

Iranian Constructive Proposals in Vienna Met With European Apathy

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Opinion

Tehran derby, an opportunity to rise for giants

By Farrokhesab

TEHRAN – Saturday's Iran Professional League (IPL) matchday includes Tehran derby at Azadi Stadium, with giants Esteghlal and Persepolis doing battle.

Iranian football's great competitive rivals go head to head as both teams try to climb in the table as the Blues and the Reds now sit just three and two points behind the leaders Sepahan with 16 points in the table.

Esteghlal, as the hosts, are looking to end Persepolis' five-year domestic dominance.

Farhad Majidi's side faltered in recent weeks despite a strong start to the season. They had three consecutive wins at the first three weeks of the 2021/22 season. However, the Blues were far from their best in the next four games, with just four draws and two goals in four games.

Esteghlal head into the derby just a single point behind Persepolis and three behind Sepahan, with a win taking them above Persepolis and even to top spot if everything goes in favor of them this week.

Meanwhile, Persepolis have been performing far from their usual exceptional standards that they have set themselves.

A shock 1-0 defeat at Arak against Aluminium was followed by two draws that caused Yahya Golmohammadi's side to lose seven points in a row. ▶ Page 3

Op-ed

The Big Bang of Lebanon

By A. Bassam

TEHRAN – During the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1989), the first time Lebanon suffered from the collapse of its Lira was when the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) departed the country in 1982, after the Israeli invasion. The Lebanese lira's price fell from 3 to 3000 against the American dollar in one go. However, at that time no one felt that the Lebanese existence as an independent state was in jeopardy.

Nowadays we live in different times; it is clear that Lebanon's fate is now in question.

According to World Bank reports, there are 2.3 million persons under the poverty line in Lebanon. The data are consistent with the latest assessment conducted by ESC-WA, which concluded that "the poverty rate in Lebanon doubled from 42 percent in 2019 to 82 percent of the total population in 2021, with nearly 4 million people living in multidimensional poverty; they represent about one million families, including 77 percent, or approximately 745,000 Lebanese families.

Lebanon is heading towards the abyss every day. And on a daily basis, people ask what is next. It seems that with the lack of solutions, we are about to reach the bottom, except that the bottom is not known yet. Lebanon is under a vicious kind of undeclared siege. Everybody loves Lebanon, and everybody wants to save Lebanon, but the humongous dilemma is that Lebanon doesn't want to save itself and head east.

To understand what is going on, we need to understand the internal factors that are preventing Lebanon from taking different decisions to stop the ongoing collapse of the country. And we need to understand the interests of the external factors that meet oddly with internals to bind the Lebanese free will. ▶ Page 5



Israeli sabotage takes new turn

TEHRAN— As Iran presented two drafts of agreements to the Joint Commission and P4+1 in Vienna, prospects of reaching a possible agreement between all sides seem more within reach. However, feeling at risk, the Israelis are trying to jeopardize the Vienna talks by making provocative remarks and

visits to the countries opposing the JCPOA in its entirety.

Referring to such moves, Iran's top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani told Al Jazeera correspondent in Vienna, "There are external actors [The Zionist regime] making efforts to

disrupt the talks."

Bagheri Kani also told Al Jazeera that "Israel won't even dream of attacking Iran because it would cease to exist," referring to a report published by Associated Press on December 2. ▶ Page 2

Iran allocates budget to promote exports to Syria

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has said the country has allocated a special budget of \$50 million to support the Iranian export companies active in the Syrian market, IRNA reported on Thursday.

"Iran and Syria have good political relations and we must use this opportunity and encourage the private sector and our busi-

nessmen to enter the Syrian market and the government must do its best in this regard," Alireza Peyman Pak told the national TV.

Referring to a recent visit to Syria by a delegation headed by Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin, he said: "During a visit to Damascus, we were mainly looking for ways to pave the way for the private sector to expand trade with this country."



Leader praises martyrs, says nation should increase unity

TEHRAN— In a meeting held on November 21 to commemorate the martyrs of Ilam province, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei praised the martyrs of the Sacred Defense, saying, "The Iranian nation should increase its unity, solidarity, motivation and efforts when it hears the martyrs' message."

The speech delivered by the Leader was broadcast on December 2.

Iran has not stopped issuing tourist visas: official

TEHRAN – By the emergence of a highly contagious Omicron variant, Iran has not stopped issuing tourist visas, which it resumed on October 23 following 19 months of suspension to curb the virus.

"Following the closure of Iran's airspace to six [African] countries where the Omicron variant has been detected, concerns have been raised about the issuance of Ira-

nian tourist visas," Leyla Ajdari, an official in charge of foreign tourism marketing, said on Friday.

In response to those concerns, she stressed there is no plan yet to halt the re-issuance of Iranian tourist visas, ISNA reported.

Iran's National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control on November 27 banned arriv-

als from the African countries of Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Swatini reacting to the new variant.

The Omicron variant appears able to get around some immunity but vaccines should still offer protection against severe disease, according to the latest data from South Africa where it is fast overtaking Delta to become the dominant variant. ▶ Page 6

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FM, Borrell hold talks on Vienna

TEHRAN— Speaking to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Friday morning, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said that Iran aims to end the sanctions violating the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Josep Borrell, EU foreign policy chief and coordinator of the Vienna talks, spoke by telephone with Iran's top diplomat about the current negotiation process in Vienna.

Borrell called the event important, as all negotiating delegations from Germany, China, Russia, France, Britain, and especially Iran, are now working hard to reach an agreement in Vienna.

He added, "I have emphasized to Mora to work constructively and actively with the senior Iranian negotiator and all delegations to reach an agreement," according to the statement published on the Iranian foreign ministry website.

He also called for the flexibility of all parties in the continuation of the talks.

Borrell expressed satisfaction with the start of negotiations and expressed his colleagues' readiness in the European Union to help resolve the issue.

Amir Abdollahian, while thanking the efforts of the EU foreign policy chief and his colleagues, described the negotiation process as good but slow overall. ▶ Page 2

Op-ed

Removal of sanctions major reason for Iran's signature on JCPOA

By Salman Parviz

"Chabahar Port is not only a transit port, it is an investment opportunity," the Iranian ambassador in India said in a recent interview with ThePrint, a Delhi-based online newspaper.

Ali Chegani pointed out that Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar has visited Iran twice after the presidency of Seyed Ebrahim Raisi and added that a visit by his Iranian counterpart Hussain Amir Abdollahian to New Delhi is in the pipeline.

The Iranian envoy pointed out the Chabahar Port is not subject to U.S. unilateral sanctions. Pundits believe that an exemption was granted due to the U.S. focus on containing the emerging Chinese influence in the region. The Pakistani Port of Gwadar, which lies 140 kilometers east of Chabahar, is being developed by China as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

In May 2015, Iran and India signed a cooperation agreement for the development of Chabahar port. India's private sector was scheduled to invest in Chabahar in two phases. The first phase is a \$31 billion project that involves construction of two berths in the port, a container of 640 meters and a multipurpose cargo terminal of 600 meters. ▶ Page 2

Removal of sanctions major reason for Iran's signature on JCPOA

Sanctions regimes impede investment and infrastructure development

From page 1 ► In the second phase, India's Jindal Infrastructure, Essar, SAIL and IRCON will develop the area around the port which involves developing a free trade zone and a railway line connecting landlocked Afghanistan to the Central Asian region.

For India, one of the fastest growing economies in the world, Chabahar Port will provide an alternative route to conduct business with Afghanistan and Central Asia circumventing Pakistan.

In January 2017, seven agreements valued at over \$3bn were signed by Iranian, Indian, Omani, Chinese, and South Korean investors to promote investment opportunities and sustainable development in Mokran coast in Chabahar Free Trade Zone (CFTZ).

However, all foreign investors exited from Chabahar project due to U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and imposition of "maximum pressure" sanctions in 2018. In total 1,500 sanctions were legislated during the former U.S. President Donald Trump's administration. These restrictions make financial transactions almost impossible. Worth mentioning is also that the foreign investors could be subject to "secondary sanctions".

With the ongoing seventh round of the JCPOA talks which resumed on November 29, the Western powers must keep in mind what kind of economic doldrums the Iranian middle and lower class are going through due to sanctions along with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Raisi administration has emphasized sanctions removal is a prerequisite for revival of the nuclear deal.

Humanitarian imports were allowed under the "maximum pressure" sanctions instituted by Trump. Due to lack of a stable banking channel for humanitarian work Iran is unable to import drugs, medical equipment, etc. in this pandemic era.

When the U.S. exited the JCPOA in 2018, the so-called E3 (Germany, France and UK) registered the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX). However, this special purpose vehicle (SPV) has no engine or driver. INSTEX mechanism was supposed to keep trade flow between Europe and Iran and initially it was announced that this SPV would be used for sectors most essential, such as pharmaceutical, medical devices, and agri-food goods. However, this SPV remains without a driver and engineless.

The Norwegian Refugee Council warned recently that future aid work is at risk in Iran due to the U.S. sanctions. The delivery of aid to Afghan refugees residing in Iran and for the 2019's severe flooding victims in Iran was at risk because banks are refusing to transfer money to aid agencies due to fear of sanctions, says the Norwegian group.

In April 2019 severe and widespread flash flooding forced 366,000 people from their homes, and killed 76 people in 25 of 31 provinces in Iran. With infrastructure facilities and livelihoods hit hard, immediate and long-term assistance and support for over two million people was hampered due to sanctions.

In an address to the UN on November 9, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Majid Takht Ravanchi, denounced the unilateral sanctions for barring the affected countries from gaining access to financial resources needed for achieving the goals of sustainable development. Ravanchi pointed out that "issues such as exclusion and inequality can act as potential drivers, aggravating factors for conflicts and weaken opportunities in achieving lasting peace."

When Raisi took office he promised to take action to lift harsh sanctions and bridge the gap with dissatisfied Iranian general public but emphasized that he will not tie the country's future to the West. Raisi said instead his administration will prioritize regional ties, especially with neighboring countries.

Iran has built an alliance with the East, including China, Russia and regional

countries. Raisi's promise of prioritizing relations with the regional countries has borne fruit. Iran's membership of the SCO was one of the limelight, but the process of membership started years ago and it will take another two years for the institution of Iran's full membership.

Another example is Raisi's visit to Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on November 28. During the trip an agreement was signed for gas swaps between Iran, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. Petroleum Minister Javad Owji said the shipments are due to begin on December 22. This happened at the backdrop of the recent rocky diplomatic road between Iran and Azerbaijan.

Meanwhile, there have been several rounds of talks between Iranian and Saudi Arabian officials. Both sides have expressed optimism over the talks and future rounds are in the pipeline which could bring the two main players of the region closer.

The Iran-China Strategic Agreement deal was signed on March 27, 2021, on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Iran and China. Although the details and terms of the agreement originally proposed in 2016 have not been made public, it has been announced that China will invest \$400-600 billion into the Iranian economy, reads an article by China Briefing. In return for the Chinese help Iran will provide cheap oil. The two countries also signed defense agreements and conducted naval exercises during the Rouhani years.

This is the first time that the Islamic Republic has reached such an extensive deal with a major world power. The last one was a 10-year agreement with Russia, which was later extended to 20 years.

What will be the impact of the Iran-China strategic deal on the development of Chabahar remains to be seen.

With the continuation of the sanctions regime, Iran's so-called shift to the East is inevitable. China and Russia's role in the development of Chabahar Free Trade Zone is inevitable.

China's new digital currency e-RMB along with barter trade could play an important role to facilitate Sino-Iranian trade, reducing regional reliance on greenback transactions.

However, returning full-circle back to today's economic realities, the U.S. dollar remains the most important and influential currency in the current financial market. In 2019, the U.S. dollar made up nearly 90 percent of all international transactions and 60 percent of all foreign exchange reserves. The supremacy of the U.S. dollar gives U.S. economic sanctions their strength, making it nearly impossible for sanctioned nations such as Iran and North Korea to conduct international business.

In a recent telephone conversation, Raisi told his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin that the "Islamic Republic is absolutely serious about negotiations and we are equally serious about our people rights to have sanctions lifted," according to a statement published on the presidency's website.

The moment the sanctions regime vanishes Iran will become one of the most lucrative places in the world to invest. Apart from natural resources, Iran is also a major global producer of steel, cement, cars and well positioned in nanotechnology and stem cell research.

All efforts should be made during the seven round of the Vienna talks to facilitate the legal rights of the Iranian nation to benefit from peaceful nuclear knowledge.

Describing Iran's potential, Sajid Rizvi, editor-in-chief of the London-based EAPGROUP International Media, said, "It's very hard to beat its roll call of assets: a consumer market of more than 80 million, largely well educated people; a human capital mix that is even more attractive than Turkey; and in the all important energy front, a combination of as much oil as Saudi Arabia, as much gas as Russia, and arguably more mineral resources than Australia."

Israeli sabotage takes new turn

From page 1 ► In that report, an Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly, said that Israel still considers a military strike against Iran to be a viable option and is preparing for all scenarios.

In a video interview with Ynet on Thursday, Defense Minister Benny Gantz expressed confidence that U.S. President Joe Biden will keep his vow not to allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons.

"I think that the United States, as a world leader, will honor its promises and accept its responsibilities... I don't believe we are alone," he stated.

"I believe we should constantly be prepared for the possibility of finding ourselves alone. I reiterate that a strike (on Iran) is an option. It is not required to be the first one."

He stated that if no progress is made on the matter, "the world, the region, and the State of Israel will have no choice but to act, and it might happen."

In another act of sabotage, Mossad chief David Barnea claimed on Thursday that the agency will take whatever steps are necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

"Iran will not obtain nuclear weapons – not in the near future, and not ever. That is my promise, and it is Mossad's vow as well."

He made the remarks while attending a ceremony recognizing exemplary agents alongside Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and President Issac Herzog.

His remarks came as Iran and major powers attempted to resurrect a 2015 deal in Vienna that would have



curtailed Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for respite from U.S., and EU economic sanctions.

Responding to the provocative moves made by the Israelis, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh tweeted on Thursday that the delegation present in Vienna will not receive instructions from Tel Aviv.

"As #ViennaTalks advances, Israeli regime shows its true color again, calling for immediate halt of negotiations. Not surprising. Dialogue is always despised by the regime whose genesis is based on war, tension & terror. Delegates in Vienna won't take instruction from Beit Aghion."

In another move to further endanger a possible agreement in Vienna, Israeli "Defense Minister" (read that as War Minister) Benny

Gantz's office said Thursday that he will fly to Washington next week for a series of discussions with key American officials amid escalating tensions with Iran.

Gantz was to meet with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

According to his office, the defense minister will travel to the United States late Wednesday night and will "hold a series of talks concentrating on security matters" in Washington.

The current round of Vienna talks concluded with European delegations asking for time to consult with their respective capitals. Iran has made its move by offering drafts of agreements. It is expected from P4+1 to not fall into another Israeli trap when returning to Vienna next week.

Top commander says U.S.' significant defeat is in Afghanistan

From page 1 ► Qaani was referring to the shameful withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan in August.

Qaani stated, "Our message to the Americans is that you still have time to get out of the geography around us, otherwise if you do not leave the geography around us, you will face consequences that you will not forget after you escape from Afghanistan."

Earlier, Ayatollah Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, said in a message on the occasion of the Hajj rituals, "This wrong perception led to the humiliation of the United States in



Afghanistan, and after the tumultuous arrival of twenty years ago, and the use of weapons, bombs and fire against defenseless and civilian people, and

found themselves in a quagmire and withdraw its forces and military equipment from it. Of course, the awake nation of Afghanistan must be vigilant against U.S. intelligence tools and soft war's weapons in its country."

The last U.S. military plane left Kabul airport quietly at midnight August 30, 2021, ending 20 years of U.S. occupation and war in Afghanistan.

The U.S. military left Afghanistan in the middle of the night in a state of humiliation, seeking the approval of the Taliban to withdraw its forces and civilians.

FM, Borrell hold talks on Vienna

From page 1 ► He added, "The Iranian delegation is actively present at the negotiating table with good intentions, necessary authorities and achievable and forward-looking initiatives."

Amir Abdollahian stressed that the goal of Iran's participation in any negotiation is to completely end the sanctions that violate the JCPOA.

Emphasizing the commitment of the

Iran to technical cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran's top diplomat added, "In addition to talks and meetings Bagheri has held, Iranian experts in the form of the sanctions working group and the nuclear working group are holding technical and specialized talks with P4+1."

Referring to some of the issues raised in the recent talks, Amir Abdollahian said that despite the

unilateral withdrawal of the JCPOA deal by the U.S. and the inaction of the three European countries, Iran is present in the Vienna talks with "good faith."

"Our team has clear, tangible and practical plans and initiatives at every stage. The West must also take its real initiative in ending the sanctions and put an end to the repetition of previous slogans that violate the rights and interests of the Iranian people," he

added.

Amir Abdollahian also noted that Iran believes that a good agreement is available, but it requires a change in the approach of some parties from the language of threat to the language of cooperation, mutual respect and results.

In conclusion, Borrell and Amir Abdollahian praised the current atmosphere in the Vienna talks.

Taliban Foreign Ministry stresses border problems with Iran will not occur again



TEHRAN— A spokesman for the Taliban Foreign Ministry has said after the incident with the Iranian border guards in Nimroz province of Afghanistan that the incident was managed and the Taliban officials are trying to prevent such incidents in the future.

According to IRNA, "Abdul Qahhar Balkhi" tweeted on Thursday that the border problems with Iran in

the Kang District in Nimroz province ended with the intervention of border officials and "we try to prevent such an incident in the future."

Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman for the Taliban government, tweeted that the incident in Nimroz province was based on a misunderstanding and that the situation was controlled by mutual understanding, and that Taliban officials had issued the necessary orders to prevent such incidents in the future.

Afghan media reported Wednesday night that clashes broke out between the Taliban and Iranian border guards in Nimroz province.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry said on late Wednesday that regarding the news of the clashes in the border area

of the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan in Iran and Nimroz province of Afghanistan, the disputes between dwellers of certain border areas led to armed clashes in Sistan region, and was resolved and managed by the border guard forces and ended at night.

The official stressed that the shooting took place on Wednesday evening following a dispute among border region dwellers, but the border guards from both sides managed to contain and control it in a peaceful manner.

The clashes erupted among a small group of farmers on a trivial issue in the town of Hirmand in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan which is neighboring Afghanistan.

Iran urges UN to counter U.S. unilateralism as UN marks 76th anniversary

TEHRAN — Speaking on the anniversary of the 76th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations on Wednesday, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Hassan Sheikholeslami said the UN should counter United States' extraterritorial moves in violations of the UN Charter.

"The principle of power balance and coordination among members was established to find solutions to international problems in economic, social and cultural spheres, principles that are agreed upon by all countries and are all necessary for the advancement of humanity," Sheikholeslami said.

The deputy foreign minister continued by saying that UN Day is an appropriate framework to remind the important role of the United Nations in supporting the efforts of countries in achieving the goals and principles of the UN Charter.

Sheikholeslami said that the United Nations can and should provide the necessary ground for countries to

develop friendly relations based on equal rights and joint efforts to solve the problems of countries for equal rights in social, cultural and economic fields.

In order to achieve this, he stressed, it is necessary for all members to promote multilateralism and to refrain from unilateralism, because unilateralism destroys the relations between countries and ignores the goal of the United Nations.

"The United Nations can play a more effective role in countering the actions of unilateral oppressors and their destructive effects," Sheikholeslami told the ceremony hosted by the Foreign Ministry's Institute for Political and International Studies.

The diplomat added that the reason for formation of the United Nations was based on multilateralism and the establishment of this organization created the hope that the world would be governed by law and multilateralism, but unfortunately 76 years later, the world is

witnessing the opposite.

"One of the tasks of this organization is to deal with unilateral policies and U.S. extraterritorial laws that violate the provisions of the UN Charter," he stated.

The deputy foreign minister added that multilateralism is not a choice, but an obligation and necessity to achieve a solution to human challenges and crises, and Iran believes in multilateralism, partnership and cooperation with all members of the international community and the United Nations.

Since the 1979 revolution in Iran, the United States has banned the sale of airplanes and spare parts to Iran which has caused plane crashes at the cost of human lives. It is its newest move against Iran, the United States under Donald Trump quit the 2015 nuclear deal in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and slapped the harshest sanctions in history against Iran. It even refused to relax sanctions despite the deadly Coronavirus pandemic.

Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations, Majid Takht-Ravanchi, has denounced sanctions as inhumane, immoral and illegal, saying their far-reaching, devastating and long-term consequences are as brutal and vicious as terrorism, war crimes and crimes against humanity. He has also said, "Whatever the Americans are saying about their sanctions not affecting humanitarian items, it's just a lie... It's basically medical terrorism."

Sheikholeslami added, "Unilateral sanctions by U.S. dictators are undoubtedly contrary to international law and against multilateralism and contrary to the high goals of the United Nations."

The diplomat also noted that Iran is affected by economic terrorism.

"Our request to the United Nations is to stand with one voice against unilateralism and terrorism and the United States against the Iranian people and condemn it," he concluded.

European apathy toward Iranian proposals reveals much about Vienna talks

TEHRAN – Over the course of the current round of Vienna talks, the word “serious” has turned into one of the most important points of contention between Iran and its Western negotiating partners.

The question of who's serious about the talks has shaped the whole state of things over the past tense days. While Iran has carefully sought to convey a message of seriousness, the other sides struck a pessimistic note and accused Iran of not seriously engaging in the talks.

This flip-flop is quite remarkable if compared with the West's position only a few days ago about the talks. Within a brief period of roughly a week, they moved from demanding a swift conclusion of the negotiations to putting the blame on Tehran for not showing seriousness. This is while Iran has underlined the need to both bring the talks to a swift conclusion and show seriousness.

Apropos the swiftness, Iran has not only called for a swift and good agreement but also complained about Western foot-dragging on the negotiations.

In his Friday phone conversation with EU Foreign Policy chief Josep Borrell, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian described the process of talks as “good though slow.”

He added that the Iranian delegation is participating in the negotiations actively and in good faith as well as with necessary powers and achievable and progress



initiatives.

“We believe that a good deal is at hand but it requires a shift by some parties away from the language of threat to the language of cooperation and mutual respect that would be also result-based,” he added.

Earlier on Thursday, he had reiterated the same position on Twitter, saying that the “Vienna Talks proceeding with seriousness and sanctions removal as fundamental priority.”

He then noted, “Good deal within reach if the West shows good will. We seek rational, sober & result-oriented dialogue.”

But Iran's seriousness and willingness for a swift and good deal were met with apathy and indifference on the part of the West.

Iran has presented two draft proposals regarding sanctions- and nuclear-related steps to be taken if talks were to lead to an agreement. In a bid to push the talks forward,

Iran drafted the proposals in strict accordance with the terms of a 2015 nuclear deal officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), according to Press TV.

The state-run news television, quoting a source with knowledge of the Vienna talks, said the Iranian-drafted proposals are “in full conformity with the 2015 nuclear agreement and the principles contained therein.”

The source lamented a lack of seriousness on the European side. “Regrettably, some European parties have mistaken the negotiating table for a platform to dictate their positions and demands,” the source said, adding, “Some parties have not come to the diplomatic maturity that the survival and endurance of the JCPOA depend on the commitment of all parties to their obligations, and some parties' refusal to implement their commitments indicates that they are not serious in the negotiations.”

Iran also prepared a third proposal

but it has not put it on the table yet. It seems that putting forth this proposal is dependent on the West's response to the previous proposals.

But what is the reaction of the West to the Iranian proposals? The answer to this question was given by French President Emmanuel Macron during his visit to Dubai. Speaking to reporters, Macron claimed that the current round of talks had not been successful, and hinted that there would be a delay before the next round took place.

“I think it's probable that this round of negotiations, given the positions, does not succeed,” Macron said according to Reuters. “It is most likely that these negotiations do not continue in the short term.”

Western media has been preparing for this moment even before the talks began. They accused Iran of pursuing “maximalist” demands, a claim that Iran has rejected repeatedly. Iran has signaled that its proposals are logical and proportionate given the U.S. track record in backing down on its word.

Iran's balanced and carefully drafted proposals, however, fell on deaf ears in Vienna. It seems that the blame game that Iranian media had already warned about is in the pipeline, with the Europeans, in particular France, taking the lead. The U.S. and its European allies may resort once again to the language of threat against Iran in the hope that they would succeed in making Tehran bow to their pressures. But if history is any guide, they will fail.

SPORTS

Tehran derby, an opportunity to rise for giants

From Page 1 ► However, in recent weeks, two narrow home victories against Sanat Naft and Naft Masjed Soleiman and the shaky form of title race rivals allowed Persepolis to go toe-to-toe with the title chasers.

In both recent victories, better to say in all the games of this season, Persepolis have lacked a clinical edge in the final third, a weakness that Esteghlal have also shown so far.

But, the two Tehran giants are well aware of the almost meaningless nature of form heading into this clash.

There have been many examples of this, in which the team who approached the Tehran derby with a seemingly advantageous position compared to their rival before the game failed to get the result and lost the match at the head-to-head encounter.

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

Tbilisi 2021: Iran's Rouhollah Rostami seizes silver

TEHRAN – Rouhollah Rostami of Iran won a silver medal at the 2021 World Para Powerlifting Championships on Friday.

Gu Xiaofei of China won the gold medal by lifting 230kg and got his revenge over Rostami for losing the Paralympic First place medal in Tokyo.

Rostami finished in second with 230kg.

The bronze medal went to Iraqi powerlifter Egyptian Mohamed Elefat in the men's up to 80kg with 217kg.

On Wednesday, Iran's Amir Jafari had won a silver medal in the men's up to 65kg.

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

Iranian trio capture top spots in GR rankings

TEHRAN – Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers Meysam Delkhani (63kg), Mohammad Reza Geraei (67kg) and Ali Akbar Yousefi (130kg) were announced the top wrestlers in the Greco-Roman ranking.

Wrestlers from eight different nationalities claimed the grand prize of \$10,000 as United World Wrestling announced the prize winners in its year-end awards.

The top-ranked wrestler will get \$10,000 followed by \$7,000 for the second-placed wrestler and \$3,000 for the third-ranked wrestler.

The prize money is almost three times from what it was in 2019 as the UWW Bureau had approved a generous \$600,000 prize package at the beginning of the season.

The 2021 prize money combines the amount that was reserved for 2020 but was not distributed due to the impact COVID-19 had on the competition.

Iran, FIFA legends to play charity match

TEHRAN – A charity match between second team of Iranian stars and FIFA stars will be hosted by Iran.

In a meeting between Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) President Shahabeddin Azizi Khadem and FIFA President Gianni Infantino took place in Doha, Qatar, the two parties agreed on.

Infantino mentioned the legends such as Ali Daei, Ali Karimi and Mehdi Mahdavi Kia and considered their presence in the team of Iranian football stars as a trophy.

Azizi Khadem also invited FIFA President to attend one of the matches hosted in Iran to watch the game in the stadium.

Infantino accepted the invitation and it was decided that the Iranian Federation would officially invite the Federations of neighboring countries and Qatar to travel to be the guest of Iran at that time.

Ghaedi's goal nominated for best goal of 2021 ACL: Semi-final 1

TEHRAN – Former Esteghlal forward Mehdi Ghaedi's goal against Al-Ahli of Saudi Arabia has been nominated for the best goal of the 2021 AFC Champions League semi-final 1.

The 2021 ACL witnessed some stunning goals, from long-range screamers to acrobatic bicycle kicks, and now it's down to the fans, to decide their favorite.

In the first of two semi-finals, the-AFC.com has selected 10 goals to review and Ghaedi's goal is among them.

Tipped to be one of the stars of the 2021 AFC Champions League, Ghaedi graced the competition with a demonstration of his prodigious talent in the very first match, rifling home from 30 yards out for his second of the game in a 5-2 win against Al-Ahli Saudi in April.

Persepolis' Hosseini, Pahlevan absent in Tehran derby

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team captain Jalal Hosseini and the team's midfielder Ehsan Pahlevan will be absent in the match against Esteghlal.

The Reds are scheduled to meet their archrivals Esteghlal in Tehran derby on Saturday.

Hosseini suffers from hamstringing injury while Pahlevan sustained a foot injury in the match against Sanat Naft and they are not fit for the derby.

Esteghlal captain Vouria Ghafouri will likely miss the match due to injury.

FIFA President Infantino meets Azizi Khadem in Doha

TEHRAN – FIFA President Gianni Infantino has met Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) President Shahabeddin Azizi Khadem in Doha.

The meeting was held alongside the FIFA Arab Cup, which is serving as a test event for the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The FFIRI held its Presidential election earlier this year, while FIFA demanded changes be made to the FFIRI's statutes, alleging Government interference.

FIFA said the meeting between Infantino and Khadem in Doha saw exchanges over women's football, overall infrastructure and development.

The FFIRI quoted Infantino following the meeting, with the FIFA President having reportedly stressed the importance of the federation's statutes being adhered to and ensuring women can attend matches.

“In this short time that the President of the Iranian Football Federation has taken office, many positive changes have been evident, one of the most important has been attention to women's football,” Infantino said, as reported by the FFIRI.

“The Iranian Government has obligations towards the statutes of the FFIRI, which should be fulfilled on the due date and approved by the relevant bodies.

“The follow-up of the FFIRI in the discussion of hosting is commendable and I hope that two important issues of VAR and the presence of women in stadiums will be solved and Iran-Korea games will be hosted by Iran with the presence of women and VAR.”

Iran, Japan FMs discuss bilateral, regional issues

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister has held a telephone conversation with his Japanese counterpart Yoshimasa Hayashi over bilateral ties and regional as well as international developments.

In the phone call, Hossein Amir Abdollahian congratulated Hayashi on his appointment as Japan's foreign minister and conveyed the greetings of Iran's president to the high-ranking Japanese officials. The Iranian foreign minister also thanked Japan for its humanitarian assistance in the fight against Covid-19. Amir Abdollahian referred to the presence of four million Afghan refugees in Iran, saying “Fortunately, two and a half million Afghan refugees have been vaccinated so far, and Iran is ready to send Japanese humanitarian aid to the Afghan people”.

Amir Abdollahian also said the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is worrying on the eve of winter and stressed the need to send humanitarian aid to the country, the Iranian foreign ministry said.

He said, “Under these circumstances, all countries should rush to help the Afghan people and we are also ready to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan by air or land”.

Amir Abdollahian also reviewed the various aspects of bilateral relations between Tehran and Tokyo and announced the readiness of the Islamic Republic to expand relations in economic, trade, humanitarian, environmental and health fields. He emphasized, “We can increase our cooperation in all areas”.

The Iranian foreign minister also touched on the nuclear talks in Vienna. He underscored that Iran welcomes serious talks and a good agreement and that the other sides must also show good



faith in this regard. Amir Abdollahian said the Islamic Republic of Iran has attended the Vienna talks with a firm resolve and a clear and logical agenda but we are not optimistic about the will and intention of the US and the European troika.

He added that on the one hand the US officials call for talks and say they want to return to the nuclear deal, JCPOA, and on the other hand, they place new sanctions on Iranian individuals and companies. Amir Abdollahian said what matters is that these negotiations produce results and the Western parties show their seriousness and good faith at the negotiating table and in practice.

The Japanese foreign minister also said in the telephone conversation that his country is ready for expanding bilateral ties with Iran in the fields of health, environment and tourism and other areas. Hayashi also welcomed the idea of sending Japan's urgent relief aid to Afghanistan.

Yoshimasa Hayashi underlined the importance of the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan and respecting the rights of women and ethnic minorities and also the importance of eradicating terrorism in the country.

The Japanese foreign minister welcomed the

beginning of the Vienna talks and called for both sides to show flexibility to reach a mutual agreement.

He also extended the high-ranking Japanese officials' greetings to Iran's president and invited Amir Abdollahian to visit Japan.

The Japanese foreign ministry also issued a statement about the 35-minute conversation. “At the outset, Minister Hayashi expressed his intention to cooperate with Minister Amir Abdollahian to further strengthen and expand the historically friendly relationship between Japan and Iran in a wide range of fields. In response, Minister Amir Abdollahian congratulated Minister Hayashi on his appointment as foreign minister and expressed Iran's intention to further deepen the relationship between Japan and Iran, which has a long established history,” the statement said.

It added, “The Ministers exchanged candid views on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in light of the talks among relevant parties that are currently taking place in Vienna. Minister Hayashi urged Iran to make serious efforts towards the immediate return to compliance with the JCPOA, and to cooperate fully and immediately with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In response, Minister Amir Abdollahian explained Iran's stance on the issue, and both sides agreed to continue close communication on this matter.”

The Japanese statement concluded, “Both Ministers exchanged views on regional issues including the situation in Afghanistan, and confirmed that Japan and Iran will continue to cooperate towards the realization of peace and stability in Afghanistan.”

Ebrahim Raisi was very significant.”

Abbasov said recently there was a misunderstanding in the relations between the two countries and there were certain tensions, but such tensions between neighbors cannot last long because it inevitably leads to detriments.

“Therefore, both the Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran respect these relations. Efforts are being made to resolve this misunderstanding. The very nature of the meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Iran showed that both sides – Baku and Tehran – are involved in creating such a spirit. The Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran are trying to turn the page once and for all,” Abbasov concluded.

great foundation.”

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.

Abbasov stated that Turkmenistan is currently trying to play a closer role in supplying gas to Europe and energy security. In such a situation, first of all, there is a need for good neighborly relations in the region. This is the first factor.

“The second factor is that we need to appreciate these relationships and think about new developments. In my opinion, the meeting between President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and the new President of Iran

strategic areas that can never be cut off. Second, the nature of these relations has prompted the two sides to achieve new components for strengthening bilateral interactions.”

Regarding the signing of a gas swap agreement involving Iran, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan which followed the meeting between the presidents of Iran and Azerbaijan on the sidelines of the ECO summit in Ashgabat on November 28, Abbasov said, “In this regard, Iran has very good communication channels in the region. It is true that we have signed a bilateral agreement with Iran. Despite all this, the trilateral relations between Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran have a

TEHRAN — “Baku and Tehran are determined to remove any obstacles to the development of relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran,” says Tofiq Abbasov, an Azeri political, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

In an interview with the news portal Publica of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Abbasov said, “Over the past month, changes have taken place in relations between the two countries.”

The expert stated: “There are reasons for changes in the relationship between the countries. First, we have good neighborly relations with Iran. There are very important relations between Baku and Tehran in a number of

Iran allocates budget to promote exports to Syria

From page 1 ► “Our industries need 150,000 tons of cotton annually, so if the Syrian cotton production increases in a year or two, we intend to import it through barter trade, which requires a reliable transportation route between two countries,” he added.

There is no regular shipping line between Iran and Syria, Peyman Pak said, adding that Iranian investors could invest in establishing shipping lines if the government provides them with necessary incentives.

Earlier this week, Iran and Syria signed four documents to boost cooperation in the fields of trade and industry during a visit of an Iranian delegation headed by the country's industry



minister to Damascus.

The documents were inked at the end of the two countries' joint economic and industrial committee meetings which were held in the Syrian capital.

Border trade with Afghanistan back on normal track



TEHRAN – Iran and Afghanistan resumed trade at the Milak border crossing on Thursday after conflicts at the border halted operations for a day, said

Rouhollah Latifi, the spokesman for the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration.

“Yesterday afternoon, some conflicts in a limited area around the Milak border crossing stopped the border trade at the area. But with the normalization of the situation, the border gate resumed its activities since this morning (Thursday),” the IRICA spokesman told the press.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has said the shootings between Iranian border guards and the Taliban forces occurred due to a border dispute between the residents, and it's now ended.

Commodities worth over \$2b exported from Maku free zone in H1

TEHRAN- As announced by the managing director of Maku Free Trade Zone Organization, commodities valued at \$2.030 billion were exported from the Maku FTZ, in Iran's northwestern province of West Azarbaijan, during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22).

Mohammadreza Abdol-Rahimi said that the export of non-oil products worth nearly \$2.1 billion, and gas export worth \$1.1 billion, imports of goods worth \$620 million, and \$13.2 billion worth of transit has been done through Bazargan customs in the zone.

He also stressed the high capacity of Bazargan Customs in facilitating the country's international trade and trade between the countries of the region.

Maku is one of the seven major free zones of Iran.

It has 140 kilometers of border with Azerbaijan Republic and 130 kilometers of border with Turkey.



As Maku is among the most newly-established and also the largest free zones of the country, there is a high need for the creation of infrastructures in this zone.

The establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern

Manufacturing of 20 major industrial, mining products rises in 7 months

TEHRAN – The production of 20 major mining and industrial products has increased in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), compared to the same period of time in the past year.

The mentioned products include home appliances, passenger and heavy vehicles, foodstuff and mining industry products, etc., IRNA reported, citing data released by the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

Production of trucks and vans

saw the highest growth of 64.4 percent, followed by vegetable oil with 41.3 percent, washing machines with 29.9 percent, aluminum ingots with 26.7 percent, glass with 23 percent and industrial soot with 20.4 percent growth, respectively.

The growth in the manufacturing of the mentioned products has been achieved despite the specific economic conditions of the country due to the U.S. sanctions and the outbreak of coronavirus which has created problems in the production sec-



tor.

The Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has been following the programs started in the previous year for supporting domestic production also in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) which has been named the year of “Production: Support and Elimination of Obstacles.” by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

These programs include reviving idle units and providing bank facilities for the country's production units and small and me-

dium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The ministry's programs for the current year include management of imports and development of non-oil exports, development of mines and mining industries, development of technology and knowledge-based products, market management and organization of commercial logistics, improving the business environment and ultimately providing financial resources to the producers and investment development.

Next year's budget bill to be submitted to parliament on schedule

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) has said the budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (starts on March 21, 2022) has been prepared and reviewed by the government and will be submitted to the parliament on schedule, IRIB reported.

Masoud Mir-Kazemi said some changes in the structure of the budget bill are taking place for which the views of the MPs and parliament committees should be taken into account in this regard.

“We tried to hold meetings with some of the parliament committees and get their points of view about the changes that we were supposed to make to the budget bill before taking it to the government for reviewing,” Mir-Kazemi said.



Back in October, the PBO head had said the national budget bill for the next fiscal year has been prepared in a way that it will not face any deficits.

“Experts and decision-makers have tried to have a macro view and to make sure that the decisions made by them will have positive effects for the entire nation and not

just a certain group,” Mir-Kazemi said in the 14th meeting of the budget bill preparation headquarters on October 10.

He said his organization was going to change the structure of the national budget for the better, following the guidelines of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on the matter.

“The Leader emphasizes on changing the structure of the budget bill and making it more effective, therefore, it is not in the interest of the country to continue the current trend, and the budget structure should be reviewed,” he noted.

Mir-Kazemi further noted that the main emphasis in the preparation of the next year's budget bill will be on achieving economic growth.

Oil sales jump drastically year on year: minister

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji has said the country's oil sales in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) have increased drastically compared to the previous year, Shana reported.

“The Oil Ministry has published a report on the oil sales as well as the exports of natural gas and petrochemical products over the past 100 days, according to which the figures have increased drastically compared to last year,” Oji said.

In a meeting with the members of the Parliament Energy Committee in mid-November, Oji said that new windows have been opened for the country's oil sales using the existing capacities and the ministry had achieved new successes in this regard.

Back in September, Oji had said his ministry was determined to increase the country's oil exports despite the U.S. sanctions, adding that the use of oil sanctions as a “political tool” would harm the market.

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

Over 700,000 tons of copper concentrate produced in 7 months

TEHRAN- Iran produced 712,685 tons of copper concentrate in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), which was one percent more than the output in the same period of time in the past year.

Also, the monthly copper concentrate production indicates a four-percent year-on-year growth to stand at 111,060 tons in the seventh month of the present 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.

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, Ardeshtir Sa'd-Mohammadi said in a press conference.

Sa'd-Mohammadi put the value of the discovered reserves at 350 trillion rials (about \$8.3 billion).

According to the official, NICIC had also discovered 523 million tons of copper reserves across the country during



the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019- March 2020).

Considering the new discoveries, NICIC's total copper reserves across the

country have currently surpassed eight billion tons.

The official put the country's total copper reserves at 40 billion tons, saying that Iran currently has the world's seventh-largest copper reserves, and hopefully the country will climb to sixth place in the current Iranian calendar year.

Pointing to the NICIC's new projects for the current year, he noted that three major copper-related projects will go operational in the current year which is going to add more than 400,000 tons to the country's copper concentrate output, boosting the company's annual incomes by \$800 million.

According to Sa'd-Mohammadi, NICIC has defined more than €2.4 billion

plus 300 trillion rials (about \$7.1 billion) worth of projects to be implemented over the next four years, which will increase the company's total copper concentrate capacity to 2.3 million tons.

He further noted that the country's copper exports increased in the previous year despite the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. sanctions.

Also, earlier this month, the official said his company has it on the agenda to be placed among the world's top 10 copper-producing companies within the next four years.

Stating that NICIC is currently in a good position, he noted that with new discoveries, the company is on a good upward path.

From page 1 ► Clearly, the struggle with the Lebanese deep system which controls the economic and the political system, which controls the state, has reached its peak. The system was laid down by the founding fathers of the Lebanese State during the French mandate, which defines the role of Lebanon as a service country, a mediator, and/or a monetary service provider between the West and its neighbors. This role was broken during the 1970s and it was one of the main reasons behind the break of the civil war.

The system crippled any attempt to change the Lebanese economic policies. It prohibited developments in the industry and/or agricultural capabilities. Hence, it limited Lebanon's ability to widen its external economic and developmental options. The mentality the Lebanese were brought upon, in particular those who monopolized the trade and economic system, which is still limited to certain families who run the deep state, not only prevailed among this group but also was contagious. Almost everyone in Lebanon lives under the code "Spend what is in the pocket, and the unseen will come to you", in the sense money will come as if it is a gift from the sky.

The layers of the system are the actual rulers of Lebanon; they are the cartels that manipulate the trade of medicine, petroleum, and other key products. They do not only control the economy, but they also run the judicial system, development system, and the social services system, which relies on aid, donations, and civil associations, instead of being regulated by the state. This is not only going to drive Lebanon to its dilemma, but to its doom.

Therefore, the Lebanese will barrow from any source to provide luxuries. In the same manner, the political system is driving the economical Lebanese system. The country's leaders believe that Lebanon is able to lead commerce, tourism, medical tourism, and be the main service provider in the region, even though it is in semi war conditions with "Israel" on its southern border and in deep conflict with Syria which is its gate towards the east. However, Lebanon's mission was crippled because the founding fathers were basically mediators between Europe on one side, and Syrian and Iraq on the other, and their services were not required anymore, especially after the independence of those states.

The system founders perceived themselves as superiors to their Arab neighbors. This supremacy was well fed by the French colonialism and the missionaries



that spread through Lebanon. Later on, the system, during Camille Chamoun's presidency in the 1950s deepened the relationship with the US and the Arabian Gulf kingdoms at the expense of the progressive Arab countries, Syria, Egypt, Algeria, etc... they owed the free trade tools, in particular the private banks, which depended on money flowing from immigrants to aid the unprivileged in the society.

It is clear that the system is too strong. The others who were able to change their social status in Lebanon by working abroad and getting higher education were not able to change it. Accordingly, the gap between the system and the others expanded, so that the Lebanese Civil War [LCV] erupted in 1975, which opened a wide window for the Israeli invasion in 1976.

We are not going back in history; we are trying to figure out the roles of the factors that are running the Lebanese present. Until 1975, the Lebanese right-wing government was able to stabilize the southern borders in the best interest of the "Israeli" security. However, since 1969 the Palestinian resistance was intensified, the Palestinian freedom fighters, the Fedayeen, were sported by the left-wing parties.

The humongous rise among the Fedayeen was a direct threat to Israeli security. A series of Israeli invasions were executed, and the

last one was in 1982. Accordingly, Hezbollah has established a resistance movement, as many other resistance movements, against the Israeli occupation of the south.

Unfortunately, the settlements, after the end of the Civil War, in al-Taef in 1989, did not change the state system in Lebanon. When the government began the reconstruction process, it was based exactly on the same economic policies established by the founding fathers, who continued to control the Lebanese institutions and governmental sectors. And the government as ever began to borrow from the banks with high interest.

In 2000 the south was liberated. However, the resistance continued to be a threat to Israel's security. All external attempts to disarm Hezbollah have failed. Especially, after the "Israeli"

outrageous loss in Lebanon in 2006, which shifted the external political decision into a different mood? Syria, the main supporter of the resistance, was under vicious skims and it was under international attack in 2011, which affected the Lebanese political and economic situation even more. However, Syria was able to defeat the conspiracy, led by an American coalition against it, with the support and help of its allies and friends, mainly Hezbollah.

When the military operations failed to weaken Syria; the war to

disarm Hezbollah and secure Israel was moved back into Lebanon. It is clear that the American decision was to revive the civil war in Lebanon again. Since the 17th of October 2019, the situation in Lebanon was deteriorating. The dollar game was on as if someone pressed a button. And the war on Hezbollah was declared.

In this war every weapon was used: chaos, hoarding food and medicine and oil products, lira's value against the dollar dropped, commodities and food prices climbed, and starvation war in Lebanon began. Hezbollah was blamed, by the rightist parties, to be the causes of disasters that came upon Lebanon.

As the deep state players and politicians were able to smuggle their money, small depositors' savings were trapped for the sake of the banks' survival. This manipulation with depositors' right to reach their assets contributed to further drop out of the Lebanese Lira's value. It is a continuous process that aimed to drive Lebanon into total poverty, chaos, and demonstrations against Hezbollah and the state, so that the country may go back to the 1975 stage.

When Hezbollah, a few months ago took the initiative to import gasoline from Iran, it was a measured step that challenged the old deep system and the West. The step was meant to prove to the Lebanese that there are options to save Lebanon from the horrible situation created by the lack of gasoline. Almost everything that depended on gasoline was withheld, whether it was to move goods, run water turbines, operate private electricity generators, etc...Hezbollah wanted to prove that Lebanon can solve its problems and head towards the east: China, Iran, Russia, and most importantly Syria. Such a step needs a collective decision because Hezbollah cannot save his partisans and leave the other Lebanese to their fate. It cannot isolate itself from the others in the homeland.

The war against Lebanon is a war, to be more precise, in favor of the security of Israel. The international world will never care if this leads to the collapse of the Lebanese community or the Lebanese State at all. Lebanon is not Argentina. It is not a resourceful state that can survive the demands of the World Bank or and the International Monetary Fund. If the economic breakdown will continue in the same rate, Lebanon will cease to be. It will be divided into provinces or mini-states. Its only hope lays in the solidarity with Syria and accordingly in heading east.

Rights groups demand Yemen war probe

THERAN - Sixty human rights organizations are demanding that the United Nations General Assembly establish a fresh committee comprising of independent experts to seriously probe potential war crimes committed during the war on Yemen. The rights groups are calling for a body to "investigate and publicly report on the most serious violations and abuses of international law committed." They also want the evidence to be preserved for possible prosecution of the perpetrators of any crimes in the future.

In October, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) surprisingly voted against renewing the mandate of the Group of International and Regional Experts established four years earlier; In August 2018, the group had reported evidence of possible war crimes. The HRC first voted to establish the expert team to investigate possible violations of humanitarian law and human rights in 2017.

In the Joint Statement, the rights groups, among them many prominent ones, called "upon the UN General Assembly to move quickly and establish a new international accountability mechanism for Yemen." Human Rights Watch argued "there is a deadly vacuum of accountability in Yemen. That's because the Saudi government killed the one existing mechanism." The statement said Saudi officials "bribed, coerced and arm-twisted the Human Rights Council" with heavy lobbying efforts into closing the UN's previous Yemen war crime investigation. It argued that the "credibility of the UN human rights system is at stake on Yemen. Through threats and bribes, the Saudi government has corrupted the UN Human Rights Council to end scrutiny of Yemen. The UN General Assembly should restore the scrutiny and UN integrity."

Afrah Nasser is a Yemen researcher with Human Rights Watch and said in a statement: "Saudi Arabia, a leading party to the conflict in Yemen accused of serious violations including likely war crimes, together with its coalition allies, is engaging in a tireless lobbying campaign to deter states at the Human Rights Council from renewing the (inquiry) mandate." She says that should the HRC bow down to Saudi pressure and fail to extend the mandate, it would be "a slap in the face to victims."

In the same statement, Amnesty International has also accused Saudi Arabia of an "aggressive lobbying campaign" to cancel the Geneva-based expert panel set up four years ago. Speaking at a press conference, the Secretary-General of Amnesty International told reporters that the United Nations had failed the Yemeni people who have been enduring years of widely-documented suffering. Agnes Callamard says, "bullying and bribing and corruption of the system has won the day, Saudi Arabia and the UAE and their allies shamelessly and aggressively lobbied states through their capital cities and got rid of the Group of Eminent Experts. So, we would like to see General Assembly action certainly within the next month or two, this is something that needs to proceed expeditiously."

A joint statement by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and Yemeni rights group Mwatana said a Saudi lobbying campaign appeared to be intensifying globally in a bid to dissolve support for the resolution and deliberately cause the investigating experts group's collapse. Last month, the Group of Independent Experts, presented its latest report, which said air strikes launched by the Saudi coalition "continue to exact a huge toll on the civilian population."

The calls and demands by the rights groups come just days after media reports surfaced in the United Kingdom that Saudi Arabia has used "incentives and threats" as part of a strong lobbying campaign to shut down the UN investigation of human right violations committed in Yemen. The reports, citing anonymous diplomatic sources as saying the attempts by Riyadh ultimately succeeded when the council voted in October against extending the independent war crimes investigation. The vote was the first defeat of a resolution in the Geneva body's 15-year history.

The reports highlighted the extent the Kingdom went to launch a "stealth campaign"



to influence officials in order to guarantee the defeat of the resolution. In one case, Riyadh is reported to have warned Indonesia that it would make it difficult for Indonesians to travel to the holy city of Mecca if the country's officials did not vote against the 7 October resolution. In another case, the African nation of Togo announced at the time of the vote it would be opening a new embassy in Riyadh, and receive financial support from the Saudis. Both Indonesia and Togo abstained from the Yemen resolution in 2020. In October this year, both countries voted against the resolution.

The measure was defeated by a simple majority of 21-18, with seven countries abstaining. In 2020, the resolution passed by a vote of 22-12, with 12 members abstaining. One political official has been cited as saying "that kind of swing - from 12 noes to 21 - does not just happen."

John Fisher, the Geneva director of Human Rights Watch, said: "It was a very tight vote. We understand that Saudi Arabia and their coalition allies and [Saudi backed former Yemeni government] were working at a high level for some time to persuade states in capitals through a mixture of threats and incentives, to back their bids to terminate the mandate of this international monitoring mechanism."

"The loss of the mandate is a huge blow for accountability in Yemen and for the credibility of the human rights council as a whole. For a mandate to have been defeated by a party to the conflict for no reason other than to evade scrutiny for international crimes is a travesty." He added.

In 2020, the UN backed experts, for the first time, recommended that the international community focus their attention on accountability for potential war crimes. They included five recommendations, including that the UN Security Council refer the matter to the international criminal court. Reports cited one source as saying "I think that must have been the trigger moment when the Saudi coalition realized this is really going too far." Saudi backed western allies who initially supported the measure are said to have been taken aback by the unexpected recommendation.

The Saudi Kingdom's communications center has not issued any immediate comments on the accusations. Likewise, the UAE has yet to respond to a media request for comment.

The war on Yemen began in March 2015 after a Saudi-led coalition using weapons purchased from many Western countries especially the U.S. and the UK began a bombing campaign to reinstate a government whose term had expired and a President who fled the country amid a popular revolution. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed since and millions more internally displaced in what the UN labels as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The conflict has exacted a heavy humanitarian toll, with a recent report from the UN's International Organization for Migration, revealing the number of internally displaced people in Yemen rose tenfold since September this year. The report noted that many of Yemen's communities are "seeing their homes destroyed on a daily basis" and predicted that the majority of future deaths from the war's indirect impacts will come from "young children."

Saudi Arabia said it would take several weeks for the military intervention against its southern neighbor to succeed. The war has now dragged on to nearly seven years with growing calls by regional countries for peace talks to end the suffering of the people of Yemen. Western powers have benefited the most by making hundreds of billions of dollars in profit by selling arms to Saudi Arabia and essentially ensuring the conflict continues despite the humanitarian crisis.

France, UAE seal major arms contract

The United Arab Emirates has signed a deal for 80 French-made Rafale fighter jets, the biggest international order ever made for the warplanes, officials said on Friday during a visit by French President Emmanuel Macron.

The two-day visit by the French president to the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia comes at a time when Arab states have voiced uncertainty about the US' focus on the region even as they seek more weapons from their key security ally.

This is be the biggest bulk purchase of the Dassault-made Rafale, other than by the French army, and comes after similar deals with Greece, Egypt and Croatia earlier this year.

The two countries have forged a close relationship in recent years with large-scale investments flowing between them. Paris has a permanent military base in the Emirati capital.

"I don't want to spoil the Christmas present with the president," Anwar Gargash, a diplomatic adviser to the UAE president, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, told reporters ahead of Macron's visit, when asked whether Abu Dhabi would purchase the fighter jets.

French weekly business magazine Challenges reported on November 19 that talks were at an advanced stage for

between 30 and 60 planes, and could be sealed during Macron's visit.

Defense sources, quoted in the report, said the Rafale fighter jets would replace the UAE's fleet of Mirage warplanes, and are unlikely to displace the American F-35 as Abu Dhabi continues to hedge its security with two major suppliers, France and the United States.

The arms sale comes amid French concerns over a new weapons agreement between the United Kingdom, United States and Australia, which officials in Paris contend has sidelined them.

The controversial trilateral security pact, dubbed AUKUS, led to Australia scrapping a multibillion-dollar deal with France to build conventional submarines.

Since 2016, France had been in negotiations with Australia to build a fleet of 12 conventional diesel-electric submarines in a deal worth £48 billion (\$90bn).

It will instead acquire at least eight nuclear-powered submarines with the US and British technology.

The AUKUS security pact will see nuclear submarines being built in Adelaide, South Australia, and will be the first time the UK and US have shared nuclear capabilities with another nation.

France sees the move as a "stab in the

back" as secret negotiations have taken place since early spring.

Meanwhile, international human rights groups have called on France to stop selling munitions to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, and to address rights abuses in their region.

They argue that France is promoting the sale of dozens of Rafale fighter jets even though the UAE has played a key role in the Saudi-led military aggression in Yemen. Emirati forces have also been complicit in the killing of civilians through indiscriminate air and drone raids in Libya.

Paris, however, has stubbornly continued arms sale to the regime in Riyadh, in defiance of UN resolutions that call for a halt to weapons exports to the region, fearing that the arms could be used to commit unlawful attacks or even war crimes in neighboring Syria.

The human rights groups further accuse the UAE and Saudi Arabia leaders of doing little to address the concerns related to terrible human rights record in their respective countries, calling on Abu Dhabi to release human rights and reform activist Ahmed Mansoor and other dissidents.

They have also urged Riyadh to come clean on the 2018 murder of dissident Saudi journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, in which the Saudi top political brass is directly involved.

Iran has not stopped issuing tourist visas: official



From page 1 ► Omicron, which has raised global fears of a surge in infections, was first detected in southern Africa earlier this month and has prompted governments across the globe to impose travel restrictions and take other measures to try and contain it.

For the time being, some travel experts believe the restoration of tourism flow is of high importance for the Islamic Republic. Iranian Tour Operators Director Ebrahim Pourfaraj said earlier this month that the restoration of tourism flow to the country is very important for Iranian tour operators and travel insiders.

"At the moment, we are not thinking about revenues, but we are looking for the begin-

ning of the tourist flow to the country and renew our links [with international fellows]," Pourfaraj said. His comments came after months of steep recession triggered by massive coronavirus restrictions which led many travel insiders, hoteliers, and tour operators towards bankruptcy, unemployment, debts, and the prospects of not being competitive on the international level.

As mentioned by Pourfaraj, Iran has made its best to maintain contact with global tourism markets and companies that worked with Iran in the past, especially since virtual communication and meetings have thrived. "Following the resumption of the tourist visa, visitors from Russia and France have traveled to Iran and we are currently expecting a smaller number of tourists in Iran due to the current situation in the world," he explained.

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

TEHRAN – Today, a vast collection of Iranian arts and culture will go on show at the National Museums of Berlin, to cast a rare light on 5,000 years of the history of the nation.

The exhibition explores the central role that Iran has played in the context of cross-regional political, economic, and cultural relations. As a "cultural highway" connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe, Persia is a place of extraordinary ethnic and linguistic diversity.

It features over 300 objects from the Sarikhani Collection as well as numerous collections of the National Museums in Berlin, highlighting Iran's outstanding importance as a source of inspiration and center of intercultural exchange between the Mediterranean, China, and India from the first advanced civilizations of the 3rd millennium BC to the end of the Safavid Empire in the early 18th century. In a chronologically structured course with seven stations, they illustrate incisions, adaptations, and transformations. Additionally, they present a rich mixture of the cultural creativity of urban societies.

According to organizers, it is for the first time in a Berlin institution that the cultural history of Iran – from the

Berlin to host gorgeous show of Iranian arts



A splendid folio of the Holy Quran; paper, colored and black-edged gold lettering © The Sarikhani Collection / C. Bruce

early civilizations through to the modern era – is the focus of a major art-historical survey exhibition.

The exhibition – a must-see for lovers of painting and ceramics in particular – shows how, over several thousand years, a specifically Iranian cultural identity emerged from Farsi as a language of instruction and cultural production, an identity that was continuously transforming, particularly among the

cross-regional networks of traders and scholars and at moments of radical change, such as war or forced migration. Time and again, invaders and invaded alike adopted the language and culture, renewing and reforming it as they went.

The exhibition takes visitors on a journey through time and the country's rich cultural heritage. Some of the highlights along the way include the empires of the

Achaemenids and Sasanids, the formation of a Persian Islamic culture, the extraordinary artistic achievements of the 9th to 13th centuries, and the Golden Age of the Saffavids.

Iran is renowned as a cradle of civilization. From the early civilizations, Elam and the ancient Kings of Persis with their seat in Persepolis to the incursions of Genghis Khan and the important imperial city of Isfahan right through to the beginning of the modern era, the evolution of Iran is arranged into a chronological tour, illustrated with traditions, transformations, and complex relationships.

A fascinating cultural landscape developed over thousands of years in Iran. Situated between deserts, mountain ranges, and bodies of water, the region was home to great historical civilizations, yet its artistic achievements are unknown to many outside of scholarly circles.

Even though the country is not only located in one of the oldest and most important cultural regions in the world but has also been home to key cultural, artistic, and scientific trends and discoveries that have had wide-ranging impacts, reaching Europe.

The exhibition will be running through March 20, 2022.

Ancient infants to go on show

TEHRAN – Bodies of ancient infants along with thousands of relics unearthed near a UNESCO-registered citadel in southern Iran will go on public display in near future.

"Bodies of infants and relics such as over 200,000 pieces of valuable pottery which were found in Arg-e Bam will go on show in an archaeological museum that is currently under construction in the quake-stricken citadel in Kerman province," the director of the World Heritage site said on Thursday.

Moreover, objects dating back from the Neolithic period to the Islamic era will be shown in pre-historic, pre-Islamic, and Islamic galleries of the museum, ILNA quoted Mohsen Qasemi as saying on Thursday.

Everything that has been discovered in the Bam citadel and its cultural landscape over the years, and everything acquired during the last 18 years following the earthquake will be displayed in this museum, the official added.

Covering an area of 1,200 square



meters, the museum is being established in collaboration with Bam Municipality, the noted.

The origins of the citadel can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th centuries BC) and even beyond. The heyday of the citadel was from the 7th to 11th centuries, being at the crossroads of important trade routes and known for the production of silk and cotton garments.

The citadel, which contains the governor's quarters and the fortified residential area, forms the central focus of a vast cultural landscape, which is marked by a series of forts and citadels, now

in ruins. The existence of life in the oasis was based on the underground irrigation canals, the qanats, of which Bam has preserved some of the earliest evidence in Iran and which continue to function till the present time.

According to UNESCO, Arg-e Bam is the most representative example of a fortified medieval town built in vernacular technique using mud layers (Chineh), sun-dried mud bricks (khesht), and vaulted and domed structures.

Bam and its Cultural Landscape represents an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement that developed around the

Iranian central plateau and is an exceptional testimony to the development of a trading settlement in the desert environment of the Central Asian region. This impressive construction undoubtedly represents the climax and is the most important achievement of its type not only in the area of Bam but also in a much wider cultural region of Western Asia.

The cultural landscape of Bam is an important representation of the interaction between man and nature and retains a rich resource of ancient canalizations, settlements, and forts as landmarks and as tangible evidence of the evolution of the area.

The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

Deserted caravanserai to turn into tourism complex

TEHRAN – The Qajar-era (1789-1925) Shams al-Saltaneh Caravanserai in the city of Naragh, the central province of Markazi is planned to be ceded to the private sector to make the best use of the historical structure, a local tourism official has announced.

During the past decade, the giant inn was abandoned and partially destroyed, CHTN quote Parvin Tayyebi as saying on Tuesday.

However, the historical structure was completely restored this year with a budget of 4.5 billion rials (\$107,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar), the official added.

The caravanserai is planned to be turned into a tourism complex and accommodation center, she noted.

The caravanserai along with a bazaar was built by Haj Mohammad Naraghi, one of the city's merchants, and then was inherited to his daughter Shams al-Saltaneh. The complex, which is considered one of the main tourist attractions of Naragh, was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1983.

Caravansary (also Caravanserai or



Caravansaray) is a building that served as the inn of the Orient, providing accommodation for commercial, pilgrim, postal, and especially official travelers.

Iran's earliest caravanserais were built during the Achaemenid era (550-330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 – to 1629, he ordered the construction of network caravanserais across the country. For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai, can be a wide experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age!

TEHRAN – A selection of nine historical structures including an inn, a public bathhouse, and a mosque, all located in Iran's East Azarbaijan province, have recently been added to the national heritage list.

Furthermore, a shop and three residential houses were inscribed on the prestigious list by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, CHTN reported

Inn, public bathhouse and mosque approved as national heritage

on Friday.

Capital of East Azarbaijan province, Tabriz, which is well-soaked in history and culture for millennia, embraces several historical and religious sites, including the Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and the Arg of Ta-

briz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex to name a few.

Tabriz became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295-1304) and his successor. Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in 1392. Some decades

later the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital, it was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz.

The city retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548 when Shah Tahmasp I relocated his capital

westward to Qazvin. During the next two centuries, Tabriz changed hands several times between Persia and Ottoman Empire. During World War I, the city was temporarily occupied by Turkish and then Soviet troops.

The ancient city was declared a world craft city of carpet weaving by the World Craft in 2016. It also bore the title of 2018 Islamic Tourism Capital.

‘Red gold’ magnetizes sightseers toward northeast Iranian farms

TEHRAN – During the past two months, Torbat-e Heydarieh and Zaveh county in northeastern Khorasan Razavi province hosted 12 saffron tours, a local tourism official has announced.

As saffron harvest season began in Torbat-e Heydarieh and Zaveh, tourists and individuals from all over the country visited the county for recreational or scientific-research tours, Ali Mohammadi said on Thursday.

Besides visiting saffron fields and learning about the stages of collecting and processing saffron bulbs, the tourists also visited a museum dedicated to saffron, the largest flower market in the country, the saffron research institute, and saffron companies among other places, the official added.

The tours also included visits to other historical and tourist attractions, handicraft workshops, and ecotourism

resorts, as well as exhibitions and festivals, he mentioned.

Torbat-e Heydarieh is known as the land of red gold because of the large area planted with this crop and a large amount of saffron produced there, he explained.

This year, a saffron tourist train and a saffron festival were planned from Mashhad to Torbat-e Heydarieh, which was widely welcomed by travel agencies, journalists, and locals, he noted.

Iranian saffron is known as the "red gold". Saffron is a magical ingredient in Persian culture, from aromatic foods and colorful desserts to physical and spiritual medicine. Every year, the saffron harvest season begins in early November. While most other vegetation is gone, the bright purple flowers cover the fields and create an outstanding landscape in dry regions in Iran.



Major saffron producers of Iran are located on the east side of the country. If you would like to see the biggest market, head to Mashhad, which is also known for its religious importance.

So far 450 historical structures have been identified in Torbat-e Heydarieh and Zaveh county -located 180 kilometers to the provincial capital of Mashhad- of which 80 properties have been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

Over the past couple of years, Torbat-e Heydarieh and its surroundings have yielded traces of the ancient settlements. Last year, an archaeological site was exposed on the outskirts of Torbat-e Heydarieh after torrential rains washed the soil away. The site was accessed to date back to the early and middle Islamic eras, according to preliminary studies carried out by the cultural heritage experts.

According to archaeological studies, Torbat-e Heydarieh is home to several historical caves due to its favorable habitat conditions and traces of habitation from about 40,000 years have been identified in the caves of the region. The history of the area stretches back to the Achaemenian Empire from the 6th to 4th century BC and the Parthian Empire from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century CE.



(OKDC)

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OSTOVAN Kish Drilling Company (OKDC), intends to purchase the Drill Pipe.

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Iran ranks 13th worldwide in artificial intelligence

TEHRAN – Iran is in 13th place among the top countries in artificial intelligence by the total number of publications, according to the Nature Index database.

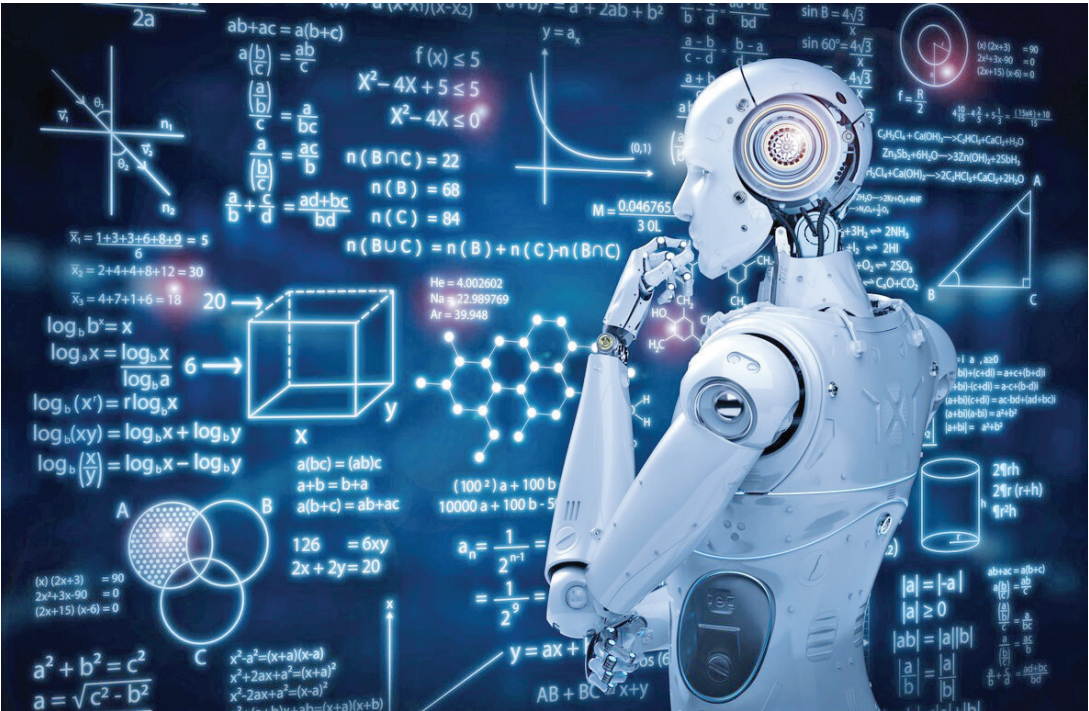
The Nature Index is a database of author affiliations and institutional relationships. The index tracks contributions to research articles published in 82 high-quality natural science journals, chosen by an independent group of researchers.

The Nature Index provides absolute and fractional counts of article publication at the institutional and national level and, as such, is an indicator of global high-quality research output and collaboration. The database is compiled by Nature Research.

In the field of Nature Intelligence 2020, this database lists the top 100 institutions, 25 growing institutions, top 25 countries/territories in artificial intelligence, top 100 academic institutions, top 10 health

The 2020 version of SCImago ranks Iran as 15th in the world and first in West Asia in the field of artificial intelligence.

care institutions, top 10 NPOs/NGOs, top 10 governmental institutions, top 5 companies, top 100 research organizations, 25 growing research organizations, and top 25 countries in artificial intelligence.



In the table of top 25 countries/territories in artificial intelligence (dimensional data), which is ranked based on the total number of publications from 2015 to 2019, the first place belongs to China with 318,534 scientific publications and 13th rank belongs to Iran with 30,221 scientific publications.

Also in the table of top research organizations in the field of artificial intelligence (dimensional data), the University of Tehran is ranked 59 among the top 100 institutions.

Iranian universities in artificial intelligence

The SCImago ranking database at the University of Granada, Spain, ranks countries and universities based on the number of scholarly articles from higher education institutions in

the Scopus database. This ranking uses three indicators of research, innovation, and society in combination.

In the 2020 version of SCImago, the subject of artificial intelligence is a subcategory of computer science, which ranks Iran as 15th in the world and first in West Asia.

Also, in cognitive sciences as a subset of psychology, which is one of the disciplines related to artificial intelligence, Iran ranks 36th in the world and third in West Asia.

In electrical and electronic engineering, which has a part of artificial intelligence, Iran is ranked 15th in the world and first in West Asia.

Another of the most important global rankings that can show the position of Iranian universities in computer science, arti-

ficial intelligence, software, and robotics is the global ranking of computer science or Computer Science Rankings (CSRankings). In this ranking, researchers' articles are displayed with their Google Scholar profiles.

In fact, CSRankings is a measurement-based ranking of the top computer science institutes around the world. This ranking categorizes universities in different regions of the world and shows only the top 50 universities in the whole world. This ranking examines the metrics of each university between 2011 and 2021.

Sharif University of Technology, IPM Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences, and Iran University of Science and Technology were placed among the top 100 institutions in Asia, according to the CSRankings.

Fighting for rights of the disabled in post-COVID era

TEHRAN – On December 3, the International Day of Persons with disabilities is marked considering the challenges, barriers, and opportunities in the context of a global pandemic. The 2021 theme is fighting for rights in the post-COVID era.

The annual observance of the International Day of Persons with Disability was proclaimed in 1992 by United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/3. It aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life.

The theme for IDPD this year is “Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.”

Since March 2020, every person on earth has been impacted by drastic political, social, and economic changes as a result of domestic and international responses to COVID-19.

This year, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities should be used to recognize that people who live with disabilities are among the most affected populations amid the COVID pandemic. Where margin-



alization, discrimination, vulnerability, and exploitation are everyday factors for many people, the increased risk of poor outcomes have been magnified with the reduced access to routine health care and rehabilitation services, more pronounced social isolation, poorly tailored public health messaging, inadequately constructed mental health services, and a lack of emergency preparedness for people with special needs.

Over 1.3m persons with disabilities live in Iran

Pirouz Hanachi, the former mayor of Tehran, said in December 2019 that over 1.3 mil-

lion people suffering from disabilities live in the country and the figure rises by 50,000 every year.

Majlis [the Iranian parliament] approved both general outlines and details of a bill on the rights of persons with disabilities in January 2018. Development of disability-friendly cities, free transportation, health insurance, free education, job creation, housing loans, and fewer working hours are some of the articles of the law.

Since the approval of the law, education for students with disabilities has been provided in Azad universities, subsidies for patients with spinal cord injury as well as disability care centers have been increased, in addition to residential units to families having members with disabilities.

Asghar Shirzadi, chairman of the board of the Iranian association of the disabled, said in December 2020 that it still seems

that the related organizations are not very willing to implement the law, so that more attention is required.

Over 1.3 million people suffering from disabilities live in Iran.

ENGLISH IN USE

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81% of bus drivers responsible for fatal accidents in 2 months

The number of public transport fleet accidents has increased significantly over the last two months, and 81% of bus drivers were to blame for fatal road crashes, Traffic Police chief has announced.

Over 90 percent of the whole transfers across the country are done by ground transport system, while air, rail and sea transportation hold a small share, Mehr quoted Seyed Kamal Hadianfar as saying on Tuesday.

Last year, 19 million rides have been delivered transferring over 290 million passengers, mostly through the bus transportation fleet under the Municipalities supervision, he stated.

He went on to say that bus drivers spend more time driving exceeding standard hour due to low income, which increases the risk of road crashes.

۸۱ درصد رانندگان اتوبوس در تصادفات فوتی دو ماه گذشته مقصر بوده اند

رئیس پلیس راهور ناجا، گفت: در ۲ ماهه اخیر تعداد تصادفات ناوگان حمل مسافر افزایش قابل توجهی داشته و در تصادفات منجر به فوت و جرح ناوگان عمومی حمل مسافر، ۸۱ درصد رانندگان اتوبوس مقصر بوده اند.

سردار سیدکمال هادیانفر، افزود: بیش از ۹۰ درصد از جایی ها در سطح کشور از طریق زمینی صورت می پذیرد و درصد کمی را حمل و نقل های هوایی، ریلی و دریایی تشکیل می دهد. در طول سال ۹۷، ۱۹ میلیون سفر با ۲۹۰ میلیون مسافر صورت پذیرفته است که عمده آن از طریق پایانه هایی صورت پذیرفته که مدیریت آن بر عهده شهرداری هاست.

رئیس پلیس راهور ناجا افزود: رانندگان به علت میزان درآمدشان بیش از ساعت مقرر رانندگی می کنند که ریسک تصادف را بالا می برد.

Rain to replace snow in the Arctic as climate heats, study finds

Rain will replace snow as the Arctic's most common precipitation as the climate crisis heats up the planet's northern ice cap, according to research, the Guardian reported.

Today, more snow falls in the Arctic than rain. But this will reverse, the study suggests, with all the region's land and almost all its seas receiving more rain than snow before the end of the century if the world warms by 3C. Pledges made by nations at the recent Cop26 summit could keep the temperature rise to a still disastrous 2.4C, but only if these promises are met.

Even if the global temperature rise is kept to 1.5C or 2C, the Greenland and Norwegian Sea areas will still become rain dominated. Scientists were shocked in August when rain fell on the summit of Greenland's huge ice cap for the first time on record.

The research used the latest climate models, which showed the switch from snow to rain will happen decades faster than previously estimated, with autumn showing the most dramatic seasonal changes. For example, it found the central Arctic will become rain dominated in autumn by 2060 or 2070 if carbon emissions are not cut, instead of by 2090 as predicted by earlier models.

The implications of a switchover were “profound”, the researchers said, from accelerating global heating and sea level rise to melting permafrost, sinking roads, and mass starvation of reindeer and caribou in the region. Scientists think the rapid heating in the Arctic may also be increasing extreme weather events such as floods and heatwaves in Europe, Asia and North America by changing the jet stream.

“What happens in the Arctic doesn't stay there,” said Michelle McCrystall at the University of Manitoba in Canada, who led the new

research. “You might think the Arctic is far removed from your day-to-day life, but in fact temperatures there have warmed up so much that [it] will have an impact further south.

“In the central Arctic, where you would imagine there should be snowfall in the whole of the autumn period, we're actually seeing an earlier transition to rainfall. That will have huge implications. The Arctic having very strong snowfall is really important for everything in that region and also for the global climate, because it reflects a lot of sunlight.”

Prof James Screen of the University of Exeter in the UK, who was part of the research team, said: “The new models couldn't be clearer that unless global warming is stopped, the future Arctic will be wetter, once-frozen seas will be open water, rain will replace snow.”

Scientists already agree that precipitation will increase significantly in the Arctic in future, as more water evaporates from increasingly warmer and ice-free seas. But the research, published in the journal Nature Communications, found this would be hugely dominated by rain, which will more than treble in autumn by 2100 if emissions are not cut.

The scientists concluded: “The transition from a snow- to rain-dominated Arctic in the summer and autumn is projected to occur decades earlier and at a lower level of global warming, potentially under 1.5C, with profound climatic, ecosystem and socioeconomic impacts.”

Snow is important in producing sea ice each winter, so less snow means less ice and more heat absorbed by open oceans. The research shows rain increasing on the southern coast of Greenland. This could further accelerate the sliding of glaciers into the ocean and the consequent rise in sea levels that threatens many coastal areas.

US is world's biggest plastic polluter

The US is the world's biggest culprit in generating plastic waste and the country urgently needs a new strategy to curb the vast amount of plastic that ends up in the oceans, a new report submitted to the federal government has found.

The advent of cheap, versatile plastics has created “a global scale deluge of plastic waste seemingly everywhere we look”, the report states, with the US a leading contributor of disposable plastics that ends up entangling and choking marine life, harming ecosystems and bringing harmful pollution up through the food chain, the Guardian reported.

Plastic waste has increased sharply in the US since 1960, with the country now generating about 42m metric tons of plastic waste a year, amounting to about 130kg of waste for every person in America. This total is more than all European Union member countries combined. The overall amount of municipal waste created in the US is also two to eight times greater than comparable countries around the world, the report found.

Recycling infrastructure has failed to keep pace with the huge growth in American plastic production. Littering, dumping and ineffi-

cient waste disposal in landfills has caused up to 2.2m tons of plastic – including everything from plastic bottles and straws to packaging – to “leak” into the environment each year. The total waste may be even greater than this due to data gaps in tracking it.

Much of this plastic ends up, via rivers and streams, in the world's oceans.

Worldwide, at least 8.8m tons of plastic waste enters the marine environment each year, the equivalent of dumping a garbage truck filled with plastic into the ocean every single minute. If current trends continue, scientists have estimated this total could leap to 53m tons annually by 2030, which is roughly half of the weight of all fish caught from the oceans globally each year.

“Plastic waste is an environmental and social crisis that the US needs to affirmatively address from source to sea,” said Margaret Spring, chief conservation and science officer at Monterey Bay Aquarium. Spring chaired a committee of experts who compiled the congressionally mandated report for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON DECEMBER 3

New cases	3,603
New deaths	78
Total cases	6,129,199
Total deaths	130,066
New hospitalized patients	649
Patients in critical condition	3,296
Total recovered patients	5,908,901
Diagnostic tests conducted	38,093,355
Doses of vaccine injected	106,867,595

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DECEMBER 4, 2021

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be afraid of a gentleman when he is hungry, and
of a mean person when his stomach is full.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:55 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:30 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:59 (tomorrow)

What’s in Tehran art galleries

* An exhibition of paintings by Khosro Hassanzadeh is currently underway at Iranshahr Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “Reza the Motorcyclist Returns” will run until December 10 at the gallery that can be found at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.

* Leila Tara is hanging her latest collection of paintings in an exhibition at O Gallery.

The exhibition will run until December 13 at the galleries located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.

* Parisa Rahmani is displaying her latest collection of paintings in an exhibition at Atbin Gallery.

The exhibit named “Behind the Perforated Wall” will run until December 14 at the gallery that can be found at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near the Parkway Intersection.

* A collection of paintings by Shirin Azadi are currently on display in an exhibit at Jaleh Gallery.

The exhibition titled “Institutions of Existence” runs until December 13 at the gallery located at No. 3, Noshahr Alley, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.

* Graphic designs by Alborz Kazemi are currently on view in an exhibition at Dastan Basement Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until December 17 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.

Mona Khademi, Farzaneh Kordi and several other artists. The exhibit will run until December 7 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

Sculpture

* Negar Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of sculptures by Amir-Shahrokh Faryusefi.

Entitled “This Bird Doesn’t Sing in the Tight Cage”, the exhibition will be running until December 14 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, East Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

Painting

* Paintings by Ali Karimi are currently on display in an exhibition at Zhinus Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until December 12 at the gallery, which can be found at 21 Fatemi St., off Vali-e Asr Ave.

* A collection of paintings by Manuchehr Motabar is on display in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibit will run until December 15 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

* Paintings by Nazanin Zadmehr are currently on view in an exhibition at Vista Gallery.

The exhibition named “The Next City” will run until December 13 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

* An exhibition of paintings by Zahra Baqeri, Melika Tabamir, Mahtab Hosseinzadeh, Mana Tusi, Mohammad Talebi, Matin Fardad, Mahsa Jalali and several other artists is currently underway at Ayrik Gallery.

The exhibition will run until December 8 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.

Multimedia

* An exhibition of artworks in various media by a number of celebrated Iranian artists, including Adak Jamshidzadeh, Mohammad Ehsai, Parvaneh Etemadi, Aidin Aghdashlu, and Ahmad Esfandiari, is underway at Art ECO Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “Yellow” will run until December 13 at the gallery that can be found at 12 Nilufar St. off Movahed Danesh St. in the Aqasieh neighborhood.

* Ehsan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of artworks in various media by Kia Vosuqkia, Nasrin Nushfar, Fatemeh Gudarzi, and several other artists. The exhibit will run until December 7 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

Winners of 2nd Seyyed Ali Andarzgu Literary Awards honored

TEHRAN – Winners of the 2nd edition of the Seyyed Ali Andarzgu Literary Awards were announced last week.

The writers received their awards in a ceremony held on Tuesday at the Sarcheshmeh Cultural Complex in Tehran.

The Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization established the awards in 2019 to honor books on the 1979 Islamic revolution. It was named after Seyyed Ali Andarzgu, a revolutionary who was killed by the SAVAK intelligence services on August 24, 1978.

“Mati Khan” by Abdorrahman Onaq and “Honoring” by Ali-Asghar Ezzati-Pak were selected as best adult novels.

In “Mati Khan”, the story begins with an announcement from Mati Khan and other leaders of the Turkmen tribes in the northeastern regions of Iran, who warn of the establishment of border checkpoints by the government during the early days of the reign of Reza Shah.

The Turkmen are not optimistic

about the government’s plan, so Reza Shah selects a tough bunch of his men to implement it. As a result, the Turkmen now face harsh restrictions imposed by the border patrol agents even on their daily movements.

“Honoring” is about Shahriar, a man who finds out on his wedding night that his wife has given information to security agents about Mostafa, his close friend and a revolutionary.

He leaves his wife alone, embarking on a journey to find Mostafa.

“Marks of Main Fingers” by Hossein Qorbanzadeh and “The Third Tunnel” by Fatemeh Elyasi won the awards in the children’s novel category.

“Marks of Main Fingers” tells the story of Abazar, a young man whose musician father leaves behind a komuz, an ancient fretless string instrument used in Central Asian music, after his death.

Abazar’s uncle who is a religious man wants him to attend an Islamic seminary in

This combination photo shows the front covers of the books honored at the 2nd edition of the Seyyed Ali Andarzgu Literary Awards.

Tabriz. However, Abazar joins a troupe, performing music in royal ceremonies in 1979.

He falls in love with Golar, a member of the troupe who is also the daughter of the police chief. But the uncle’s hostile attitudes toward the police chief influence the relationship between Abazar and Golar.

A Man Named Reza Who

Was Then Called Reza Khan”, a biography of Reza Shah by Hedayatollah Behbudi, was honored in the History Narration category.

The book recounts the life story of the first monarch of the Pahlavi dynasty from his birth in 1878 until 1921 when he was selected as the commander of the Iranian Army in the new government after the 1921 coup.

Spanish writer Fernando Aramburu’s novel “Homeland” published in Persian

Front cover of the Persian translation of Fernando Aramburu’s novel “Homeland”.

TEHRAN – Spanish writer Fernando Aramburu’s internationally acclaimed novel “Homeland” has been published in Persian.

Khub Publications has released the book translated into Persian by Alireza Shafieinasab.

The novel that limns a decades-long relationship between two Basque families

torn asunder by the violent insurgency of the separatist movement ETA is arguably the most acclaimed and successful literary novel published in Spain in recent times.

Here is the story of two families in small-town Basque country, pitted against each other by the ideology and violence of the terrorist group ETA, from the unrelentingly grim 1980s to October 2011 when the group proclaimed an end to its savage insurgency.

Erstwhile lifetime friends, especially the generation of parents on both sides, the two families become bitter enemies when a father of one is killed by ETA militants, among them one of the sons of the other family.

Told through a succession of more than one hundred short sections devoted to a rich multiplicity of characters whose role in the story becomes clear as one reads, “Homeland” brilliantly unfolds in nonlinear fashion as it traces

the consequences for the families of both the murder victim and the perpetrator.

Aramburu alludes only obliquely to a historical matrix even as he focuses on the psychological complexity of his characters while building nearly unbearable narrative tension.

“Homeland”, the winner of the National Prize for Literature, National Critics Prize, Euskadi Prize, Francisco Umbral Prize, Strega European Prize and Tomasi di Lampedusa Prize, has distinguished Aramburu as a writer who will leave his mark on our era.

Aramburu is considered one of the most remarkable writers in the Spanish language. He won the Ramón Gómez de la Serna Prize in 1997, the Euskadi Prize in 2001, and, for his short story collection “Los peces de la amargura”, the Mario Vargas Llosa NH Short Story Award, the Dulce Chacón Prize, and the Prize of the Spanish Roal Academy in 2008.

Manuscripts carrying paintings of ancient Persian gardens on view at Berlin State Museum

TEHRAN – Persian illuminated manuscripts containing paintings of ancient Iranian gardens are on display in an exhibition at the Berlin State Museum.

The exhibition entitled “The Garden as a Place of Refuge” is an accompaniment to the exhibition Iran: Five Millennia of Art and Culture, which will open on Saturday in the German capital.

“Whether it’s garden parties or romance in the park, the dream of retreating to places that are suffused with beautiful memories is no new thing,” the organizers said in a statement.

“Gardens and parks have always been alluring locations. Places where you can enjoy a barbecue with friends, escape the crowds of the city, or relax under the trees

A Persian painting from the Divan of Hafez (1655-60) - The Sarikhani Collection, London).

or a gazebo and gaze out onto the verdant landscape,” they noted.

“This is particularly true in arid regions like Iran, where cultivated gardens with cooling courses of water and the shade of the trees form idyllic refuges. This social function of gardens, as well as the major significance of the culture of gardening as an independent art

form, find rich expression in Persian poetry and illuminated manuscripts,” the statement added.

The special exhibit in the book art cabinet of the Museum fur Islamische Kunst weaves together the culture of the gardens of Iran and the “longing for the countryside” of today’s city-dwellers. Persian illustrated manuscripts

demonstrate in intricate detail and vibrant colors the enchantment of gardens.

In this showcase, they are juxtaposed with the promise of freedom of urban garden allotments, holiday shacks, and the altered significance of parks and gardens in the era of the pandemic, the museum said.

The exhibition will run until February 20, 2022.

The exhibition Iran: Five Millennia of Art and Culture will be running until March 20, 2022. Some 360 objects representing the central role that Iran has played as a site of innovation, as a melting pot and cultural powerhouse connecting Africa, Asia and Europe, have been selected to be showcased at the exhibit.

Iran: Persian literature

Part 3

Visionary and apocalyptic works include the Arda Wiraz –namag “Book of the Righteous Wiraz,” a popular prose work in simple style relating the visions of heaven and hell by the righteous Wiraz; the Zand i Wahman Yasn “Interpretation of the Wahman Yasht;” a prophecy on the fate of Iran till the end of time; the Jamasp-namag “Book of (the seer) Jamasp;” another prophecy, later incorporated as the sixteenth chapter in the Ayadgar i Jamaspig “Memoirs of Jamasp” (which survived only in Pazand and Persian versions).

Wisdom literature constitutes another rich genre, cultivated by the Zoroastrian priests in the andarz “precept” texts, such as the Pand-namag i Zardusht “Book of advice of Zardusht” and the Chidag Andarz i Poryotkeshan “Collection of precepts of the ancient teachers;” or in riddle-texts like the Madayan i Josht i Friyan “Book of Josht i

Friyan,” which is about the Zoroastrian Josht who resolves all riddles propounded by the sorcerer Axt.

Few secular Middle Persian works have survived. Apart from those already mentioned above that are actually translations of older Parthian originals, they include the legendary history of the Kar-namag i Ardaxshir i Pabagan “Book of the deeds of Ardaxshir, son of Pabag” and similar (but lost) works; these finally found their way into the (also lost) Xwaday-namag “Book of Kings” in the late Sassanid period.

Of the numerous lawbooks that must have existed, only one lengthy work composed at the late Sassanid period survives: it is the Madayan i Hazar Dadestan “Book of a Thousand Judgments.”

Rather than being a systematic legal code, it discusses a number of actual or hypothetical cases (concerning marriage, inheritance, property, rents, trade, etc.).

Further secular works are the Shahrestaniha i Iranshahr “Cities of Iran,” a catalogue of the chief cities of Iran with their legendary or actual founders; the Abdihud Sahighi Sestan “Wonders and remarkable features of Sistan;” obviously the only Middle Persian text composed outside of Pars; the Wizarishn i Chatrang “The explanation of chess;” the Husraw i Kawadan ud Redak-e “Husraw, son of Kawad, and a page,” which gives a vivid picture of courtly luxury at the time of Husraw I in the form of a series of questions asked by the king and answered by his page (the topics dealt with concern food, wine, musical instruments, scents, flowers, women, riding animals, etc.).

Finally, two important political treatises written at the time of Husraw I survive only in an Arabic (the “Testament of Ardaxshir”) and a Persian (the “Letter of Tansar”) translation.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued