

Iran, UAE Begin With the Easiest

► Page 3

Report

Life threats against Ilhan Omar expose level of Islamophobia in U.S. Congress

TEHRAN – Leaders in the American Congress are finding it difficult to address a series of scandals involving congresswoman Ilhan Omar and Islamophobia in what has exposed anti-Muslim sentiments among representatives of the United States.

Recent Islamophobic remarks by Republican congresswoman Lauren Boebert have upset Muslims in America and beyond. A fortnight ago Boebert referred to Representative Omar, one of three Muslim lawmakers and the only one in the House who wears a headscarf as a member of the “jihad squad.” In a speech, Boebert again made anti-Muslim remarks, claiming that while riding an elevator that Omar was also on, she saw a concerned Capitol Police officer approaching the Muslim lawmaker. In her comments, Boebert said Congress had nothing to fear from the Democrat if Omar was not wearing a backpack, indirectly and unpleasantly implying that Omar could have been a suicide bomber. It has since been reported that Boebert has been ridiculing her fellow congresswoman with this story in public on more than one occasion. Omar denies ever being approached or even speaking with a Capitol Police officer. ► Page 5

Report

Hezbollah is determined to resist against enemy

TEHRAN – Sayyed Hashem Safi al-Din, A high-ranking official with the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah has described certain parties that believe they can undermine the resistance by siege and sanctions as “fools”, stressing that the resistance now lives in the bliss of victories.

Addressing a memorial service held for the poet of resistance Sheikh Fadl Mkhaddar, Safi al-Din stressed that the power of the resistance front lies in Tawakkul. (Putting one's trust in God)

“If some people imagine that they can weaken this resistance by siege, elections or sanctions, then I tell them: You are stupid, and fools,” Hashem Safi al-Din, head of the Executive Council of Hezbollah, said during a memorial service in the Lebanese village of Babliyah on Sunday.

“Those who imagine they can weaken the resistance have not read history and are unaware of reality,” He added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Safi al-Din stressed that those who conspire against the resistance are seeking to normalize ties between Beirut and Tel Aviv, stressing that, “This project will not pass and we won't accept it.”

Back in September 2020, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed normalization deals with Israel. Morocco and Sudan later signed similar agreements with the Israeli regime as well. Palestinians have denounced the normalization deals, describing them as a “stab in the back” and a “betrayal” to their cause. ► Page 5

Good agreement cannot be achieved through ‘vague and general dialogue’

TEHRAN — As the Vienna talks are put on hold at the request of the Europeans, Iranian experts are in now in Vienna to carefully examine the drafts, clauses, and proposals. Apparently in Western terminology, this is not defined as “seriousness.”

Speaking at a joint press conference with his Syrian counterpart, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said that Iran arrived in Vienna with good faith, seriousness, planning and initiative in the first round of new talks. The foreign minister added that he has told EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and the foreign ministers of the countries

whose diplomats are present in Vienna that their eagerness to resume the talks must be reflected in their goodwill and initiatives.

“We told them bluntly that Raisi's government is a pragmatic and result-oriented government, and that vague and general dialogue will not help solve the problem. If you are concerned about Iran's completely peaceful nuclear program, we also have our own concerns and demands regarding the continuation of sanctions, the non-lifting of sanctions, and non-compliance with the so-called nuclear agreement,” he added.

What can be assessed from the first round of the new talks in Vienna from the narratives put out by the Iranian officials is that the other side came to Vienna to evaluate and assess the Iranian delegation, rather than actually negotiating.

Amir Abdollahian later said, “In order for the other parties to know that we are in Vienna with a plan, we submitted two written draft proposals, one to the sanctions working group and the other to the nuclear working group.” ► Page 2



Tanbur museum to be established in Kermanshah

TEHRAN – A museum dedicated to tanbur, a long-necked fretted lute, is planned to be established in Dalahu county, the western province of Kermanshah, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

In light of the importance and position of tanbur in the province, as well as Dalahu's designation as a national center for making tanbur last year, the establishment of a museum was seen as a necessity, Jabbar Gohari said on Monday.

Taking advantage of the presence of prominent tanbur masters and artists in the region, this museum will be created in collaboration with the private sector, the official added.

The 180-square-meter museum will display ancient tanbur instruments, instruments of artistic value, the tanburs of the nations, the process of making tanburs, and there will be a recording studio and an artist hall, he noted.

Tanbur is an inseparable part of the lives of the Kurds in Iran, so much so that the children learn how to play it before they learn how to read and write. ► Page 6

Iran: Delegation went to Vienna to reach good agreement

TEHRAN — Speaking at his weekly press briefing on Monday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that the Islamic Republic has a strong will to reach a good agreement in Vienna.

“What I am saying is an Iranian narrative. We arrived in Vienna with a strong will and the team was sent to reach a good agreement... in line with the commitments that everyone around us has in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA),” Khatibzadeh said.

Iran sent a 40-member strong team to Vienna. In addition to diplomats, it included experts in law, banking, economy, trade, oil, economy, etc.

The talks to lift sanctions were resumed

on November 29 and lasted until December 3. However, the Western negotiators called for a halt of the talks to return to their capitals for more consultations.

“The composition of the delegation showed that the main purpose of the delegation was to ensure that the delegation would decide everything in Vienna without round trips to Tehran,” the spokesman noted.

He added that the other side did not expect the Iranian team to give them ready-made written texts with the same approach that a good agreement can be reached in the shortest possible time. ► Page 2



Vocalist Alireza Qorbani to return to live shows in Germany, Switzerland

TEHRAN – Iranian vocalist Alireza Qorbani has announced two concerts in Germany and Switzerland this month in what will be one of his few live performances since the COVID-19 pandemic.

His first concert will be performed at Kultur- und Kongresszentrum Liederhalle Stuttgart Mozart-Saal, in Stuttgart on Saturday.

Théâtre du Léman in Genève, Switzerland, will host his fans on December 16.

“After a long time, we have an opportunity to resume our concert tours with ‘Sing with Me’ outside of Iran,” Qorbani said in a post on his Instagram on Sunday.

“As you know, we were performing part of the concert tour ‘Sing with Me’ in Tehran when the pandemic, unfortunately, hit Iran and the world; as a result, all artistic events were postponed,” he added. ► Page 8



Syrian FM meets top Iranian officials, vows to strengthen ties with Tehran

TEHRAN — Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad visited Tehran on Monday to meet his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir Abdollahian as well as President Ebrahim Raisi.

In the meeting with Mekdad, Raisi said long-term and comprehensive plans should be drawn up to deepen ties between Tehran and Damascus. ► Page 2

From Inside



- Presidential chief of staff: Iran entered Vienna with plans **P2**
- Iran, Venezuela presidents hold phone conversation **P3**
- Top negotiator to brief lawmakers on Vienna talks **P3**
- NIORDC, IKCO ink MOU to add 45,000 dual-fuel cars to public transport fleet **P4**
- TSE's main index drops 865 points on Monday **P4**
- National Seal of Excellence awarded to 18 Iranian handicrafts **P6**
- Webinar to discuss ecotourism challenges in Kordestan **P6**
- Stolen bas-relief discovered in southern Iran **P6**
- Wetland protection heroes to be honored **P7**
- Sri Lankan envoy opens exhibition on agricultural products in Tehran **P7**
- Artist Ardeshtir Mohasses back home with posthumous show **P8**
- Iranian troupe to perform Attar's story of Sheikh Sanan at Carthage theater festival **P8**

Interview



Skocic is right about Iran's tactical deficiency

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN – About two months ago, Iran football team head coach Dragan Skocic spoke frankly about the fact that the country's footballers are technically-good but they need to grow up tactically, however, some critics attacked him for what he said about the football.

If you watch Tehran derby between Esteghlal and Persepolis, you will definitely find out 'what Skocic talks about when he talks about Iran's tactical deficiency'.

Yes, he is right about Iran's football since the despicable performance of the most popular teams proved that the Iranian footballers and coaches need to grow up in terms of tactics. The match finished in a shameful goalless stalemate.

Esteghlal and Persepolis coaching staff, at the post-match news conference, believed that the referee's decisions went against their teams. In my opinion, they should be embarrassed by what their teams did onto the field.

Earlier in the day, West Ham defeated Chelsea 3-2 at the London Stadium in London derby and later in the day, Borussia Dortmund lost to Bayern Munich 3-2 in a thrilling Der Klassiker at the Signal Iduna Park.

Football needs excitement, technology, beautiful stadiums, jubilant fans, goals and the players and coaches who know what they do. We are not talking about Iran's football.

Carlos Queiroz and Dragan Skocic helped Iran's football to grow up over the last 10 years in terms of tactics but I believe that the Iranian coaches must learn more about their jobs.

Yes, Skocic is right about Iran's tactical deficiency.

Good agreement cannot be achieved through ‘vague and general dialogue’

From page 1 ► What the Iranian delegation has presented as a written text is completely within the framework of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and nothing beyond what has been agreed in the JCPOA has been requested by the Iranian side. This is crystal clear in the words of the Iranian officials, but the Western media outlets like to derail the discussions.

In that regard, the foreign minister stated, “The claim made by some Western parties that Iran has had maximalist demands, our demands are completely in line with the JCPOA and we have not had a post-JCPOA demand.”

During the talks, some media outlets and lobbies tried to suggest that Iran had begun 90% enrichment just as the talks began.

Amir Abdollahian called this a “bold lie,” saying that the claim was raised in a phone call to him on Friday morning by Joseph Borrell, and he told him that it is a bold lie.

“Iran, in the same framework that it has clearly announced and in the framework of the NPT, continues its enrichment of 20% and higher, and does not confirm any news pieces about 90% enrichment. It is a bold lie,” Amir Abdollahian said as he was

referring to his conversation with Borrell.

He then clarified for those who wish to listen that Iran does not seek a Plan B.

“We are waiting and trying to achieve the progress that the nation expects in order to lift the sanctions through strong and solid negotiations,” he said.

Discussing the possibility of a temporary agreement, Amir Abdollahian said that Iran does not consider a temporary agreement as beneficial to the country.

“The agreement must be comprehensive, and it must be an agreement that Iran and the people can tangibly feel the use of the economic benefits of the JCPOA and the lifting of sanctions. With the same approach, our team will return to Vienna in the coming days. Most of our team is currently in Vienna and will continue their expert discussions,” he informed the press.

Iran’s chief diplomat has made everything crystal clear. Negotiations will resume soon and Iran is looking for a good agreement, through “solid, strong and logical negotiations.”

If other parties use such a constructive approach, Iran can reach a mutually satisfactory agreement while ensuring the rights and interests of its people. The ball is in the U.S. court.

From page 1 ► So as soon as these texts were given, some media outlets began saying that the agreement cannot be reached because the Iranian demands were maximalist, Khatibzadeh said.

The talks were resumed after a five-month delay to the presidential elections in Iran in June in which a new government came to power. Six rounds of talks were held until June 20.

“Everything that was written in these texts was based on the JCPOA and the draft negotiated in the six previous rounds and could not have been maximized. Unfortunately, the approach of the United States and the European parties to fulfill their obligations is minimal, and this minimalism has led the negotiations to a point where the European parties immediately asked to return to their capitals and consult,” he stated.

The spokesman continued that the Iranian team announced in Vienna that in order to make a decision, it has the permission to stay in Vienna as long as necessary and reach the necessary agreements based on the texts, but at the insistence of the other side, Iran accepted the need to consult with the capitals.

The talks are being led by the European Union’s Enrique Mora and Iran’s lead negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani.

“The next round will start this weekend and the exact date of the talks between Bagheri and Mora will be finalized soon. It is important that the other side, like Iran, come up with detailed proposals. What we have can certainly be negotiated and examined, but it is a misconception that the other side think it can play a blame game and influence the thoughts of Iranian decision-makers

Iran: Delegation went to Vienna to reach good agreement



and elites with this game by making media statements.”

The diplomat noted that Iran knows what it wants in Vienna.

“What we want is completely within the framework of the JCPOA. The other side did not find any objections in the Iranian texts and said that it should be examined,” the spokesman reiterated.

He added that Iran is not in a hurry, but it will not allow anyone to play with Tehran’s time and energy in Vienna.

Khatibzadeh also highlighted, “The Iranian delegation entered Vienna with flexibility, but the other side was

not like that. We are waiting to receive the other party’s opinion about the two draft proposals. New drafts can be exchanged where necessary. It is important that the talks resume this weekend because the talks have not stopped but have been given a few days off.”

Khatibzadeh said now it is the time for the other side to decide what position to take on lifting the sanctions.

“We do not accept anything less than the JCPOA and we do not commit to anything more than the JCPOA.”

One year after the U.S. quit the

JCPOA and the European parties failed to compensate Iran for the U.S. sanctions, Iran started to take gradual compensatory measures based on paragraph 36 of the JCPOA.

“Although we believe that our compensatory measures were taken in response to the other side, it was within the framework of the JCPOA and the issue of sanctions should be settled once and for all. We accepted to work within the framework of flexibility and interaction. We accepted that the second proposal we would present include clauses related to the cessation of Iran’s compensatory measures. What’s most important today is the commitment of the other side. Our commitments are clear, but there are many sanctions that the other side must lift as a stalemate.”

He added in the six rounds of talks conducted before, drafts were prepared, and drafts are subject to negotiations.

“According to the government’s policy, our main and definitive focus is the lifting of sanctions, and we have presented the clauses on lifting the sanctions in the new draft, which is based on the previous draft. No other clauses can be commented on until the benefits of lifting the sanctions are met,” he elaborated.

The spokesman concluded by saying that the people expect the negotiators to have their interests taken into serious and careful consideration.

“The Iranian government is determined to reach a good agreement, and the other side should come to Vienna this weekend with detailed proposals on the texts that Iran has submitted, especially regarding the sections on lifting sanctions,” he noted.

Presidential chief of staff: Iran entered Vienna with plans



TEHRAN — In an interview with state TV on Saturday night, presidential chief of staff Gholam Hossein Esmaili said that Iran entered the Vienna talks with a plan.

“We entered the negotiations with the will and plan,” Esmaili said.

The talks to lift sanction on Iran were resumed in Vienna after they were suspended in June due to the presidential elections in Iran. It was the seventh round of talks since April.

Iran has been insisting that the talks must have tangible results. The Iranian diplomat have been insisting that sanctions must be lifted in a verifiable manner.

“And by lifting sanctions, we seek the outcome of these negotiations,” Esmaili remarked.

He also said that people will be fully briefed about the negotiations.

“We were ready to continue the negotiations in Vienna, but our negotiating parties stated that they should raise the issues in their capitals,” the chief of staff added.

Iran chief negotiator: ‘We will not back down’

TEHRAN - Iran “will not back down” on its demands to reactivate the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator and deputy foreign minister for political affairs has said in an exclusive interview with the official Italian news agency ANSA.

Ali Bagheri Kani said since it was the U.S. that quit the agreement in 2018, it is up to them to take the first step, ANSA reported on Saturday.

Bagheri Kani also said the Iranian proposals are “documented and logical” and therefore can be used as a basis for negotiations.

According to the Guardian, Bagheri Kani has also said, “We are negotiating a comprehensive agreement. We are negotiating a comprehensive agreement that will pave the way for the return of a country that has left the agreement. We

‘Iran activating Asia-oriented economic diplomacy’

Elsewhere in his remarks, Esmaili discussed how Iran has been activating its economic diplomacy by following an Asia-oriented foreign policy.

“The general policies of the government are to establish relations with neighboring countries and activate Asia-based economic diplomacy with neighbors,” he stressed.

He added that at the 15th ECO summit hosted by Turkmenistan on November 28, President Ebrahim Raisi sought to develop economic cooperation between Iran and ECO member states so that Iran can increase its cooperation with these states in the fields of energy environment, digital economy and optical fiber, etc.

During the president’s recent visit to Ashgabat, Raisi had one-on-one meetings with his counterparts from Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Uzbekistan to discuss Iran’s cooperation in the field of transport and energy transfer between the member countries.

According to Esmaili, the trilateral agreement between Iran, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Azerbaijan on gas swap could be considered a great success for the government.

The presidential chief of staff added, “Paying attention to neighborly economic diplomacy is one of the most important general policies of the government so that we can cooperate with ECO member states on many issues including security, transportation, energy transfer and other economic sectors.”

are seeking the lifting of unjust illegal U.S. sanctions.”

Iran and the remaining parties to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, resumed talks on November 29 after a five-month hiatus. It was a continuation of the previous rounds of talks which started in April during the rule of Hassan Rouhani’s administration in Iran. The U.S. is involved in the talks indirectly.

The new round of talks ended on Friday. The chief negotiators returned to capitals for more consultations.

The talks are being led by European Union political director Enrique Mora and Bagheri Kani.

According to Mora, the talks would reconvene in the current week.

Syrian FM meets top Iranian officials, vows to strengthen ties with Tehran

From page 1 ► The president described the volume of trade and economic exchanges between the two countries much lower than the desired level, saying, “There are many capacities to increase the volume of economic exchanges between the two countries.. the volume of economic exchanges can be increased several times.”

Raisi then referred to the illegal presence of foreign forces in the region and in Syria, saying that it will endanger the security and stability of the region.

The president stressed the importance of maintaining Syria’s security and stability, saying Syria is at the forefront of resistance against Israel with its anti-Israel approach and “the history of the resistance of Syrian people and government against cowardly aggression will be proudly recorded.”

Emphasizing the need to respect the territorial integrity of Syria, Raisi said, “Ignoring the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries by any country is not acceptable and the Syrian people will certainly not tolerate it.”

Mekdad also conveyed the message of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to Raisi. Mekdad also said that Syria is determined to activate all capacities for cooperation with the aim of growing

Tehran-Damascus relations in line with the interest of the two nations.

The Syrian foreign minister also said, “The United States uses the evilst methods in its relations with some countries in the region and seeks to dominate the Zionists in the region by disrespecting and humiliating those countries.”

“With the resistance of the Syrian people and the Resistance Front, the conspiracies of the United States, the Zionist regime and its allies in the region have failed, and today they have reached the point that Syria has not failed and they have changed their approach,” he said.

In a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart, Mekdad also said that Syria vows to develop relations with Iran as much as possible and to move in a direction that will serve the interests of the nations of the two countries.

“We want these relationships to reach the highest possible level,” he added.

Syrian FM says Israelis should not make mistakes in their calculations

About the recent Israeli strikes on the outskirts of Damascus, the Syrian Foreign Minister said, “The continuous Israeli attacks against Syria cannot go unanswered. We are responding to these attacks every moment and every day, and the terrorists

and their supporters who invaded Syria were the enemies of Syria. They armed and supported the terrorists, and Israel is continuing to do so today.”

He then said that Syria is responding to these aggressions in various ways, especially by continuing to pursue the remnants of terrorist groups, many of which are supported by Israel.

He added, “Israelis should not make mistakes in their calculations and they should know that Syria always has the ability to respond to these attacks.”

We ask U.S. to remove the cruel sanctions

On the humanitarian condition in Syria, Mekdad said that the inhumane U.S. and Western sanctions imposed on Syria have worsened the economic situation in Syria.

“The problems of Iraq, Syria and Lebanon are due to such behaviors. Some may think that these sanctions will benefit them. I call on all countries, including developing countries, to break their silence on these sanctions and take a stand,” he reiterated.

“These sanctions target the poor and needy, and women and children. By insisting on these sanctions, the United States and Western countries are violating all the values they claim. We call for the lifting of these economic sanctions as soon as possible,” he highlighted.

Rep. Thomas Massie tweets pro-gun photo days after Michigan school shooting

A US congressman has posted a picture of himself and others smiling and holding guns around a Christmas tree, just days after four teenagers were killed in a shooting at a Michigan high school!



TEHRAN – The mysterious, taciturn man of the United Arab Emirates finally made it to Iran on Monday, setting the stage for the gradual development of ties starting with economic cooperation.

Leading a delegation of Emirati officials, the bespectacled UAE National Security Advisor Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al-Nahyan visited Tehran on Monday after weeks of speculation about the date of the visit. He first met with Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and then Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi.

The visit comes against a backdrop of Emirati push to patch up ties with one-time rivals such as Qatar, Turkey, and Iran. Interestingly, Sheikh Tahnoon played a pivotal role in amending ties with all these countries, an indication of the powerful position the man enjoys in the Emirati government. He traveled to Qatar and Turkey and met with the two countries' leaders respectively. After his visits to Doha and Ankara, other Emirati officials met with their Qatari and Turkish officials. This suggests that Sheikh Tahnoon served as a road roller paving the way for further high-level meetings between Emirati leaders and their rivals.

But will his visit to Tehran lead to leaders-level meetings between Iran and the UAE? The answer is not easy. But the range of issues at play between Tehran and Abu Dhabi makes it difficult to think of a meeting à la the one that took place of late between Abu Dhabi



Crown Prince Mohammad bin Zayed and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

This, however, does not mean that a thaw in Iranian-Emirati ties is impossible. Diplomatic contacts between Iran and the UAE have never gone down to zero over the past decade. They only decreased at some points due to a number of mainly political disputes. But while diplomatic ties have experienced some ups and downs, economic ties remained up and running.

And continued economic cooperation seems to have ultimately created a common ground for Tehran and Abu Dhabi to de-escalate tensions at a time when solving political disputes is neither easy nor possible, at least in the short run.

Emphasis on the need to develop economic ties stood out in Sheikh Tahnoon's meeting with Shamkhani. "Warm and friendly

relations with neighbors and the exchange of economic, trade, and investment capacities are the main priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of foreign policy," the top Iranian security official told his Emirati counterpart.

Shamkhani added, "The countries of the Persian Gulf, if they cooperate and work together, can play an important role in the regional and global economy while creating development and prosperity for their nations as an energy hub."

Sheikh Tahnoon, for his part, welcomed proposal to strengthen economic ties with Iran. He described the economic potential of the two countries in the fields of transit, energy, transportation, health, and investment as very broad. He added, "It is necessary to identify and eliminate the obstacles ahead by forming specialized working groups while

accurately enumerating the areas of joint cooperation in various economic fields."

Politically, Iran and the UAE are on opposite sides of many disputes in the region. In addition to the Emirati claim to the three Iranian islands of the Persian Gulf, Tehran and Abu Dhabi have disagreements on the situation in Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria. Recently, Israeli presence in the UAE has been added to the long list of differences.

During Sheikh Tahnoon's meeting with Ayatollah Raisi, the Iranian president appeared to warn about the "sinister goals" of Israel affecting ties between Iran and the UAE. "The Zionists in the region are pursuing their sinister goals and wherever they can find a foothold, they will turn it into a tool for expansionism; therefore, regional countries should be careful," Raisi said.

Ayatollah Raisi added, "The security of the countries of the region is intertwined and Iran supports the security of the Persian Gulf littoral states."

Sheikh Tahnoon underlined the common destiny of the people of the region. He said, "We are the children of this region and we have a common destiny, so the development of relations between the two countries is on our agenda."

Referring to his detailed talks with his Iranian counterpart, Sheikh Tahnoon said, "These meetings will be a turning point in the relations between the two countries."

Iran, Venezuela presidents hold phone conversation

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has spoken over the phone with his Venezuelan counterpart Nicolas Maduro. They discussed the development of relations between Tehran and Caracas.

The telephone conversation took place on Saturday night. During the conversation, the Iranian president called the relations strategic and said, "The current relations between the two countries should be increased in the new Iranian government's term."

Referring to the high capacity of Iran and Venezuela, the president said, "Development of relations between Tehran and Caracas is a necessity, especially in trade and economic fields," according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

Emphasizing the desire of independence-seeking of the Venezuelan people and government against the domineering powers, Ayatollah Raisi said, "The reason for the sanctions imposed by the domineering powers and the United States on the Venezuelan people and government is their independence and freedom."

Ayatollah Raisi stated, "This telephone conversation can be a turning point for the development of relations and increase trade and economic cooperation between the two countries."

Congratulating the successful holding of the



elections in Venezuela, the president said, "Your success in holding the elections shows the authority of the Venezuelan government."

Referring to the position of Iran and Venezuela in the OPEC, Ayatollah Raisi said, "Oil cooperation between the two countries should take a new form and we need to take greater steps in the field of refining and petrochemical resources."

Referring to the agreements between Iran and Venezuela, the president said, "These agreements must be fully implemented and the ground must be prepared for new agreements."

"Despite the threats and attacks imposed on us by imperialism, we have been able to defend internal peace through the efforts of our people," Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said in the telephone call, referring to

elections in Venezuela.

Emphasizing the need to create new dynamism in the economic relations between the two countries, the Venezuelan president referred to the good results of the meetings of the joint commissions between the two countries and said, "We must work for OPEC to achieve lasting stability in the oil market."

"There is a lot of joint work between Iran and Venezuela, and I am very optimistic that with the help of joint commissions we can conclude new agreements," the Venezuelan president said.

The Iranian president had busy days receiving foreign phone calls and delegations over the past few days. He received United Arab Emirates National Security Advisor Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed and Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad on Monday.

During his meeting with the Syria foreign minister, Raisi considered the Iran-Syria relations strategic and insisted on strengthening the strong foundations of the relations between the two countries, especially in the economic and trade fields.

He said, "Today, long-term and comprehensive planning must be done to develop and deepen the relations between Tehran and Damascus, and based on that, we must take steps to ensure the interests of our nations, especially in the economic sector."



their countries, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said.

During the current round of talks, the Iranian negotiators presented two draft proposals regarding sanctions and nuclear-related steps 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.

SPORTS

Iran learn rivals at Asian 2022 Men's Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran discovered their opponents at the 20th edition of the Asian Men's Handball Championship on Monday.

In the draw ceremony held at the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture in Dhahran, Saudi Arabi, Iran are pitted against hosts Saudi Arabia, Australia and India in Group B.

South Korea are in Group A along with Kuwait, Jordan and Singapore.

Defending champions Qatar have been drawn with the UAE, Iraq and Oman in Group C.

Group D consists of Japan, Bahrain, Hong Kong, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

The competition was supposed to be held with 18 teams but Thailand withdrew from the event.

The 2022 Men's Handball Championship will be held in Dammam, Saudi Arabia from Jan. 18 to 31. The competition was originally scheduled to be held in Iran but Asian Handball Federation (AHF) decided to move the event to Saudi Arabia due to spread of COVID-19 in Iran.

It also acts as a qualification tournament for the 2023 World Men's Handball Championship, with top five teams from the championship directly qualifying for the event to be jointly hosted by Poland and Sweden.

Iran runners-up at 2021 World Para Powerlifting C'ships

TEHRAN – Iran finished in second place in the 2021 World Para Powerlifting Championships held in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The Iranian powerlifters won three gold medals, three silver medals and one bronze in the competition.

China, who participated in the competition with men's and women's teams, won the title with five gold medals, four silver medals and four bronzes.

Nigeria came third with three golds, one silver and two bronzes.

Hamed Solhipour in the 97kg, Ali Akbar Gharibshi in the 107kg and Ahmad Aminzadeh in the +107kg won three gold medals in the competition.

Amir Jafari in the 65kg and Rouhollah Rostami in the 80kg won two silver medals.

Samam Razi also took a bronze medal in the 107kg.

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

Iran beaten by Norway in 2021 World Women's Handball

TEHRAN – Iran lost to European champions Norway 41-9 in their second match in the 2021 World Women's Handball Championship Sunday night.

Iran had started the campaign with a 39-11 loss against Romania in Group C.

Iran goalkeeper Fatemeh Khalili Behfar was named Player of the Match due to her outstanding saves.

International Handball Federation (IHF) praised Khalili's performance in the match.

"A very special moment in Castellon as Iran's Fatemeh Khalili Behfar received the hummel Player of the Match award after another eye-catching performance, despite her team's loss," IHF twitted.

Iran will take on Kazakhstan on Tuesday.

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

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

Jahanbakhsh steals the show as Feynoord pummel Fortuna

TEHRAN – Alireza Jahanbakhsh scored a goal in the Feyenoord's 5-0 win over Fortuna Sittard Sunday night.

Feynoord are now second one point behind leaders Ajax after fifteen matches. Guss Til opened the scoring for the host and Bryan Linssen netted a brace.

Luis Sinisterra scored Feynoord's fourth goal.

With one minute remaining, the Iranian international winger scored a goal with a header to seal the 5-0 victory.

Fortuna Sittard remained 15th in the 16-team league with nine points out of 15 matches.

Miguel Ángel Russo appointed Al Nassr coach

TEHRAN –Saudi Arabia giants Al Nassr announced on Sunday that they have agreed with Argentine Miguel Ángel Russo to coach the team until the end of the seasons.

The announcement came less than a month after the Riyadh-based outfit decided to part ways with Portuguese coach Pedro Emanuel following poor results, the-afc.com wrote.

"The club have signed a contract with Argentinean coach Miguel Ángel Russo who will be coaching the first team until the end of the current season," Al Nassr said on their official Twitter account.

"Russo won the local league title in Argentina with Boca Juniors in 2019 and 2020 while he also won the Colombian league with Millonarios," the statement continued.

The 65-year-old will be the third coach to take charge of Al Nassr in nine months as Brazilian Mano Menezes was appointed to coach the team in April before leaving for Emanuel who eventually suffered a similar fate.

Tractor goalkeeper Akhbari voted best of Asia

TEHRAN – The 28-year-old goalkeeper of Iranian football club Tractor FC Mohammadreza Akhbari has been voted the best goalkeeper of the 2021 AFC Champions League team by the fans on the AFC website.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) last week asked the fans to pick the best goalkeeper at the end of the 2021 AFC Champions League on its website, MNA reported.

The results of the voting were announced on Saturday and the 28-year-old goalkeeper of Iranian football club Tractor Akhbari with a clear lead over the other contenders won the majority of the votes.

The goalkeeper of the Tractor's team stood at the top after winning 54.91% of the votes.

Top negotiator to brief lawmakers on Vienna talks

TERHAN – Iran's top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani will brief lawmakers sitting on the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on the outcome of the recent round of the Vienna talks.

The spokesman for the parliamentary committee, Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, said during this week Bagheri Kani will attend a meeting of the committee to inform the lawmakers with the latest developments in the Vienna talks.

In remarks to Tasnim, Meshkini said, "In this meeting, Mr. Bagheri, the head of the Iranian negotiating team, will report on the details of the talks."

The spokesman said the members of the committee will have a meeting with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian at the Foreign

Ministry this week as well.

"According to the schedule, members of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee will meet on Tuesday with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and his deputies at the Foreign Ministry," Meshkini said.

He said that the meeting will be held in order to bring the views of national security committee closer to the Foreign Ministry. "In this joint meeting, issues and developments in the region and the world will be discussed."

After a week of intensive negotiations, diplomats from Iran and major world powers finished the latest round of talks on Friday and decided on a return to Vienna next week.

The Joint Commission of the Iran nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), convened a

session on Friday afternoon at Vienna's Coburg Hotel.

Enrique Mora, the EU Deputy Director General for External Action Service, and Iran's top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani presided over the session.

At the meeting which was held with the delegations of Iran and P4+1 group (Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany) as well as the European Union in attendance, the participants reviewed the results and progress made during this round of talks in light of the draft documents presented by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Some delegations asked for returning to their respective capitals for consultations and receiving new instructions. Hence, the negotiating teams agreed to a hiatus in talks so that discussions will resume next week after delegations return to Vienna from

Iran-Venezuela oil cooperation must take a new form: Raisi says



TEHRAN - Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has said Iran-Venezuela oil cooperation must take a new form and the two sides need to take further steps for expanding cooperation in the fields of refining and petrochemicals as well, Shana reported on Sunday.

Raisi, in a telephone conversation with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, called the relations between the two countries strategic, and said: "The current relations between Iran and Venezuela should be bolstered under the new Iranian administration."

Referring to the high capacity of the two countries in various areas, he added: "Development of relations between Tehran and Caracas

is a necessity, especially in trade and economic issues."

Emphasizing the desire for independence, justice, fighting arrogance and the struggle of the Venezuelan people and government against the domination system, the president stated: "The reason for the sanctions imposed by the arrogant system and the United States on the Venezuelan people and government is their independence and freedom."

Referring to the position of Iran and Venezuela in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), he said: "Oil cooperation between the two countries must take a new form and in the field of refining and petrochemical resources, we need to take greater steps."

Earlier this month, Iran delivered the fourth shipment of its gas condensate to Venezuela in line with concluding a contract with Venezuela for exporting gas condensate and importing crude oil in return.

The two countries earlier this year formalized a swap deal under which Iran would continue supplying condensate to Caracas and received Venezuelan crude in return.

Imports of basic goods up 62% in 8 months

TEHRAN - Iran imported 20.322 million tons of basic goods worth \$12.436 billion in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), 62 percent more than the figure for last year's same period, Mehr News Agency reported.

According to the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Rohollah Latifi, the imports of basic goods in the mentioned eight months also increased by 30 percent in terms of weight.

The mentioned goods accounted for 75 percent of the country's total imports in terms of weight and 38 percent of the total value of the imports during the said period.

Sugar, wheat, basic machinery, chemical fertilizers, soybean meal, edible oils, oil-seeds, barley, and corn were among the imported basic goods.

The value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 40

percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

According to IRCI Head Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi, Iran traded over 110.3 million tons of non-oil products worth \$63.1 billion with other countries in the mentioned period.

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

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

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

Export from Sistan-Baluchestan rises 12% in 7 months yr/yr

TEHRAN- The value of export from Sistan-Baluchestan province in the southeast of Iran rose 12 percent during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to a provincial official.

Mohammad-Ali Khashi, an official with the customs department of the province, announced that 2.469 million tons of products worth over \$867 million were exported from the province in the seven-month period.

The export shows 12-percent rise in terms of value, while 27 percent growth in terms of weight, as compared to the same time span of the previous year, he noted.

He named oil products, gas, bitumen, cement, ceramic tiles, iron and steel, as well as licensed foodstuffs as the major exported items.

Kashi further said that 1.357 million tons of products worth \$737.5 million were imported to the province in the first seven months of the present year, indicating 57 percent rise in value and 41 percent growth in weight year on year.

The main imported items were rice, wheat, corn and barley, mango, sugar, sesame, spare parts, tangerines, bananas and livestock, and Russia, Germany, Denmark, Pakistan, India, UAE, Thailand and China were the main sources of imports, he stated.

As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 43 percent



during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi said that Iran has traded over 98 million tons of non-oil products worth \$54.8 billion with other countries in the mentioned period.

According to the IRICA head, the volume of trade in the mentioned period also grew by 16.5 percent in comparison to the figure for the previous fiscal year.

The official put the seven-month non-oil exports at 75.2 million tons valued at \$27.1 billion, with a 47-percent rise in value and 15-percent growth in weight.

Mir-Ashrafi mentioned natural gas, methanol, polyethylene, semi-finished iron products, liquid propane, iron ingots, iron rods, urea, copper, and bitumen as the main exported products in the said time span.

He said major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China with about 16.9 million tons worth \$7.7 billion, Iraq with 19.7 million tons worth \$5.5 billion, Turkey with 11 million tons worth

\$7.4 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 6.6 million tons worth \$2.6 billion, and Afghanistan with 2.8 million tons worth \$1.1 billion.

The official further announced that Iran has imported 23.5 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$27.7 billion in the first seven months of the present year, with a 38-percent growth in value and a 21-percent rise in weight year on year.

Mir-Ashrafi named basic goods, machinery, livestock feed inputs, and raw materials for production units as the main imported commodities.

The United Arab Emirates with 6.9 million tons of goods worth \$8.6 billion was the top exporter to Iran in the said period, followed by China with 1.9 million tons of goods worth \$6.1 billion, Turkey with 2.5 million tons worth \$2.9 billion, and Germany with 512,000 tons worth \$1 billion, the official stated.

According to the IRICA head, out of the total non-oil goods imported into the country in the first seven months of this year,

16.6 million tons worth \$11 billion were basic goods.

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

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

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

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

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

NIORDC, IKCO ink MOU to add 45,000 dual-fuel cars to public transport fleet

TEHRAN - National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) and state-owned Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) signed a \$20 million deal on Sunday to co-manufacture 45,000 dual-fuel vehicles for the country's public transportation fleet.

The signing ceremony was attended by the NIORDC Head Jalil Salari, IKCO Managing Director Farshad Moghimi, and Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohsen Salehi-Nia, Shana reported.

Based on the deal, of the mentioned vehicles 40,000 will be taxis and 5,000 are going to be vans.

NIORDC and IKCO had signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in December 2019, to add new dual-fuel vehicles to the country's public transportation



The NIORDC Head Jalil Salari (L), IKCO Managing Director Farshad Moghimi exchanging signed contract documents in a ceremony on Sunday.

fleet.

According to that MOU, 146 million dual-fuel vehicles were supposed to be added to the public transportation fleet, reducing the country's daily gas-

oline consumption by 10 million liters.

Back in May, the Head of NIORDC's compressed natural gas (CNG) programs Mohammad-Hossein Baqeri said

132,000 public transport vehicles were going to become dual-fueled across the country.

The mentioned vehicles would become dual-fuel under the framework of a program launched back in May 2020, for the promotion of CNG consumption instead of gasoline. The program is aimed at converting over 1.46 million public vehicles into dual-fuel ones.

Iranian Oil Ministry considers CNG as the national fuel, therefore, to increase the share of this fuel in the country's energy basket, it was planned to turn public vehicles into dual-fuel cars, which can increase CNG consumption by 10 mcm per day.

There are currently 2,400 CNG stations across Iran that supply 22 percent of the country's fuel basket.

TSE's main index drops 865 points on Monday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 865 points to 1.342 million on Monday, IRNA reported.

As reported, over 4.849 billion securities worth 28.774 trillion rials (about \$685.095 million) were traded at the TSE on the mentioned day.

The first market's index lost 2,092 points, while the second market's index rose 2,849 points.

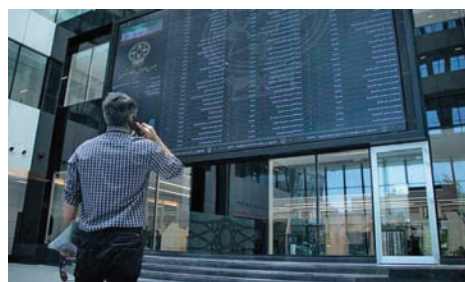
Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has recently said the government is following new strategies to avoid pre-ordered pricing in the stock market in the long term.

"The government's policy, in the long run, is to avoid pre-ordered pricing. This policy has been repeatedly stressed by the president and the government's economic team and has been placed on the government's agenda," Majid Eshqi said on November 14.

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

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

Also, in a meeting with the representatives of over 30 major companies active



in the capital market, on November 1, to exchange ideas for resolving issues and developing the economy, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi said his ministry plans to make the economy more predictable and eliminate pricing systems that are harmful to the capital market and the stock exchange industry.

The official noted that the government will follow new strategies to compensate for the budget deficit by making government assets more productive and also by selling surplus properties.

"The task of the Economy Ministry and the Securities and Exchange Organization is to develop tools and institutions in order to create a transparent, efficient, and predictable market," Khandouzi stated.

Meanwhile on November 22, The SEO

head said facilitation of the activities of stock market institutions like brokers will lead to the development of the capital market.

"Facilitating the establishment of brokerage firms and the ease of licensing issuance for financial institutions, as well as the strict supervision of the SEO over the activities of such financial institutions, are the basis for the development of the capital market," Eshqi stated.

Noting that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs has put the support for the capital market on the agenda, Eshqi added: "In order to support the capital market, Economy Minister Ehsan Khandouzi has put issues such as the development of institutions, the removal of monopolies, the use of new tools, and the strengthening of the primary market on the agenda of this ministry."

"Elimination of monopolies and facilitating the issuance of licenses for establishment of financial institutions is one of the most important missions of the Securities and Exchange Organization, however this goal has made the SEO more precise in performing its supervisory duties to prevent any possible problems for shareholders," the official explained.

Over 17m tons of sponge iron produced in 7 months

TEHRAN- Production of sponge iron in Iran stood at 17.082 million tons in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), IRNA reported.

As reported, sponge iron output stood at 2.563 million tons in the seventh month of the present year.

Directreduced iron (DRI), also called sponge iron, is produced from the direct reduction of iron ore (in the form of lumps, pellets, or fines) into iron by a reducing gas or elemental carbon produced from natural gas or coal. Many ores are suitable for direct reduction.

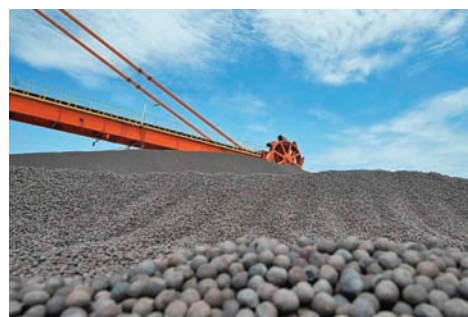
While Iran is fighting the U.S. severe sanctions on its economy, and the country's different industrial and economic sectors have been affected by the limitations and difficulties caused by the sanctions condition, the country's mining sector is moving forward noticeably, overcoming such barriers.

Among the mining sector's different products, sponge iron is an outstanding example, as the production of this item is rising more and more in the country.

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), Iran's largest metals and mining holding, has stated that one of the most important reasons for the increase in sponge iron production in Iran is the establishment of new sponge iron plants, adding that in recent years, with its new strategy and with the participation of the private sector, the organization has been able to launch several projects to produce sponge iron.

Meanwhile, in late July, IMIDRO reported that Iran's Mines and Metals Company (MME) has established China's first gas-based sponge iron production unit using the Persian Direct Reduction (PERED) technology.

"As the world's first manufacturer of gas-



based sponge iron, Iran is now transferring the technology to the world's biggest steel producer", IMIDRO announced at the time.

The deal for the construction of the first gas-based sponge iron plant was concluded between China's CSTM Company and MME Company from Iran as the license owner of PERED technology.

With a capacity of 300,000 tons, the plant has been launched in China's Taiyuan city.

PERED is a new technology for producing sponge iron using natural gas as fuel, which according to MME is a masterwork of the Iranian steel industry and is more efficient and effective in all respects such as the degree of metallization of the product, fuel consumption, operating costs and ease of operation compared to similar technologies.

This technology is already being used in several production units across Iran including Shadegan Steel, Miyaneh Steel, Neyriz Steel, and Baft Steel companies.

The main difference of the PERED technology with other technologies is the high and tangible quality of the sponge iron metallization, which has been reached above 95 percent on the initial day. In other technologies, however, it is very difficult to achieve a degree of metallization above 95 percent during the first months of a unit's operation.

Life threats against Ilhan Omar expose level of Islamophobia in U.S. Congress

From page 1 ▶ Instead of the discriminatory remarks being condemned, the comments have pretty much been met with silence by lawmakers in particular Boebert's Republican party leaders. Analysts say It is quite an uncomfortable reminder of how Islamophobia has become accepted among American lawmakers representing the American people on Capitol Hill.

Boebert has yet to publicly apologize to Omar and even went on to level more accusations against her during a phone call the two had earlier this week. Hours after the call in which Boebert refused to apologize publicly and the Republicans rejected requests to condemn her racist rhetoric, Omar began receiving death threats. During a press conference, she played a racist voice mail she had received on her phone filled with alarming threats against her life. The explicit recording began with "we see you, you Muslim sand n **** b****," and ended with "don't worry, there are plenty who would love the opportunity to take you off the face of this f***** earth, you will not live much longer b****, I can almost guarantee you that."

Omar says she has been receiving similar death threats on an almost daily basis while at the same time facing regular personal attacks from conservative media pundits and some legislators. She says "when a sitting member of Congress calls a colleague a member of the 'jihad squad' and falsifies a story to suggest I will blow up the Capitol, it is not just an attack on me but on millions of American Muslims across the country." She added that "we cannot pretend this hate speech from leading politicians doesn't have real consequences."

House Democratic leaders, meanwhile, have denounced Boebert's Islamophobic remarks but stopped short of putting forward a formal resolution or penalty over her statements. Under normal circumstances, both Democrats and Republicans can use several options for punishment, including a resolution denouncing the comments, a formal reprimand or censure, or the stripping of committee assignments. At this point,



neither party has publicly announced any further action they would take despite pressure for a serious punishment; from the public and House caucus chairs. Critics argue that inaction in the face of Boebert's comments will only condone Islamophobia and send a message about what types of extremist comments or views Congress is willing to accept and reject.

A few lawmakers have issued a joint statement saying, "there must be consequences for elected representatives who traffic in anti-Muslim and racist tropes that make all Muslims across the country less safe."

Research has found that Islamophobic rhetoric by politicians has consequences and has been directly linked with hate speech targeted toward Muslim Americans. And as Congress is not budging on the issue of any punitive measures, research suggests it will further normalize anti-Muslim rhetoric and sentiment, affecting millions of Muslim Americans.

The lack of congressional response has shown that neither party is willing to condemn Islamophobic statements, which in turn gives the impression to the public that Congress is embracing the racist and hateful rhetoric.

Omar says "the truth is that Islamophobia pervades our culture, our politics, and even policy decisions." In essence, congressional inaction toward Boebert's comments only

helps normalize them, and the fact that Boebert hasn't faced more immediate consequences from either party makes anti-Muslim sentiment acceptable to both Democrats and Republicans.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations says it believes "that so far the response from the Democratic leadership is weak and late and doesn't meet the seriousness of these attacks. Islamophobia has unfortunately become a reality of our life as American Muslims. It has not been tackled with the vigor and the swiftness it needs to be dealt with."

The House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy has the responsibility and power to take action against members of the Republican Party, but he has turned down the opportunity to do so. Omar has strongly criticized the Republican leader after he did not even condemn members of his caucus including Boebert for the number of deeply offensive comments about her Islamic faith.

Speaking to American media, Omar blamed McCarthy for not doing more to condemn the remarks and discipline his members for racist or otherwise deeply offensive comments. She says "McCarthy is a liar and a coward. He doesn't have the ability to condemn the kind of bigoted Islamophobia and anti-Muslim rhetoric that are being trafficked by a member of his caucus."

She added that attacks on the few Republicans who have

spoken up against Boebert show "their conference condones [her remarks] and that's why it's dangerous. this is who they are, we have to be able to stand up to them, and we have to push them to reckon with the fact that their party, right now, is normalizing anti-Muslim bigotry... the most dangerous thing that she has recently said is that we have a problem in Congress because there's a terrorist. And I think once you sort of invoke that kind of language, you put not just my life but the lives of my colleagues as well in danger because we don't know who's out there."

Referring to the recording of the threatening message, she says "the people who are leaving these voicemails that are saying, 'We are taking up arms, coming to the Capitol to protect our country from a terrorist are not, you know, people that we should dismiss. They're not joking. And I think it's important for us to say this kind of language, this kind of hate, cannot be condoned by the House of Representatives, and we should punish and sanction Boebert by stripping her of her committees, by rebuking her language, by doing everything we can to send a clear and decisive message to the American public."

Omar described the problem as not something specifically directed towards herself, but rather a case of whether Muslims can live safely in communities across the U.S. under such leadership.

Does this affair explain why anti-Muslim hate crime is on the rise? Leaders have a duty to condemn hate crime in the country, when they refuse to do so at the highest level it certainly doesn't set the best example.

The bigger question is if there is so much hatred inside Congress towards a Muslim (who is one of their own colleagues) then how much hatred has been built up on Capitol Hill towards Muslims in America. Analysts would argue that the more important aspect of this whole affair is how much hatred is therefrom within Congress towards Muslims beyond America's borders and what role this is playing in the Islamic world.

Saudi warplanes launch massive airstrikes across Yemen

TEHRAN - Saudi Arabia has upped the ante in the war on Yemen by conducting a new round of airstrikes targeting various areas across the crisis-hit country, as Riyadh and its regional allies forge ahead with their devastating war and brutal siege against the Yemeni people.

Saudi warplanes carried out five air raids against al-Anab residential neighborhood in the capital Sana'a late on Sunday, said Yemen's al-Masirah television network.

There were no immediate reports of casualties or extent of damage.

Shortly afterward, the al-Masirah TV broadcast video footage that appeared to show the aftermath of the Saudi airstrikes, which targeted a car maintenance workshop.

Earlier in the day, Saudi fighter jets had launched 34 airstrikes against different areas in Yemen's oil-producing central province of Ma'rib.

The official Saba news agency, citing a security official, reported that the aerial assaults hit al-Jubah and Sirwah districts.

The raids caused severe damage to civilian structures and private properties, the official said.

Moreover, Saudi aircraft bombarded the Maqbanah district in the southern Yemeni province of Ta'izz on three occasions, though no reports about possible casualties were quickly available.

Saudi Arabia, backed by the United States and regional allies, launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing former Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi's government back to power and crushing the popular Ansarullah resistance movement.

The war has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead and displaced millions more. It has also destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and spread famine and infectious diseases there.

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

Hundreds of Hudaydah truce violations in 24 hours

The Saudi-led military coalition has violated 267 times during the 24 hours to Monday a ceasefire agreement between the warring sides on the western coastal province of Hudaydah.

Al-Masirah television network, citing an unnamed source in Yemen's Liaison and Coordination Officers Operations Room, reported that

the violations included dozens of reconnaissance flights over various regions, including Hays, al-Jarrahi, Faza, and al-Jabaliyah neighborhoods, in addition to 134 counts of artillery shelling and 98 shooting incidents.

Yemeni forces repel massive attacks in Hudaydah

Additionally, Yemeni army forces and fighters from the Popular Committees managed to repulse massive attacks by Saudi-backed mercenaries in Yemen's western province of Hudaydah.

A number of Saudi-sponsored mercenaries loyal to Hadi, a close ally of Riyadh, were killed and injured in a counterattack mounted by the Yemeni troops in the Hays district of the province, according to Yemen News Portal.

Saudis failed to achieve sinister goals in Yemen

An unnamed official at the Yemeni Foreign Ministry said Saudi Arabia has failed to obtain any of its aggressive and sinister objectives in Yemen, hailing the steadfastness of the Yemeni nation, their belief in their just cause, and their total rejection of foreign interference.

"The Saudi-led coalition's failure to achieve its malicious goals has resulted in confusion of the alliance member states. They sometimes try to mislead the international community through alleged support for a peaceful political solution to Yemen conflict, and at other times threaten to launch fresh military strikes," the official told Saba news agency.

He also lambasted the policy of starvation pursued by the Saudi war coalition against Yemeni, stressing that the practice aggravates the repercussions of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in the country as ships loaded with oil derivatives, natural gas, and foodstuff are not allowed to unload their consignments at the port of Hudaydah.

While Sana'a can respond to the excesses of Riyadh and Abu Dhabi regimes at an appropriate time and place, it still adheres to the principle of just and honorable peace for Yemeni people, the Yemeni Foreign Ministry official pointed out.

It will not, however, accept the continuation of the Saudi war and comprehensive siege through which the alliance is seeking to falsely portray the Yemen crisis as nothing but an internal conflict, the official added.

He also highlighted that all evidence confirms the fact that what is happening in Yemen is a direct and clear act of aggression from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates against Yemen and its people.

Venezuela's US-backed opposition movement on verge of collapse

The political opposition movement the US has aided and abetted in Venezuela to challenge the Nicolás Maduro government is facing crisis after a major faction announced its withdrawal.

Julio Borges, a leading figure in the so-called Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) coalition, announced the end to the leadership of Juan Guaido, whom Washington and its allies had backed as Venezuela's 'president' since January 2019.

It has further undermined the country's Washington-sponsored opposition following its massive defeat in regional polls last month, which gave Maduro a thumping mandate

Borges made the announcement during an online news conference on Sunday, insisting that the interim government – illegally formed in 2019 and led by Juan Guaido – is not serving its objective, suggesting that it has turned into an elite social class.

"The (interim) government makes sense as an instrument to get out of the dictatorship. But at this moment, in our way of

seeing it, the interim government has been damaged," said Borges, whose differences with Guaido are well-known.

"Instead of being an instrument to fight the dictatorship, the interim government has become a kind of ... caste," he further emphasized.

Borges, who fled to neighboring Colombia and acquired political asylum there after being charged in Caracas for being part of a plot to oust President Maduro, said he would make his resignation official during a legislative session on Tuesday and that the interim government should "disappear."

It should only serve to manage foreign-based state assets like the US-based refiner Citgo Petroleum Corp, and its political structure must be re-jigged, he proclaimed.

The US, along with dozens of allied countries – mostly in Western Europe -- recognize the opposition-led interim government and consider the 2018 re-election of President Maduro to be "fraudulent."

(Source: Press TV)

Hezbollah is determined to resist against enemy

From page 1 ▶ Those who conspire against the resistance are "dreaming of normalization and perhaps dreaming of more, and this is their true [face], and they want to tell us that normalization amounts to Arabism and resistance is outside Arabism," he said.

The Hezbollah official also stressed that Hezbollah is determined to go on resisting against the enemy.

He added that "today we live in the bliss of victories and never experience humiliation and weakness, so we are continuing on the path of strong and present resistance to confront the enemy, and we will not retreat, but rather grow stronger."

Hezbollah was established following the 1982 Israeli invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon. The movement drove out Israeli forces from Lebanon in May 2000.

Since then, the group has grown into a pow-



erful military force, dealing repeated blows to the Israeli military, including during a 33-day war in July 2006.

Safi al-Din also said the anti-Hezbollah team in Lebanon, which wants to "pawn" the nation to foreign countries, "can't be entrusted with anything" and can't solve the country's economic problems.

Lebanon has been mired in a deep economic and financial crisis since late 2019. The crisis

is the gravest threat to the country's stability since the 15-year civil war ended in 1990.

The economic and financial crisis is mostly linked to the sanctions that the United States and its allies have imposed on Lebanon as well as foreign intervention in the Arab nation's domestic affairs.

Compounding the woes, Saudi Arabia has imposed its own sanctions, including banning its citizens from traveling to Lebanon where Riyadh-backed elements have been jockeying for positions.

"Today we live in the bliss of victories and never experience humiliation and weakness."



Tanbur museum to be established in Kermanshah



From page 1 ► Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites, of which Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan are both on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Inscribed into the base of a towering cliff, Taq-e Bostan comprises extraordinary Sassanid bas-reliefs of ancient victorious kings divide opinions. Late afternoon is the best time to visit, as the cliff turns a brilliant orange in the setting sun, which then dies poetically on the far side of the duck pond.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting king Darius I and several other figures. UNESCO has it that Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values on the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

The inscription, measuring about 15 meters

high and 25 meters wide, was created on the order of King Darius I in 521 BC. It bears three different cuneiform script languages: Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian.

According to legend, the figure represents Gaumata, the pretender to the throne whose assassination led to Darius' rise to power. This symbolic representation of the Achaemenid king in relation to his enemy reflects traditions in monumental bas-reliefs that date from ancient Egypt and the Middle East, and which were subsequently further developed during the Achaemenid and later empires.

Another popular historical site of the province is the Temple of Anahita in the city of Kangavar, which is believed to have been built circa 200 BC. Several column bases and ruins of a wall remain from the magnificent Greek-style temple.

The temple was used during the Parthian era (248 BC-224) as well as the Sassanid era (224-651).

The monument was damaged as it was used for various purposes by the Seljuk, Ilkhanid, Safavid, and Qajar dynasties, which ruled Iran over the past centuries.

The Temple of Anahita was seriously damaged by an earthquake in 1957. Afterward, people invaded the perimeter of the site, using stones from the temple to rebuild their homes at that location.

Historical monuments in Fars added to national heritage list

TEHRAN –A total of 13 historical buildings and aging monuments across Fars province have been added to the national heritage list.

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

Jameh Mosque of Bardej, Haj Esmaeil Amui Mansion, and cisterns of Sedeh Village are among the properties inscribed on the list.

The ancient region of Fars, also spelled Pars or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (c. 550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pas-

argadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

The capital city of Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital which was the literary capital of Persia during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent buildings and sights including Eram Garden, Afif-Abad Garden, Tomb of Hafez, Tomb of Sa'di, and Jameh Mosque of Atigh.

Stolen bas-relief discovered in southern Iran

TEHRAN – Massive pieces of stolen bas-relief carving have recently been found in the Marvdasht plain, which is home to the UNESCO-registered sites of Persepolis and Pasargadae as well as tens of other magnificent structures, in southern Fars province.

The Sassanid artwork named Farrokhzad inscription was originally discovered along with similar ones at the foot of Rahmat Mountain in southern Iran, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage announced on Sunday.

"The bas-relief that has recently been broken in half was originally installed near the ancient city of Istakhr... However, its inscriptions are almost intact," Mohammadreza Bahmani said on Sunday.

Istakhr, was once a royal residence for Sassanid kings of Persia. It is deeply rooted in history with a human occupation dating back to the fourth millennium BC, and the site was certainly occupied in the



Bronze Age, by the Achaemenids, by the Seleucids (who used it as a mint town), and by the Parthians.

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

The ancient region, known as Pars (Fars), or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenid Empire founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC. Alexander the Great defeated the Achaemenian army at Arbela in 331 and burned Persepolis apparently as revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

Persis became part of the Seleucid kingdom in 312 after Alexander's death. The Parthian empire (247 BC– 224 CE) of the Arsacids (corresponding roughly to the modern Khorasan in Iran) replaced the Seleucids' rule in Persis during 170–138 BC. The Sassanid Empire (224 CE–651) had its capital at Istakhr. Not until the 18th century, under the Zand dynasty (1750–79) of southern Iran, did Fars again become the heart of an empire, with its capital at Shiraz.

Webinar to discuss ecotourism challenges in Kordestan

TEHRAN – The western province of Kordestan will host an online seminar on Tuesday to discuss ecotourism challenges in the region, the deputy tourism chief has announced.

Ecotourism enthusiasts, nature lovers, tour operators, cultural heritage experts, scholars, and eco-lodge units owners are welcomed to attend the event, Arman Vatandoust said on Sunday.

The challenges of establishing eco-lodges and their management needs will be discussed during the event, the official added.

As a four-season country with pristine and beautiful nature in different parts of the country, Iran has a lot to offer nature lovers and eco-tourists.

Eco-lodge units in rural areas and the heart of nature, away from the hustle and bustle of the city, smoke, and pollution, could free people from the chaos and turmoil of modern life.

In recent years, several historical mansions and rural houses across the country have been repurposed into eco-lodge units to attract more domestic and foreign tourists.

The houses represent the indigenous culture, local customs, traditions, and stories, while the guests are served delicious food with



local ingredients.

The growing tendency of tourists to experience indigenous and local cultures has made them want to get closer to natural and indigenous living conditions, experiencing the old-fashioned way of life, considering that staying in these eco-lodge units is much cheaper than other accommodation centers.

Last January, Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism Director Behrouz Omrani announced that Iran has been constructing hundreds of eco-lodge guesthouses over the past couple of years to meet the demands of rising eco-travelers and sightseers.

"At present, issuing guidelines for eco-tourism development is on the agenda. Historical villages are amongst target destinations for

eco-tourism development," the official said.

Iran's tourism body said in 2018 that 2,000 eco-lodges will be constructed nationwide until 2021. Experts say each eco-lodge unit generates jobs for seven to eight people on average so that the scheme could create 160,000 jobs.

Having a very diverse natural setting, Iran offers varied excursions to nature lovers. Sightseers may live with a nomad or rural family or enjoy an independent stay. The country is home to abundant historical mansions, caravanserais, bathhouses, madrasas, and other massive monuments, which can buttress its budding tourism and hospitality sectors if managed appropriately and refurbished properly.

The name Kordestan refers to the region's principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuq period), the name Kurdistan was applied to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains. It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran's Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century.

Police bust gang of illegal excavators near Alamut Castle

TEHRAN – Iranian police have recently busted a gang of illegal diggers in Alamut, a semi-mountainous historical region in Qazvin province, west-central Iran, CHTN reported on Monday.

Five illegal excavators, who were digging near the historical Alamut Castle, were detained in this regard, said Hassan Mehri, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage.

Some excavation tools and equipment were seized from the gang, the official added.

The culprits were handed over to the judicial system for further investigation, he noted.

Better known for being home

to a well-fortified ruined castle and its lush cherry gardens, Alamut annually attracts hundreds of thousands of holidaymakers to the castle that once sheltered the followers of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070–1124), a leader of the Ismaili sect, known as 'Assassins'. In the early 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book "The Valleys of the Assassins".

In popular myth, Sabbah led a bizarre, much-feared mercenary organization whose members were dispatched to murder or kidnap leading political and religious figures of the day.

Alamut, which means "eagle's nest", is a geographic region in



the western edge of the Alborz range, between the dry and barren plain of Qazvin in the south and the densely forested slopes of the Mazandaran province in the north.

Nowadays, the ruined castle, which is also known as Alamut Castle, is a top travel destination in the northeastern side of Gazor Khan Village in the environs of Mo'aleim Kalayeh, from the envi-

rons of Roudbar of Alamut, Qazvin province.

Qazvin was once the capital of the mighty Persian Empire, under Safavids, from 1548 to 98. It is a major tourist destination with a wonderfully restored caravanserai-turned-arts precinct, some quirky museums, and a handful of decent eating options.

Qazvin is also home to one of the biggest roofed caravanserais of the country, Sa'd-al Saltaneh caravanserai. Dating back to the Qajar era, it's a place for discovering tens of Hojreh or shops, cafes, yards, and a stunning mosque. It's a place for visitors who want to experience the culture, culinary, and hospitality of Iran.

Iran's most important historical centers.

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. Qajar era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

National Seal of Excellence awarded to 18 Iranian handicrafts

TEHRAN – The National Seal of Excellence has been awarded to 18 high-quality works handcrafted by the natives of the northwestern province of Ardabil, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

Traditional musical instruments, toreutics art, and traditional jewelry are among the works awarded with the National Seal of Excellence, Nader Fallahi said on Monday.

The National Seal of Excellence assures the quality of the selected handicrafts, encourages competition among craftsmen and artists, makes it easier to identify active artists, introduces and promotes these works, and motivates the emergence of new talents, innovations, and creativity in the production of handicrafts, the official added.

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

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

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

The value of Iran's handicrafts exports



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

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

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

Clean-up project to begin on English Graveyard in southwestern Iran

TEHRAN – A clean-up project is planned to be commenced on the English Graveyard in the southwestern Bushehr province, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

Preservation of historical monuments is a priority, which is why the main tombstones of the cemetery have been collected for better preservation, Nasrollah Ebrahimi said on Monday.

When the cleaning project of the historical site is complete, the tombstones will be built and installed according to the original stones, the official added.

Back in September, the official announced that the Qajar-era (1789-1925) cemetery will be open to the public as a tourist destination and historical site, following its full restoration.

The English Graveyard is the final resting place of British officers and soldiers who were killed during

the 1856 invasion of Persia and World War I in the port city of Bushehr.

The majority of the invaders were killed in the fight against Colonel Baqer Khan Tangestani and Rais Ali Delvari, national heroes of Iran who organized popular resistance against the British troops which had invaded the country in the nineteenth century.

The Persian sign of the cemetery reads "the graveyard of English invaders," which recalls the days of English colonialism as well as the resistance of the brave people of Bushehr.

The graveyard is on the national heritage list but has been abandoned for years.

With over 6,000 years of history and significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras, Bushehr Province is one of

Wetland protection heroes to be honored

TEHRAN – The annual program for introducing and honoring persons who have notably endeavored to preserve wetlands across the country will be held coinciding with World Wetlands Day, which is celebrated every year on February 2.

The event marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands in 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

In order to identify, collect and classify successful experiences related to the optimal protection of wetland ecosystems and to encourage and promote wetland culture in the country, the rangers and those who took steps to well protect the wetlands will be honored, IRNA reported on Monday.

Also, in order to appreciate the tireless efforts of environmentalists who are protecting wetlands, a program of selection and appreciation of rangers



will be held concurrent with World Wetlands Day.

Wetland Hero Award will be presented in three categories of research, executive activities, and public participation.

Valuable wetlands

Wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or

permanently. They store water and ensure its quality, providing resilience against drought. They play a central role in sustainable development by supplying all our freshwater. More than 40 percent of freshwater fish are said to live in wetlands.

Wetlands play a major role in protecting the land against floods and the

impacts of storms. They provide food and diverse habitats which support genetic, species, and ecosystem biodiversity. Wetlands play a key role in the life cycles of many species and in annual migration patterns.

Iran is rich in terms of having a variety of wetlands due to its climatic diversity. In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value with an area of over 3 million hectares have been identified, of which 25 wetlands are designated as wetlands of international importance (registered in the Ramsar Convention) covering more than 1.4 million hectares and four sites are biosphere reserves.

Of Iran's 25 Ramsar sites about one-third are under pressure or in critical condition.

Unfortunately, wetlands are being degraded and lost due to pollution, overexploitation, climate change, and human population growth.

Benefactors free over 5,400 prisoners in 8 months

TEHRAN – A total of 5,421 inmates of involuntary crimes have been released during the first eight months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (began March 21) with the help of philanthropists and charities, Asadollah Joolaei, head of Blood Money Organization, has said.

Freeing prisoners of involuntary crimes is done in three ways. The first way is granting prisoners leave and the second way is providing a number of them with loans to be paid inside the prison.

The third way of assistance is the release of unintentional convicts by paying their debt.

Some 203 of these released prisoners were female convicts and the rest were male debtors who were incarcerated due to inability to pay financial debts or inability to pay dues (workshop accidents and traffic accidents), he said.

He went on to note that a total of 18 trillion rials (nearly \$428 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been the debt of the released prisoners.

Since 1990, more than 150,000 unintentional

crime doers who had debts have been freed, he said on October 3.

Currently, there are 10,680 prisoners of unintentional crimes in the country, of whom 4,673 are eligible for assistance, he stated, adding, Tehran with 999 prisoners has the most unintentional crime prisoners, Sistan-Baluchestan with 26 and Hormozgan with 46; have the smallest prisoner population.

14,600 inmates freed last year

Iranian benefactors helped release a total of 14,681 inmates of unintentional crimes across the country over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2020-March 2021), Hadi Sadeghi, an official with the Judiciary, has said.

Last year, a total of 35 trillion rials (nearly \$833 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been donated to pay the debt of the released prisoners.

As an annual tradition, benefactors come together in a ceremony to raise funds for releasing prisoners of unintentional crimes during the holy



month of Ramadan (which started on April 13 this year), through which, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has donated 5 billion rials (about \$120,000).

Last year, heads of the three branches of the government and the private sector donated 6.5 billion rials (nearly \$150,000) to release prisoners who had committed involuntary crimes.

Former President Hassan Rouhani, former Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, and former Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi made a total of 3.9 billion rials (around \$92,000) in contributions to free prisoners of unintentional crimes.

Relief Foundation, Basij to build 5,000 houses for the deprived

TEHRAN – The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation and the Basij will provide 5,000 houses for the underprivileged families across the country, Mehr reported on Monday.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Basij and Housing Foundation regarding the construction of 5,000 out of a total 40,000 planned housing units, Morteza Bakhtiari, Head of the Foundation said.

The Foundation will also start the construction of 5,000 housing units for the deprived families during the Ten-Day Fajr celebrations (January 31-February 10, marking the 43rd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution), he noted.

He further expressed hope that in a period of 2 years, all 40,000 units will be completed and delivered to people.

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation works to provide employment in deprived areas and empowers financially

struggling families, other services such as building or buying housing, cultural services, medical services, and other facilities are provided, for example, in the field of treatment, more than 80,000 patients of incurable diseases are currently under the Foundation's coverage.

Support for villagers, underprivileged

Over the past couple of years, more than two million houses have been built in rural areas and some 500,000 houses have been renovated, as well, Azizollah Mahdian, the Foundation's deputy director, said in July.

Moreover, the Welfare Organization will provide 35,169 residential units for underprivileged families across the country over the current [Iranian calendar] year.

The construction of 10,000 houses will begin this year, Zolfaghar Yazdanmehr, deputy head of the Organization, said in April.



In the Iranian calendar years 1398 (March 2019-March 2020) and 1399 (March 2020-March 2021), 14,700 and 16,500 residential units have been provided to the deprived, respectively, he noted.

Many efforts have been made over the past couple of years by the government to support villagers and slow down the trend of migration from rural areas to cities.

Rural tourism, agritourism, religious tourism, and ecotourism are alternatives or complementary economic activities that could further stimulate rural development while decreasing rural community dependency

on one main economic sector (agriculture, forestry, energy, or mining).

The budget for rural development projects has increased by 2.5 times in the current [Iranian calendar] year compared to that of the previous year.

A total of 80 trillion rials (nearly \$1.9 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) were allocated this year for the implementation of rural development projects across the country.

The credit will be spent on preparing, reviewing, and implementing the rural plans, improving the rural infrastructure, and the development of the villages.

Currently, 26 percent of the country's population lives in villages, around 39,000 villages have more than 20 households and 23,000 villages have less than 20 households.

Thus, more than 97 percent of the country's rural population lives in villages with over 20,000 households.

SOCIETY

DECEMBER 7, 2021

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

7

Sri Lankan envoy opens exhibition on agricultural products in Tehran

TEHRAN – Sri Lankan Ambassador to Iran, Wishwanath Aponsu, officially inaugurated an exhibition on agricultural products in Tehran on Monday.

Sri Lankan Export Exhibition-2021, together with the Tea Stakeholders' Gathering, was held at the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Tehran in order to showcase various Sri Lankan food and beverage export products.

"Sri Lanka is one of the major producers of tea and, one of the key exporters to Iran with an annual value of around US\$100 million. However, in recent years, we observed that exporting our tea and other agricultural products to Iran have been in a decreased trend," Aponsu said.

With the Covid-19 tension across the globe, the popularity of herbal tea and other medicinal plants' beverages among the people are growing, that is why we organized the exhibition, he added.



Heat, no food, deadly weather: climate change kills seabirds

The warming of the planet is taking a deadly toll on seabirds that are suffering population declines from starvation, inability to reproduce, heat waves and extreme weather.

Climate-related losses have hit albatrosses off the Hawaiian islands, northern gannets near the British Isles and puffins off the Maine coast. Some birds are less able to build nests and raise young as sea levels rise, while others are unable to find fish to eat as the ocean heats up, researchers have found.

Common murre and Cassin's auklets that live off the West Coast have also died in large numbers from conditions scientists directly tied to global warming.

With less food, rising seas that encroach on islands where birds roost and increasingly frequent hurricanes that wipe away nests, many seabirds have been producing fewer chicks, researchers say.

And tern species that live off New England have died during increasing rain and hailstorms scientists link to climate change. Some species, including endangered roseate terns, also can't fledge chicks because more frequent severe weather kills their young, said Linda Welch, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The warming world is increasingly inhospitable to many seabirds, Welch said. "In the last couple years, they've experienced widespread nesting failure," she said. "I definitely think there's large ramifications of what we're seeing."

It's difficult to precisely determine the population loss to wide-ranging seabirds and how much is attributable to climate change. But one estimate by researchers from University of British Columbia stated that seabird populations have fallen 70% since the mid-20th century.

Reproductive success also decreased over the last half century for fish-eating seabirds, especially those that live north of the equator, according to a study earlier this year in the journal Science.

Researchers from the University of Washington and other institutions who studied dozens of worldwide seabird species found some were having success breeding at only 10% of historical levels. They also found that in the southern hemi-

sphere, difficulty finding fish has prevented species such as the Magellanic penguin from successfully feeding chicks.

Worldwide, seabirds are in jeopardy largely because of warming ocean temperatures, scientists say. Over the past five decades, more than 90% of the extra heat on the planet from global warming has been absorbed by the ocean, according to U.S. government scientists.

Warming seas, coupled with die-off events that kill thousands of birds by starvation, are making it harder for some species to maintain stable populations, said P. Dee Boersma, a University of Washington biology professor and an author of the Science study.

The seabirds, such as penguins that have declined by nearly three-quarters in South Africa since 1991, are a harbinger of what will happen to wildlife with global warming, Boersma said.

"These ecosystem sentinels are important because they're not only enjoyable for us to be able to see them, but they're important as a signal that we've gone too far," she said.

One of the most serious threats to seabirds is a reduction of plankton and small fish in cold northern waters. Forage fish and plankton loss has led to mass die-offs of birds such as the Cassin's auklets that washed up by the tens of thousands on the Pacific Coast in recent years.

One of the most visible examples of global warming's seabird toll was the die-off of tens of thousands of common murre along the West Coast in the mid-2010s. Nearly 8,000 dead birds washed up on a single beach near Chugach National Forest in Alaska.

Scientists later determined that warming waters deprived the birds of the abundant sardines and anchovies they gorge on, and the birds starved. The deaths came amid a marine heat wave known as "the blob."

Thousands of miles away in the North Sea, a similar problem has forced northern gannets to search farther away for food, leaving chicks untended and vulnerable to predators, University of Leeds researchers have found.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON DECEMBER 6

New cases	3,356
New deaths	77
Total cases	6,137,821
Total deaths	130,277
New hospitalized patients	559
Patients in critical condition	3,232
Total recovered patients	5,930,502
Diagnostic tests conducted	39,415,479
Doses of vaccine injected	107,940,633

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

\$1.2m donated to provide the underprivileged with warm clothing

Iran's Welfare Organization has managed to collect a contribution of 50 billion rials (nearly \$1.2 million) to provide the underprivileged with warm clothing, Tasnim news agency reported on Thursday.

Within the framework of a campaign dubbed "kindness smile" from December 10, 2018 to January 9 some \$1.2 million was solicited from the public for procuring warm clothing for the financially struggling children in underprivileged areas, an official with the Organization has said.

Mohammad Ali Kozehgar explained that some 50,000 packages of warm clothing were obtained by the money and distributed among the children.

کمک ۵ میلیاردی برای تامین لباس زمستانی کودکان در مناطق کم برخوردار

به گزارش خبرگزاری تسنیم سازمان بهزیستی کشور با هدف تامین تهیه لباس گرم برای کودکان مناطق کم برخوردار مبلغ ۵ میلیارد تومان جمع آوری کرده است. رئیس مرکز مشارکتهای مردمی و توانمندسازی سازمان بهزیستی کشور با اشاره به اتمام پوش لبخند مهربانی با هدف تامین تهیه لباس گرم برای کودکان مناطق کم برخوردار اظهار کرد: این پوش از ۱۹ آذر با مشارکت خیرین و نیکوکاران آغاز شد و تا ۱۹ دی ماه ادامه داشت و در این طرح یک ماه ۵ میلیارد تومان جمع آوری شده است. محمد علی کوزه گر گفت: ۵۰ هزار بسته لباس گرم به ارزش ۵ میلیارد تومان تهیه شده است و در اختیار کودکان قرار گرفت.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Hearts of people are like wild beasts. They attach themselves to those who love and train them.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:56 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:32 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:02 (tomorrow)

Iran: Persian literature

Part 6

The Middle Persian language itself survived among communities of Zoroastrians in Persia in the first three centuries after the rise of Islam, and significant religious texts in Middle Persian are extant from this period.

But it is in Classical Persian poetry, which relies so much on tradition and cultural memory, that the strong connections with the pre-Islamic past are displayed in sundry ways: in its meter (although adjusted to Arabic), as well as its vocabulary and major themes.

It is through a diachronic study of Classical Persian poetry that we can study the import of loanwords and syntactical structures from Arabic. Moreover, as Arabic vocabulary has itself evolved substantially through time, it is important to bear in mind the changes in usage and the different semantic associations of the same words when used in Persian and Arabic in different historical periods.

Another factor in the evolution of Middle Persian to Persian was the geographical spread of this language in the wake of the Arab conquest.

Following the path of the Arab invasion, Persian spread from its own heartlands to Central Asia (Transoxania). For their conquests, the Arabs enlisted indigenous peoples in their armies.

These local populations did not speak a standardized Persian and in many cases did not even use Persian among themselves. Nevertheless, the Persian of the time served as a lingua franca for these enlisted men.

They were to spread this new version in the conquered provinces, from Azerbaijan to Central Asia, to the detriment of other Iranian languages or other dialects of Persian.

Such was the case of Sogdian, a language belonging to an age-old culture that was largely engulfed by Persian. Thus Persian became, in due course, the court language of the first semi-independent Muslim principalities, most notably those founded in the Greater Khorasan.

With the appearance of translations and commentaries on the Quran in Persian, Persian began to exhibit its capacity as a malleable language for conveying religious ideas and spiritual meditations along with its other already well-established function as a medium for administrative and cultural affairs.

The geographic progress of the language was now from a new direction, from Bukhara to Tabriz, and from Ghazni to Shiraz. For a while the province of Fars in southern Persia preserved many of the distinct traits of Middle Persian, whereas Central Asia, the first site of the new culture inspired by Islam, was at the origin of ten centuries of scientific and literary Persian.

But throughout the land, a significant part of pre-Islamic Iranian culture was preserved and this proved to be a highly significant phenomenon in the general history and culture of the Muslim world.

In the linguistic sphere, Persian transmitted to the Muslim world a substantial collection of Iranian art, tales, fables, myths as well as history, moral instruction, political advice, and religious treatises derived ultimately from the pre-

Islamic era.

The great literary achievements of the Abbasid age and the remarkable effervescence of Muslim spirituality owe much to the Iranian contribution, made through the medium of the Arabic language.

Tabari (b. Amol, 839; d. Baghdad, 923) in his two monumental works, History and Tafsir (Commentary on the Quran), or the great anthologist and scholar from Nishapur, Abu Mansur Taalebi (961-1038), in his prolific writings on literature and mores and manners, are eloquent representatives of this deeply entrenched Persian presence.

From the 9th century, Persian experienced an expansion from an opposite direction, this time at the hands of the Turks. After the end of the Omayyad period, high-ranked Turks in close proximity to the caliphs were a constant feature of the political and military structure of the caliphate.

In the northeastern provinces of Persia, the system of gholams favored the enrollment of Turks in Muslim armies. They converted to Islam and adopted Persian and gained entry into the military hierarchy.

Conquerors of a state that in one century extended from Baghdad to Anatolia and to the Indus, the Turks in turn were won over by Persian culture, while maintaining control of their new states for centuries. After them, Mongol and Mughal patrons preserved the same tradition and exploited the same legacy.

If Tamerlane gathered an elite coterie of scientists, artists and men of letters in Samarqand by force and coercion, his successors were astute enough through their munificent patronage to make Herat of the fifteenth century an unparalleled center of the Persian literary world.

The widespread popularity and influence of the voluminous poetry of Abd al-Rahman Jami (1414-92), spreading from Herat to India and into the Near East is a remarkable illustration of this cultural propagation.

Istanbul to this day remains a treasure trove for Persian manuscripts. Nestling between two seas and a gulf, the Iranian plateau provided an ideal location for the exchange of cultures: its own culture extending west towards the Mesopotamian rivers and east, to the Oxus (Amu Darya), and the Indus.

Beginnings of Persian poetry

The distinction between poetry and prose has always been quite deliberate in Persian literature, with poetry given the pride of place. It distinguished itself clearly from prose not only in terms of rhyme and rhythm, but also in the artful play between explicit meaning or meanings and implicit nuances.

At the fountainhead of Persian literary history stands the figure of Rudaki (860-940) as an arch poet. The extant works of this poet at the court of the Samanids in Bukhara contain the first masterpieces of Persian poetry.

By its exemplary quality, this poetic corpus served as a model for subsequent generations. Rudaki, it seems, was the first to combine roles that were still distinguishable entities in the 9th century royal court: musician, poet and his declaimer/reciter, and copyist.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

Vocalist Alireza Qorbani to return to live shows in Germany, Switzerland

From Page 1 ► “We had plans to give more performances of this kind, but due to the uncertain conditions, they were unfortunately canceled or postponed,” he stated.

“Now, we’re keen to take this opportunity to warmly receive you, the art aficionados, in Stuttgart on December 11 and Geneva on December 16,” he said.

Qorbani is scheduled to perform pieces from his latest album “Sing with Me” composed by Hessam Nasser.

In an announcement, the organizers of the Stuttgart performance said, “The ‘Sing with Me’ concert includes the most beautiful, prominent and audible songs of Alireza Qorbani that will undoubtedly remain in your memory.”

The announcement called Qorbani “a great artist deeply rooted in the tradition but also of an insatiable curiosity and a large

open-mindedness with respect to the other cultures.”

Qorbani and Azerbaijani singer Alim Qasimov gave a joint concert on September 30 during the 18th edition of the Konya International Mystic Music Festival at the Seljuk Congress Center of the Turkish town of Konya.

Earlier in December 2020, Qorbani and Qasimov released a duet single entitled “Rababi” featuring a poem by Rumi.

The two vocalists have sung both in Persian and Azerbaijani together in the song composed by Hessam Nasser.

He has participated in several international projects in Europe like Le Rhythm De La Parole, SOUFFLES DU MONDE, Ivresses-le Sacre de Khayyam with Tunisian singer Dorsaf Hamdani, concerts with the Dusseldorf Symphony Orchestra, Kamel Orchestra Vienna and the Vancouver Opera Orchestra.

A poster for Iranian vocalist Alireza Qorbani's concerts in Germany and Switzerland.

Artist Ardashir Mohasses back home with posthumous show

A poster for an exhibition of artworks by Ardashir Mohasses at Tehran's Artibition Gallery.

TEHRAN – Drawings and cartoons by Ardashir Mohasses, a great Iranian artist who spent the last 30 years of his life in New York, will be showcased in an exhibition in Tehran 13 years after his death.

A collection of rarely seen works by the artist will be put on view in the ten-day exhibition opening at Artibition Gallery on Friday.

The authenticity of the artworks has

been confirmed by Nikzad Nojumi, the U.S.-based Iranian artist who is also a Mohasses's close friend, the gallery said in a statement published on Monday.

The gallery called the exhibition “an important event in Iran's visual arts arena” and added, “In a period, in which Iranian artists had stuck to focusing on the modernism aesthetic, he put the issue aside, regarding drawing to have his personal expression; something that is considered a contemporary issue.”

Ahmad Shamlu, one of Iran's foremost poets of Persian blank verse style, wrote about Mohasses's style, “If we define cartoon art as an exaggerated expression of the truth, then what are drawn by Ardashir are not cartoons anymore; at least for us, his friends and those who know the pains and sufferings of the subjects of his works.”

“Besides being a talented and skillful artist, Ardashir will remain an acute realist. He is an artist who illustrated the truth in his environs,

Iranian troupe to perform Attar’s story of Sheikh Sanan at Carthage theater festival

TEHRAN – Iranian troupe Qasedak is in the Tunisian city of Carthage to perform a play on the Persian story of Sheikh Sanan at the Carthage Theater Days.

Ali-Akbar Khodashenas is the director of the play “Sanan”, which he has written himself based on a story from Persian mystic and poet Attar Neyshaburi's masterpiece “The Conference of the Birds”.

A cast composed of Shararhe Rokham, Amir-Ehsan Amirpur, Elaheh Pajuhi, Soheila Qoebani and Reza Enayati has made numerous rehearsals to perform

A poster for the Iranian play “Sanan”.

the play at the Tunisian festival, which is currently underway and will run until December 12.

The original story from “The Conference of the Birds” is about a celebrated sheikh named

they came to Greece and prayed to God that Sheikh Sanan would return to the right path.

Due to the disciples' prayers, he revived his Muslim faith and returned to his home in the Hijaz. Then, repenting of her deed, the Christian maiden followed him and converted to Islam.

Sheikh Sanan sensed that she had true faith in Islam and turned back to seek her with his disciples. When she saw Sheikh Sanan, she fainted and this made him cry. Later, when the Christian maiden recovered consciousness, she begged his pardon and died.

New Persian translation of “The Island of Missing Trees” published

TEHRAN – A new Persian translation of award-winning British-Turkish novelist Elif Shafak's 2021 book “The Island of Missing Trees” has arrived at Iranian bookstores.

Neda Rahmani is the translator of the book published by Chatrang. Another translation by Ali Salami has previously been published by the Noon publishing house in Tehran.

The novel is a rich, magical new book on belonging and identity, love and trauma, nature and renewal, from the Booker shortlisted author of “10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World”.

Two teenagers, a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot, meet at a taverna on the island they both call home. In the taverna, hidden beneath garlands of garlic, chili peppers and creeping honeysuckle, Kostas and Defne grow in their forbidden love for each other.

A fig tree stretches through a cavity in the roof, and this tree bears witness to their hushed, happy meetings and eventually, to their silent, surreptitious departures. The tree is there when war breaks out, when the capital is reduced to ashes and rubble, and when the teenagers vanish.

Decades later, Kostas returns. He is a

botanist looking for native species, but really, he's searching for lost love.

Years later, a Ficus carica grows in the back garden of a house in London where Ada Kazantzakis lives. This tree is her only connection to an island she has never visited – her only connection to her family's troubled history and her complex identity as she seeks to untangle years of secrets to find her place in the world.

A moving, beautifully written and delicately constructed story of love, division, transcendence, history and eco-consciousness, “The Island of Missing Trees” is Shafak's best work yet.

Several of Shafak's novels, including “The Hidden” and “Three Daughters of Eve”, have also been published in Persian.

Shafak is the most widely read female author in Turkey. She writes in both Turkish and English, and has published seventeen books, eleven of which are novels.

Her work has been translated into fifty languages. Shafak holds a Ph.D. in political science and she has taught at various universities in Turkey, the U.S. and the UK, including St. Anne's College, Oxford University,

Front cover of the new Persian translation of Elif Shafak's novel “The Island of Missing Trees”.

where she is an honorary fellow.

Shafak contributes to major publications around the world and she has been awarded the title of Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. In 2017 she was chosen by Politico as one of the twelve people who would make the world better. She has judged numerous literary prizes and is chairing the Wellcome Book Prize 2019.