Straight Truth

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From Inside

- UN chief calls on U.S. to lift sanctions on Iran based on JCPOA **P2**
- Army chief says Zionist regime's 'empty threats' against Iran are out of fear **P2**
- It's 'open lie' that Iran enriching uranium to 90%: nuclear chief **P2**
- Iran, Russia FMs discuss Vienna talks **P3**
- Iran, P4+1 continue talks in Vienna **P3**
- IPL: Esteghlal beat Sepahan to move provisionally top of table **P3**
- Tax incomes highlighted in next year's budget bill **P4**
- PMO to facilitate providing maritime, port services **P4**
- Iranian heavy crude oil price rises over 42% in 2021: OPEC **P4**
- Russia urges talks to avoid military escalation **P5**
- More than 90% of foreign vacationers satisfied with Iran travel, minister says **P6**
- Restoration laboratory launched in Persepolis **P6**
- Iran-made expo opens to showcase achievements **P7**
- Iran short of rain by 33% **P7**
- "A Hero" nominated for Golden Globes 2022 **P8**
- Bradwell's antiwar play "There Is No Return" on stage at Tehran theater **P8**
- Meg Elison's novel "Find Layla" appears in Persian **P8**

Just One Wrong Move!

TEHRAN — An intensification of the Israeli military threats against Iran seems to suggest that the Zionist regime has forgotten that Iran is more than capable of hitting them from anywhere.

The Yedioth Ahronot newspaper said on Tuesday that Israel's strike on Syria is "a direct message" to Iran. The chief of staff of the Israeli army has also accepted to increase the number of troops in the air force and the intelligence branch of the Israeli army to prepare for an attack on Iran, according to the Israeli media outlets.

Yedioth Ahronot also revealed that one of the main demands of Israel from the United States, which war minister Benny Gantz ▸ Page **2**

Threat and pressure do not work on Iran

TEHRAN – Until Sunday, there was a sense of optimism about possible progress in the Vienna talks. But optimism soon turned into pessimism by virtue of a Western harder-line stance that featured threats and bluster against Iran.

The European trio in Vienna – France, Germany, and the UK (E3)- put out a downbeat statement late on Monday blaming Iran for lack of progress in the talks.

"As of this moment, we still have not been able to get down to real negotiations," the E3 said. "We are losing precious time dealing with new Iranian positions inconsistent with the JCPOA or that go beyond it."

The statement came after coordination between the E3 and the U.S. negotiating team led by Iran envoy Rob Malley and exposed a clear division of labor between the Western negotiators. When the talks resumed last week, Malley had put off his trip to Vienna until Sunday on the condition that the talks make progress. He arrived in Vienna and met with the Europeans. The E3 issued the cynical statement afterward. If the talks had not made any progress, then why he would have gone to Vienna?

In reality, the talks have made progress and they continue to make progress. The Europeans are well aware of the progress being made in the talks but they are pressing ahead with their policy of playing a blame game against Iran in order to extract more concessions at the negotiating table.

In the meantime, Israel also plays its part in close coordination with the E3 and Washington. Tel Aviv is now issuing military threats against Iran almost on a daily basis. The Americans and British also seem willing to insinuate that they are unwilling to rein in the Israeli bluster.

In some ways, the British also sought to signal that they are siding with Israel against Iran. This was clear right from the start of the new round of the Vienna talks. The foreign ministers of Israel and Britain published a joint article vowing to work hand in glove to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear development. ▸ Page **3**

Report

Vienna talks can be successful, but does U.S. want so?

TEHRAN — As a fresh round of talks in Vienna are moving forward, there is big question here: Does the U.S. want talks to reach a successful conclusion?

The U.S. president and his team constantly say that they hope diplomacy prevails, but they seem to be forgetting something. Their predecessor left them a broken house that is difficult to repair.

Biden said in his election campaign over and over that once he becomes the president, he will return to the internationally agreed 2015 nuclear deal, otherwise known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions (JCPOA). However, Donald Trump's legacy has made the task almost impossible.

In a report in November 2020, the New York Times said sanctions instituted under the category of counterterrorism and human rights, like those against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, "would be harder to void, especially since many Democrats also support them."

Trump's legacy was to impose harsh and brutal sanctions outside the JCPOA under false categorizations. It is more than obvious that Trump sought to cripple Iran, but the story does not end here. Trump had a different approach in mind. He wanted to make a possible return to the JCPOA all the more difficult and complicated for his successor, a move that is widely shunned by American experts.

In his article for the New York Times, Thomas Friedman said, "President Donald Trump's decision to tear up the Iran nuclear deal in 2018 — a decision urged on by his secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, and Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu — was one of the dumbest, most poorly thought out and counterproductive U.S. national security decisions of the post-Cold War era."

In another article in the Washington Post titled "Iran's foreign minister says diplomacy with U.S. is over" published in September 2019, Josh Rogin wrote, "The Trump administration increased sanctions on Iran's central bank in response to the attack on Saudi Arabia, designating the central bank as a supporter of terrorism, which eliminates any exceptions, even for humanitarian aid. Zarif blamed the sanctions on a Washington think tank, the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), which the Iranian government has sanctioned as a supporter of terrorism:

'FDD, [its executive director] Mark Dubowitz, wanted to make sure neither this president nor his successor will be able to normalize relations with Iran,' Zarif said."

It is no wonder that Trump would follow the advice of a troubled person such as Dubowitz, but the Biden administration needs to sort out its priorities first. If you want diplomacy to prevail, you must first mend your predecessor's failed legacy. An executive order to lift all the Trump-era sanctions would be the first sign of "good will".

Interview

Ex-coach Sadeghi hails Italian women volleyball coach

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - Former head coach of Iran's women's volleyball national team, Fariba Sadeghi, says that the presence of good foreign coaches will help Iranian volleyball both for women and men. Iran volleyball federation has reached an agreement with Italian women volleyball coach Alessandra Campedelli. Before, the federation had negotiated with other international coaches as well.

"I believe that the Iranian volleyball needs to bring experienced foreign coaches. There is no doubt about it," Sadeghi told Tehran Times. "Even in the men's volleyball, even though the men's team are strong, there is still a need for a foreign coach."

Sadeghi was named the head coach of the national team last May to prepare the Iranian women for the 2021 Asian Women's Volleyball Championship. Originally scheduled for Aug. 29 to Sept. 5, 2021, the tournament was postponed to Aug. 30 to Sept. 6, 2022, due to rising COVID-19 cases amidst a pandemic. ▸ Page **3**

Report

Optimal cultivation key to preserve water resources

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Iran has been grappling with water stress since 2006 and the situation is forecast to be exacerbated by the next 15 years, while reforming the irrigation method from traditional to modern will reduce water consumption and waste at least by half.

Last week, President Ebrahim Raisi referred the issue of water scarcity across the country, calling all sectors to find a wise and long-term solution to the issue.

Expert studies show that between 70 to 90 percent of the country's water resources is used in the agricultural sector annually, according to the National Agricultural Research Centre.

Part of this huge amount of water consumption is related to the improper cultivation pattern that has been going on for years, regardless of the country's capacities and priorities. But the other part is concerned with the traditional method of irrigation, which is centuries old and still runs in many parts of the country, a method that wastes a lot of water and also cause floods and landslides. ▸ Page **7**

Report

U.S. will not punish troops for killing Afghan civilians

TEHRAN - In a new announcement that is expected to trigger global outcry and push calls for an independent international investigation, the Pentagon says no U.S. military personnel will be held accountable for an August drone strike in Afghanistan's capital Kabul that killed 10 civilians from the same family, among them seven children.

In two decades of America's alleged "war on terror", the United States military has killed tens of thousands of civilians, if not more in war zones like Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia among others. The State Department every now and again accepts responsibility for the massacres, normally when the killings are picked up by the media but never does the Pentagon ▸ Page **5**

Canada apologizes to its own military amid sexual misconduct

TEHRAN - The Canadian government has issued an apology for widespread sexual misconduct in the country's military, saying Ottawa has failed to protect its own soldiers. The apology was part of the settlement of a lawsuit filed against the government on behalf of almost 19,000 both serving and retired members of the army, as well as civilian defense workers. ▸ Page **5**

Govt. to build nuclear power plants for generating 10 GW of electricity

TEHRAN – Based on the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21, 2022), the government is allowed to construct nuclear power plants for the generation of 10,000 megawatts (10 GW) of electricity in collaboration with foreign or local investors and under the supervision of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

According to the AEOI Head Mohammad Eslami, the construction of the mentioned power plants requires $40 billion of investment and is expected to begin in the next Iranian calendar year, Mehr News Agency reported.

As reported, the financing of the mentioned power plant projects is going to be done using foreign investment, domestic financing, public resources, and acquisition of capital assets.

The executive financing plan will be prepared and announced by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran in collaboration with the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

In the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

Over the past two years, however, new deteriorating factors including the pandemic and a new wave of illegal cryptocurrency mining across the country have also worsened the situation. ▸ Page **4**

Just one wrong move!

From page 1 ▶ and Mossad chief David Barnea stressed during their visit to Washington last week, is a complete cessation of Iran's ballistic missile development and production program. The paper also said that the Israeli military experts are worried about the short timespan it takes Iran to hit Israel. According to the Israeli newspaper, it takes Iran an hour to launch missiles into Israel.

Major General Mohammad Bagheri, the Chief of General Staff of Iran's Armed Forces, said on Tuesday that Iran never underestimates the enemy's threats. "Despite our confidence in the deterrence situation of the country, our forces have never underestimated the threat of the enemy and are prepared for the smallest of threats in the strategic field," Bagheri remarked.

He noted that the military is in "maximum vigilance commensurate with the enemy's situation."

"At the strategic level, we do not intend to strike anyone, but at the operational and tactical level we are ready for a decisive response and a quick and tough offensive against the enemy," the military chief asserted.

Bagheri said the missile strike on the U.S. air base in western Iraq and the downing of the U.S. strategic drone with indigenous systems have been noticed by everyone, and these moves are especially instructive for "the adventurous enemies."

On December 8, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) confirmed that it will hold a large-scale exercise over the Mediterranean in the spring with dozens of aircraft simulating a strike against Iran's nuclear program.

According to the IDF, the drill will be one of the largest ever held by the Israeli Air Force and will include dozens of aircraft, including the F-15, F-35, and F-16 fighters, Gulfstream G550 spy planes, and refueling jets.

The planes will conduct the exercise far out over the Mediterranean Sea to simulate the distance — over 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) — that the aircraft would need to travel in a strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

All these threats and moves come at a time when Iran and P4+1 countries (Russia, China, France, UK, plus Germany) are now in Vienna to diplomatically examine ways to remove illegal sanctions on Iran. The Israeli disruptive moves are not a mystery to the negotiators.

On Tuesday, Israeli premier Naftali Bennett held a phone conversation with the new German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. As reported by the Israeli state TV, the two discussed the Vienna talks. According to a statement from Bennett's office, the two spoke of "the importance of the effort to prevent Iran attaining weapons."

Germany has taken a tougher stance against Iran since Scholz took power on December 8. Known as an admirer of Israel, Germany has paired up with the UK to collaborate with Israel during the Vienna talks.

The Tehran Times doesn't need to remind the illegitimate regime of Israel of Iran's defense capabilities. Yet, they need to remember something.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei responded to all Israeli threats in 2013, saying, "Sometimes the leaders of the Zionist regime even threaten us; they are threatening to strike militarily, but I think they know it, and if they do not know it, they must know that if they make a mistake, the Islamic Republic will destroy Tel Aviv and Haifa."

Keep your hands off!

UN chief calls on U.S. to lift sanctions on Iran based on JCPOA

TEHRAN — United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has called on the United States to lift or waiver the sanctions on Iran in accordance to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Guterres made the call in his 12th quarterly report submitted to the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 committee.

The report was submitted on December 8 to be reviewed by the resolution 2231 committee on December 14.

Resolution 2231 has made implementation of the JCPOA legally binding.

The following is excerpt of the report by the UN chief:

On 14 July 2015, China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the European Union with the Islamic Republic of Iran concluded the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Subsequently, on 20 July 2015, the Security Council adopted resolution 2231 (2015), in which the Council endorsed the Plan and called upon all Member States, regional organizations and international organizations to support its implementation. Despite difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Plan in recent years, I have always believed that it represents the best option available to realize the goals of multilateral diplomacy and regional security in a manner that delivers tangible economic benefits for the Iranian people.

I am encouraged by the diplomatic engagements in and around the Joint Commission, which took place between April and June 2021, to facilitate the return of the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran to full and effective implementation of the Plan and the resolution. Those efforts did not result in the return of the United States to the Plan or to the reversal of steps taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran to reduce implementation of nuclear-related commitments under the Plan. It is my hope that the resumption of diplomatic efforts, which recommenced on 29 November 2021, will usher in renewed and effective cooperation among all participants in the Plan. The swift and successful conclusion of those diplomatic engagements should allow all parties to address their concerns and achieve their stated objectives, as expressed most recently in the letter dated 20 July 2021 from the Islamic Republic of Iran to me (A/75/968-S/2021/669) and the joint statement issued by France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

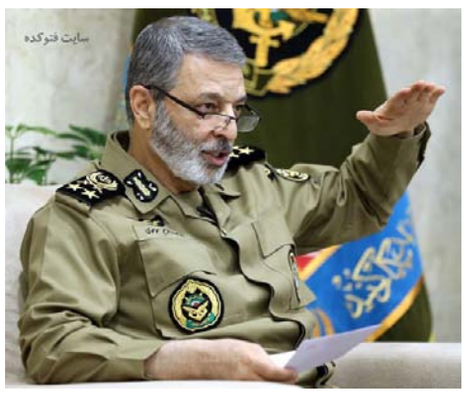
> It's my hope the resumption of diplomatic efforts resumed on Nov. 29 will usher in renewed and effective cooperation among all JCPOA participants.

I appeal again to the United States to lift or waive its sanctions as outlined in the Plan, to extend the waivers with regard to the trade in oil with the Islamic Republic of Iran and to fully renew waivers for nuclear non-proliferation projects in the framework of the Plan. Those steps are needed to facilitate the full and proper implementation of the Plan and resolution 2231 (2015)

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and resolution 2231 (2015) continue to enjoy broad international support. I am encouraged by bilateral and multilateral initiatives to improve relationships with the Islamic Republic of Iran, which should be encouraged and built upon. Such initiatives can have positive effects on regional stability, as well as foster a conducive environment for diplomatic engagements pertaining to the Plan. I call upon Member States, as well as their economic operators, to engage in trade with the Islamic Republic of Iran, including through available arrangements such as the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), the procurement channel provided for in resolution 2231 (2015) and the Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement, as appropriate. Support for such trade arrangements continues to be important, given that the health challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic remain significant in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The present report, my twelfth on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), provides an assessment of the implementation of the resolution, including findings and recommendations, since the issuance of my eleventh report (S/2021/582), on 21 June 2021. Consistent with previous reports, the focus of the present report is on the provisions set forth in annex B to resolution 2231 (2015).

Army chief says Zionist regime's 'empty threats' against Iran are out of fear



TEHRAN - The Iranian Army chief said on Monday that Israel's "empty threats" against Iran originate from its "fear".

Abdolrahim Mousavi made the remarks during an opening ceremony of an exhibition on the capabilities and achievements of the Navy.

Mousavi warned that any Israeli move to operationalize its threats would be met with a "proportionate response".

"The Zionists' driveling hails from fear and horror, as leaders of this ominous regime know that if they wished to get such drivel a bit closer to action, they would receive a proportionate response that would put a sooner end to their existence," Press TV quoted Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi as saying.

Israel has intensified its attempts to derail the Vienna talks on possible lifting of U.S. sanctions against Iran by continually bringing up Iran's missile and drone capabilities, claiming that Iran acts maliciously in the region, and last but not least, by resorting to the old allegation that Iran is trying to build nuclear weapons.

The Tel Aviv regime has also threatened to wage war against Iran while championing the so-called option of using force against Iran as "diplomacy by other means."

Meanwhile, Iran's lead negotiator at the Vienna talks on Sunday censured Israel for trying to sabotage the "atmosphere outside the negotiations hall in an attempt to influence the outcome," Lebanon's al-Mayadeen television network reported.

Israel was the chief opponent of the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Late last month, Iran's security chief brushed aside reports about Israel's budget for a potential attack on Iranian nuclear facilities, saying the regime must consider the colossal cost of repair after Tehran's "shocking" response.

Calls from Israel for the restoration of the Iran nuclear deal have ramped up in recent weeks as talks in Vienna have resumed

"Netanyahu's efforts to persuade the Trump administration to quit the nuclear agreement have turned out to be the worst strategic mistake in Israel's history," Isaac Ben Israel, chairman of Israel's space agency, said in an interview published at Bloomberg.

"We need to end the negativity and encourage the U.S. to conclude a deal that focuses on the main thing," Ben Israel said, according to Responsible Statecraft.

'Hegemons left in ambiguity'

Elsewhere in his remarks, General Mousavi attributed the progressive development of the Navy to "the spirit of moving forward and dissatisfaction with the current situation in the Navy."

The Navy chief said that the progress made by all the Iranian armed forces, including the naval troops, has left "the army of the Global Arrogance (hegemonic powers) face ambiguity," quoting one of their leaders as saying recently that "our actions have no benefit and we can't stop the progress of Iran."

He further said the anti-Iran sanctions "have lost their efficiency a long time ago," stating that the progress achieved by the armed forces is attributed to "domestic capabilities."

Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made great progress in indigenously developing and manufacturing a broad range of defense equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in this regard.

Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the Islamic Republic will not hesitate to build up its defense capabilities, emphasizing that such abilities are entirely meant for the purpose of defense and will be never subject to negotiations.

It's 'open lie' that Iran enriching uranium to 90%: nuclear chief

Karaj facility doesn't fall within nuclear safeguards, Eslami says

TEHRAN – Mohammad Eslami, chief of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), on Tuesday dismissed rumors that Iran is enriching uranium to 90 percent purity, calling it an "open lie".

"This is an open lie... that are attributed to our country especially by the enemies and the Zionist current," Eslami told the IRIB news agency.

He added Iran's nuclear program are in accordance to the rules and regulations of the Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The IAEA is supervising all Iran's activities and "we have never done and will never do anything outside that framework", the nuclear chief asserted.

Eslami also said the centrifuge manufacturing facility near Karaj and all other issues related to the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA – fall outside the IAEA Safeguard Agreement.

He added, "If the JCPOA is a treaty and the parties have undertaken obligations... then all (sides) must abide by their obligations."

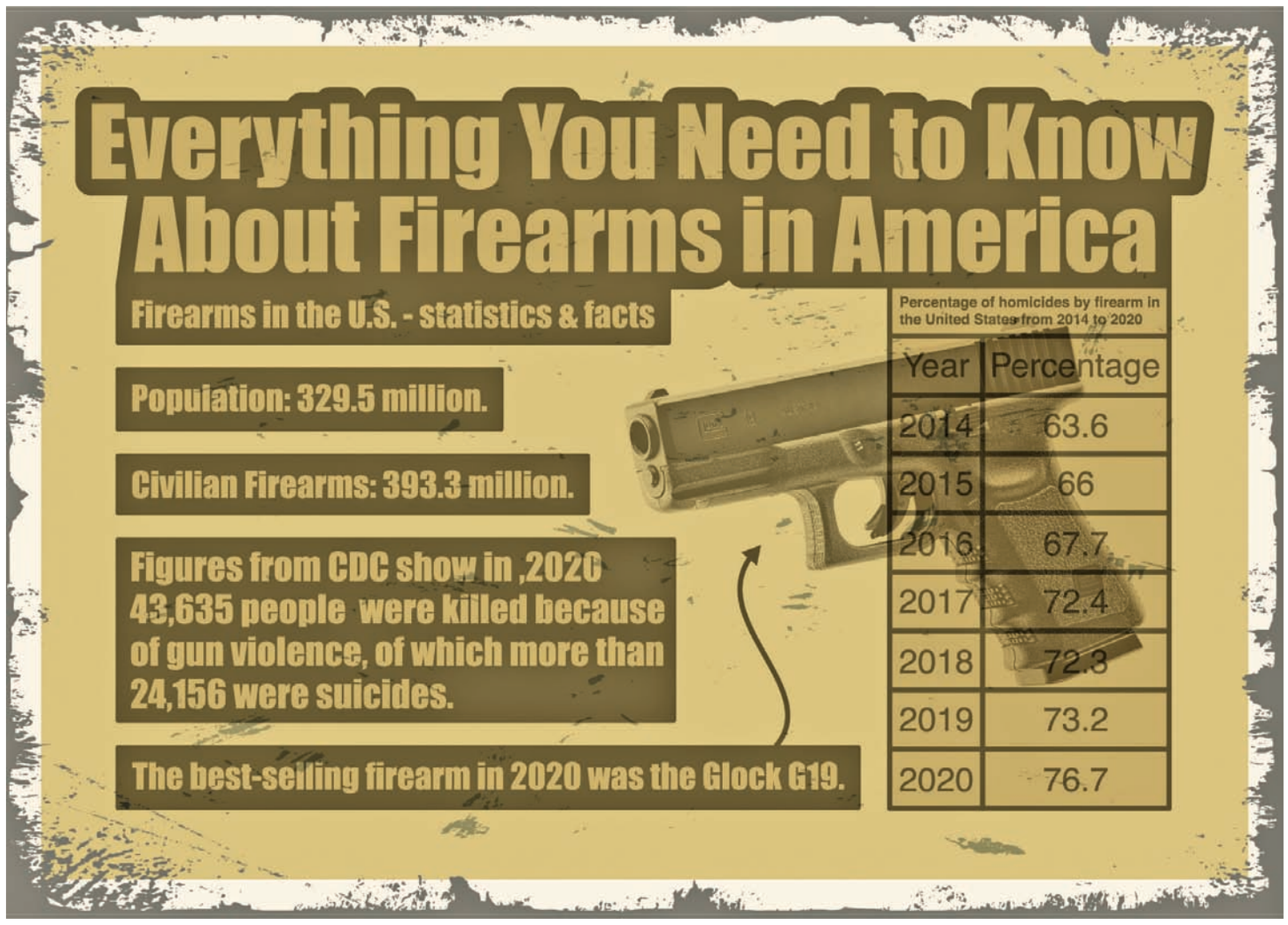
Under the JCPOA signed in July 2015 and went into effect in January 2016, Iran was tasked to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

However, in May 2018 the United States unilaterally quit the JCPOA and returned sanctions and imposed new ones. Iran remained fully loyal to the JCPOA for a complete year after the U.S. withdrawal. However, seeing no action on the part of the European sides to compensate Iran for the sanctions, Iran started to gradually remove bans on its nuclear program in accordance to the paragraph 36 of the JCPOA.

(Paragraph 36 provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.)

The new nuclear chief said, "So long as they don't honor their commitments and slap 'oppressive and illegal' sanctions against Iran and increase them on a daily basis, there is no reason to put pressure on us for JCPOA commitments."

He added, "We act based on the safeguards and the NPT and don't accept anything beyond that."



Threat and pressure do not work on Iran

Frome Page 1 This negotiating tactic is also manifested in the room. While the French continue to play the role of a bad cop, the British seek to showcase harmony with Israeli demands, according to an Al-Akhbar report.

Citing a source familiar with the talks, the Beirut-based newspaper said, "Paris continues to play the role of a very bad cop, while London seeks to show that it is in line with Israeli demands, to impose greater pressure on Tehran, and Berlin is taking a middle position between Paris and London."

All this is aimed at ramping up pressure on Iran to force it into making more concessions. European and American officials

know full well their tactics will not produce any tangible results. This may be the reason why Washington and its European allies count on the Israeli bluster to change Iran's calculus in their favor.

But even most hawkish Iran experts believe that Israel's talks of a military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities is nothing more than diplomatic bluff intended to pocket more concessions from Iran at the negotiating table.

On the other hand, Iran has made it clear that military option is not available for the U.S. as it would lead to large-scale destruction of U.S. assets in the region. "Military conflict will lead to the destruction of all US assets in West Asia & the collapse of pro-US regimes. It would be an ideal moment for China to retake Taiwan & Russia to take East Ukraine. Iran would end all nuclear talks. It's wise for the US to fully implement the JCPOA," Seyed Mohammad Marandi, a media advisor to the Iranian negotiating team, tweeted on Tuesday.

In a sense, the U.S.-Israeli threats and pressure will not only fail to budge Iran but will also have dire consequences for the West.

Iran, Russia FMs discuss Vienna talks

Amir Abdollahian, Lavrov affirm common determination to revive nuclear deal in its original form

TEHRAN – The foreign ministers of Iran and Russia have spoken over the phone on Monday to discuss the latest developments in the ongoing Vienna talks.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and the Russian Federation's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov exchanged views on the latest status of the Vienna talks.

In the telephone conversation, Amir Abdollahian explained Iran's position and called on the West to be as serious as possible and urging the involved parties to come up with initiatives in the negotiations, the Iranian foreign ministry said.

The Russian foreign minister described the Iranian deputy foreign minister's visit to Moscow as positive, saying the two countries' delegations are seriously cooperating on the steps to be taken by the two sides and their implementation arrangements in Vienna.

Lavrov noted that it has always been emphasized that all sanctions which are illegal and contrary to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and UN Security Council Resolution 2231 should be removed. He added that Moscow has always tried to bring the Americans in line with all the rules of the JCPOA and UN Security Council resolution 2231.

The Russian foreign minister called the constructiveness and diplomatic creativity of the parties, along with patience for further coordination, the key to the success of this stage of the negotiations for the parties.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the two chief diplomats focused in their conversation on "vital issues related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and Iran's nuclear program in the context of the resumption of the negotiating process in Vienna" on November 29.

"Both parties affirmed the common determination to revive the nuclear deal in its original, balanced form, which was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council," the statement said, according to Press TV.

Lavrov and Amir Abdollahian, as the statement said, underlined that "this is the only correct way to ensure that the rights and interests of all parties participating in the comprehensive agreements are taken care of."

Also, the Iranian foreign minister exchanged views with the foreign minister of Oman, Badr bin Hamad Al-Busaidi.

Amir Abdollahian referred to the nuclear talks and underlined the Islamic Republic's readiness to reach a good deal to fully enjoy the economic benefits of the 2015 nuclear deal and also dispel the possible concerns of the other side.

He said Iran's nuclear program will also be pursued in line with the nuclear deal in exchange for removal of sanctions.

Oman's top diplomat also referred to his country's support for the nuclear talks during the phone call. Busaidi said Iran's emphasis on its seriousness and efforts to conclude the talks is a cause for optimism and Oman always holds consultations in this regard.

The phone conversations came at a time when the Vienna talks are making progress slowly. This was evident from remarks by several Russian diplomats.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has said the chances of reaching an agreement on restoring the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have increased.

"I think that now, the likelihood that we will come to an agreement has increased compared to what it was before the resumption of negotiations. I would rather say that there are reasons to expect some progress, not fast but at least clear, without any kickbacks and additional factors that can complicate [the situation]," Ryabkov told Sputnik.

Aside from this, the proposals put forward by Iran at the Vienna talks on the JCPOA, according to Ryabkov, demonstrate Tehran's utmost seriousness about restoring the nuclear deal.

"There are other proposals presented not only by Iran. Negotiations are for finding a common denominator. It is not hopeless. On the contrary, there is material for consideration. As for the Iranian proposals, I can only say one thing — they have demonstrated the utmost seriousness of their approach to the task," Ryabkov said.

At the same time, the deputy foreign minister noted that it is counterproductive to threaten Iran with sanctions against the backdrop of the nuclear talks in Vienna - something the U.S. is doing.

"This is their usual method — trying to drive someone to heaven with sticks. We constantly explain to the Americans the counterproductivity of this approach," Ryabkov said.

Iran has expressed its readiness to reach a good deal based on the terms of the original JCPOA.

In a recent Instagram post, Amir Abdollahian said that the Iranian negotiating team is in the Austrian capital to reach a good deal.

"We are all in Vienna to negotiate to reach a good agreement. The Western parties should know that in the last eight years, enough has been said and they made promises that were never fulfilled, but today is the time to act and we are working to reach a serious and good agreement," he said.

He added, "Iran's nuclear program is entirely peaceful, but resolving the alleged concerns of the Western parties is directly linked to the complete removal of sanctions. Although we are doubtful whether the West is basically ready to lift the sanctions or only seeks to resolve its concerns in a one-sided manner, if the West takes part in the negotiations ahead with good intentions, initiative and constructive ideas, we will certainly see quick progress in the negotiations."

But Iran's seriousness was met with Western apathy. Ever since the resumption of the Vienna talks nearly two weeks ago, the U.S. has done everything in its power to blame Iran for the manufactured failure of the talks. Before the new round of talks, the Americans and their European allies launched an early blame game which continues to this day. They accused Iran of not being serious and, and even worse, playing for time to build up its nuclear infrastructure.

Iran, P1+4 continue talks in Vienna

TEHRAN – Negotiators from Iran and the P4+1 group of countries have continued negotiations over the past two days with meetings at different levels and in different formats.

On Sunday, for the first time during the seventh round, the third working group meeting was held with the participation of experts from Iran and the P4+1 group comprised of Russia, China, and France, Britain plus Germany.

Earlier, Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's envoy to the talks, stated that a third working group on sequencing held a meeting for the first time since the talks resumed in late November.

A constructive trilateral meeting was also held among senior negotiators of Iran, Russia and China, during which the participants discussed how to proceed with the talks, the Iranian foreign ministry said.

Ali Bagheri Kani, deputy foreign minister of Iran who leads the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna, met with his Russian and Chinese counterparts on Sunday. "This afternoon I held a constructive & fruitful meeting with Russian & Chinese chief negotiators," Bagheri said on Twitter.

He added, "We shared ideas about how to proceed & also coordinated our positions about several issues. We will continue our intensive & serious engagement to reach a good deal."

Ulyanov also said the trilateral meeting discussed issues related to the ongoing Vienna talks. "The delegations of China, Iran and Russia held another round of trilateral consultations today on issues related to the on-going Vienna Talks on JCPOA," the Russian diplomat tweeted.

The Iranian foreign ministry said in a statement that "yesterday, a bilateral meeting was held between head of the Iranian negotiating delegation Ali Bagheri and Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service Enrique Mora. The top Iranian negotiator and the heads of the three European delegations of the P4+1 (France, Britain and Germany) held another meeting at the Coburg Hotel in Vienna yesterday evening."

Bagheri Kani met with the chief negotiators of the E3- France, Germany and Britain - at Vienna's Palais Coburg Hotel on Saturday afternoon as talks continued in the Austrian capital.

The statement concluded that consultations in Vienna will continue on Tuesday.

On Tuesday, Bagheri Kani underlined the possibility to make a deal in Vienna. "Some actors persist in their blame game habit, instead of real diplomacy. We proposed our ideas early, & worked constructively & flexibly to narrow gaps; diplomacy is a 2 way street. If there's real will to remedy the culprit's wrongdoing, way for quick good deal will be paved," he tweeted.

Despite having presented two draft proposals in the Vienna talks, Iran has received no proposals from the other side, the top Iranian negotiator said on Sunday.

During the current round, Iran presented two draft proposals regarding the nuclear and sanctions removal measures that needed to be taken by Washington and Tehran if the 2015 nuclear deal, formally called the JCPOA, is to be revived.

In remarks to Press TV on Sunday, Bagheri Kani pointed out that the Iranian side has not received any constructive initiative or proposal from the opposite side during the ongoing negotiations in the Austrian capital.

SPORTS

Ex-coach Sadeghi hails Italian women volleyball coach

Frome Page 1 Now the Iranian women's national team will participate in the tournament with a new foreign coach, namely Campedelli. She is currently the head coach of the deaf Italian women's national team, with them she won the European title in 2019.

"Due to the fact that the Iranian women's volleyball lack enough international experiences, we need a foreign coach who has the experience of competing in different levels of international competitions," she said.

"On the other hand, the Iranian women's volleyball league has not been dynamic in the previous years- except the current season – and the Iranian players were not able to play in big matches and big tournaments. It is another factor that proves the need for an experienced international coach who conveys her knowledge to our players," added the current coach of the Zob Ahan volleyball team.

"There are not many female international coaches in world volleyball because men lead many women's teams. Moreover, the number of coaches who can adapt themselves to Iran's cultural and economic situation is not that much.

"So, I believe that the Iranian volleyball federation has done a great job – due to the problems and limitations - to find an excellent new coach for the national team, and it will help us a lot," concluded Sadeghi.

IPL: Esteghlal beat Sepahan to move provisionally top of table

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team earned a 1-0 hard-fought win over Sepahan on Matchday 10 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Tuesday.

Left-footed Jafar Salmani scored the solitary goal of the match in the 35th minute in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Sepahan put the hosts under pressure but their strikers failed to capitalize on their chances.

Esteghlal moved top with 20 points, a point ahead of Gol Gohar, Sepahan and Aluminum.

On Wednesday, Gol Gohar will host Foolad, Aluminum play Nassaji, Persepolis meet Paykan, Sanat Naft face Padideh, Fajr Sepasi host Mes, Zob Ahan encounter Havadar and Tractor entertain Naft Masjed Soleyman.

Boxers depart Iran for Armenian tournament

TEHRAN - Iran boxing team left Tehran Tuesday morning to take part in a tournament in Armenia.

The Iranian team will participate at the tournament as part of preparation for the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China.

Armenia, Iran, Russia, Ukraine and Georgia will be competing in the six-day tournament.

Iranian boxers have improved during the past years.

Danial Shahbakhsh won the country's first-ever medal in the World Boxing Championships in November.

Iran squad:

48kg: Mehdi Parvizi

57kg: Sajad Mohammadpour

63kg: Sajad Abedipour

67kg: Bagher Faraji

71kg: Farhad Moradi

75kg: Mehdi Sarbaz

80kg: Meysam Gheshlaghi

86kg: Ali Jamali

92kg: Toofan Sharifi

+92kg: Iman Ramezanpour

Iran lose to Cameroon in IHF President's Cup

TEHRAN - Iran were defeated against Cameroon in Group I of the International Handball Federation (IHF) President's Cup Monday night.

The Iranian women's handball team lost to the African team 32-17.

The Iranian women's handball team had previously lost to Romania, Norway, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Angola in the 2021 Women's Handball World Championship in Spain.

Laeticia Ateba, Cameroon's top scorer in the match against Uzbekistan with 14 goals, did well in the second half, finishing the game with six goals, one less than hummel Player of the Match Cyrielle Ebanga.

While 'The Lionesses' will play their last match at the World Championship on Wednesday, the competition is over for Iran.

The Asian side have lost all their six matches and finished bottom of Group I. However, they are now certain to be ranked 31st, as PR of China have withdrawn from Spain 2021.

Women volleyball coach Campedelli to travel to Iran on Dec. 21

TEHRAN – Women volleyball coach Alessandra Campedelli will travel to Tehran on Dec. 21 to finalize her contract with Iran volleyball federation.

The Italian coach has reached an agreement with Iran, Tasnimnews.com reported

She has most recently worked as head coach of Italian deaf volleyball team.

Iran women volleyball team will participate at the 2021 Asian Women's Volleyball Championship in the Philippines in May 2022.

The competition was Originally scheduled for Aug. 29 to Sept. 5, 2021, but was postponed to May 15 to 22, 2022 due rising COVID-19 cases.

Yemen win WAFF U15 championship

TEHRAN - Yemen registered their first regional title, lifting the WAFF U15 championship after defeating hosts Saudi Arabia 4-3 in a penalty shootout at the Prince Muhamad Bin Fahad Stadium in Dammam.

Watched by 20,000 spectators, Yemen celebrated exuberantly following the shootout win after the match ended 1-1.

Yemen opened the scoring in the first minute of the second half through Muahammed Al Barwany.

They were, however, denied regulation time victory when Saudi Arabia equalized through substitute Muhammed Al Essa in the second minute of stoppage time.

The two teams opted for a penalty shootout, with Yemen winning 4-3.

Yemen striker Al Barwany emerged top scorer with four goals while Saudi Arabia's Mahmoud Al Burayh got the best goalkeeper award.

Govt. to build nuclear power plants for generating 10 GW of electricity

From page 1 ▶ To compensate for the power shortage, the Energy Ministry has been taking various steps including construction of new power plants, adding new units to the existing power plants and promoting management programs.

According to Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian, the ministry is following a comprehensive program for adding 30,000 megawatts to the country's power generation capacity by the end of the current government incumbency (August 2025).

Back in November, Mehrabian said his ministry was planning to construct and put into operation 21 new power plant units by the next summer's peak consumption period (Iranian calendar's summer begins on June 22).

Speaking in a meeting with the members of the Parliament Energy Committee on November 3, the minister said: "According to the plan submitted to the parliament, the Ministry of Energy will increase the capacity of the country's power plants by 30,000 megawatts."

"Currently, for the next year's summer peak [consumption period], we are taking the necessary measures to bring 21 new [power

plant] units on stream; Of course, the exact schedule for the operation of these units is prepared and will be provided in the form of weekly reports," he added.

He further noted that the construction of 10,000 MW capacity of power plants has also been started by various industrial sectors, saying: "four major industries have started their work in the field of power plant construction. Based on the contract concluded with these industries, the said industries will not be provided with electricity from the national grid if they cannot deliver the power plants based on the specified schedule."

Tax incomes highlighted in next year's budget bill

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – President Ebrahim Raisi submitted the administration's draft of the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1401, which starts on March 21, 2022, to the Majlis on Sunday.

The proposed budget amounted to about 36.31 quadrillion rials (about $132.518 billion at the exchange rate of 274,000 rials).

While rising tax revenues is being considered as one of the strategies of the government to compensate for the reduction in the oil income and combat the sanctions, the next year's budget bill has envisaged 5.27 quadrillion rials (about $19.233 billion) tax income, which is 62 percent higher than the figure for the current year.

Meanwhile, new tax bases have been considered in the budget bill, among them it could be referred to taxes on houses and cars.

According to the 1401 budget bill, the first real estate deal for newly constructed buildings that are not more than three years old will be subject to a

2.5-percent tax.

The deal on newly built homes will also be subject to a 2.5-percent tax.

All real and legal owners of villas and expensive residential units whose property is worth 100 billion rials (about $365,000) and above are obliged to pay the relevant annual tax before the end of the next year's eleventh month of Bahman (February 19, 2023).

The bill states that the villas and residential units under construction will not be taxed.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development is obliged to provide the Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA) with the possibility of online access to the property ownership information required by the INTA. And INTA is obliged to determine the eligible assets and their value by the end of the third month of Khordad (June 21, 2022) at the latest and to inform the persons in an appropriate manner.

Also, according to the budget bill for 1401, the total value of all types of passenger cars and two-cab vans with personal numbers, for individuals (themselves and children under 18 years of age and dependents) and legal entities, of more than 10 billion rials (about $36,500) is subject to tax.

The source of calculating car taxes is the daily price of all types of cars according to the date of manufacture or import, which is determined and announced by the INTA by the end of year 1400 (March 20, 2022).

And INTA is obliged to determine the eligible assets and their value by the end of the third month of Khordad (June 21, 2022) at the latest and to inform the persons in an appropriate manner.

The above-mentioned are two cases regarding the new tax bases in the next year's budget law.

As repeatedly emphasized, Iranian government is seriously pursuing the strategy of reducing reliance on oil incomes, while relying more on other sources of revenues such as non-oil export and tax; and in this regard setting new tax bases and collecting taxes more systematically, while seriously preventing tax evasion are on agenda.

Iranian heavy crude oil price rises over 42% in 2021: OPEC

TEHRAN – Iran's average heavy crude oil price has increased $29.34 in 2021 to register a 42.1-percent rise compared to the previous year, according to OPEC's last monthly report for the year published on Monday.

Following the ease of pandemic impacts in various countries and the increase in oil demand in the markets during 2021, the average Iranian heavy crude oil price increased to $69.32 per barrel in 2021, compared to $39.98 in 2020, the report said.

According to the data provided, the country's heavy crude price was $80.5 in November, down $2.07 from $82.14 in October.

The report put Iranian crude output for November at 2.474 million barrels per day (bpd) indicating a 9,000-bpd decrease compared to the figure for the previous month.

Based on OPEC data, the country's average crude output in the third quarter of 2021 stood at 2.482 million bpd indicating a nearly 42,000-bpd rise compared to the average figure for the year's second quarter.

Iranian heavy crude oil price had followed an upward trend since the beginning of the current year up to May, then following the increase in the OPEC members' production oil prices fell during June-August. Towards the end of the year, the prices once again got back on the upward track.

In addition to the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the global oil industry

which resulted in the drastic fall in oil prices in 2020, the Iranian oil industry was also under pressure from the U.S. efforts to isolate the country by re-imposing sanctions.

The country, however, ramped up its oil production following the developments in the White House and also the recovery of the global markets from the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier in February, Fitch Solutions Incorporation, a subsidiary of Fitch Ratings, which is one of the U.S.'s three biggest credit rating agencies, forecasted a 6.8-percent growth for Iranian oil exports in 2021 if the U.S comes back to the 2015 nuclear deal.

In one of its latest reports dubbed "Iran Oil and Gas Report", Fitch also saw the Islamic Republic's crude oil exports double in 2022 compared to 2020.

"The prospects for the Iranian oil sector have brightened significantly following Joe Biden's victory in the U.S. presidential election on November 3. President Biden has indicated that he will seek to re-enter the U.S. into the Iranian nuclear deal, paving the way for a roll-back of secondary sanctions and recovery of around 2.0 million bpd in oil production," the report said.

Iran to expand agricultural co-op with intl. organizations

TEHRAN – Director-general of the Iranian Agricultural Ministry's International Affairs Office has said the ministry is going to expand cooperation with specialized international organizations through United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

As IRNA reported, the UNDP representatives held a meeting and a workshop at the place of the Iranian Agricultural Ministry on Monday to explore the capacities and potentials for mutual cooperation.

"The United Nations Development Programme workshop and the joint meeting with the UNDP representatives have provided an opportunity for us to expand our cooperation with specialized international organizations," Alimorad Sarafrazi said at the meeting.

"The Agriculture Ministry's priorities for cooperation with international organizations will be in areas like drought resilience, contract farming, smart agriculture, as well as reforming the structure and improving agricultural businesses in rural areas with an emphasis on women's occupations," he noted.

Export from Gilan province rises 35% in 8 months yr/yr

TEHRAN – The value of exports from Gilan province, in the north of Iran, rose 35 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Farhad Dalq-Poush, the head of the province's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, said that 704,000 tons of products worth $412.46 million were exported from the province in the said time span, also indicating 11 percent rise in terms of weight.

The official named Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Georgia, and Ukraine as the main export destinations of the products.

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

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

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

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

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

He said major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China, Iraq, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Afghanistan.

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

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

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

PMO to facilitate providing maritime, port services

TEHRAN – Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has been following a new strategy since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21) to develop and facilitate port and maritime services in the country, the PMO announced in a report published on its website on Tuesday.

In this regard, the organization has taken various measures including the drafting of a strategic document to award the berthing and ships separation services to the private sector, and also the drafting of a plan for the transfer of ship registration services to the private sector.

Connecting the maritime system to the social security system, set-

ting up barcodes in vessels' journey permits to facilitate their inquiry at foreign ports are also among the measures taken by the Ports and Maritime Organization to enhance maritime and port services.

The establishment of a secretariat for the investigation of seafarers' disciplinary violations, as well as the smartening of the services provided for the employees working on commercial, service, and fishing vessels are other important steps that have been taken by the organization since the beginning of the current fiscal year.

Back in October, Deputy PMO Head Jalil Eslami had said that amending registration instructions and determining the schedule for mooring of ocean-going vessels at the country's ports were among the main programs of his organization for the second half of the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2022).

According to Eslami, another important program for the mentioned period was to design and implement mechanisms for monitoring and supervision of the shipbuilding industry which includes the repair of vessels and offshore structures.

This program aims to monitor the construction industry and ship repair workshops in a more effective way to ensure their productivity, he said.

Development of safety regulations for fishing and non-conventional vessels by the end of the current fiscal year is also on the PMO's agenda, Eslami had added.

He noted that the instructions for registering, and scheduling the mooring of ocean-going vessels at the country's ports will be updated in accordance with the organization's current policies.

TEDPIX drops 3,700 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 3,751 points to 1.291 million on Tuesday.

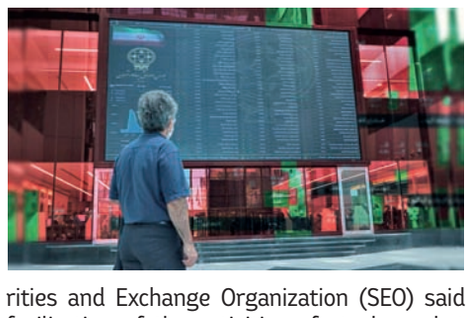
Over 5.331 billion securities worth 31.959 trillion rials (about $110.2 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dropped 2,937 points, and the second market's index fell 6,961 points.

TEDPIX gained 9,000 points (less than one percent) to 1.349 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

During the past week, the indices of Isfahan Refining Company, Sabzevar Pars Steel Complex, Social Security Investment Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed ones.

Earlier this month, the head of Iran's Secu-



rities and Exchange Organization (SEO) 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.

Reaching a deal in Vienna not impossible: professor

By Mohamamd Mazhari

TEHRAN - Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, a London-based professor, says that reaching a deal in Vienna is a difficult task as the U.S. president is caught up in domestic constraints, but it is not impossible.

"I believe it is incredibly difficult to reach a deal, but it is not impossible. Undoubtedly, Europe wants this to happen, President Biden, too, but he is too caught up in domestic constraints to act upon his instinct," Professor Adib Moghaddam tells the Tehran Times.

World powers are continuing private talks in Vienna aimed at reviving Iran's 2015 nuclear deal but disagreements between Iran and the West have kept on spilling into public view.

In a tweet early on Tuesday, Iran's chief negotiator wrote that some counterparts still "persist in their blame game habit, instead of real diplomacy".

Ali Bagheri Kani said "diplomacy is a two-way street", suggesting that the three European signatories to the deal – France, Germany, and the United Kingdom – and the United States, which unilaterally abandoned the accord in 2018, lack the political will to reach an agreement.

This came shortly after senior diplomats from the so-called E3 said they still have not "been able to get down to real negotiations".

However, analysts expect the nuclear deal talks in Vienna to lead to some sort of consensus.

"I retain my cautious optimism that the negotiations will continue," Adib Moghaddam notes.

Following is the text of the interview

What is your prediction about new rounds of talks in Vienna to revive the JCPOA? Do you see any flexibility? Some observers argue there is no solution but a new deal.

I believe it is incredibly difficult to reach a deal, but it is not impossible. Undoubtedly, Europe wants this to happen, President Biden, too, but he is too caught up in domestic constraints to act upon his instinct. There is a wall of mistrust between the United States and Iran in particular, as I have discussed in "What is Iran?". I would have liked to see some Track-2 diplomacy before the talks started, much in the same way as it happened during the Obama administration when there were various communications channels that aided and abetted the diplomatic process. I retain my cautious optimism that the negotiations will continue. As the minimum outcome, we may have another round of talks.

The Iranian side says Washington is not ready to honor its commitments in the JCPOA? Do you think U.S. exceptionalism may prevent it from tolerating anything that challenges its supremacy?

I think it is fair to say that the political elites governing the United States have had a distorted picture of world politics in general, including the situation with Iran. But this may be equally true for the counterparts. It has a lot to do with the way elite circulation happens these days – it is not always the brightest minds who become politicians. But I think the analytical reason why Biden can't act upon his instinct, which signals to him that a diplomatic solution with Iran must be sought, is largely rooted in his imperiled domestic standing in the United States. Obama cleverly enveloped the JCPOA in a language of new U.S. diplomatic activism and as such sold it as a triumph. Biden hasn't had that narrative that would have allowed him to sell a success in the JCPOA negotiations as a political advantage, even to his constituency in the United States itself.

We have seen some sort of blame game between Iran and the U.S. and its Western allies in the midst of the Vienna talks. Why are the Western countries trying to neglect the fat that it was Washington that quit the JCPOA unilaterally?

It is brinkmanship and I have to say both sides were wrong to start the negotiations with maximalist demands and stand-points. Again, the JCPOA negotiations required a preliminary process to ease everyone into the Vienna meeting. In many ways, the election of President Raisi made this difficult for Iran, as no one in Europe or the United States wants to be seen to do business with him. This is just a fact.

Some say the JCPOA can never meet Iran's expectations, because no one in the West is ready to invest in Iran after Trump abandoned the pact. Also, there is no guarantee that the next U.S. administration won't pull out of any possible deal. What is the solution?

The solution would have been to paste the JCPOA into a wider diplomatic dialogue between the United States and Iran via the European Union. The next Iranian President may want to display this audacity in order to secure both the national security of Iran and the interest of Iranian citizens. The initiative to change international relations and everything related to it has to come from Iran.

Apparently the Iranians and the Western countries cannot understand each other's logic. The Iranian side is talking about guarantees and ways of compensation of economic loss the Trump administration caused while the Americans expect a rapid return to the pact without any guarantee to not breach it. Is there any ground on which both sides find a common language? And how do you assess Western conceptions of Iran as a great civilization?

My work has always also been about the gross misperceptions of Iran from the outside and "What is Iran?" speaks to that point, too. But perceptions and misperceptions are socially constructed, which means that they can be rectified. It is another fact emerging from my research and exposure, that Iran misrepresents itself. Why would any Iranian wait until the so called "West" perceives the country a great civilisation when the Iranian state doesn't enact that image or when the Iranian diplomatic missions and cultural attaches have no real impact on the representation of the country? How many exhibitions of Iran as a great civilisation have Iranian embassies in Berlin, Athens, London, Madrid, Paris and Prague organized? I know that there are many Turkish, Qatari, Emirati and Saudi events happening, but very rarely any Iranian ones, apart from those that some of us organize as a part of our cultural work, without any support, as orphaned disciples so to say. The image of Iran must be created from within – alas, this is not the case and it is probably one of the biggest weaknesses of Iran in international diplomacy.

U.S. will not punish troops for killing Afghan civilians

From page 1 ▶ ever hold specific military personnel accountable, responsible or punish any of them. The U.S. military claims that it conducts thorough investigations after it kills civilians, but critics have raised question marks about these inquires.

One case has been reported as an exception, which occurred in 2016, when the Pentagon disciplined around a dozen military personnel for their roles in an airstrike back in October 2015 on a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan that killed at least 42 people. But none of the military personnel faced any criminal charges for raiding a hospital and murdering at least 42 civilians. They were only disciplined. Some received formal reprimands while others were suspended from duty.

Speaking to reporters about the August 29 attack this year in Kabul, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby says senior commanders had made a number of recommendations to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin about the fatal drone strikes, none of which include any accountability measures for U.S. army personnel. Kirby says Austin accepted the recommendations. An earlier investigation; again an internal one, conducted by the U.S. Air Force inspector general said the strike was caused by execution errors, interpreting information that supported certain viewpoints, and communication breakdowns. The military previously called the strike a "tragic mistake." Critics say accountability must be held for those murdered in the strike and the countless other civilians murdered by U.S. airstrikes in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The military initially defended the fatal August attack, in the days afterwards, but ended up describing it as a "tragic mistake". None of the military personnel involved in the botched drone strike will face any kind of punishment. Austin is reported to have approved the recommendations from two top commanders. A subsequent high-level investigation was reportedly conducted into the atrocity and found no violations of the law but stopped short of fully exonerating those involved, reportedly claiming that was "commander business." Which essentially means no severe punishment, otherwise it would have been made public.

According to a Pentagon official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to the New York Times, Austin left the final word on any administrative action, such as reprimands or demotions (which are in essence minor punishments in comparison with the crime committed) to two senior commanders, General Kenneth F. McKenzie the head of the military's Central Command, and General Richard Clarke, head of the Special Operations Command. Both officers found no grounds for penalizing any of the army personnel involved in the murder of the ten civilians.

Critics of the Kabul attack have pointed to the acknowledgement of the murders, the intelligence failure but at the same time not finding anyone accountable for any wrongdoing as laughable. Steven Kwon, the founder and president of Nutrition & Education International, the California-based aid organization, that employed the driver of a white Toyota sedan that was hit by the American drone says "this decision is shocking, how can our military wrongly take the lives of 10 precious Afghan people, and hold no one accountable in any way?"

Washington's acknowledgement of the mistaken strike came a week and only after a New York Times investigation of video evidence challenged the narrative by the American military that it had struck a vehicle carrying explosives meant for Hamid Karzai International Airport.

Everything senior U.S. defense officials said in the hours, days and weeks after the Kabul drone strike turned out to be false.

As public anger and international outcry intensify over America's deadly military strikes across the Muslim world, Austin last month was forced to order a new high-level probe into a U.S. airstrike in Syria in 2019 that killed dozens of women and children. A massacre that military officials went a long way to hide from the public.

This comes following an explosive revelation on Sunday from a probe carried out by The Times which exposed a top-secret American strike cell that launched tens of thousands of bombs and missiles in Syria, where commandos sidestepped safeguards and repeatedly killed civilians.

The American military has been paying "condolence payments" for deaths caused by its military. These are said to have varied widely in recent years. In the 2019 fiscal year, for example, the Pentagon offered 71 such payments, with some ranging as little as $131. Some payments are reported to be a bit higher but no amount of money can bring back a loved one.

The reality is the victims will not see proper justice and the perpetrators will escape any accountability so long as America conducts internal probes into these deadly attacks. An outside international committee should be formed to investigate U.S. massacres over the past twenty years.

Russia urges talks to avoid military escalation

TEHRAN - Russian President Vladimir Putin has told British Prime Minister Boris Johnson of an urgent need for talks to end NATO's military eastward expansion. Putin also called for a halt to the deployment of heavy offensive weapons near Russian borders, which the Kremlin says has forced Moscow to increase its own defensive capabilities along its borders.

Russian officials have already noted a legally binding treaty offering firm guarantees that NATO would not expand any further east, or place offensive weapons in member countries bordering Russia. Putin told Johnson that Russia has been already devising draft documents on that matter and negotiations should begin "immediately."

The Kremlin's readout of the phone conversation shows Putin showed specific examples of "Kiev's destructive line on the disruption of the Minsk agreements" as an "uncontested basis for resolving the internal Ukrainian crisis."

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov says NATO would face "dire consequences" if it continued to threaten Russian security. He says a "lack of progress towards a political and diplomatic solution to this problem

will lead to our response being military and technological".

Saudi pro-democracy group protests in U.S.

.Saudi Arabia's pro-democracy party has launched a campaign against the kingdom's crown prince in the US, accusing him of aiding and abetting the murder of dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The National Assembly Party (NAAS), an opposition party of Saudi Arabia with members mostly living in exile, has reserved advertisements on trucks in the Washington DC, showing Mohammad Bin Salman with blood-stained hands.

"We deserve democracy, not Mr. Bone-saw the crown prince," reads one of the advertisements, referring to the crown prince as 'Mr. Bone-saw'.

Jamal Khashoggi, a prominent Saudi journalist who lived in the U.S.at the time of his death, was murdered at Saudi Arabia's Istanbul consulate in October 2018. His body was later dismembered.

Saudi Arabia initially issued conflicting versions about his disappearance, but eventually claimed that he had been killed in a "rogue" operation, without owning responsibility.

US intelligence agencies earlier this year admitted that the notorious Saudi crown prince had ordered the killing of Khashoggi, a strong critic of the Saudi rulers, and then tried to eliminate the evidence.

Joe Biden, who promised during his election campaign to hold the Saudi leader accountable for the murder, later said he was not going to hold a head of the state accountable for the crime.

"We held accountable all the people in that organization – but not the crown prince, because we have never, that I'm aware of ... when we have an alliance with a country, gone to the acting head of state and punished that person and ostracized him," Biden told ABC News in March.

Protesters in Washington on Monday condemned the silence of the U.S.government over it and demanded the democratic transition in the Arab country.

The trucks moved around the U.S.capital, driving in front of the White House, the Saudi Embassy and the U.S.Congress, while attracting attention from by-passers.

The organizers also posted pictures on the Twitter, saying they were marching in defense of the Saudi people.

"The NAAS sends a message on the streets of the capital Washington defending the Saudi people: "we deserve democracy, not Mr. Bone-saw"," read one of the tweets.

The Saudi king, who is in his mid-80s, has given his son a free hand to suppress and silence his critics, including members of the extended royal family as well as journalists and activists.

Canada apologizes to its own military amid sexual misconduct

From page 1 ▶ Defense minister Anita Anand says "I am apologizing to you on behalf of the government of Canada. We must acknowledge the pain and trauma that so many have endured because the very institution charged with protecting and defending our country has not always protected and defended its own members".

The statement of remorse comes after several senior officers faced sexual misconduct investigations, including the former chief of the defense staff Jonathan Vance, who tried to obstruct the probe. The serving Chief of the Defense Staff, General Wayne Eyre, noted in his remarks that among soldiers, "trust can mean the difference between life and death. And we betrayed that trust." A former prosecutor with the International Criminal Tribunal has been brought into Ottawa, to help clean up a disastrous culture of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The prosecutor has recommended that investigations and prosecutions in the military be handed over to civilian authorities because of "serious mistrust in the military justice system."

Restoration laboratory launched in Persepolis

TEHRAN – A restoration laboratory dedicated to ancient relics and ruins has recently been launched on the premises of the UNESCO-registered Persepolis.

"A laboratory and workshop for restoration of cultural and historical objects opened in Persepolis on Monday... it is equipped with necessary tools, equipment, and material needed for cultural heritage experts," IRNA quoted Hamid Fadai, the director of the World Heritage site, as saying on Monday.

In this workshop and laboratory, historical monuments including pottery, inscriptions, stone fragments of Persepolis reliefs, glazed bricks, tablets, and seals, etc. are being treated, cultural heritage expert Mohammadreza Alikhah said.

Experts at the laboratory are qualified to help restore physical damage, biological damage, and chemical damage caused by corrosion, sediments, discoloration, etc., Alikhah added.

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

The royal city of Persepolis, which ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art, was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

The city's immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire's king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall ("Hundred-Column Hall").

This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world's greatest archaeological sites.

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 Sasanid Empire (224 CE–651) had its capital at Istkhr. 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.

More than 90% of foreign vacationers satisfied with Iran travel, minister says

TEHRAN – Surveys show that over 90 percent of foreign tourists who visit Iran are satisfied with their experience, Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ezatollah Zarghami has announced.

He made the remarks during a meeting with Iranian envoys and diplomats on Monday, ILNA reported.

Rival countries have been working relentlessly to hinder Iran's tourism industry's growth, the minister said.

However, the country's relative historical, cultural, and natural advantages, as well as its tourist attractions, allow it to capture a significant portion of the overall tourist quota in the region, he added.

"[An example of] active diplomacy in the world today is tourism discussion, in which the values, capacities, and assets of a country are presented to the people of other countries", the minister noted.

Therefore, tourism is expected to become a priority of Iranian ambassadors and representatives to other countries, he explained.

"Identifying and communicating with agencies and tour operators active in target countries, as well as establishing effective communication with Iran, are among the envoys' responsibilities," he mentioned.

Furthermore, the tourism minister noted that the tourism ministry is working on arranging familiarization tours for foreign media and cultural officials.

Last November, the World Tourism Organization announced that international tourist arrivals to Iran plunged 72% during the first eight months of 2020 compared to 2019, highlighting the severe impact of COVID-19 as the main factor.

Even before the pandemic, Iran's tourism was already grappling with some challenges, on top of those Western "media propaganda" aimed at scaring potential travelers away from the Islamic Republic. Some experts believe Iran is still somehow "unknown" for many potential travelers due to such a "media war". They, however, consider bright prospects for the tourism sector of the country if it vigorously pursues comprehensive strategies to counter U.S.-led propaganda and strict sanctions, yet does its best to loosen tough travel regulations.

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

Muddy ramparts of Damghan to undergo urgent restoration

TEHRAN – An urgent restoration project will soon be commenced on the muddy ramparts of Damghan that for centuries helped protect the north-central Iranian town against enemy attacks.

"An urgent restoration work will soon begin on ramparts of Damghan, which date back to pre-Islamic eras," Semnan province's tourism chief Hamidreza Doostmohammadi said on Tuesday.

Damghan fortress is one of the largest mudbrick architectures in Iran, which was built in the early Islamic era.

The barrier was once 16 kilometers in length and it embraced 106 towers and four gates in its heyday, of which only eight kilometers have remained, Doostmohammadi explained.

Last year, local vandals severely damaged parts of the ramparts and their fortifications.

The invaders completely destroyed two old towers and a small part of the fortification, according to Mehdi Qasemi, the tourism chief of the oasis town.

"Following the citizens' call about the demolition of a part of the fortification wall that is located in the northeast of Damghan, police forces in charge of protecting cultural heritage presented at the [crime] scene and after confirming the demolition, a decree to stop the act was issued in coordinating with the deputy prosecutor," Qasemi explained.

They aimed at creating a bigger passageway towards a street leading to their private houses and their actions will undoubtedly be put on trial, he noted.

Damghan lies at an elevation of 1,200 meters just southeast of the Alburz Mountains on a large, barren gravel plain. It is on the road and railway between Tehran and Mashhad.

Archaeological excavations at nearby Tepe Hissar reveal occupation from prehistoric times through the Sasanian period (224-651 CE). Damghan was an important town and capital of the medieval province of Qumis but was destroyed by Afghans in 1723. The town trades in pistachios and almonds.

Ancient relics recovered in western Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian police have recovered 38 historical relics from an antique dealer who was illegally keeping them at his place in the western Kermanshah province.

The police discovered the relics after cultural heritage aficionados told its forces about the unlawful activity of an antique dealer, police discovered the relics, CHTN quoted a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage on Tuesday.

The relics, which include coins, rings, pendants, and hairpins, are estimated to date back to different eras including the first millennium BC, Sassanid period (224–651), and the early Islamic era, Hassan Mehri said.

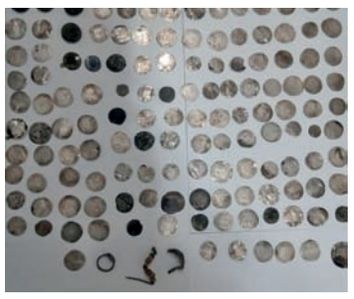
The culprit was surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, the official added.

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 Sassanian 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.

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.

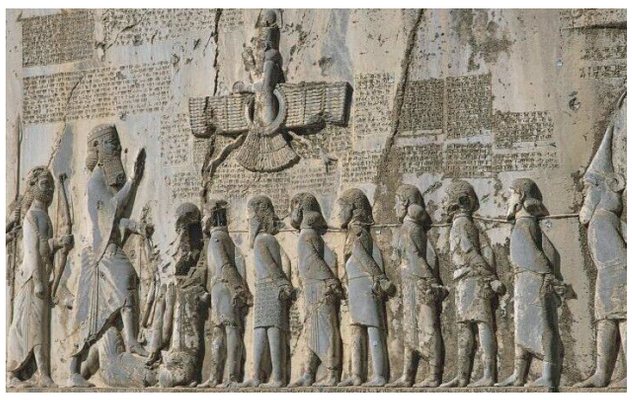
Kermanshah was founded in the 4th century CE by Bahram IV of the Sassanid dynasty. Conquered by the Arabs in 640, it was called Qirmasin (Qirmashin). Under the Seljuk rule in the 11th century, it was the chief town of Kordestan. The Safavids (ruled 1501–1736) fortified the town, and the Qajars repulsed an attack by the Turks during Fath Ali Shah's rule (1797–1834). Occupied by the Turkish army in 1915 during World War I, it was evacuated in 1917. The construction of a road in the 1950s over the age-old Khorasan track added considerably to the importance of the city.

Iran historical linguistics investigated

TEHRAN – Over the past year, 31 researchers have conducted investigates on historical linguistics of homeland in terms of ancient bas-reliefs, inscriptions, and coins to name a few.

The researches were conducted under the auspices of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism to document, study and protect Iran's oral language heritage, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Iranian languages have been written in many different scripts during their long history, although various forms of Aramaic script have been predominant. Old Persian was written with a cuneiform syllabary, the ori-



gin of which is still hotly disputed. Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, and Old Khwarezmian were recorded in various forms of Aramaic script.

Pahlavi language is an extinct member of the Iranian language group, a subdivision of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. Pahlavi is a Middle Persian (sometimes called Middle Iranian) language, meaning that it was primarily used from the end of the Achaemenian dynasty (559–330 BC) to the advent of Islam in the 7th century CE. Modern Persian is written in Arabic script, which is of Aramaic origin.

Ground broken for national museum of 'red gold'

TEHRAN – Construction of a long-awaited national museum of saffron officially began on Thursday with a ground-breaking ceremony in the northeastern Qaenat region which is famed for its 'red gold'.

The ceremony was attended by several local officials, farmers, and cultural heritage lovers, IRNA reported.

The museum will be constructed in a land covering 970 square meters in Qaenat, which has been a major producer of saffron over the past 12 centuries, the report added.

known as the "red gold", Saffron is a magical ingredient in Persian culture, from aromatic foods and colorful desserts to physical and spiritual medicine.

Every year, the saffron harvest season begins in early November. While most other vegetation is gone, the bright purple flowers cover the fields and create an outstanding landscape in dry regions in Iran.

Dezful Museum of Anthropology reopens as pandemic eases

TEHRAN – Dezful Museum of Anthropology reopened to visitors on Monday after about two years of closure caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Located in and named after the southwestern Iranian city in Khuzestan province, the museum features indigenous human cultures, societies, and linguistics, the city's tourism chief Abbas Cheraghcheshm has said.

It also has sections dedicated to literature, handicraft products, and a photography studio, the official announced on Tuesday.

Covering an area of 880 square meters, the museum is located in the historical Kornasiyon Public Bathhouse since 2006. The bathhouse dates back to 200 years ago, the early Qajar era.

Museums at forefront of closures

Last November Mohammadreza Kargar, the director of museums and historical properties at the tourism ministry announced that Iranian

museums have taken 1.7 trillion rials (some $42 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) hit from the coronavirus outbreak over the previous months.

If the country was in normal condition, the museums would host over 25 million visitors, but now they have faced a huge loss as there is almost no visitor to the museums, he noted.

In October former Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan warned that Iran's cultural heritage and tourism will be in a critical situation if the crises are caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus continue. With the outbreak of the coronavirus, museums were at the forefront of closures and for several months now, they have not had any revenue from the sale of tickets, Mounesan explained.

Currently, 740 museums are active across Iran, in which some three million historical objects are being kept. The county is home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to 4000 BC. It also hosts some of the world's oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 26 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Iran-made expo opens to showcase achievements

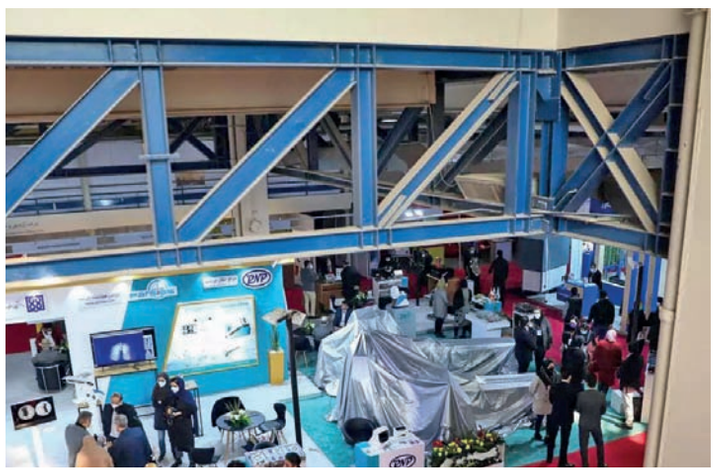
TEHRAN – An exhibition of laboratory equipment and material opened in Tehran on Tuesday to showcase the country's achievements in the research and technology sector.

The event titled "Iran-made expo" is being held for the fourth year in a row, Mehr reported.

Putting the latest achievements of the country on display, introducing the current technological challenges to researchers in order to find solutions, and establishing links between researchers and industrialists are among the main objectives of the organizers.

More than 9,000 advanced laboratory products are being offered to visitors in the exhibition which will run until Friday.

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



amounts of foreign currency.

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

Vice-President for Science and Technology, Sourena Sattari has said 42 knowledge-based companies with a total value of 2.8 quadrillion rials (nearly $9.5 billion) have so far been listed on the stock exchange and they will soon turn into the biggest businesses in the county

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology will provide special support to facilitate export for knowledge-based companies with quality products over the next 6 months.

Due to the necessity of Iran's presence in the global technology markets and the high capability of knowledge-based and creative companies, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology stepped into the field to pave the way for the presence in the global market, Mehdi Ghaleh-Noei, an official with the Vice Presidency, has said.

To this end, it has developed and implemented programs, policies, and support packages related to the development of export, he stated, noting, planning to attract foreign investment, eliciting the participation of Iranians abroad, and connecting domestic capabilities to the global market are among the actions taken in this regard.

Conservation documents for half of all critically endangered species don't mention climate change

Conservation documents for more than half of Australia's critically endangered species and habitats fail to mention climate change according to new analysis that argues there is a significant "climate gap" in the management of Australia's threatened wildlife.

The report was commissioned by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and prepared by the Australian National University's GreenLaw project, which is led by students in the ANU's law faculty.

The analysis examined the extent to which conservation documents for Australia's most imperilled wildlife discussed and addressed the threat of global heating, the Guardian reported.

It found that for 178 out of 334 critically endangered species and habitats the threat of climate change was not mentioned in the government's conservation information at all.

When it was mentioned, the analysis found the information "tended to be brief and generalised" and the recommended actions to mitigate the threat were limited.

"Our results demonstrate there is a significant climate gap in the management of Australia's threatened species," said GreenLaw chief executive and lead researcher, Annika Reynolds.

The report argues that without such an analysis there was a risk that management of wildlife or decisions about developments affecting it would not factor in the impact of the climate crisis.

"It means that the recovery actions that are meant to be happening are not going to be informed by the latest and most up-to-date information about the threat of climate change to those critically endangered species and communities," said Brendan Sydes, the ACF's biodiversity policy adviser.

"Recovery plans are supposed to inform recovery efforts, so if they're not actually capturing the threats and the actions that are required to address them, there is a risk those actions could be misdirected."

When species and habitats are listed as threatened under Australia's environmental laws, information is generally prepared that describes the level of decline, key threats and actions to help their recovery.

These conservation documents can take the form of either a recovery plan, which the environment minister is legally bound not to act inconsistently with; or, more commonly, a conservation advice – a similar document but which does not have the same legal force under national law.

GreenLaw examined these documents for all species and ecological communities listed as critically endangered under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

The group found in addition to some documents not mentioning global heating at all, there were others where the threat was mentioned but no actions that could be taken to address it were discussed because this was "outside the scope of the plan".

They found climate was omitted from some documents where there was scientific uncertainty about its likely impact for that particular plant, animal or habitat.

But Reynolds said the information gap was also evident for some species that "were known to suffer from extreme heat and drought", such as the short-nosed sea snake and the leafscaled sea snake. Documents for those species do not discuss climate change directly despite listing coral bleaching as a major threat.

There were also other species that fell outside the scope of the analysis because they have a lower threat status but whose documentation excludes up-to-date information on the climate crisis.

The conservation advice for the spectacled flying fox lists climate change as a "potential" and "future" threat despite the animal being uplisted to endangered in 2019 after almost a third of its population was wiped out by a heatwave.

The report found that conservation documents that had been written or updated in the past three years were more likely to include a detailed analysis of the climate threat.

The ACF said the government needed to increase funding for threatened species recovery, including funds to update its scientific information about the impacts of the climate crisis on individual plants, animals and habitats.

Iran short of rain by 33%

TEHRAN – Precipitation has declined by 33 percent in Iran over the first three months of the current water year (September 23-December 10) compared to the long-term mean.

The whole country received 33.5 millimeters of rain over the aforementioned period, meanwhile, the long-term average is reported 49.6 millimeters in this month, showing a 33 percent decrease in rainfall, and the country is 51 percent short of rain compared to the same period last year.

The report by the national center for drought and crisis management considers this year to be one of the driest in the past 50 years.

Reduction of precipitation, especially snowfall in the country has caused the level of snow cover not to be in a favorable condition compared to last year.

The snow cover in the country last year was 170,994 square kilometers. This is while it has decreased to 133,011 square kilometers by December 10, this year, which shows a decrease of 37,983 square kilometers.

Also, snow cover is very effective in supplying water to the country's dams, and it has resulted in declining dam reservoirs, as out of the total capacity of 50.5 billion cubic meters of the country's major dam reservoirs, only 35 percent is filled.

More drought predicted over next 5 years

According to the World Meteorological Organization's multiannual forecast, in the next five years, Iran's average rainfall will decline by 75 percent, and the temperature rises by 50-75 percent compared to the long-term average.

Accordingly, the adoption of national policies to adapt to low rainfall and reduce the consequences of drought is inevitable, and the Seventh Development Plan should be prepared on the basis of drought and climate change, Vazifeh said in May.

A large part of the country has been hit by severe drought during the past 12 months. Forecasts indicate that we will not have significant rainfall in the remaining months of the current water year, so that, we face severe to very severe drought in most parts of the country, he stated.

What would be the consequences?

Climate change is a fact that cannot be run over, whether the temperature raises over 2 or 6°C, natural incidents such as flooding, droughts, and severe storms are among the main consequences of climate change.

Moreover, water and food shortages, water-borne illnesses, cold or heat-related deaths will come up as the results of temperature variations. In tropical areas also the risk of floods will raise.

Heavy rain and other extreme weather events will become more frequent, which can lead to floods along with decreasing water quality, but also decreasing

availability of water resources in some regions.

Climate change will also bring extreme wet and dry seasons, which mainly causes rainfall fluctuations and water scarcity. While there have been prolonged droughts nationwide in past recent years leaving people scrambling for water.

So, nations must take steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the future, preventing the emissions peak, otherwise, they might not be able to breathe on the planet in the future, or migrate to other places if found.

The study may also come efficient when it comes to making the people aware of climate change impact in their own city, within their lifetime, to avoid experiencing an entirely new climate that is beyond human experience.

Optimal cultivation key to preserve water resources

From page 1 ▶ Modern irrigation methods have different types, including surface irrigation and pressurized irrigation.

Surface irrigation is where water is applied and distributed over the soil surface by gravity. It is by far the most common form of irrigation throughout the world and has been practiced in many areas virtually unchanged for thousands of years.

In pressurized irrigation systems, water is pressurized and precisely applied to the plants under pressure through a system of pipes. Pressurized irrigation systems, as opposed to surface irrigation systems, are more effective in the application of irrigation water to crops.

New irrigation methods (especially drip irrigation) have been introduced in the world since 1950 and have entered the Iranian agricultural industry since 1969.

Currently, 2.4 million hectares of agricultural land are equipped with pressurized irrigation systems, but we are still a long way from reaching the figure of 9 million hectares.

Out of 164 hectares of agricultural land, about 20 hectares are cultivated.

Since the agricultural sector is the largest and most important water consumer in Iran, any action is necessary to stop the "80 percent loss of water resources" which is mainly caused by the lack of use of advanced irrigation technologies.

> Some 2.4 million hectares of agricultural land are equipped with pressurized irrigation systems, but still a long way from 9 million hectares.

On the other hand, one of the problems for farmers in changing the irrigation method is the high cost of its equipment, which apparently the government was supposed to have an 85 percent share in the financing, but so far this has not been achieved.

It seems that the national water council, the Center for Strategic Studies, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, the ministries of Energy and Agriculture, with the cooperation of other sectors, can change irrigation methods in less than two years.

In particular, they should address the issue of reforming the irrigation method so that the result will be huge savings in annual water consumption and Iran's agriculture and environment will be partially out of the crisis.

Water resources declining

Renewable water resources have decreased by 30 percent over the last four decades, while Iran's population has increased by about 2.5 times, Qasem Taqizadeh, deputy minister of energy, has said.

A recent report by Nature Scientific Journal on Iran's water crisis indicates that from 2002 to 2015, over 74 billion cubic meters have been extracted from aquifers, which is unprecedented and its revival takes thousands of years along with urgent action.

Three Iranian scientists studied 30 basins in the country and realized that the rate of aquifer depletion over a 14-year period has been about 74 billion cubic meters, which is recently published in Nature Scientific Journal.

Also, over-harvesting in 77 percent of Iran has led to more land subsidence and soil salinity. Research and statistics show that the average overdraft from the country's aquifers was about 5.2 billion cubic meters per year.

Mohammad Darvish, head of the environment group in the UNESCO Chair on Social Health that the situation of groundwater resources is worrisome.

The report notes that Iran's water consumption has increased due to a significant increase in legal and illegal wells, the expansion of agricultural land, and increasing livelihood dependence on water and soil resources in agriculture, livestock, and poultry, which are mainly caused by human factors, Darvish noted.

The statistic is unprecedented, as the total reservoirs of all dams in the country have a capacity of about 50 billion cubic meters; In other words, in the last 14 years, 22 billion cubic meters more than the capacity of all dams have been extracted from the country's underground sources, he explained.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

20,000 residential units to be constructed for the deprived

The Welfare Organization and the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to construct 20,000 housing units for the financially struggling families, Mehr reported.

Alireza Tabesh, the Foundation's head, and Vahid Qobadi Dana, the Organization's head, inked the MOU during a meeting held in Tehran on Monday.

As per the agreement, 20,000 housing units will be provided to breadwinners with disabilities, breadwinner women, and the ex-addicts under the Organization's coverage residing in villages with a population of less than 25,000, Qobadi Dana explained.

احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای محرومان

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر تفاهم نامه مشترک برای احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای محرومان بین بنیاد مسکن انقلاب اسلامی و سازمان بهزیستی کشور منعقد شد

تفاهم نامه احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی روستایی با حضور علیرضا تابش رئیس بنیاد مسکن انقلاب اسلامی و وحید قبادی دانا رئیس سازمان بهزیستی کشورروز دوشنبه به امضا رسید.

قبادی دانا گفت: این تفاهم نامه به منظور ساخت ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای معلولین سرپرست خانوار، زنان سرپرست خانوار، و بهبودیافتگان از بلای اعتیاد که در روستاها و شهرهایی با جمعیت کمتر از ۲۵ هزار نفر ساکن و تحت پوشش بهزیستی هستند؛منعقدمی‌شود.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON DECEMBER 14

New cases	2,784
New deaths	67
Total cases	6,160,303
Total deaths	130,831
New hospitalized patients	433
Patients in critical condition	3,042
Total recovered patients	5,980,566
Diagnostic tests conducted	40,258,351
Doses of vaccine injected	111,558,663

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DECEMBER 15, 2021

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Like your body your mind also gets tired so refresh it by wise sayings.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:59 Evening: 17:12 Dawn: 5:37 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:07 (tomorrow)

“A Hero” nominated for Golden Globes 2022

TEHRAN – “A Hero” by two-time Academy Award-winning director Asghar Farhadi has been nominated in the Best Picture – Non-English Language category at the 79th Annual Golden Globe Awards, celebrating the best in television and film.

“Compartment No. 6”, a co-production by Germany, Russia and Finland directed by Juho Kuosmanen, Japanese drama “Drive My Car” by Ryusuke Hamaguchi, “The Hand of God” by Italian director Paolo Sorrentino, and “Parallel Mothers” by Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar are other contenders in this category as the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), the group behind the event, announced the nominees on Monday.

“A Hero”, the winner of the Grand Prix (ex aequo) at Cannes 2021 also made the list of eligible films for the 94th Academy Awards in the International Feature Film category.

The film, which is a co-production between Iran and France, follows Rahim, who is in prison because he was unable to pay a debt. During a two-day leave of absence from prison, he attempts to have his creditor withdraw his complaint over part of the sum owed. But things don’t go as planned.

Farhadi’s “A Separation”, a drama about a breakup, won the Golden Globe for best foreign-language film in 2012. The film also won Iran its first and only ever Oscar at the same time.

His “The Salesman” also received a nomination at the Golden Globe Awards 2017, however, it failed to win the honor. This drama brought Farhadi his second Oscar.

In the 79th Golden Globe Awards, “Belfast”, Kenneth Branagh’s black-and-white drama, has received nominations in seven categories, including categories, including best picture drama and best screenplay.

Amir Jadidi and Mohsen Tanabandeh act in a scene from “A Hero” directed by Asghar Farhadi.

Director Jane Campion’s “The Power of the Dog” has also been nominated in the seven best picture drama, including best director and best picture drama.

The awards ceremony will be held on January 9, 2022, with TV screening after broadcaster NBC terminated the contract.

Iran: Persian literature

A Persian painting from a manuscript of the Shahnameh preserved at the British Library depicts Rustam marries Princess Tahmina.

Part 13

The Book of Kings (Shahnameh): The earliest extant manuscript, which contains only the first part of the Shahnameh, dates from 1217, two centuries after the poet’s death.

It was discovered in the Laurentian Library in Florence in 1980 by Angelo Michele Piemontese. Among other important manuscripts one can mention a 16th-century copy of a manuscript dated 1276, which contains the entire text and is preserved in the British Library.

There are many other manuscripts of good quality in existence, and most probably Ferdowsi left more than one redaction of his poem.

Given this complex and uncharted textual history, the major critical edition begun by Jalal Khaleqi-Motlaq, of which six volumes have already been published, cannot be said to be definitive in the strict sense of the term.

Some of the texts that Ferdowsi had drawn upon in his Book of Kings have come down to us. The most famous is a Pahlavi text, The Testament of Ardashir son of Pabag.

We are therefore able to assess the poet’s close adherence to his sources, as well as his remarkable ability to weave the material available to him in a sequential narrative, endowing his poem with a sense of order and cohesion.

The medieval manner of composition is evident in his skillful use of the narrative formulae—often repeated to enable declamation of well-defined episodes divided into delineated parts.

The Book of Kings tells the story of Royal Glory and its vulnerable and only too human supporting cast of characters.

In its early sections it introduces three civilizing world rulers. However, in a moment of excessive pride, Jamshid, the third amongst them, instigates a fall that shatters the initial universal harmony.

A world divided into three kingdoms emerges; only Iran at the center inherits the Royal Glory. But the country’s welfare and safety depend on a noble family of Sakas from Sistan, eventually led by its most famous and long enduring leader and hero, Rustam, the crown-bestower (Tajbakhsh).

The three Iranian kings and princes, Keykavus, Siavash and Keykhosrow, are emblematic figures of willful capriciousness, innocence and martyrdom, and legitimate vengeance, respectively.

Rustam is actively involved in all their adventures. However, he refuses to convert to the ‘good faith’ of Zoroaster. Having served as mentor and companion in arms to Esfandiar, son of King Goshtasp, circumstances force him to bring the downfall and death of the prince in a dramatic duel—a climactic moment in the Book of Kings.

Overlooked in Ferdowsi’s sources, the Achaemenids and the Arsacids are mostly passed over in the Book of Kings, the Arsacids celebrated by a recital of their names in a few lines.

The heroic figure that follows Rustam is Alexander. In his work, Ferdowsi integrates a rare and intriguing version of the Alexander Romance—redrawn with psychological finesse.

First shown as a liberator, Alexander ends up as the great divider of Iran. He attempts to benefit from the Royal Glory of the Iranians, only to taste the bitter fruit of usurped grandeur: death.

Faithful to his sources, the poet then created the foil to Alexander, the character of Ardashir, the founding ruler of the Sassanid dynasty.

He unites Iran by making a pact with his people, based on justice and faith in one single religion, Zoroastrianism. Later in the Sassanid section the ideal figure of Khosrow Anushervan (Khosrow I) is described in some detail.

According to the sources of the book, it is in this monarch that Royal Glory appears in its clearest manifestation. All the traits of other royal figures in the book are combined in this central character.

The history of the Sassanids is then continued in the manner of traditional chronicles until an evil day, a Satanic or Ahrimanic moment, when the last king of the dynasty is betrayed and, while on the run from the Arab armies, killed by a miller.

Throughout his narrative, Ferdowsi pursues a fecund thematic idea characteristic of the epic tradition that portrays the vulnerable yet heroic man confronting his relentless destiny.

Salvation lies in wisdom, for it, above all else, makes man aware of the dehumanizing cycle of Time-Destiny. By maintaining his distance from Chronos, man escapes from the illusory nature of this world. Only genuine fame (nam) derived from selfless and heroic conduct is worth striving for and fit to be left as a memento.

Ferdowsi exploits substantial portions of the ancient epic material available in his time. The remaining parts dealt with individual heroes and were drawn upon by other poets.

It was left to others, including Asadi of Tus (11th century), to recreate and exploit other available epic material, in his case, in the Book of Garshasp.

From the 12th century onward, extremely interesting epics of more popular nature begin to appear. They further elaborate and amplify earlier accounts of Darius III and Alexander the Great (Dara and Eskandar).

They introduce heroes and heroines in whose ethical code ruse and clever stratagems, rather than military might and muscle, are legitimate instruments for fighting injustice and evil. Samak-e ayyar, a monumental book in prose, is its finest example.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

“Hit the Road” wins awards at Red Sea filmfest

Photo: Hassan Majuni and Bahram Ark act in a scene from “Hit the Road”.

TEHRAN – Iranian drama “Hit the Road” has won two awards, including a special jury prize, at the Red Sea International Film Festival in Saudi Arabia.

Cinematographer Amin Jafari received the award for Best Cinematic Contribution for his collaboration in this film directed by Panah Panahi.

The film begins in the middle of nowhere, where an Iranian family makes a pit stop to bury the kid’s phone to avoid surveillance. Through several pit stops and encounters, we explore this family’s riotous dynamic and learn where their destination is.

The festival announced the winner in Jeddah on Monday by honoring “Brighton 4th” by Georgian director Levan Koguashvili as best film.

Representing Georgia at the Oscar race, the film presents a touching exploration of masculinity in a stunning central performance by former Olympic wrestling champion Levan Tediashvili. Art imitates life as Tediashvili plays a former Olympic wrestler who travels to New York to clean up a mess made by his gambling addict son who was trying to marry for a green card. The Olympic champion soon discovers that life in America isn’t that different from Georgia.

Haider Rashid from Iraq was selected as best director for his drama “Europa”, a co-production by Iraq, Italy and Kuwait.

“Neighbours”, a co-production between Switzerland and Syria written and directed by Mano Khalil, won the award for best screenplay.

The film shows Syrian Muslims, Kurds and Jews living amicably together in a small village on the Turkish border. The arrival of a fanatical new teacher at the primary school, however, divides the community; people who had always supported each other start to mistrust their neighbors. 6-year-old Sero finds his own small world turned upside down; the teacher bans children from speaking Kurdish and insists on a collective veneration of the president, a petty but poisonous classroom dictatorship that director Mano Khalil depicts with a good deal of humor. Drawing on his own experience, he pays tribute to the good neighbors of his childhood.

Bradwell’s antiwar play “There Is No Return” on stage at Tehran theater

TEHRAN – New Zealand dramatist Eric Bradwell’s play “There Is No Return” on the aftermath of wars is being performed in the form of a stage reading at the Javanmard Hall of the Iranian Theater Forum.

The story of the play is about the Forrester family, who assume they have lost their eldest son in the war. Every year on his birthday, the mother lights a candle in her son’s memory and places it near his photo in their home. However, his brother Gerald and sister Jodith know very little about their presumably deceased brother.

Meanwhile, the warrior who had been assumed to have been dead by the family returns home from a sanatorium on his birthday. Regrettably, the soldier is blind and has lost his memory. While Gerald wants to banish him from their home, Jodith is impressed from talking with him, as she sees a resemblance between him and the photo in their home. But in the end, after having been seen by his entire family, the soldier departs unrecognized.

“People from every walk of life are deeply affected by the impacts of wars,” director Bahman Vakhshour told the Tehran Times before staging the first reading on Tuesday night.

“As with my previous works, through this play, I intend once again to present the ugly image of war,” he added.

Vakhshour also plays the role of Philip Forrester, the father of the family, while Mona Dabir-Aslani, Fariba Qolibaklu, Sajjad Qatei, Sayeh Kabiri and Sadeq Vafai are other members of the cast.

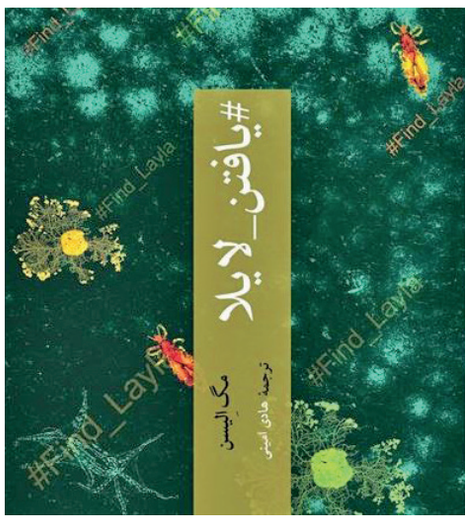
The troupe has previously performed a radio adaptation of the play, which has been translated by Hushang Hesami.

A poster for Eric Bradwell’s play, “There Is No Return”, on stage at the Iranian Theater Forum.

They will perform two more readings on Wednesday and Thursday.

The play has previously been performed by several other Iranian groups. Mehdi Mayami directed the play for three weeks at the Entezami Hall of the Iranian Artists Forum in October and November 2016.

Meg Elison’s novel “Find Layla” appears in Persian



Front cover of the Persian translation of Meg Elison’s novel, “Find Layla”.

TEHRAN – American novelist Meg Elison’s book “Find Layla” has been published in Persian.

Hadi Amin has translated the novel published by Chatrang.

A neglected girl’s chaotic coming-of-age becomes a trending new hashtag in a novel about growing up and getting away by an award-winning author.

Underprivileged and keenly self-aware, SoCal fourteen-year-old Layla Bailey isn’t used to being noticed, except by mean girls who tweet about her ragged appearance. All she wants to do is indulge in her love of science, protect her vulnerable younger brother, and steer clear of her unstable mother.

Then a school competition calls for a biome. Layla chooses her own home, a hostile ecosystem of indoor fungi and secret shame. With a borrowed video camera, she captures it all: the mushrooms growing in her brother’s dresser; the black mold blooming up the apartment walls; the unmentionable things living in the dead fridge; all the inevitable exotic toxins that are in Layla’s life. Then the video goes viral.

When Child Protective Services comes to call, Layla loses her family and her home. Defiant, she must face her bullies and friends alike, on her own. Unafraid at last of being seen, Layla accepts the mortifying reality of visibility. Now she has to figure out how to stay whole and stand behind the truth she has shown the world.

Elison is a science fiction author and feminist essayist. Her series, “The Road to Nowhere”, won the 2014 Philip K. Dick award.

She was a James A. Tiptree Award Honoree in 2018. In 2020, she published her first collection called “Big Girl” with PM Press and her first young adult novel, “Find Layla” with Skyscape.

Meg has been published in McSweeney’s, Fantasy & Science Fiction, Fangoria, Uncanny, Lightspeed, Nightmare and many other places. Elison is a high school dropout and a graduate of UC Berkeley.