Iraqi tour operators and travel agents along with their Iranian fellows are currently visiting the northern province of Golestan to get acquainted with the province's tourism potential as a travel destination.

The tour highlights the province's strengths, including its natural, cultural, historical, handicrafts, agricultural tourism, and other assets.

Last week, several Iraqi travel in-



siders and tour operators requested Iran to waive visa requirements for Iraqi nationals who want to enter the Islamic Republic via land borders.

Earlier this year the two neighbors agreed to abolish visa requirements for air travelers.

The announcement came after Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi met in Tehran, discussing various issues including visa waiver, a joint railway project, and increasing the level of trade.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, Iraqi constituted Iran's largest source of tourists. In return, hundreds of thousands of Iranian pilgrims head for the holy Iraqi cities of Najaf and Karbala each year to attend the Arbaeen pilgrimage, aka the Arbaeen trek, to mark an

end to the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The ancient region of Fars also spelled Pars, or Persis was the heart of the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

Celebrated as the heartland of Persian culture for over 2000 years, the capital city of Shiraz has become synonymous with education, nightingales, poetry, and crafts skills passed down from generation to generation. It was one of the most important cities in the medieval Islamic world and was the Iranian capital during the Zand

dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital.

Eram Garden, Afif-Abad Garden, Tomb of Hafez, Tomb of Sa'di, Jameh Mosque of Atigh, and Persepolis are among the historical, cultural, and ancient sites of Shiraz that are of interest to domestic and foreign tourists.

The UNESCO-registered Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy), was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars Province.

The ancient city is also home to some magnificent historical gardens such as Bagh-e Narenjestan and Eram Garden, which are top tourism destinations both for domestic and international sightseers.

UNESCO describes the Persian Garden as an idea that combines natural elements with manmade components to materialize the concept of Eden or Paradise on Earth.

## National Seal of Excellence granted to 52 Iranian handicrafts

TEHRAN – A selection of 52 high-quality works handcrafted by the natives of Khuzestan province has been granted the National Seal of Excellence, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

Winners were picked by a panel of national juries from a shortlist of 80 works, Seyyed Hekmatollah Musavi said on Tuesday.

"Khuzestani craftsmen and artists have done remarkable work over the past few years, considering the growing trend in the field and the efforts made to promote handicraft in the villages and cities of the [southwestern] province," the official added.

The National Seal of Excellence is given to high-quality, selected works to support craftspeople, improve the quality of their works and preserve the originality of this industry, and create sustainable employment.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

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

The value of Iran's handicrafts ex-



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

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

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

## Centuries-old arch bridges to undergo restoration

TEHRAN – Safavid-era (1501-1736) arch bridges of Sikapol and Bozpol in the northern province of Golestan are planned to undergo some rehabilitation works in the near future, a local tourism official has said.

A budget of two billion rials (\$47,600 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, Jafar Khanduzi announced on Tuesday.

Upon the order of Shah Abbas the Great (r. 1588 - 1629) thousands of kilometers of roads were constructed throughout the country during the Safavid period to stimulate trade and travels, the official explained.

"One of these roads was the Shah Abbasi Road, which connected northern Iran to the

central province of Isfahan over these two historical bridges, but most of the road has been destroyed over time," Khanduzi added.

Though the construction of these two bridges and the road is over 400 years old, they are still in use despite needing major repairs, he noted.

The bridges and the road were registered on the national heritage list in 2019.

An arch bridge carries loads primarily by compression, which exerts on the foundation both vertical and horizontal forces. Arch foundations must therefore prevent both vertical settling and horizontal sliding. Despite the more complicated foundation design, the structure itself normally requires



less material than a beam bridge of the same span.

Arch bridges can be classified into deck arch bridges (featuring arches below the

deck) and through arch bridges (those with arches above the deck, generally tied arches). In all arch bridges, the structural difficulty can be found in the minimization of the misalignment of the arch axis and the line of thrust, as well as a sufficient bending and buckling resistance. General design recommendations focus principally on the arch-to-span ratio, the arch and deck slenderness, and the number of hangers or piers.

Recent innovative arch bridges include high-speed railway (HSR) bridges, concrete-filled steel tubular and precast concrete arches, high-performance concrete or ultra-high performance concrete arches, and steel-concrete composite arches, and feature innovative erection methods. Recent

research has been dedicated to the shape and magnitude of equivalent geometric imperfections, fatigue detailing, erection methods, reduction of the arch's self-weight, and new materials for arches, hangers, and ties.

Golestan is reportedly embracing some 2,500 historical and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus - a one-millennium-old brick tower - amongst its most famous. Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. The UNESCO comments that the tower bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

# Iran has been generous to host refugees over past decades: UNHCR

TEHRAN –Millions of Afghans have fled their country over the past few decades, and Iran as a neighboring country has been generous to host many of them, said Ivo Freijssen, UNHCR's Representative in Iran.

"The Taliban's takeover of power has exacerbated the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and beyond. With the onset of winter, even more Afghans face hunger and hardship."

He added that the Government of Germany has significantly increased its support for Afghan refugees in 2021, from an initial EUR 3.2 million earlier this year, to EUR 57 million as of November, to support UNHCR response in Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The total German contribution to emergency support for Afghanistan is amounting to EUR 600 million.

This contribution will allow UNHCR, in coordination with Iran's Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA), to continue to support Afghan refugees and host communities in Iran through health, education, and livelihoods opportunities.

This donation will also help newly arrived Afghans who are fleeing their country. So far, in 2021 alone, UNHCR is directly aware of over 20,000 Afghans who arrived in Iran using irregular routes to seek safety in Iran, although the total number that has entered the country is likely to be significantly higher. UNHCR will thus channel funds towards



pre-positioning Core Relief Items, hygiene kits, and tents at the eastern borders, to ensure newly-displaced persons receive the urgent assistance they need.

In October, German Ambassador to Iran Hans Odo Motzel expressed readiness to help solve the problems of refugees by expanding cooperation with international organizations, appreciating Iran for the services provided to refugees.

"We will do our best to remove the obstacles and challenges facing the refugees," Motzel said in a meeting with Mehdi Mahmoudi, director of citizens and foreign immigrants of the Ministry of Interior.

Regarding the supply of the COVID-19 vaccine, the ambassador said that Germany has also allocated a budget for the supply

of the vaccine for refugees.

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

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

However, in light of the pandemic, all refugees, even those undocumented, benefited from access to free primary health services and free COVID-19 re-

lated testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like Iranian nationals.

On November 28, World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Iran Jaffar Hussain said it is a great achievement for Iran that the government is vaccinating every Afghan refugee going to the vaccination center even before receiving COVID vaccines from Humanitarian Buffer (COVAX).

"There are three to four million Afghan refugees in the country and the government received 1.6 million doses from Humanitarian Buffer (COVAX) from COVID but the government is vaccinating every Afghan refugee going to the vaccination center even before receiving the buffer from their own resources and I witnessed it during my visits to Vaccination centers in Tehran, Kerman, and Mashhad," he said.

## Public campaign launched to safeguard Zagros forests

TEHRAN – A public campaign aimed to help national authorities save the endangered valuable Zagros forests was launched across the country on Wednesday.

Nature lovers, city and village councils, NGOs, environmental formations, the Red Crescent Society, as well as local officials from 11 provinces neighboring the forests, are participating in the campaign, ISNA reported.

With the theme of "A Green Iran, Each Iranian One Tree", the participants will plant seeds of trees endemic to Zagros regions in 74 counties.

Zagros forests are the most important vegetation area in the country, which is spread over 6 million hectares of the whole 30-million-hectare area of the region.

Climate change, deforestation, over-graz-



ing, land-use changes, drought, pests, and diseases are among the causes of damage to the forests.

Since the Iranian calendar year 1387 (March 2008-March 2009), about 1.45 million hectares of forests have died of pests and diseases.

Zagros forest steppe ecoregion with an area of about 6 million hectares (3.5 percent of Iran) is located primarily in Iran, ranging

northwest to southeast and roughly paralleling the country's western border. The forest constitutes 40 percent of the country's forested area. The forest has also been called western oak forest due to the dominance of oak species.

According to Science Direct Western, oak forests are home to many species including, the Persian squirrel which is the indicator species of this region. Persian squirrels and oak trees have symbiotic relationships, in which forests provide ecological requirements of Persian squirrels such as food and shelter and, in return, the Persian squirrel contributes to seed germination and forests' regeneration.

A wide variety of wildlife, including wolves, leopards, and even the Persian fallow deer which was once thought extinct have made their homes in the mountains.

Iran has made many notable contributions to the development and humanitarian sphere.

## Iran, UN working to map out new partnership on sustainable development

From page 1 ▶ UN agencies accelerated support - to date 15 million vaccines have landed in Tehran together with other medical supplies, 1.6 million doses were provided specifically to the vulnerable Afghan population, he added.

"We must take the lessons that we learned from these last two years of COVID and also more broadly as



we see the dramatic challenges the world faces in the environment and climate change, backsliding on education and reduced access to social services, and with poverty and hunger rising around the world for the first time in decades," he said.

At the end of the event, a book entitled "United Nations and Iran Partnership" was unveiled.

## ENGLISH IN USE

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### Precipitation forecast to reach above normal in next 3 months

The country is predicted to receive above normal rainfall over the next three months (February 20-May 21), head of the climatological research institute affiliated to Iran's Meteorological Organization (IMO) has said.

The whole country will meet normal and above normal rainfalls, the northern parts will receive above normal rainfall while southern provinces will receive normal to lower-than-normal rainfall, IRNA quoted Iman Babaeian as saying on Sunday.

This month, northern and eastern provinces will receive rain above normal averages, while in the first month of spring precipitation will be at normal amounts across the country, he noted, adding, during the second month of spring rainfall will reach its peak.

### بارش‌های کشور در سه ماه پیش رو بیش از نرمال است

رئیس پژوهشکده اقلیم‌شناسی سازمان هواشناسی گفت: پیش‌بینی‌ها نشان می‌دهد میزان بارش در کشور در سه ماهه پیش رو (اسفند ۹۷، فروردین و اردیبهشت ۹۸) در حد نرمال و متمایل به بیش از نرمال خواهد بود. ایمان باباییان روز یکشنبه در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: مجموع بارش‌ها در سطح کشور نرمال و متمایل به بیشتر از نرمال است اما در نیمه شمالی، بیشتر از نرمال و در نیمه جنوبی در محدوده نرمال تا کمتر از نرمال خواهد بود.

وی اظهار داشت: بارش‌ها در اسفندماه ۹۷ در نیمه شمالی و شرقی بیشتر از نرمال است، در فروردین ماه ۹۸ نیز بارش‌ها در محدوده نرمال و برای اردیبهشت بیشتر از نرمال پیش‌بینی شده است.

## Iranian northwestern national parks share incredible biodiversity

The precious national parks of northwestern Iran are the most diverse of any in the country, differing from rainforest to wide shrub lands which share a great biological diversity, this time we will take a quick look at three incredible national parks located in East Azarbaijan province.

To preserve the existing biodiversity over the wide geographic expanse of Iran, four types of areas have been designated for preservation and protection, including, national parks, wildlife refuges, protected areas and natural national monuments. In 1997, the Department of the Environment (DOE) held supervision over 7,563,983 hectares of such areas. By the year 2003, the size of the DOE supervised areas reached 11,791,788.225 hectares.

National park is a designated part of Iran's environment - including forests, rangelands, woodlands, prairies, water or mountains - that is an outstanding representation of Iranian nature. As such, it is brought under protection in order to permanently preserve its natural ecology and to create a suitable environment for the flourishing of wildlife and the growth of flora under natural conditions.

The national parks currently cover 1,649,771 hectares of the country's area.

Protected areas also are significantly important natural resources due to its impact on wildlife breeding, preservation of plant life or its natural state. The total area of regions protected is 6,600,601 hectares.

Wildlife refuges also are natural habitats with special climate qualifications, which brought under protection in order to revive wild animals and is stretching to 3,524,181 hectares.

### Arasbaran National Park

Arasbaran is a large mountainous area stretching from the Qusha Dagh massif, south of Ahar, to the Aras River in East Azarbaijan province. The region is confined to Aras River in the north, Meshgin Shahr county and Moghan in the east, Sarab county in the south, and Tabriz and Marand counties in the west.

Arasbaran protected area measures 78,560 hectares with a circumference of 134 kilometers. The altitude varies from 256 meters in the northern part to 2,896 meters which is the highest elevation in southern part of the area, according to the UNESCO website.

In-between the Caspian, Caucasus and Mediterranean region, the area covers mountains up to 2,200 meters, high alpine meadows, semi-arid steppes, rangelands and forests, rivers and springs.

Arasbaran was designated as a UNESCO Biosphere reserve in 1976.

It is home to 215 species of birds, namely the Caucasian black grouse, grey partridge, black francolin, and common pheasant, 29 species of reptiles, 48 species of mammals, notably wild goat, wild boar, brown bear, wolf, lynx, and leopard, and 17 species of fish.

It was once home to extinct sub-species of Caspian red deer local to the area.

Designed with a wide range of flora and wild trees, Arasbaran forests is the ubiquity of edible wild trees, which grow wild alongside streams, also exotic plant species, such as redcurrant, truffle and herbs with application in traditional medicine significantly add to the ecological importance of Arasbaran region.

### National Park of Lake Urmia

The National Park of Lake Urmia, shared between West Azarbaijan and East Azarbaijan provinces, is home to several precious species and amongst 9 biosphere reserves of Iran in 2013 periodic review by UNESCO.

Thus, with regard to its ecological significance, unique biodiversity and the presence of indigenous communities, Lake Urmia has been recognized as a protected area since 1967 and was designated as a National Park in 1976.

Stretching to 464,056 hectares, the National Park of Lake Urmia consists of approximately 102 islands; Shahi island was historically the lake's largest. However, it became a peninsula connected to the eastern shore when the lake level dropped. Some of the islands have a rich ecosystem due to being out of reach.

The 3,200-hectare national park of Kabudan Island, is a habitat for wild mammals such as rats, urials, and leopards.

Armenian mouflon, Persian fallow deer are among the most common species in the area, while it holds a great share of vegetation and herbs and hosts flocks of migratory birds like pelicans, flamingos, large white-headed gulls and common shelduck.

Lake Urmia, was once the largest salt-water lake in the Middle East. It was home to many migratory and indigenous animals including flamingos, pelicans, egrets and ducks and attracted hundreds of tourists every year who had bathed in the water to take advantage of the therapeutic properties of the lake.

However, decades of long-standing drought spells and elevated hot summer temperatures that speed up evaporation as well as increased water demands in agriculture sector shrank the lake drastically. In 1999 the volume of water which was at 30 billion cubic meters drastically decreased to half a billion cubic meters in 2013. Moreover, the lake surface area of 5,000 square kilometers in 1997 shrank to one tenth of that to 500 square kilometers in 2013.

The lake also hosted diverse bacterial communities, hyperhalophilous phytoplanktons, and notably the macrozooplankton crustacean, the brine shrimp *Artemia urmiana*.

### Kantal National Park

Kantal National Park is located in the northern part of East Azarbaijan province and the international border with the Republic of Armenia, with an area of 7,000 hectares.

The northeastern part of Kantal National Park is recognized as part of the Kiamaki Wildlife Refuge, which has been promoted to National Park in 2011.

There are more than 450 plant species in the region including Juniper, desert poplar, Maple, Celtis australis, wild pistachio tree, European pear, Russian olive, barberry and dog rose.

The Kantal National Park is hosting over 350 animal species namely, wild goat, urial, wild boar, brown bear, Lynx, wild cat, fox, jackal and wolves, while being one of the most important habitats of Persian leopards in the country.

In early spring, colorful tulips grow on the slopes of Kantal farms extending their range to amaze the visitors.

And Maharan Waterfall is also one of the unique beauties of the Kiamaki Wildlife Refuge.

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON DECEMBER 1

New cases	4,312
New deaths	82
Total cases	6,121,757
Total deaths	129,912
New hospitalized patients	660
Patients in critical condition	3,328
Total recovered patients	5,892,574
Diagnostic tests conducted	38,873,156
Doses of vaccine injected	106,267,319



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DECEMBER 2, 2021

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A fool's mind is at the mercy of his tongue and a wise man's tongue is under the control of his mind.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon: 11:54 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:28 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:57 (tomorrow)

## Iran: Persian literature

Part 2

Finally, wisdom literature is represented by the Draxt i asurig or "The Babylonian Tree," another Middle Persian poem of Parthian origin, in which the contest between a palm tree and a goat may be interpreted as an allegory on the superiority of pastoral life over agriculture.

The bulk of Parthian literature was written after the Arsacid period, however, and is of Manichean content. It dates from the 3rd to 10th centuries, reaching its peak between the 4th and 6th centuries.

The latest texts show less literary merit, since they were composed by Sogdian speakers, at a time when Parthian had become a dead, church language. Relatively few texts have survived to the present day; however, among them one might mention, in particular, the hymn cycles Huyadagman "Fortunate for us" and Angad Roshn "Rich in light," both named after the first words of the text and attributed to Mani's disciple Mar Ammo (and thus dateable in the latter part of the 3rd century).

### Middle Persian literature

Other than legends on coins and seals, as well as private and business letters, economic documents, and administrative records on ostraca and papyri, Middle Persian literature encompasses fragments of a manuscript of the Psalter and a number of inscriptions up to the 11th century, but above all an important corpus of writings in Book Pahlavi script (mostly of religious content) and of Manichean texts.

The manuscript from Bulayiq with a Middle Persian translation of the Psalter was probably written no earlier than the 7th century, though the original text itself presumably dates from the 5th century.

Although Middle Persian continued to be used in private inscriptions from India and Mazandaran as late as the 11th century, the most important and longer inscriptions date from the 3rd century.

These include the trilingual inscription (Middle Persian, Parthian, Greek) of Shabuhr I (241-72) on the Ka'ba-ye Zardosht at Naqsh-e Rostam, the bilingual (Middle Persian, Parthian) inscription of Narseh in Paikuli, and the four Middle Persian inscriptions of the Mazdean (Zoroastrian) high priest Kerdīr, all of which show a number of interesting parallels with the Old Persian inscriptions of the Achaemenids.

The mostly severely damaged Manichean manuscripts discovered in the early decades of the 20th century in Central Asia are written in a variant of the Palmyrene script and deal with religious matters.

Apart from the one work written in Middle Persian and entitled Shabuhrgan, in which Mani summarized his teachings in order to convince the Sassanid king of kings Shabuhr I of his new religion, all his works were presumably written in his Aramaic dialect.

The latest dateable Middle Persian Manichean text is in prose and was written in the second quarter of the 9th century: it is the introduction by a Sogdian author to a hymn-book composed at Qarashahr between 825 and 832.

Other texts include hagiographic and dogmatic prose writings as well as fragments of Manichean church history, homilies, prayers, and the translation of two Christian apocryphal works, the "Shepherd of Hermas"

and the "Book of Henoch".

The major part of Middle Persian Manichean texts, however, is comprised of versified hymns, among which one might mention the Gowishn ig Griw Zindag "Hymn of the Living Soul" and the Gowishn ig Griw Roshn "Hymn of the Light Soul."

Middle Persian literature other than Manichean includes first of all a word-for-word translation of the Avesta (even faithfully rendering Avestan syntax, which results in a clumsy, not to say at times obscure, Middle Persian version), accompanied by a Middle Persian commentary.

The whole is called Zand "Understanding," and priests made no distinction between the two parts, learning both of them by heart. In post-Sassanid times, as knowledge of the Avestan language dwindled, compilations relating to particular themes became increasingly popular.

One such work is the Bundahishn or "Creation" (compiled in the 9th century), also called Zand-agahih "Knowledge from the Zand"; this work exists in a shorter Indian recession along with a longer Iranian version.

It deals with Zoroastrian cosmology and the creation of the world and much else. By far the most voluminous compilation, however, is another 9th-century work called Denkard or "Book of the Religion," which on its own represents about one-fourth of Middle Persian literature.

It is an encyclopedic work of Zoroastrian knowledge in nine volumes, written in a tortuous and dry style. The sixth book offers an anthology of wise sayings, the seventh a sort of universal history, including the fullest legend of the life of Zoroaster, and the eighth a summary of the original Avesta.

Yet another work offering excerpts from the Avesta and its commentary was compiled in the late 9th century by a man named Zadspram, son of Gushn-Jam (or Juwanzham?), and therefore called Wizidagih i Zad-spram "Selections of Zadspram."

This anthology deals with several themes, such as the creation of the world and the formation of man, legends about Zoroaster, and the final Restoration of the world. Since the text is the work of a single man, it suffers less from repetitions than the two previous works.

The Shkand-Gumanig-Wizar, the "Doubt-destroying Exposition" is a further 9th-century work which stands somewhat apart from the others: in an elevated but clear style, it exposes Zoroastrian beliefs and polemically criticizes other religions, in particular Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and Manichaeism.

It survived in Sanskrit and Pazard (i.e., Middle Persian transcribed in Avestan characters) redactions, and corruptions are numerous.

Among the many other later religious writings of didactic or normative character, the following may be briefly mentioned: the Dadestan i Menog i Xrad "Judgments of the Spirit of Wisdom," the Dadestan i Denig "Religious judgments" and the Pahlavi Rivayat accompanying it, the three "Letters of Manushchīr," and the short treatises Shayast ne-Shayast "Allowed and not-allowed" and Chim i Kustig "Reasons for the sacred girdle."

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

# Golden Pen of Belgrade honors Iranian illustrators Matak, Zakeri

From Page 1 ► The exhibition of the biennial, which is organized by the Association of Fine Artists of Applied Arts and Designers of Serbia, opened on November 23 at the Residence of Princess Ljubica and will run until December 3.

Published by Kanoon, "Friendship Cookie" (also known as "A Friend or a Cookie?"), which carries illustrations by Matak has been introduced in the biennial's catalog.

The catalog also features "Am I Sleeping or Awake?" written and illustrated by Samaneh Salavati, a winner of the 50th Golden Pen of Belgrade.

"Panbeduneh and Mahtutus in the Snowy Night" illustrated by Ghazal Fathollahi is another Persian bestseller introduced in the catalog.

Written by Meria Yazdani, the book tells the story of

Panbeduneh, a little rabbit that is lost in the forest during a snowy night. Panbeduneh's mother and other rabbits are worried about Panbeduneh. So they begin praying for the little rabbit.

On the sidelines of the Golden Pen of Belgrade, the Singidunum Gallery in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Center is organizing an exhibition showcasing works by the special guest of this year's Golden Pen of Belgrade, Lorenzo Ceccotti LRNZ from Rome. His exhibition will continue until December 25.

David Vartabedian was president of the council for the 51st Golden Pen of Belgrade. The council also includes Slobodan Jovanovic, a senior curator of the Museum of Applied Arts in Belgrade, graphic designer Danijela Paracki, painter and illustrator Vladimir Vesovic, art historian Dragana Palavestra, illustrator Iva Ciric and author Drazen Kovacevic.



A poster announces Iranian illustrator Mohammad-Hossein (Mason) Matak's "Friendship Cookie" as a winner of the 51st Golden Pen of Belgrade awards, and the 16th International Biennial of Illustrations.

## Romania's Piatra Neamt art competition awards Iranian children



Painting by Iranian girl Kimia Purrezai won a Grand Prize for Individual Work the Piatra Neamt Creative International Art Competition for Children in Romania.

TEHRAN – Iranian children won several awards at the 5th edition of the Piatra Neamt Creative International Art Competition for Children in Romania.

Kimia Purrezai won a Grand Prize for Individual Work, Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA - Kanoon) announced on Wednesday.

In addition, Aysa Jaferi, Fereshteh Abdi, Hadiseh Alemi, Elnaz Khodabakhshi, Negin

Yarali, Niku Jannati, Setayesh Nasuhi, Nirvana Rustai and Bitu Jaddi received Gold Medals and diplomas.

The children all are members of various branches of Kanoon.

Works by 1,800 young artists aged 6 to 18 from 34 schools, high schools and clubs in 15 countries, including Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Latvia, Ukraine, Poland, Iran, Russia and Turkey, were submitted to the competition.

Romania's Cultural Association of Arts and the organizers of the contest held an exhibition of winning works and a selection of submissions at the central library of Piatra-Neamt.

"This project is a representative effort for the cultural and artistic life of the Piatra-Neamt municipality," the Kirileanu County Library Managing Director Mihaela Mereuta said.

"It is an event that enriches us spiritually, that illustrates the culture and civilization of people, and this permanent contact with the young people, most from different countries, strengthens our conviction in the unity of humanity, with good understanding," she stated.

## "Tazieh of Poor King Lear" blends Iranian, Western theater styles

TEHRAN – Iranian and Western theater styles merge in director Melika Razi's new project "The Tazieh of Poor King Lear".

She plans to blend an Iranian story and William Shakespeare's tragedy "King Lear" to stage a play by adopting the style of tazieh, Iranian passion play, and other Iranian dramatic elements.

The play written by Hossein Jamali will be performed during the 20th edition of the Traditional and Ritual Theater Festival, which will open on December 5.

"In 'King Lear,' Shakespeare tells the story of a king who plans to relinquish his power and land to his daughters. One of his three daughters refused to accept their father's decision, therefore he



A scene from "The Tazieh of Poor King Lear" (Theater.ir)

disinherits her, forcing her to marry the French king," Razi told the Persian service of MNA on Wednesday.

"In its Iranian version, the play goes toward an epic ambiance, in which Siah [the character of Siah-bazi, a type of Iranian folk play featuring a blackfaced harlequin] arrived at the king's palace and the plot and two other stories are combined as the

play progresses," she added.

Razi noted that the play features the elements of repetition in an absurdist play and is almost under the influence of tazieh.

"If we plan to work in the field of ritual and traditional theater, we should raise our knowledge of this genre, myths and folktales as well as

learn about origins and basic topics in this field," she stated.

"Sometimes, I have seen people taking negative attitudes toward traditional Iran plays, but I have also seen other countries still regard their classics and plays written based on their own folktales. As a stage artist, I have a duty to introduce our native culture to the world," noted Razi who has previously directed numerous plays from the world's literature, including Ingmar Bergman's "Persona" and "The Operetta of Orang's Deceit" and Marsha Norman's "'night, Mother".

"The Tazieh of Poor King Lear" has previously been staged by Hossein Jamali at the Yerevan Shakespeare International Theater Festival and several Tehran theaters.

## Isabel Wilkerson's "Caste" appears in Persian

TEHRAN – American journalist Isabel Wilkerson's nonfiction book "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents" has been published in Persian.

Maaref is the publisher of the book translated by Payam Derakhshanfar.

In this brilliant book published in August 2020, Wilkerson gives us a masterful portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America as she explores, through an immersive, deeply researched narrative and stories about real people, how America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings.

Beyond race, class, or other factors, there is a powerful caste system that influences people's lives and behavior and the nation's fate.

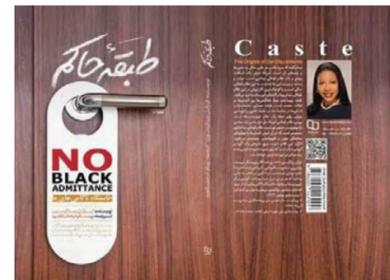
Linking the caste systems of America, India and Nazi Germany, Wilkerson explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across

civilizations, including a divine will, bloodlines, stigma and more.

Using riveting stories about people—including Martin Luther King, Jr., baseball's Satchel Paige, a single father and his toddler son, Wilkerson herself, and many others—she shows the ways that the insidious undertow of caste is experienced every day.

She documents how the Nazis studied the racial systems in America to plan their out-cast of the Jews; she discusses why the cruel logic of caste requires that there be a bottom rung for those in the middle to measure themselves against; she writes about the surprising health costs of caste, in depression and life expectancy, and the effects of this hierarchy on our culture and politics.

Finally, she points forward to ways America can move beyond the artificial and destructive separations of human divisions, toward hope in our common humanity.



Cover of the Persian translation of Isabel Wilkerson's book "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents".

"Caste," which followed Wilkerson's 2010 book "The Warmth of Other Suns," was met with critical acclaim and commercial success.

It won or was nominated for several awards, and was featured prominently on nonfiction bestsellers lists and year-end best-books lists.