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# Iran Urges West to Show Good Faith in Vienna

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## Report

### Blair's knighthood triggers public outrage

More than one million people have signed a petition calling for former Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair to have his controversial knighthood removed with the number rising literally by the minute.

The fact that the knighthood was announced on New Year Eve, and the petition has reached such a milestone so quickly is evidence that public anger in the UK against the former Premier has not gone away. According to a YouGuv survey only 14% of the public approve of Blair's knighthood.

It is perhaps not so surprising how an illegal war saw a politician go from an amazing 93 percent approval rating when he entered office in 1997 to one of the most hated public figures in the UK.

Critics say the man who led Britain "shoulder to shoulder" with former U.S. President George W. Bush into the disastrous and illegal invasion of Iraq deceived the British parliament and the British public into doing so.

The war led to the killing of around one million Iraqi people. Ironically under the title of the "war on terror", it also led to the formation of more barbaric terrorist groups that are still active in the country today. Blair's decision to side with Bush and play a major role in waging the war was unspeakably a catastrophic one in every aspect you look at it.

Nobody wanted the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein to stay in power, but an invasion of the country and destroying its entire infrastructure alongside the suffering of almost every single Iraqi to this day was certainly not the way to go about removing Saddam. ▶ Page 5

## Opinion

### Iranian football clubs are hurt by mismanagement

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - Top Iranian teams Esteghlal, Persepolis, and Gol Gohar, have been barred from the 2022 Asian Champions League for failing to meet entry requirements. An absolute disgrace for Iranian football, which once again proved the weakness in management in the country's favored sport.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has announced that Persepolis, the 2020 ACL finalists, Esteghlal, one of the most decorated Asian clubs, and Gol Gohar Sirjan are ineligible to play in the current edition of the champions league.

Licensing regulations that clubs failed to meet relate to issues including timely submission of documents about stadium safety, having fully qualified staff, and details of who are the owners of clubs.

The significant issues of Esteghlal and Persepolis were the issue of joint ownership and club debts, including tax debt.

As the current owner of both clubs, Iran's Ministry of Sport and Youth, tried to resolve the issue of joint ownership by assigning its right as an owner to another Iranian government body. ▶ Page 3

## Govt. paying \$134m of loans to export companies

TEHRAN - Head of Commercial Services Department at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Ehsan Ghamari has announced the allocation of 40 trillion rials (about \$134.6 million) for supporting export companies as part of the government's Non-Oil Export Support Package for the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20).

The mentioned funding is being provided to approved export companies in the form of low-interest bank loans supplied by 13 acting banks, Ghamari said.

According to the official, half of the above-mentioned figure is provided by the National Development Fund (NDF) and the

other half is supplied by the banking system, the TPO portal reported on Saturday.

Ghamari noted that the process for assessing the eligibility of 120 export companies which have applied for the mentioned facilities is already completed and the list of these companies has been sent to the acting banks for credit qualification and payment of facilities.

Back in September 2021, TPO Head Alireza Peyman-Pak had announced the finalization of the instructions for the implementation of Article 3 of the Non-Oil Export Support Package for the current calendar year which deals with paying facilities to export-oriented

companies.

According to Peyman-Pak, the mentioned facilities will be provided in the form of working capital loans and also foreign currency facilities.

"Based on the provisions of the mentioned instructions, which has been prepared using the opinions of the major sectors affecting the country's foreign trade, we tried to make the process of allocating and paying working capital facilities online and in the shortest possible time, and all information and evaluations are done through the system in a purposeful and transparent manner," Peyman Pak said regarding the mentioned allocations.

## Iran ready to mediate between Saudi Arabia and Yemen: senior MP

TEHRAN - The spokesman for the Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has said Iran is ready to mediate between Yemen and Saudi Arabia to settle their conflict.

Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini also said that Saudi Arabia's past actions against Iran along with some current stances and policies, are slowing down the negotiation process between Tehran and Riyadh.

"Iran has taken the initiative to sincerely improve relations and pursue the interests of the countries in the region, but only if the other side also enters into an honest interaction," Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini told IRNA in a recent interview.

Abbaszadeh Meshkini added, "Establishing good relations and a regional power bloc with the involvement of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey will benefit everyone." ▶ Page 2

## Unemployment hits lowest rate in 25 years

TEHRAN - According to the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), the unemployment rate for people aged 15 and above fell to 8.9 percent this fall (September 23-December 21, 2021), recording the lowest rate in 25 years.

Accordingly, 63.1 million of the country's population are in the age group of 15 years and older, 40.9 percent of whom, equal to 25.8 million people, have been economically active, i.e. they are in the group of employed or unemployed.

An examination of the changes in the economic participation rate shows a 0.5 percent decline compared to the same period last year.

The SCI said the figure was the lowest on record for Iran's labor market since 1996 although it insisted that a lower jobless rate did not necessarily mean that Iran had created more jobs over the past year.

"This declining trend does not mean more employment but it is due to the spread of the coronavirus disease which has caused many young adults to leave the labor market after failing to find a proper job," and said the re-

port.

"We are witnessing a reduction in active population and as a result, the jobless rate has been declining," it added.

SCI calculations showed that Iran's economically inactive population of above 15-year-olds had increased to reach over 37.3 million people. Jobs had increased by 122,000 over the quarter to late December to a total of 23,535 million.

The jobless rate was 23.6 percent among the youth between 15 and 23 years old, down 0.1 percent against the similar quarter last year, said the SCI.

The Iranian services sector was responsible for 49.9 percent of the jobs in the country over the quarter, followed by manufacturing and agriculture with 34.7 percent and 15.4 percent, respectively.

Some 20 out of 31 Iranian provinces had reported single-digit jobless rates over the three months ended in late December, including Khorasan Razavi in the northeast where unemployment was lowest in the country at 5.3 percent. ▶ Page 7

## A birthplace of musical instruments

TEHRAN - Narratives say the initiation of music in Iran dates back to the time of the mythical king, Jamshid. However, fragmentary documents from various periods, including rock-carved carvings, suggest millennia of musical practices in every corner of the ancient land.

Archaeological records of Elam, the oldest civilization in the southwestern Iranian plateau, suggest the ancient land is the birthplace of the earliest complex instruments, which date back to the third millennium BC.

Archaeologists have discovered many trumpets made of silver, gold, and copper were found in eastern Iran attributed to the Oxus

civilization and date back between 2200 and 1750 BC. The use of both vertical and horizontal angular harps has been documented at the archaeological sites of Madaktu (650 BC) and Kul-e Fara (900-600 BC), with the largest collection of Elamite instruments documented at Kul-e Fara. Multiple depictions of horizontal harps were also sculpted in Assyrian palaces, dating back between 865 and 650 BC.

The Sassanian period (226 CE-651), in particular, has left us ample evidence pointing to the existence of a lively musical life. The names of some important musicians such as Barbod, Nakissa, and Ramtin, and titles of some of their works have survived. ▶ Page 6

## Instagram "removes" Iranian culture minister's account for publishing post on Gen. Soleimani

TEHRAN - The Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance announced on Friday that Instagram has had his Instagram account "removed" for publishing a post on General Qassem Soleimani.

Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili published the post last week to commemorate the second anniversary of Soleimani's assassination in a U.S. air raid in Baghdad.

Speaking to reporters in Tehran, Esmaeili said, "The media of imperialism is frightened of the names of Iranian legends; the sunlight

of Hajji Qassem scares the bats."

This is not the first time an account of an Iranian official has been locked on global social platforms.

Facebook and Instagram in January 2020 suspended or locked the accounts of many Iranian people and officials who urged "harsh revenge" on General Soleimani's assassins, in line with what was promised by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. ▶ Page 8

## Interview

### Gen. Soleimani's legacy is imperishable: Chilean analyst

TEHRAN - Pablo Jofre Leal, a Chilean analyst, believes that Lieutenant General "Qassem Soleimani is one of those characters who never dies."

"After all, his legacy is imperishable," adds Jofre Leal, author of Palestine: Chronicle of the Zionist occupation (Palestina: crónica de la ocupación sionista).

In an interview with the Tehran Times, the Chilean analyst describes General Soleimani as "a visionary man" who dedicated himself to "the cause of the freedom of the peoples."

He says General Soleimani reminds one of Commander Ernesto Che Guevara's famous quotation: "Remember that the highest rank that the human species can reach is to be a revolutionary."

Following is the text of the interview:

**How do you see the character of General Soleimani considering that he has spent his entire life fighting against imperialism?**

Qassem Soleimani is the type of human being that reminds us of Commander Ernesto Che Guevara's famous quotation: "Remember that the highest rank that the human species can reach is to be a revolutionary." In the case of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, his life, his passing through his earthly journey, the attitude with which he faced the challenges of his society, in his time with all the challenges that this involves, was that of a true revolutionary. ▶ Page 5



## FM meets leaders of monotheistic religions, minority MPs

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian met on Saturday with the leaders of monotheistic religions and sects, as well as the representatives of religious minorities in the parliament.

While congratulating the new Christian year, the foreign minister described the coexistence of monotheistic religions throughout history in the geography of Iran as a unique example.

## EU lawmaker says Gen. Soleimani's 'heroic struggles' against terrorism will never be forgotten



TEHRAN - A member of the European Parliament has condemned the U.S. for assassinating Iran's top anti-terror hero Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, saying "their heroic struggles against terrorism will never be forgotten."

In a tweet on January 3, Clare Daly said the "legacy" of these two commanders "will prevail," Press TV reported.

"Thinking today of #GeneralSoleimani & #AbuMahdiAlMuhandis unlawfully assassinated by the #US on this day two years ago. #Anti\_terrorism\_hero. Their heroic struggles against terrorism will never be forgotten..their legacy will prevail," Daly wrote.

Daly embedded in her tweet a Twitter post by the Iranian embassy in Croatia, in which the diplomatic mission had hailed General Soleimani's effort to restore regional peace and fight against the Takfiri Daesh terrorist group.

The embassy said former U.S. president Donald Trump, who ordered the assassination, aimed to save Daesh terrorists by conducting such a heinous act.

"Efforts to bring peace to the region and the fight to save defenseless people from a demon called Daesh, were great concerns of Qassem Soleimani. With the assassination of the Iranian General, Trump sought to save Daesh criminals and protect Obama's legacy," the Iranian embassy tweeted.

General Soleimani, the commander of the IRGC Quds Force, and his Iraqi comrade al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were martyred along with their companions in a U.S. drone strike authorized by Trump near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020.

Both commanders were highly revered across West Asia because of their key role in fighting Daesh in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

The comments by Daly comes as Iranians, Iraqis, Syrians, Lebanese and Yemenis marked the memories of General Soleimani and al-Muhandis in recent days.

### General Soleimani "never dies"

Pablo Jofre Leal, a Chilean analyst, believes that General Soleimani is "one of those

characters who never dies."

"After all, his legacy is imperishable," adds Jofre Leal, author of Palestine: Chronicle of the Zionist occupation.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Leal says General Soleimani has turned into an example in the peoples' struggle against hegemony.

By assassinating General Soleimani, Trump and his inner circle sought to strengthen the support of the Zionist lobby and facilitate his reelection bid, the Chilean analyst remarks.

He says General Soleimani reminds one of Commander Ernesto Che Guevara's famous quotation: "Remember that the highest rank that the human species can reach is to be a revolutionary."

Leal also says the U.S. assassinated the Iranian commander "because he represented the ideals that imperialism and its Zionist and Wahhabi partners hate the most: idealism, courage, honesty, bravery, dedication, sacrifice, international solidarity."

In 2014, when Daesh unleashed its campaign of terror in Iraq, Iranian military advisers rushed to the aid of Iraqi armed forces on Baghdad's request, helping them reverse Daesh's gains and ultimately liberate their entire homeland from the unimaginably violent group some three years later.

### Iran's helping hand in fight against Daesh

In April 2021, Mick Wallace, an independent Irish member of the European Parliament (MEP), also described the rise of Takfiri terror in Iraq as an outcome of Washington's 2003 invasion of the Arab country, saying neighboring Iran, unlike the U.S., gave Baghdad a helping hand in its fight against the Daesh terrorist group.

In a post on his twitter account, Wallace said former U.S. president Barack Obama refused to help Iraq, but Iran assisted the Arab country with its counter-terrorism battle.

Daesh "grew from destruction of Iraq following illegal US Invasion, with many coming from prisons where US tortured inmates. When Iraq asked Obama for help to fight ISIS, he refused —Iran came to their aid," Wallace tweeted.

At the same time, he added, the U.S. along with the Israeli regime and its Persian Gulf Arab allies armed the Takfiri militants to wreak havoc in Syria.

Wallace, who paid a visit to Iraq in 2021, hailed Iran's support for Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) or Hashd al-Shabi, the government-sponsored umbrella group that made sacrifices in confronting Daesh elements.

"The Iraq Government sought US + EU help to fight ISIS in 2014 but were refused. It was Iran who helped Popular Mobilization Forces to fight ISIS which grew from illegal US Occupation — Europe should be grateful for PMF sacrifices, not demonize them," he tweeted.

Mikhail Ulyanov, on Saturday confirmed the meeting of the working group.

"The Working Group on sanctions lifting met today in the course of the #ViennaTalks on #JCPOA to assess the current state of affairs in this area," Ulyanov tweeted.

Over the past two days, intensive talks have been held at different levels and formats as well.

## Sanctions-removal working group meets in Vienna

TEHRAN — Late on Saturday a working group meant to lift oppressive sanctions on Iran convened a session with experts from Iran the P4+1 group in attendance at Palais Coburg in Vienna.

Bilateral and multilateral meetings will also continue at the level of the heads of delegations.

The Russian negotiator in the Vienna talks,

## Acting Taliban FM arrives in Tehran

TEHRAN — Acting Taliban Foreign Minister Mulavi Amir Khan Muttaqi arrived in Tehran late on Saturday.

A Taliban Foreign Ministry spokesman said during the visit, Amir Khan Muttaqi will discuss political, economic, transit and Afghan refugees in Iran with officials in Tehran.

Muttaqi is leading a high-ranking delegation.



From page 1 ▶ Meshkini said that the new Iranian government is trying to deepen relations with neighbors and remove the obstacles, especially with the countries bordering the Persian Gulf. He added that Iran is serious and faithful in this regard.

"If we consider the index of strengthening relations with Central Asian countries for the reason of economic affairs, during the last four months, our economic relations with these countries have grown by more than 200% in some cases. In the case of the Caucasus, you can see that in one month, four meetings were held at the level of senior officials, and at the end, a meeting took place between the two presidents of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan in Ashgabat. We also recently had another relationship with Turkey, and we made efforts towards Iraq and, above all, towards the countries south of the Persian Gulf. The number of delegations has increased and the Islamic Republic is doing its best," he stated.

He added that naturally, these actions are followed by reactions because there must be communication between the two parties.

"We often saw positive reactions. Even in the case of Saudi Arabia, these reactions have been 'seemingly' positive," he noted.

Meshkini noted that the use of the word "seemingly" about Saudi Arabia is intentional.

"The reason is that if we examine the history of the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia, even after the revolution, we come across different eras. In the 1980s, for example, you noticed that Saudi Arabia provided \$40 billion in aid to the Baathist regime (of Saddam Hussein). In each period, we see some actions. For example, now, the Iran International network has been launched, which daily plots against Iran."

According to the senior MP, over the past 40 years, wherever there has been a conspiracy against Iran, "Saudi dollar" has been behind the scenes.

"That's why we understand these. The fact is that the Islamic Republic of Iran and countries such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey are important and influential countries in the region. We know that if these countries become allies and good relations are established between them, a synergy will take place and a center of unparalleled power in the world will be formed. A power pole that controls the world's energy and can be a global power pole, and as a result all different countries can benefit from it. But when there is friction, not only the pole is not formed, but even the power of all three countries decreases and wears out. For this reason, Iranian rationality has always sought to establish relations with these countries," he noted.

Meshkini noted that the rationality of Iranian politics has always sought to strengthen communication, but when Iran looks at the past and previous experiences, it naturally becomes cautious.

# Iran ready to mediate between Saudi Arabia and Yemen: senior MP



In May 2021, the King of Saudi Arabia sent positive signals for communication, the MP revealed.

"We took it and we did not reject it, but when we put it alongside other actions, we have to look at it with caution. For example, during a visit to the (United Arab) Emirates by a Saudi official, they issued a statement against the Islamic Republic of Iran," he noted.

According to the MP, by putting this statement and those signs together, it naturally leads the people to the conclusion that they should look at cases with caution even in positive situations.

"That's why I said on television that we have shown both goodwill and seriousness, but this past is also behind us. We have an eye on the past and look at the current actions," Meshkini reiterated.

However, the MP added that there are obstacles that both sides can overcome regardless of actions and reactions.

Talks were held and signals were sent on the sidelines of the Baghdad summit in Iraq, he said, adding when these messages were sent, there was a positive reaction from the other party.

"For any relationship, there must be a political will with rationality based on the interests of both parties. We understood this and came to this conclusion. They, too, must come to this conclusion and mutual understanding, and when they come to this mutual understanding, change in their behavior must be visible, but doing contradictory behavior does not show this," he pointed out.

The MP exemplified the Saudi support for the Al-Ahwazi terrorist group, as well as the presence of a Saudi security official at a gathering of the Mojahedin-e-Khalgh (MEK) terrorist organization in Albania, or the launch of the Iran International network as destructive behavior.

"You also see the behavior of Saudi Arabia towards Hezbollah in the 2006 war. In the last 40 years, we have witnessed that Saudi dollars have been used more against the interests of the Islamic Republic of

Iran," he lamented.

Meshkini added that for any relationship there must be a political will with rationality based on the interests of both parties in view of the fact that Saudi dollars have been indirectly used against Iran.

"We have experience that the last time that the Americans took action against an ally of the Islamic Republic of Iran in South America, they received \$60 million in funding from Saudi Arabia. Even in pressure against the allies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi dollars have been used. We do not want to highlight these and prevent restoration of relations with a country like Saudi Arabia. They were not too keen on the media, but in any case, when we sit at the negotiating table, the past naturally comes to mind," he noted.

He added, unfortunately, Saudi Arabia approaches Iran whenever it encounters a problem that it cannot solve, exemplifying the 9/11 aftermath in which Saudi citizens were blamed for the incident.

Meshkini added that he prefers to say that the negotiations are held at expert level, as experts must work out the issues between the two countries first, and when it comes to a result, it becomes a formal negotiation.

"When the formal negotiation is not concluded, the cost for both countries will increase. For this reason, it is better to discuss the details in expert discussions. Now it may be at the expert level as well as at the security level. After all, Iran and Saudi Arabia are in a region with a high level of security risks. For some reason, the level of risk is high and there are many security components in the region, so naturally a layer of these expert negotiations can be security, but in any negotiations there are usually expert and preliminary negotiations," he remarked.

### "Yemen is an independent country"

The MP noted that Iran has received a message regarding mediation in the Saudi-Yemen conflict in the talks.

"Our answer is clear. Yemen is an independent country and we are interested in resolving the dispute between Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Why do they need us? Yemen is their own neighbor. They can go and solve it themselves. When both sides asked us and agreed that the Islamic Republic should come to arbitrate, we did not reject it, provided that both countries wanted us to do so. Yemen is an independent country. The two countries should solve their own problems, but if both sides ask Iran, we will help," he pointed out.

Meshkini said in his opinion Saudi Arabia also approached to Iran in the case of Yemen, which had a problem.

"We are ready to mediate, provided that both parties want us to be a mediator," he reiterated.

He added that the art of politics is to turn conflicts into friendship and bridge the gap through communication.

### We are ready to answer Saudis' questions

Meshkini went on to say that the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee is receiving news about Iran-Saudi talks from the Foreign Ministry, but both sides are still far from this stage until the issue reaches an assuring point and the necessary preparations are made for the start of formal negotiations.

"Fortunately, there is no problem with us communicating. We have both good faith and seriousness, if the Saudis have a question, we are ready to answer and clarify it," he remarked.

However, Meshkini asserted that Iran has many questions about Saudi Arabia.

"We have many questions about Saudi behavior. For example, the Saudi support for (Abdalmalek) Rigi. They supported these terrorists for years in one of our provinces," he noted.

Rigi was leader of the Jundullah terrorist group who was captured in 2010.

### Saudis' remarks in UAE shows they are captives of Iranophobia

On allegations that Iran is a threat to Saudi Arabia, Meshkini said that Iran never acts in a way that causes cost and damage to its neighbors.

"We are sorry that some neighboring countries are captives of the Iranophobia project. Examples are the remarks made by Saudi officials in the Emirates. We are not malicious about the genuine components of Saudi power. We oppose the presence of foreign countries in the region and their mischief in the region. We oppose giving part of the countries and their territory to establish a base for foreign countries. We are not opposed to the components of their authority. We consider their authority as our authority. Why do these countries align themselves with trans-regional powers and our enemies when foreigners interfere in our internal affairs? These issues must be clarified," he concluded.

## Foreign Ministry updates sanctions list of individuals involved in Gen. Soleimani's assassination

TEHRAN — On Saturday afternoon, Iranian Foreign Ministry updated its list of counterterrorism designations over the American individuals involved in the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

The following is the statement released by the Foreign Ministry:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in accordance with the "Act on Countering Violations of Human Rights and Adventurist and Terrorist Actions of the United States of America in the Region", particularly, Articles 4 and 5, and in addition to the American individuals including Donald Trump[1], Michael Pompeo[2], John Bolton[3], Mark Esper[4], Gina Haspel[5], Christopher Miller[6] and Steven Mnuchin[7] and also Matthew Tueller[8], Steven Fagin[9] and Rob Waller[10] who were listed respectively on 19 January 2021 and 23 October 2020, identifies and imposes sanctions as set forth in the abovementioned Act on the following persons for the role they played in the terrorist act of the United States against Martyr General Qassem Soleimani and his companions, in glorification of terrorism and in violating the fundamental human rights. The said persons, as the case may be, have taken part in decision-making, organizing,

financing, and carrying out the terrorist act or have otherwise justified terrorism which is a threat to the international peace and security through supporting such egregious terrorist attack.

It is reiterated that United States by conducting the callous terrorist act has flagrantly breached its international legal obligations in countering terrorism and terrorism-financing, in particular, the obligation to refrain and desist from organizing and participating in terrorist acts and the obligation to respect, protect and fulfill human rights which constitute internationally wrongful acts entailing the international responsibility of the United States. As such, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in conformity and compliance with its human rights obligations and also duties in combating terrorism and countering terrorism financing, in particular the state terrorism perpetrated by the United States and to ensure the international peace and security, imposes the sanctions as stipulated in the Act on the said persons on a reciprocal basis.

The Islamic Republic of Iran underlines that the heinous terrorist act will not in any manner diminish the resolute determination and resolve of the Islamic Republic of Iran in following the path of the revered General Soleimani in fighting terrorism

and terrorist groups, in particular, the U.S.-backed terrorist groups.

In the light of the above and taking into account the provisions of the "Act on Countering Violations of Human Rights and Adventurist and Terrorist Actions of the United States of America in the Region", all relevant national authorities will take appropriate measures for effective implementation of the sanctions set forth in the Act.

- [1] Former President of the United States
- [2] Former United States Secretary of State
- [3] Former United States National Security Advisor
- [4] Former United States Secretary of Defense
- [5] Former United States Director of Central Intelligence Agency
- [6] Former United States Acting Secretary of Defense
- [7] Former United States Secretary of Treasury
- [8] The United States Ambassador to Iraq
- [9] Former Deputy Chief of the United States Embassy in Iraq
- [10] The United States former consul-general in Erbil

# Iran urges West to show good faith in Vienna

TEHRAN – In his latest comment on the Vienna talks, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said the talks are moving in the right direction.

“Talks in Vienna are proceeding in the right direction. Iran’s initiatives brought the talks back on track in a constructive atmosphere,” he said on Twitter. He also called on the West to show good faith. “It is now up to the Western side to show good faith and commitment for a good deal,” Amir Abdollahian noted.

The assessment of the Iranian foreign minister on the status of talks came amid a remarkable media silence on the talks. The current round resumed in the early days of the new year after a short break due to the end-of-year holidays. Unlike the previous rounds, the negotiators have been getting down to brass tacks ever since they returned to the Austrian capital amid warning from the Western side that time is running out for a deal. Iran has said that it also wants a deal as soon as possible but it prioritizes substance over pace.

Due to Iran constructively engaging in the talks, progress is being reported by almost all concerned parties. Currently, the negotiators are focusing on four major points: Iran’s nuclear activities, U.S. sanctions, verification, and guarantees. The progress in question has largely been made in the nuclear sphere, according to press reports.



Citing sources familiar with the talks, the Qatari-owned Al-Araby Al-Jadeed reported that progress on the four negotiating files of lifting sanctions, nuclear issues, verification, and guarantees is unbalanced, but it is continuing, albeit slowly.

The newspaper pointed to intransigence on the part of the U.S. in terms of lifting its sanctions. The issue of sanctions removal is not witnessing “remarkable progress, and the United States has not yet shown willingness to make more concessions in this regard than it did in the sixth round.”

As regards verification and guarantees, the sources noted that the Western side agreed in principle to Iranian demands related to verifying the sanctions removal and offering guarantees, but there are deep disagreements on these issues.

The Western side rejected an Iranian demand that Iran should be given a period of months for verification, and

instead offered to provide Iran with a days-long verification period, according to Al-Araby al-Jadeed.

The sources indicated that “Iran has accepted to stop some nuclear measures such as enriching uranium at high levels during the verification period if an agreement is reached, but it insists that its full compliance with all its nuclear commitments stipulated in the nuclear agreement depends on its full realization of the lifting of sanctions.”

As for guarantees, the Biden administration still insists that it can’t force the next U.S. administration into honoring a revived 2015 nuclear deal. Whether the negotiators will be able to bridge the remaining gaps before the end of January is an open question. The Qatari newspaper also quoted Iranian sources as saying that the progress made during the negotiations until this moment is not deep and does not constitute a major breakthrough.

So far, the draft text of the documents, which is about 150 pages, includes 12 brackets that need to be addressed if a deal is to be reached, according to the Beirut-based Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar.

Citing an Iranian source familiar with the matter, the Lebanese newspaper said the most important contentious topics are “the number and type of sanctions that are to be lifted,” “the mechanism for verifying their lifting,” “the method of ensuring that withdrawal from the agreement will not be repeated,” and “the status of Iran’s uranium and centrifuges.”

The source pointed out that “the parties are looking for a way to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in one go.”

The eighth round will continue now, without any specific time limit, the Lebanese paper said, adding that despite the wide differences, the parties are keen for these talks to continue.

But this does not mean that the Western side is above blackmailing. Al-Akhbar suggested that there is a possibility that the remaining European parties to the nuclear agreement will resort to activating the “snapback” mechanism if this round does not achieve the desired result, with the aim of putting pressure on Tehran, by returning the nuclear program dossier to the UN Security Council.

## Ayatollah Raisi receives message from Tajik counterpart

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has received a message from Tajik President Emomali Rahmon offering congratulations on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Tajik president expressed confidence that Iran and Tajikistan can further boost their relations drawing on their historical and cultural common grounds.

“Please accept my sincere congratulations and best wishes of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to Your Excellency on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, an event of remembrance for the people of the two countries,” President Rahman told Ayatollah Raisi in the message.

He added, “During this period, our countries have continuously developed practical measures in order to achieve a high level of constructive relations, find new ways to strengthen comprehensive cooperation and provide a fruitful perspective for their expansion, and we appreciate the continuation of the two countries’ efforts on this important path.”

The Tajik president continued, “Tajikistan is always in favor of the increasing development of our countries’ relations in various fields with the spirit of good understanding, cooperation and trust, preparation and implementation of plans and programs and consistent measures to achieve these goals.”

President Rahman reiterated, “I am confident that with strong determination and sincere and joint efforts of the two sides, we can enrich the relations between the two countries with historical and cultural common grounds with more significant results and in the highest interests of our peoples.”

He concluded his message, “I hope that this important event, with its new achievements, will make the relations between the two friendly and brotherly countries colorful. I wish Your Excellency health and prosperity, and for the friendly people of Iran, peace, stability, well-being and prosperity.”

Tehran-Dushanbe ties have been significantly boosted after Ayatollah Raisi assumed presidency in last August. In his first foreign visit, Ayatollah Raisi travelled to Tajikistan on top of a high-ranking

delegation to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit and held talks with his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmon.

Speaking with the Tajik leader, Raisi stressed that Iran and Tajikistan enjoy good capacities to expand ties. He said an increase in ties will pave the way for regional cooperation.

On the sidelines of Raisi’s visit to Tajikistan, officials from both sides had also met and set the goal for promoting trade ties to €500 million per year.

The delegations also signed eight cooperation documents, in different areas including tourism, labor and energy.

Earlier in June, Dushanbe had hosted the 14th meeting of the Iran-Tajikistan Joint Economic Committee.

Promoting economic relations was the major focus of the mentioned meeting which was co-chaired by Former Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Tajikistan’s Minister of Energy and Water Resources Daler Juma.

In November, Ayatollah Raisi said during a visit to Turkmenistan that his earlier visit to Tajikistan paved the way for further development of Iran’s ties with countries of the region.

Emphasizing the need to facilitate the activities of the country’s traders and exporters in order to boost and develop exports, the president said, “By attending the Shanghai summit in Tajikistan, a suitable platform has been created for the development of regional relations in the country, and we are witnessing good opportunities in the field of improving the level of relations between Tehran and Dushanbe.”

In September, Iran was welcomed into the SCO during a summit of the regional organization held in Dushanbe.

“At the end of the 21st Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), held in the Tajik capital Dushanbe, the leaders of the eight main members of the organization agreed to change the membership of the Islamic Republic of Iran from an observer member to a full member and signed the relevant documents,” the Iranian presidency said in a statement at the time. “Accordingly, the technical process of Iran becoming one of the main members of the organization has begun and Iran will henceforth cooperate and interact with member

countries as the main member of the important regional organization.”

The membership was achieved during the first foreign visit by Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi in his capacity as Iran’s president. So, it gave the Raisi team a boost at the start of their Asia-oriented foreign policy.

Iran’s joining the SCO was the first step on the path of the Raisi administration’s stated policy of strengthening relations with neighbors and regional organizations.

Addressing the SCO summit in Dushanbe, Ayatollah Raisi elaborated on this policy. “When I took over the presidency of the Islamic Republic, I introduced my foreign policy orientation as focusing on ‘economic multilateralism’ and strengthening ‘neighborhood policy’ in its broadest sense, and strengthening its presence in regional organizations,” he said.

The Iranian president added, “The combination of the Eurasia and One Road-One Belt initiatives can be an objective realization of this approach, and the vast potential of the Islamic Republic of Iran in terms of geopolitics, population, energy, transportation, human resources, and most importantly spirituality, culture and civilization can cause a significant stimulus to this outlook.”

Iran’s top diplomat, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, described the country’s membership in the SCO as “strategic” that will have an important impact on Iran’s “comprehensive” cooperation within the framework of the Neighborhood and Asia-oriented Policy.

The membership was made possible due in part to Russia’s support and diplomacy. Preparations for the realization of Iran’s joining the SCO first came to light in mid-August when Ali Shamkhan, Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, announced after a phone call with his Russian counterpart Nikolai Patrushev that Iran will soon become a full member of the SCO.

“Fortunately, the political obstacles to Iran’s membership in the Shanghai CO have been removed & Iran’s membership will be finalized,” Shamkhani said on Twitter in August.

Abdollahian also pointed out that his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov and Russian President Vladimir Putin have supported Iranian membership.

## President Raisi visits Mashhad

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi paid a visit to the province of Mashhad and met with ordinary people there.

Ayatollah Raisi, who travelled to the holy city of Mashhad on Friday morning to attend a meeting of the National Working Group on Pilgrimage, appeared in Yousefzadeh neighbourhood in one of the suburbs of Mashhad in the afternoon.

At the same time as the evening prayer, the President attended the congregational prayers in the Javad al-Ae’meh (AS) Mosque in

the neighbourhood, and then gave short speeches to the locals and worshippers at the mosque.

At the end of the ceremony, the people expressed their views and problems to Ayatollah Raisi directly.

Addressing the people of Yousefzadeh neighborhood on the outskirts of Mashhad amongst and the worshippers at Javad Al-Ae’meh Mosque (AS), Ayatollah Raisi described marriage, employment and housing as three important issues for the young people and said, “God willing, we can solve these three problems.”

Referring to the problems of suburban areas in the city of Mashhad, the president said, “Some villagers come to the cities because they feel that staying in the village will not solve their problems.”

Referring to the government’s plan to activate the rural economy, Ayatollah Raisi said, “If the rural economy is activated, the villagers themselves are not satisfied to come to the city.”

Ayatollah Raisi said, “Mashhad is a city that receives immigrants. People come from different places, and you cannot tell them not to come, and now

that they come, a step must be taken to solve their problems.”

Referring to his visit to Nematabad neighborhood of Mashhad, Ayatollah Raisi said, “In some areas of this neighborhood, there is no urban structure at all and it is necessary to give an order to the construction of these neighborhoods.”

The president said that the government, while paying attention to the housing problem, is also sensitive to the problem of youth unemployment, according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

## SPORTS

### Iranian football clubs are hurt by mismanagement

From Page 1 ▶ It’s a disgrace for the Iranian football federation’s club licensing committee and the clubs’ managers.

For many years, AFC had repeatedly challenged the major issues regarding the club licensing of Iranian giants, Esteghlal and Persepolis. But none of the high-ranking Iranian football officials heeded these warnings.

Iranian media have cited other problems for the three clubs’ exclusion from the prestigious tournament of Asian football, including sending some documents without translation, incorrect upload of some documents, etc.

It’s a devastating day for Iranian football, since the mismanagement caused that the tens of millions of Iranian football fans miss the chance to see their favorite teams in the 2022 ACL.

### Esteghlal move three points clear at top: IPL

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team defeated Mes 3-2 to go three points clear of Persepolis at top of the Iran Professional League (IPL) in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium.



Kevin Yamga opened the scoring for Esteghlal in the 9th minute from the penalty spot. Godwin Mensha equalized the match in the 35th minute from the spot.

Yamga once again scored from the penalty spot just after the hour mark. With three minutes remaining, substitute Amin Ghaseminejad scored Esteghlal’s third goal. Mohammadreza Soleymani pulled a goal back in the injury time.

Earlier in the day, Persepolis were held to a 1-1 draw by Padideh in Mashhad. Masoud Zaer Kazemi scored an own goal in the 31st minute and Persepolis midfielder Vahid Amiri also scored an own goal just before the break.

In Isfahan, Sepahan earned a 2-1 win over Foolad. Soroush Rafiei (35th) and Omid Noorafkan (56th) scored for the hosts and Ayanda Patosi halved the deficit from the penalty spot in the 60th minute.

Furthermore, Sanat Naft defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman 2-0, Gol Gohar edged past Havadar 1-0, Fajr Sepasi and Tractor shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw, Nassaji defeated Zob Ahan 1-0, Paykan drew with Aluminum 1-1.

### Thori re-elected as president of Iran boxing federation

TEHRAN – Hossein Thori has been re-elected as president of Iran boxing federation on Saturday for a four-year term till 2026.

In the elections held at the Iran’s Academy Olympic in Tehran, Thori secured 26 of 42 votes cast.

Ruhollah Hosseini came second with 16 votes.

Iranian boxing has improved during the past years.

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

### Iran’s Nazemi nominated for world’s best futsal referee

TEHRAN – Gelareh Nazemi from Iran has been nominated for the best referee in the world in 2021.

Nazemi was chosen as the fourth referee of the 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup in Lithuania in October.

She is the first female referee to officiate in an Asian Football Confederation (AFC) men’s futsal competition.

Nazemi will have to compete with Nurdin Bukuev (Kyrgyzstan), Juan José Cordero Gallardo (Spain), Mohamed Hassan Hassan Ahmed Youssef (Egypt), Alejandro Martinez Flores (Spain), Valeria Nicole Palma Palma (Chile), Chiara Perona (Italy), Maria Estefania Pinto (Argentina), Antony Riley (New Zealand) and Irina Velikanova (Russia) to win the accolade.

According to futsalplanet.com, Iran’s Farzaneh Tavasoli has been also nominated for the best women’s goalkeeper in the world.

Ana Carolina Caliar Sestari (BRA/ITA), Ana Catarina Silva Pereira (POR), Bianca Castagnaro Moraes (BRA), Angelica Dibiase (ITA), Joziane de Oliveira “Jozi” (BRA), Missiara Luiza Papst “Missi” (BRA), Viktoria Sagaidachna (UKR), Silvia Agueté Outón (ESP) and Maria Sumina (RUS) have also been also shortlisted for the award.

### Iran handball suffer two losses in Spain’s tournament

TEHRAN – Iran national handball team lost to Spain and Poland in the international tournament of Spain.

The two-day event was held in Cuenca from on Jan. 6 and 7.

Spain, Iran and Poland participated in the tournament. Japan were originally supposed to compete in the event but withdrew from the competition after several Japanese players tested positive for COVID-19.

Iran, headed by Spaniard Montoya Montoya, partook in the tournament as part of their preparation for the 2022 Asian Men’s Handball Championship which will be held in Doha, Saudi Arabi from Jan. 18 to 31.

Iran are pitted against hosts Saudi Arabia, Australia and India in Group B.

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

### Verheydt says he is under contract with ADO Den Haag

TEHRAN – Dutch forward Thomas Verheydt says he is under contract with ADO Den Haag.

The 29-year-old striker has been reportedly linked with a move to Persepolis.

The Eerste Divisie side striker said has received the offer but he is under contract with his current team.

“I have two-and-a-half years left on my deal. You never know what will happen,” Verheydt told omroepwest.nl.

Persepolis are looking to win the Iran Professional League (IPL) for the sixth year in a row.

The Reds sit second in the 2021/22 IPL table, one point behind their archrivals Esteghlal.

## Water storage behind Iranian dams exceeds 19 bcm



TEHRAN - Iranian Energy Ministry data indicates that currently 19.18 billion cubic meters (bcm) of water is stored behind the dams across Iran, indicating that 38 percent of the capacity of the country's dams is full.

The total capacity of Iran's dam reservoirs currently stands at 50.5 bcm, IRNA reported.

Based on the mentioned data, from the beginning of the current water year (late September 2021) up to January 4, 2022, the total volume of water inflow to the reservoirs of the country's dams stood at 10.6

bcm, 31 percent less than the figure for the last year's same period.

Compared to the figures for the previous water year, the volume of water outflow from the country's dams has also decreased by 36 percent to stand at 95.5 bcm.

The increase in temperature in Iran during summer and the decline of rainfalls across the country caused severe drought in the current year so that the energy ministry was forced to implement new programs for managing water and electricity consumption.

Out of a total of 183 currently operational dams across Iran, 52 are related to the Caspian Sea catchment area, 12 are based in the Urumieh basin, 68 dams are located in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman watersheds, 34 dams are in the Central Plateau, 11 dams are in Sarakhs catchment basin, and another six dams are located across the eastern boundary basin (Hamoun).

## Mechanism for using cryptocurrencies in foreign trade finalized

TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has announced the finalization of a mechanism for using cryptocurrencies in foreign trade, Mehr News Agency reported.

Alireza Peyman-Pak made the announcement on his social media on Friday, stating that the mechanism has been finalized in a meeting of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry and Central Bank of Iran (CBI) joint foreign currency working group.

The Iranian government approved cryptocurrency mining as an industrial activity in 2020, after which numerous companies started mining cryptocurrency across the country thanks to the extremely low-cost electricity.

In January 2020, the Iranian Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade issued more than 1,000 licenses for cryptocurrency mining units.

Iranian government currently allows cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin to be mined by the mentioned units while requiring them to sell the cryptocurrencies to the CBI.

These cryptocurrencies can be used to pay for imports, thereby reducing the chances of suppliers being punished by the U.S. because of the sanctions imposed on Iran.

However, according to the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, most cryptocurrency mining farms in Iran operate unofficially, generating cryptocurrency worth \$660 million a year, or 4-6 percent of the



world's total of around \$11 billion.

Back in July 2021, members of the Iranian parliament proposed a bill that required the government to ban all cryptocurrency payments in Iran while encouraging the mining of other cryptocurrencies as a source of state income.

The proposed legislation called "Supporting Cryptocurrency Mining and Regulation of Domestic Cryptocurrency Trade," obliged CBI to regulate cryptocurrency transactions at the national level while calling on crypto-mining farms to declare their assets to CBI.

The legislation authorized the Industry Ministry to supervise cryptocurrency mining in the country.

The ministry would license, supervise and support companies mining international cryptocurrencies aiming at raising \$500 million in cryptocurrency for the state in the next Iranian calendar year (starting March 21, 2022) and increase this by 10 percent a year.

## Kirkuk to host exclusive exhibition of Iranian products



TEHRAN - An exclusive exhibition of Iranian products is planned to be held in Iraq's Kirkuk region in early March, the portal of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) reported.

As reported, numerous Iranian companies active in various fields are going to participate in this exhibition which is scheduled to be held during March 8-12.

Having over 500 kilometers of shared borders, Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan are taking serious measures to use this capacity to expand their trade relations.

Iran has previously held exclusive exhibitions in Sulaymaniyah and the country plans to hold several other exclusive exhibitions in Iraq during the current Iranian calendar year (ends in late

March 2022).

According to Director-General of Iranian Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Office of Arabian and African Countries Farzad Piltan, TPO also plans to make the necessary preparations for the participation of Iranian companies in more than 15 international exhibitions that are scheduled to be held in Iraq in the current year.

"According to the plans of the Trade Promotion Organization for introducing Iranian products and also the country's capabilities in technical engineering services to the markets of the neighboring countries, the presence of the country in the form of national pavilions in three Iraqi international exhibitions is on the agenda for the coming months," Piltan said in July 2021.

Iran and Iraq have been taking serious measures for boosting all-out ties between the two countries and as a major exporter to the Iraqi market, Iran has played a significant role in meeting the needs of its Arab neighbor.

The two countries' presidents have previously agreed to augment trade between the two countries to \$20 billion a year and in this regard numerous trade delegations have been exchanged between the two sides and several exhibitions have been held in both countries over the past few years.

# CBI defines new programs to prevent liquidity growth

TEHRAN - Director General of Money and Credit Operations at Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has outlined the bank's new programs for monitoring the activities of banks in order to prevent liquidity growth in the country, Mehr News Agency reported.

According to Mohammad Nadali, monitoring the banks' liquidity creation, distancing banks from corporate governance and controlling the capital adequacy of banks are among the programs seriously pursued by the CBI in this regard.

Nadali put the current ratio of Iranian banks liquidity creation at 7.9, meaning that each currency unit that leaves the central bank grows 7.9 times circling in the country's banking network.

Central banks around the



world use various tools to limit the ability of banks to create liquidity, and to direct the money generated in the banking network to productive activities, the official said.

He further referred to the tools, methods and regulations that the CBI uses to limit liquidity growth in the country,

saying: "One of these tools is liquidity generation coefficient; the central bank regulates this coefficient by controlling the amount of legal deposit it receives from banks."

"In order to limit the banks' liquidity generation capacity, CBI obliges them to keep a percentage of their assets as

legal deposits with the central bank. This figure is currently about 10 to 13 percent," Nadali explained.

Alternatively, the central bank has also defined a specific liquidity coverage index for banks, based on which they are obliged to hold a percentage of their assets in portfolio. This helps preventing the banks from lending too much.

The central bank has also a new program to have more effective supervision on banks activities using new tools and modern technologies.

"In order to have more control over the banks' liquidity creation, we monitor the monthly growth in their balance sheets; we increase the legal deposit obligations of the banks that does not comply with the CBI regulations," he added.

## Iran exporting 110MW of electricity to Afghanistan

TEHRAN - Iran is currently exporting 110 megawatts (MW) of electricity to Afghanistan on a daily basis, Deputy Energy Minister for International Affairs Mohammad-Ali Farahnakian announced.

According to Farahnakian, Iran has the capacity to export 175 MW of electricity to the neighboring country, IRNA reported.

"Our country's electricity network is now connected to the city of Herat in Afghanistan and electricity transmission is carried out through three or four power transmission lines," he explained.

Farahnakian noted that the two countries are planning to implement some new projects to boost their electricity exchange to 500-600 MW.

Connecting electricity network with neighboring countries with the aim of expanding electricity exchanges is one of the programs that the Iranian Energy Ministry has been pursuing seriously over the past few years.

Outlining the Energy Ministry's major programs for the next four years, Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian has underlined electricity diplomacy and the synchronization of Iran's electricity network with the countries in the region including Russia and the Persian Gulf nations as a major focus of his plan-



ning for the future.

Referring to the synchronization of the country's electricity network with neighboring countries, Mehrabian had said: "It is possible to exchange electricity with Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey and Iraq."

Earlier this month, Farahnakian had announced that the project for synchronizing the electricity networks of Iran and Russia through Azerbaijan will start in late April.

According to the official, half of the project's primary studies have been conducted and completed and the executive operation of the project is expected to begin in late April after all three countries send comprehensive reports to the Iranian consultant of the project.

"Russia and many other neighboring countries have winter peaks consumption periods, while about 40 percent of our electricity capacity is left unused in the winter and our power plants go through an overhaul in the cold season, so we can use this capacity to supply the electricity needed by our neighbors in winter through connecting our power grid with those of such countries," Farahnakian said regarding the benefits of the synchronization project.

Back in September 2021, former Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian had announced that a research project for the synchronization of the electricity networks of Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia was underway by his ministry.

According to Ardakanian, there are two possible routes for the synchronization of Iran and Russia's power grids, one of which is through Armenia and Georgia and the other is through Azerbaijan.

The route through Azerbaijan is currently more plausible and Iran is more inclined toward this country since, in a meeting with Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev back in February 2019, Ardakanian had announced that the two countries electricity networks would become synchronized.

## Solar farms generate over 50% of Iran's renewable power

TEHRAN - Solar power plants across Iran managed to generate 455.28 megawatts (MW) of electricity in the previous Iranian calendar month (November 22-December 21, 2021), accounting for 50.38 percent of the total electricity generated by renewable sources in the country.

Based on the said data, wind power plants with 310.2 MW of power generation accounted for 34.31 percent of the total power generation by renewable sources in the mentioned month, standing in second place in the country's renewable energy basket, IRNA reported.

The share of small hydropower plants in the total renewable energy generation was also 11.58 percent in the said period, with 104.7 MW of electricity output.

Biomass power plants produced 10.56 MW of electricity to account for 1.17 percent of the total renewable electricity generation.

According to Head of Renew-

able Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) Mahmood Kamani, despite having great potential, the total capacity of the country's renewable power plants currently stands at 904.07 MW, indicating that the share of the renewables in Iran's total power generation is less than 10 percent.

The share of renewable in the power generation basket of most advanced nations across the globe has increased to more than 37 percent on average, the official said.

Kamani had previously announced that Iran has the potential to generate over 100,000 MW of electricity from solar power plants and 40,000 MW from wind farms.

**Renewable power generation capacity to increase 208% by March 2023**

Iranian Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) announced on Saturday that considering the budget allocations for the development of renewable energy

in the next fiscal year's national budget bill, the nominal capacity of renewable power plants is expected to reach 1,925 MW in the next Iranian calendar year (March 2022-March 2023).

The country is currently planning to add 10,000 MW to its renewable power generation capacity over the next four years.

Earlier this month, the Energy Ministry and some of the country's private contractors signed memorandums of understanding (MOU) for cooperation in the construction of the mentioned renewable power plants.

The MOUs were signed following the Energy Ministry's public call for the contribution of private companies in a project for developing renewable power plants in the country.

According to SATBA, after the ministry's public call, so far 153 requests for the generation of 90,000 MW have been submitted to the ministry by private companies.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian said: "When the private sector invests in this industry [the renewables], the government is obliged to return the equivalent of the investment plus its interests to the investor."

Mehrabian noted that the government has allocated over 30 trillion rials (about \$101 million) for the development of renewables in the budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21), saying that it is an unprecedented budget in this area.

Further in the ceremony, Kamani mentioned some of the Energy Ministry's plans for the development of the country's renewable energy industry, saying: "Export of renewable energy is a goal that has been targeted by the government."

"Constructing renewable power plants for the cryptocurrency miners is also being seriously considered," he added.

## TEDPIX loses 751 points on Saturday

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 751 points to 1.362 million on Saturday.

Over 5.993 billion securities worth 27.341 trillion rials (about \$92 million) were traded at the TSE, IRNA reported.

The first market's index rose 1,570 points, and the second market's index dropped 8,111 points.

TSE had lost 34,000 points (2.4 percent) to 1.363 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The government has applied several new changes in the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21, 2022) which according to experts and analysts will ensure the stock market's stability and growth in the coming years,

IRNA reported.

Reducing taxes on production units active in the stock market, strengthening the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund, eliminating subsidized foreign currency allocations, and stabilizing the ownership interest of the mines are some of the measures considered in the budget bill to support the capital market.

# Gen. Soleimani's legacy is imperishable: Chilean analyst

*Soleimani assassination has turned Iran into symbol of fight against the 'triad formed by imperialism, Zionism, and Wahhabism'*

From page 1 ▶ Not only do I say this because of what his career in the Islamic Revolution in Iran means, but also because of the whole of his journey in his life with the positive influences that his ideas have left in his country and in the entire area of Western Asia, which is expanding throughout the planet. Soleimani was a brilliant military strategist, a bold politician, a servant of his people and of those who defend their sovereignty and those who seek complete self-determination. A visionary man dedicated to the cause of the freedom of the peoples.

**In your opinion, why did the Americans assassinate General Soleimani in Iraq?**

They assassinated him because he represented the ideals that imperialism and its Zionist and Wahhabi partners hate the most: idealism, courage, honesty, bravery, dedication, sacrifice, international solidarity. The United States political and military regime decided to carry out a terrorist act that meant the death of Qassem Soleimani because they wanted to erase the footprints of a brilliant military strategist, an empathetic human being, endowed with an enormous attraction among resistance movements, helping him coordinate plans to fight the hegemonic powers.

They assassinated him because they believed that by truncating his life, they would generate a situation of forgetfulness, of leaving the struggle that animates the movements, organizations, and peoples that make up the axis of resistance. They were flatly wrong because Qassem Soleimani is one of those characters who never dies. After all, his legacy is imperishable.

By assassinating General Soleimani, former President Donald Trump and his inner circle dominated by Zionists sought to weaken Iran and the axis of resistance, continuing to subdue the reactionary Arab regimes, and above all strengthen the support of the Zionist lobby with this attack, facilitating the reelection of Trump. However, in the end, this did not happen to result in the frustration of the tycoon, stating to the Israeli media that he had expected more commitment from his allies in Israel. The precise words were "I cannot speak of this story. But I was very disappointed with the role that Israel played in that event. (...) People will find out about it at the right time."

**Two years have passed since the martyrdom of General Soleimani. How do you think the situation is for Americans in West Asia compared to two years ago?**

The facts show that the United States is a declining power, that its hegemony, questioned in the region since the triumph of the Islamic revolution in Iran since February 1979, is losing more dominance every day, and this trend will continue to go on. In the last two years, Iranian political-military respons-



es have expanded the field of action, especially the decision to send supertankers carrying energy resources to Venezuela and Syria.

The past two years have seen the intensification of actions by the resistance axis, which has been gaining many victories in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, creating a scene where the drowning ship of Zionism can be seen. Invaders forcefully left Afghanistan in August 2021 and are also being forced to leave Iraq, seemingly fewer Western troops remain in the country every day. They have had to curb their aggressive momentum in the Persian Gulf where Iranian naval forces dominate the geostrategic region.

The situation of the balance of forces every day since January 2020 to date is in favor of the resistance axis and above all in favor of the decisions made by the sovereign defense of Iran, which became a reference in the fight against the triad formed by imperialism, Zionism, and Wahhabism.

**Iran has declared that General Soleimani's main revenge is the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the region. How do you assess the withdrawal of U.S. troops from West Asia?**

As a tremendously significant and historical fact, that demonstrates the fairness of the fight against these foreign powers. To point out that the main revenge to be carried out for the crime committed against Iran and the world of resistance with the assassinations of Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al Muhandis is to achieve the exit of U.S. troops from Western Asia - as well as their allies such as the British - This indicates the withdrawal from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and finally from all those countries whose governments have served as allies, sheltering U.S. military and naval bases, allowing the presence of troops that usually serve to repress their populations who are subject to totalitarian monarchical regimes, also becoming a starting point for aggression against other countries.

**Please explain the influence**

**of General Soleimani on Latin America?**

The assassination of General Qassem Soleimani made it possible to visualize the enormous influence that his political and military leadership wielded, not only in Western Asia but also in the political movements in Latin America that oppose U.S. hegemony, such as Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. He had a popular political and military personality both in Iran and abroad and was a key figure for the positive influence the Persian nation has in the world today.

**Soleimani has turned into an example in the peoples' struggle against hegemony.**

Qassem Soleimani's opinion on the negative powers that influence our peoples reflects the objectives of liberation, which undoubtedly puts our peoples in the trench of the enemies of imperialism and its partners in the continent, where Zionism also has

roots. From media point of view, it is not by chance that after the assassination of Soleimani, the political, military, and media caste in Latin America, ordered by the United States, began a campaign applauding itself on the murder of this popular hero.

The ultra-reactionary newspaper, The Wall Street Journal, through its editorial field, said, "If the end of Soleimani is the beginning of a more muscular North American policy towards Tehran, it is good news for Latin America", a sign of the hopes they had for diminishing Soleimani's values and importance in Latin America and Soleimani's referential role in the peoples' struggle for their liberation.

**What were the reactions of Latin American people to the assassination of General Soleimani?**

Among Latin Americans, many movements and organizations believe in the struggle of the people for their freedom. Among those who see the United States and its allies as the enemies of their peoples, the death of Qassem Soleimani marked a fundamental and crucial reference point, losing a distinguished figure that had not been seen since the assassination of Commander Ernesto Che Guevara. Soleimani has turned into an

example, in the peoples' struggle against hegemony. His loss was a tragedy without doubt, but also the starting point of the triumph over the hegemonic powers, and the criminal Triad made up of imperialism and its fighting dogs such as Zionism and Wahhabism.

In this framework, undoubtedly the murder of Soleimani was a moment of deep sadness, pain, and anguish. In general, our struggles tend to have moments of setbacks in the struggle for defeating those who want to make the world their field of financial-political operations and aim for military dominance, subjugation, and colonization. The initial reaction of pain has transformed over time into an example to follow, a catalyst, a vital point of reference, and a sign of triumph.

**Do you think that U.S. power has been increasing or decreasing in recent years?**

Without a doubt, it has been decreasing and the examples are evident:

1. Its withdrawal from Afghanistan.
2. Its clear and measurable decline in Iraq and its loss of influence even on those groups that used to be guided by Washington's aggressive policies.
3. Their direct and indirect defeats in the aggression against Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, at the hands of increasingly powerful resistance forces.
4. The alteration of their support for alliances against Iran and Russia in Western Asia, which makes their impunity for conducting attacks in the region fade away.
5. The impossibility of being able to deter Iran's decisions to support the resistance movements in Western Asia, and its efforts to effectively support nations like Venezuela, thousands of kilometers from its border.
6. The null participation of Washington in resolving regional conflicts where other powers participate such as Iran and Russia, for example, in the South Caucasus, in the negotiations for the achievement of peace in Syria, or the JCPOA where Iran has determined the working agenda.
7. The sustained and concrete advance of regional and world powers of the Russian Federation and China and the increasingly relevant role of Iran in what was the domain of imperialism and its allies.

**By assassinating General Soleimani, Trump and his inner circle sought to strengthen the support of the Zionist lobby and facilitate his reelection bid.**

## Blair's knighthood triggers public outrage

From page 1 ▶ Indeed the conclusions of Chilcott inquiry into the Iraq war states: at the time of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Saddam Hussein did not pose an urgent threat to British interests; intelligence regarding weapons of mass destruction was presented with "unwarranted certainty"; peaceful alternatives to war had not been exhausted; the UK and the U.S. had undermined the authority of the United Nations Security Council; the process of identifying the legal basis was "far from satisfactory"; and a war was unnecessary.

Blair's critics describe the former British Premier as a war criminal who has the blood of one million Iraqis on his hand and should be prosecuted for war crimes and crimes against humanity at the international criminal court.

The petition, which has surpassed one million signatures, says Blair "caused irreparable damage to both the constitution of the United Kingdom and to the very fabric of the nation's society. He was personally responsible for causing the death of countless innocent, civilian lives and servicemen in various conflicts".

"For this alone he should be held accountable for war crimes. Tony Blair is the least deserving person of any public honour, particularly anything awarded by Her Majesty the Queen. We petition the prime minister to petition Her Majesty to have this honour removed."

Following Blair's departure from office, he has been accused of being amazingly pathetic in his role as a "peace envoy" in West Asia. The rest of his time, he has been receiving as much money as possible from extremely authoritarian regimes and dictators in exchange for "advice".

As Blair went on to live a comfortable life, making tens of millions of dollars in "appearances", those who exposed war crimes in Iraq would be and continue to be punished.

Labour MP Richard Burgon has written on social media that "It says a lot about what is wrong with our system when, after being one of the leading architects of the Iraq war, Tony Blair is honoured with a knighthood while Julian Assange, who exposed war crimes in Iraq, faces extradition to the USA and a lifetime in prison."

Assange who many analysts and pundits say should be awarded has been languishing for more than one thousand days in his continuous incarceration at Britain's maximum-security Belmarsh Prison. The journalist's legal and human rights have been trampled on. For more than two years now hundreds of doctors have repeatedly demanded Assange be released to a university teaching hospital or freed; warning that he may otherwise die in prison.

This is while Britain's Stop the War Coalition has described the decision to award Blair with knighthood as a "kick in the teeth for the people of Iraq and Afghanistan".

The anti-war movement says "it's pretty incredible given that this year, we've seen the collapse of Afghanistan, which [was] Tony Blair's first major war. We have 8 million people on the edge of starvation in Afghanistan now. We have Iraq in a terrible state now, nearly 20 years after the invasion".

The movement added "it's a kick in the teeth for the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, and a kick in the teeth for all the people who protested against the war in Iraq and who have been proved right".

As much as the title is ceremonial, nevertheless it means the British public and media should refer to him as "Sir Tony" which brings about a sense of privilege for a man who will now undoubtedly believe that his reputation has been re-established. In fact the privilege bestowed upon the former British premier has



only widened the argument about the institution that hands out the "honor" of becoming a Sir.

Blair was a recipient of "the Knight Companion of the Most Noble Order of the Garter". That's his new title in its entirety. The knighthood is the highest possible ranking Blair was appointed to by the Queen in the UK's new year honours list. This knighthood is also the only appointment that is received without advise from the Prime Minister's office. There are now 21 non-royal companions in this ultra special knighthood club out of a maximum of 24.

Almost all decisions made by the Queen are actually made by the Prime Minister but this decision was taken by the Queen herself.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesperson confirmed that it had not been the Prime Minister's choice to award Blair the honor saying "appointments to the Order of the Garter are a matter for Her Majesty the Queen, there is no involvement of the prime minister or government, so it wouldn't be one for me to comment on".

That has put into the spotlight again the role of the British monarchy and what analysts say is the unfair system of distributing honors to the public.

British tax money goes towards the British monarchy's lavish lifestyle. A centuries' old monarchy that has never been elected and never held accountable. Questions have been raised about whether a referendum is needed in the near future to gauge public opinion into the centuries old undemocratic Royal Family that has pretty much turned into a useless tourist attraction today.

And it's this royal family that decided to award the "war criminal" Tony Blair with such a high honor, to the astonishment of so many; since he left office, Blair's legacy has been described as toxic mainly because of the Iraq war. It begs the question about whether the Royal Family saw the two million people who protested in the British capital London alone against the war before the invasion started.

It was the largest demonstration in Britain's history and if the Royal Family thought time would make people forget, the uproar and the outrage Blair's knighthood has triggered clearly points to a disastrous error in judgement.

Worse still, the fact that Blair lied to the public, parliament and to the armed forces makes the decision even more catastrophic. Whether the Queen will reverse the move is something that remains to be seen but it has certainly proved extremely unpopular with the British public who are directing their anger mostly at the Royal Family.

It's perhaps fair to argue that not many will refer to Tony Blair as Sir Tony; but he will always be remembered as the war criminal that escaped justice.

## U.S. judge sentences Ahmaud Arbery's killers to life in prison

A judge in the United States has sentenced three men to life in prison for the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, whose fatal 2020 shooting in the state of Georgia fuelled mass protests against racism and vigilantism.

Georgia Judge Timothy Walmsley ruled on Friday that Travis McMichael, 35, and his father, 66-year-old Gregory McMichael, would spend life in prison without the possibility of parole, Al Jazeera reported.

Walmsley also sentenced the McMichaels's neighbour, William "Roddie" Bryan, to life in prison, but he will have

the possibility of parole after 30 years - the minimum sentence allowed for murder under state law.

A Georgia jury in November found the three men - who chased and fatally shot Arbery in February 2020 as he jogged through the coastal community of Satilla Shores - guilty of a range of charges, including felony murder.

Walmsley said at the hearing in Glynn County Court in Brunswick on Friday that he gave the McMichaels the harshest sentence open to him in part because of their "callous" words and actions captured on video.

"It was a chilling, truly disturbing scene," the judge said of the frame in a cellphone video of the killing where Travis McMichael begins to lift his shotgun at Arbery while the 25-year-old is about 20 feet away.

He said Arbery was "hunted down and shot and he was killed because individuals here in this courtroom took the law into their own hands".

During the sentencing hearing earlier on Friday, Arbery's relatives had asked the judge to show no leniency to the three men. Defence lawyers had pleaded for leniency, saying none of the three men ever intended for Ar-

bery to be killed.

Arbery's sister, Jasmine Arbery, recalled her brother's humour, describing him as a positive thinker with a big personality. She told the judge her brother had dark skin "that glistened in the sunlight", thick, curly hair and an athletic build, factors that made him a target to the men who pursued him.

"These are the qualities that made these men assume that Ahmaud was a dangerous criminal and chase them with guns drawn. To me, those qualities reflect a young man full of life and energy who looked like me and the

people I loved," Jasmine Arbery said.

Ben Crump, a civil rights attorney representing the Arbery family, welcomed the sentences on Friday, saying the convicted trio "stalked, cornered and lynched" Ahmaud Arbery in broad daylight. He called the outcome of the trial a sign of progress in the fight for racial justice.

"But we are not done. The tragic murder of Ahmaud Arbery must not be in vain," Crump said in a statement. "America, we are showing progress. Now is not the time to retreat. We must continue to demand better from law enforcement, from

our justice system and from society as a whole."

Arbery was running through Satilla Shores, Georgia, on the afternoon of February 23, 2020, when the McMichaels decided to grab their guns, jump in a pickup truck and give chase through the predominantly white community.

A graphic video of Arbery's killing leaked two months later, driving mass public protests against anti-Black racism and vigilantism, as well as calls for accountability. It also prompted Georgia state officials to take over the case and ultimately charge the trio.

## Permanent handicrafts market to open in Yazd



With its winding lanes, a forest of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, referring to as a 'don't miss' destination by almost all travel associates in the region.

Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.

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

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

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

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

TEHRAN - A permanent handicrafts marketplace will be launched in the historical texture of the UNESCO-listed Yazd, central Iran, Yazd's deputy tourism chief has said.

Opening such marketplaces are intended to promote handicrafts, introduce people to handicrafts and traditional arts of the province and expand the handicraft market in the province, Mohammadreza Dehqan Mehrjerdi announced on Saturday.

The benefits for artisans who attend this market are supporting participation in exhibitions at local, national, and international levels, creating export, marketing, and sale conditions for handicraft products, and assisting in attracting investors and advertising and promoting handicraft and traditional arts, the official added.

In July 2017, the historical texture of the city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

## Golestan turned into major agritourism hub



TEHRAN -The northern province of Golestan has turned into Iran's major agritourism hub, an official with the tourism ministry has announced.

"Golestan province offers a great deal of potential for tourism and is the country's center for agritourism," CHTN quoted Nader Zeinali as saying on Saturday.

Last August, a memorandum of understanding was signed at the provincial level to help develop agritourism across the lush green province.

The MOU also aimed to facilitate issuing agritourism permits to selected farms, identifying and developing tourism capacities in the agriculture industry, monitoring the performance of certified farms, and forming advisory committees, and working as a team that will assist the agricultural sector in attracting domestic and foreign tourists.

Back in July, provincial tourism chief Ahmad Tajari announced that agritourism is being developed in the northern province of Golestan by launching new tourist farms.

"The province has issued seven agritourism permits in less than a year, which is expected to attract more

tourists."

Such permits are granted to eligible farm owners in the country to launch agritourism businesses, aiming to set certain standards in a move to ensure the quality of such services in the country.

A total of 720 billion rials (\$2.4 million) has been invested in these tourist farms, which are expected to generate almost 120 job opportunities, the official added.

As tourism and agriculture are the two axes to the development of the province, their combination serves a crucial role in creating jobs and economic prosperity, particularly in the villages, he noted.

Golestan is reportedly embracing some 2,500 historical and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus - a one-millennium-old brick tower - which is of high architectural importance as an exemplar and innovative design of the early-Islamic-era architecture.

Narratives say the majestic tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. The UNESCO comments that Gonbad-e Qabus bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

# A birthplace of musical instruments

From page 1 ▶ With the advent of Islam in the 7th century CE, Persian music, as well as other Persian cultural taints, became the main formative element in what has, ever since, been known as "Islamic civilization".

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, Persian musicians and musicologists overwhelmingly dominated the musical life of the Muslim lands. Farabi (d. 950), Ebne Sina (d. 1037), Razi (d. 1209), Ormavi (d. 1294), Shirazi (d. 1310), and Maraqi (d. 1432) are but a few among the array of outstanding Persian musical scholars in the early Islamic period.

In the 16th century, a new "golden age" of Persian civilization dawned under the rule of the Safavid dynasty (1499-1746). However, from that time until the third decade of the 20th-century Persian music became gradually relegated to a mere decorative and interpretive art, where neither creative growth nor scholarly research found much room to flourish.

Since the early 20th century, once again, Persian music began to find broader dimensions. An urge to create rather than merely perpetuate the known tradition, and an interest to investigate the structural elements, has emerged.

Today, in a progressively modernizing society, they are generally engaged by broadcasting and television media. They are also active as teachers both privately and at the various scholars and conservatories of music.



Lute player statue from the time of the Parthian Empire, kept at the Netherlands's Rijksmuseum van Oudheden.

When it comes to structure, perpetuated through an oral tradition, the classical repertoire encompasses a body of ancient

pieces collectively known as the "radif" of Persian music. These pieces are organized into twelve groupings, seven of which are known as basic modal structures and are called the seven "dastgah" (systems).

They include : Shur, Homayun, Segah, Chahargah, Mahur, Rast-Panjgah, and Nava. The remaining five are commonly accepted as secondary or derivative dastgahs. Four of them: Abuata, Dashti, Bayat-e Tork, and Afshari are considered to be derivatives of Shur; and, Bayat-e Isfahan is regarded to be a sub-dastgah of Homayun. The individual pieces in each of the twelve groupings are generally called "gushe", but each gushe has a specific and often descriptive title. A gushe is not a clearly defined musical composition; rather, it represents modal, melodic, and occasionally rhythmic skeletal formulae upon which the performer is expected to improvise. Thus, the radif submits an infinite source of musical expression. The flexibility of the basic material and the extent of the improvisatory freedom is such that a piece played twice by the same performer, at the same sitting, will be different in melodic composition, form, duration, and emotional impact.

For those with a passion for music, it is worthy to spend a few hours in one of the museums dedicated to the music of the nation. An example is the Isfahan Music Museum located in the Armenian quarter of Jolfa in Isfahan. It showcases 300 regional and national musical instruments.

## Historical arch bridge in Lorestan being strengthened, reinforced

TEHRAN -The historical bridge of Chalanchulan, an arch brick monument located in the western province of Lorestan, has undergone some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The project involves strengthening, reinforcing, lightening, and cleaning the historical structure, Seyyed Amin Qasemi said on Saturday.

Last year, a restoration project was commenced on the Qajar-era (1789-1925) bridge, which had suffered damage from heavy flooding in 2019.

With 120 meters long, Chalanchulan Bridge was built on the remains of an ancient structure dating back to the Sassanid era (224 CE to 651). It has six brick arches and its columns are made of stone and brick. The structure was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1997.

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

design, the structure itself normally requires less material than a beam bridge of the same span.

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

Recent innovative arch bridges include high-speed railway (HSR) bridges, concrete-filled steel tubular and precast concrete arches, high-performance concrete or ultra-high performance concrete arches, and steel-concrete composite arches, and feature innovative erection methods. Recent research has been dedicated to the shape and magnitude of equivalent geometric imperfections, fatigue detailing, erection methods, reduction of the arch's self-weight,



and new materials for arches, hangers, and ties.

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.

## Hydro tourism to be developed in western Iran

TEHRAN -The western province of Kordestan plans to boost its hydro tourism, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

The water resources of the province offer a great opportunity to diversify Kordestan's tourist attractions, Arman Vatandust said on Saturday, CHTN reported.

Dams and rivers across Kordestan province, with their unique scenery and special attractions, have great potential to grow and develop hydro tourism of the province, the official added.

It is necessary to attract investment and the participation of private investors for the development of tourism in the dams of the province, and this opportunity must be used for the prosperity of hydro tourism with care and principle, he noted.

In March 2021, Deputy Energy Minister for Water and Wastewater Affairs Ghasem Taqizadeh Khamesi announced that 30 dams across Iran have been planned to be turned into tourist destinations.

A total budget of 1,300 billion rials (some \$4.3 million) has been allocated to develop the tourism infrastructure of the dams, the official said.



Water tourism of the dams is estimated to generate 3,000 direct jobs when fully operated, he added.

The official also noted that 182 national dams have been built in the country, most of them have the potential to be tourism destinations.

Back in May 2019, the Ministry of Energy inked a memorandum of understanding with the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ministry to lay the ground for launching dam tourism.

Though much of Iran is composed of arid and semi-arid lands, the country has many rivers, waterfalls ponds, and wetlands offering scenic vistas to nature lovers and eco-travelers,

backpackers, birdwatchers, and fishers.

Hydro tourism or water tourism involves traveling to places specifically to take part in water-based activities. Some individuals who do not wish to partake in water-related activities embark on water tourism trips so that they can visit tourist sites that sit close to bodies of water such as lakes, rivers, dams, oceans, etc. Water tourists are regularly independent travelers, although some travel businesses do organize group trips.

While water tourism often includes active chases, some water tourists visit islands and shore regions to join more relaxed pursuits such as diving

or swimming. Travel businesses organize tours of coral reefs and arrange for local tour guides to preside over excursions on which travelers can swim with local marine life such as dolphins or even sharks. Some tour operators also cater to families who are primarily focused on swimming and tanning rather than interacting with aquatic life.

Water trips occasionally involve inland destinations such as lakes and rivers. Holidaymakers can sail or swim on lakes while many rivers are ideally suited to white water rafting. Additionally, some leisure businesses operate water parks that contain swimming pools, water slides, and areas for kayaking or canoeing.

The name Kordestan refers to the region's principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuq period), that name was given to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains.

It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran's Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century.

# \$690m budget proposed for population growth

TEHRAN – The budget bill for the next year (March 21, 2022), has proposed 190 trillion rials (nearly \$690 million) for childbearing and population growth, IRIB reported on Saturday.

The decline in the marriage rate, followed by a dramatic decrease in childbearing, has sounded the alarm of the aging population, an issue that has forced government officials to enact legislation to support the population growth and the youth.

By a decree issued by President Ebrahim Raisi, the "Law on Family and Youth Support" approved by the Majlis (Iranian Parliament) was notified to the Ministry of Health and the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs.

The Guardian Council approved the law on November 17, 2021 to implement a population growth and family support plan for 7 years to change the declining trend of childbearing.

The plan stipulates health insurance for infertile couples, providing services and facilities to working women, providing health and nutri-



tion support packages to mothers and children, educational opportunities for student mothers, providing livelihood support to families, and ongoing medical services to pregnant women.

The budget will be provided to four responsible bodies of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science, and the Presidential Office.

## Demographic issue

Today, the country's fertility rate has reached about 1.6 children per

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

While 1,594,000 births were registered in the [Iranian calendar] year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016), the downward trend continued annually to the point that the number of births reached about one million in the [Iranian calendar] year 1399 (March 2020-March 2021).

In other words, we lost more than

550,000 births in five years.

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

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

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

Seyed Hamed Barakati, deputy health minister for family and school population, said in May 2020 that Iran's population growth rate has decreased to less than one percent for the first time over the past four decades.

## Iranian expats launch 200 domestic startups



TEHRAN – Over 200 startups have been launched by Iranian entrepreneurs abroad, creating employment opportunities for 2,400 graduates so far.

The cooperation program with Iranian specialists and entrepreneurs abroad is one of the plans designed and implemented by the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology to cooperate with Iranian elites abroad.

Over the past four years ago, one of the basic programs has been the creation of suitable conditions for the attraction of Iranians abroad,

including specialists, elites, investors, and entrepreneurs in various businesses, but the scope in accordance with the requirements of the time and necessities has become more widespread.

This program is being implemented with the aim of using the scientific and professional capacity of Iranian researchers and specialists and establishing relations with selected scientific, technological, and industrial centers of the country.

So far, more than 2400 Iranian expatriates have cooperated with scientific and industrial centers in the country in the path of scientific and technological development.

Research and technological projects such as postdoctoral, technology start-ups, and holding lectures and specialized workshops to help Iranian experts abroad communicate effectively with selected science and technology centers, are among the

goals of this program.

The progress, made in startups, research, and academia since 2015, has led to the return of 2,000 Iranian specialists and graduates from 400 prestigious and top universities in the world.

## Over 2400 Iranian expatriates have so far cooperated with domestic scientific and industrial centers.

Iran has also implemented a plan to return elites from the top 100 universities in the world. Through a national model, the facilities are provided for their return by creating technology parks, innovation centers, and factories.

The plan was able to bring back 2,000 Iranian students from around the world over a three-year period.

About 500 Iranian researchers have returned home over the past four years to transfer their knowledge and expertise to the country's universities, according to the vice presidency for science and technology.

## Unemployment hits lowest rate in 25 years

From page 1 ▶ The highest jobless rate of 15.3 percent was recorded in Hormozgan Province on the Persian Gulf coast.

### Joblessness on the rise

The latest employment report released by the Statistical Center reflects the growing trend of unemployment in Iran.

This summer (June 22-September 22, 2021), the working population amounted to 62,976,422 people (all people between 15 and 65 years old), which shows that their number has increased by about 709,000 compared to last summer.

However, the active population accounted for 25,900,000 people, whose number has decreased by 0.7 percent compared to last summer.

Among the active population, more than 23.4 million people were employed, which has declined by 0.6 percent compared to last summer, a difference of more than 130,000 employees.

There were 2,496,086 unemployed people in the country during summer, showing an increase of 0.1 percent compared to last summer when the number of unemployed was 2,477,350. So, the unemployment rate has risen from 9.5 to 9.6 percent.

During the spring (March 21-June

21), the active population was estimated at 25,967,000 people, the unemployed were about 2,291,604 people and the unemployment rate was 8.8 percent. Also, the number of employees was 23,676,000, demonstrating an increase of 713,000 people.

## However, a lower jobless rate does not necessarily mean creating more jobs over the past year.

Overall, what has happened shows a decrease in the active population over the last two years.

Iran's unemployment rate has been above 10 percent for the last 10 years, and this rate is estimated to have peaked in 2014, when esti-



mates reached 14 percent, according to Statista website.

In 2020, Iran's unemployment rate was estimated to amount to 10.96 percent of the total labor force.

The country's economy has also been in a recession, which has exacerbated the difficulties to meet the employment demands of its inhabitants.

In times of a struggling economy, it is typically more difficult to create jobs and introduce people to the labor force.

## Elderly's share of national budget up 5-fold

TEHRAN – A total of 500 billion rials (about \$18 million) has been proposed for the implementation of the National Document for the Elderly in the next year's budget bill (March 2022-March 2023), which represents a fivefold increase.

The growth of the aging population is one of the major challenges that the country will face in the coming decades; For this reason, there should be programs in all provinces to improve the health, physical, social and economic conditions of the elderly.

The elderly population in Iran is increasing rapidly as there were 7.46 million senior citizens in the [Iranian calendar] year 1395 (March 2015-March 2016), which has now reached 8.8 million, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Over the last 5 decades, the elderly's population has increased from about 5 to 10 percent, and it is predicted that this rate will triple in the next 50 years.

The National Document for the Elderly thoroughly focuses on various aspects of the elderly's lives by meeting six prime objectives of income and livelihood, health, training and employment, and building an empowering environment, promoting the cultural level of society in the field of aging, and developing the infrastructure required for aging, he explained.

According to this document, it is necessary to see the duties of the devices in relation to aging in future budgets.

For implementing the National Elderly Document, at least a hundredfold increase in the aging budget is required, Hesamoddin Allameh, head of the secretariat of the National Council of the Elderly, said.

The document will be implemented in three areas of health, welfare, and support, but we do not yet have comprehensive plans and full support coverage in this area, he lamented.

Referring to a fivefold increase in the National Document for the Elderly, he stated that in the next year's budget bill, a sum of 500 billion rials (about 1.8 million) has been proposed.

### Aging Iran

From 1976 until today, Iran was a very young population with an average age of 22 years, while it has reached an average population of 32 years, which means that the country got 10 years older.

The United Nations forecast for 2050 shows that four regions of North America, Western Europe, Southeast Asia (Iran), and Oceania (New Zealand) will have older people over 30 percent, which is different from Western countries in this area.

In a period of 5 years, about 16 percent has been added to the country's elderly.

The country's population growth is less than 1.7 percent, while the growth of the elderly is 3 percent.

The aging population is 4 times the growth of the population. If the situation continues like this, we will reach a point where the proportion of the productive population, i.e. between 15 and 65 years old, will be very low.

The decline in the marriage rate, followed by a dramatic decrease in childbearing, has sounded the alarm of the aging population, an issue that has forced government officials to enact legislation to support the population growth and the youth.

### Challenges brought by aging phenomena

Saleh Ghasemi, a demographer, referring to the consequences of aging, stressed that all responsible institutions and organizations should be ready to deal with premature aging in Iran.

In the face of this crisis, the responsible organizations must think of a solution for the labor force, as some Western countries have been forced to accept immigrants due to labor shortages, he highlighted.

He went on to note that with the arrival of immigrants in the country, the culture of families and the level of social employment will be affected.

Stating that the elderly need the most services and infrastructure in terms of social, economic, and health services, he said that it also threatens the country's security, and the elderly population growth needs more welfare and social institutions, which affects the policies and capacities of the country.

If the trend continues, a huge amount of funds is needed to provide the population with insurance pension and two related organizations will be bankrupt, he lamented, adding that serious planning is needed to deal with the crisis. Highlight: It is predicted that the elderly population will triple in the next 50 years.

## Precipitation rises by %86 compared to long run

TEHRAN – Since the beginning of winter (December 22, 2021), the amount of rainfall was accompanied by a growth of over 86 percent compared to the long-term average, IRNA reported on Saturday.

The precipitation rate during autumn (September 23-December 21, 2021) was not very favorable, as the Meteorological Organization has considered this autumn one of the driest seasons in the past 50 years.

The latest report of the National Center for Drought Warning and Monitoring Center shows that since December 22, the country received 28.7 mm of rainfall, which shows an increase of 15.4 mm compared to the long-term period, amounting to 86.6 percent.

Since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2021), the amount of rainfall that poured over the country was 68.5 mm, which shows a decrease of 10.9 percent compared to the long-run average of 76.9 mm.

In most of the country's catchments, rainfall has been less than the long-term average, so that the highest rainfall shortage occurred in the east and

south of the country.

### More drought predicted

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, Ahad Vazifeh, head of the national center for drought and crisis management, 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.

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON JANUARY 8

New cases	701
New deaths	26
Total cases	6,204,925
Total deaths	131,847
New hospitalized patients	168
Patients in critical condition	1,889
Total recovered patients	6,050,483
Diagnostic tests conducted	42,742,805
Doses of vaccine injected	121,434,219

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## COVID19-: Iran reopens schools under strict health protocols

Over 15 million students attended schools nationwide on Saturday for the new school year under strict health protocols to protect teachers, staff, and students against the coronavirus pandemic.

The opening bell of the new academic year was rung symbolically by President Hassan Rouhani at a girls' high school in downtown Tehran.

The back-to-school ceremony is officially inaugurated by the president each year, as he rings the bells in a symbolic gesture at a chosen school.

Mohsen Haji Mirzaei, Education Minister, symbolically attended the virtual festival.

More than 15 million students started the new school year in 116,000 schools across the country, Haji Mirzaei stated. This year, education is followed in three forms of in-person, virtual, and television-based, but our priority is school attendance, he noted, highlighting, all schools should strictly follow the health regulations so that the students are protected.

## بازگشایی مدارس با پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی

بیش از ۱۵ میلیون دانش آموز سال تحصیلی جدید را با رعایت پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی آغاز کردند.

زنگ آغاز سال تحصیلی به صورت ارتباط تصویری در مراسمی به دستور رئیس جمهور در دبیرستانی در تهران نواخته شد.

محسن حاجی میرزایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش در این مراسم گفت: بیش از ۱۵ میلیون دانش آموز سال تحصیلی جدید را در ۱۱۶ هزار مدرسه آغاز کردند.

وزیر آموزش و پرورش در این مراسم گفت: امسال آموزش دانش آموزان به سه شکل حضوری، مجازی، و تلویزیونی دنبال می شود. اما اولویت ما آموزش حضوری دانش آموزان است. لافزود: همه مدارس باید شیوه نامه های بهداشتی را به طور جدی رعایت کنند تا مشکلی برای دانش آموزان پیش نیاید.



JANUARY 9, 2022

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He is the wisest and the most knowing man who advises people not to lose hope and faith in the Mercy of Allah and not to be too sure and over-confident of immunity from His Wrath and Punishment.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:11 Evening: 17:28 Dawn: 5:46 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:14 (tomorrow)

## Hafez, most popular of Persian poets



Tomb of Hafez, Shiraz.

Part 4

Hafez very often is called an aref. The application of this term depends on what is meant by it. If by aref is meant a person of wisdom and insight, broad-mindedness and understanding, given to reflection on human destiny, the transience of life, and the vanity of our worldly concerns, a man who would not go for the dogmatic rigidity of formal religion and the intervention of self-appointed guardians of faith in the daily lives of believers, but would prefer the devotion of truly pious men and sets high value on purity of heart and kindness towards others rather than pretentious observation of religious ordinances—in other words, a benevolent sage—there is no reason to deny that epithet to Hafez.

He has an enticing way of implanting in the midst of expressing his passionate love or describing the perfection of the beloved, or conveying the wonders of wine, a line or two of wise observation, moral maxim or broad comment on life that transport the reader to a world of enlightening contemplation or consoling thought.

On the other hand, if by aref is meant a “mystic,” that is, a person who believes in the theory and practice of Sufism, is attached to a certain Order or the circle of a Sufi mentor (pir) or a khaneqah, or allows the clarity of his mind to be clouded by the irrational and obfuscated by the woolly thinking of some Sufis and their belief in miraculous deeds ascribed to their saints, then the epithet is a misnomer.

While it is clear that Hafez distinguishes sincere, self-effacing, and godly mystics from the false ones, he does not belong to any Sufi school of thought, but chooses to be entirely free and independent of any such attachment.

He is very much a man of normal sensibilities with an unmistakable appetite for the beauties and pleasures of life; he serves a number of patrons with his panegyric ghazals and expects to receive rewards: 224.1, “If the stipend reaches (me) it is to be spent on flowers and wine” (wazifeh gar berasad masraf-ash gol ast o nabid).

He is eager to have the necessary material means to enable him to enjoy a good life adorned with music, outings, partying with friends, and having the pleasure of saqis’ services.

Confusing Hafez’s lack of fanaticism, his broad world view, and his contemplative and moral musings with “mysticism” implies a subjective interpretation of his poetry.

It should be noted that in Hafez’s time the

Persian cultural climate was so saturated with expressions of mystical thought that it was nearly impossible for anyone to avoid them.

The currency of Gnostic ideas and expressions, however, did not entail a deliberate attachment to Sufi tenets or practices. Today, even an atheist speaker of Persian cannot avoid the use of a large number of expressions with Khoda or Allah as their component: Khoda nakonad “God forbid,” Khoda hafez “good-bye,” Khoda midanad “God knows,” en-sha Allah “God willing,” and so on.

In the same way, expressions or ideas such as tariqat (the way) or pir (spiritual guide), or the body’s being the cage of the soul, the soul’s belonging to another world, love’s being a gift of God to man differentiating him from angels, or the necessity of a guide for spiritual journeys—all Gnostic, mystical, or Islamic concepts—were on everybody’s lips, but this does not mean that those who used them were necessarily conscious believers in their implied philosophical or religious sense.

It was simply a matter of falling in line with the cultural trend and ideological conventions of the time.

Although modern critics who have commented on Hafez have acknowledged that many lines of his poetry concerning the beloved, the saqi, and wine cannot be interpreted in any way other than this-worldly, and that love and wine refer to earthly love and grape wine, a certain timidity in denying claims for esoteric meanings and a reluctance to brush away Hafez’s mystical aura have resulted in equivocation and the adoption, at least in some cases, of a binary reading of his poems at two levels, mystical and mundane.

In the absence of reliable biographical data, the safest way to understand Hafez and fathom his beliefs and attitudes is to go by his own poems.

To impose views not sanctioned by his poetry is to make Hafez a mirror of the views of his interpreters. This may have a phenomenological validity, reflecting the historical evolution of Hafez’s image in the minds of his readers, and some post-modernist reading of Hafez may seek to establish the interaction between his text and his audiences; but if we are aiming at finding what Hafez actually thought and said, we must rely on a close reading of his Divan without pre-judgments.

Making an oracular saint and a mystic out of him, rather than a superb and truly great poet, will mean ignoring the transparency of his language and the lucidity of his diction.

Hafez’s appeal has been tremendous. He profoundly influenced the subsequent host of ghazal writers. The figures that he attacked or extolled in his poems became the common stock of Persian lyric poetry.

Glorifying wine and applauding intoxication, satirizing the zahed, the shaiikh, the preacher and other hypocrites, furnished the post-Hafezian ghazal with themes and motifs that have continued to our own day, albeit with diminished vigor after the modernist poetry of Nima and his followers gained ground.

Hafez’s own appeal and popularity, however, have survived all subsequent developments.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

## Instagram removes Iranian culture minister’s account for publishing post on Gen. Soleimani

From Page 1 ▶ Earlier last week in a letter to the directors of Meta (Facebook) and Instagram, Iran’s Ministry of Information and Communications Technology asked them “to end censorship of written material as well as photos related to the country’s top anti-terror commander, General Soleimani,” the FNA reported.

The letter was primarily sent to Mark Zuckerberg, the chief executive officer of Meta Platforms, Inc., which is the parent organization of Facebook and Instagram.

Copies of the letter were forwarded to Adam Mosseri, the head of Instagram, and the current Chairwoman of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission



Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili.

Jessica Rosenworcel.

The letter also reads, “Removal and written material related to

and censorship of the photos

and written material related to

General Soleimani, who is a well-known hero of the fight against terrorism and eradicator of the ISIS takfiri terrorist group, does not conform to any international norm.”

“Millions of Iranian and non-Iranian Instagram users have been banned from sharing photos, texts and any information related to their beloved hero, and they have not been even given any explanation in this regard nor any instructions on ways to recover their accounts,” the letter added.

“Instagram executives are expected to respect millions of users who adore this anti-terror hero and end this widespread censorship as soon as possible,” the letter concluded.

## Director Hadi Marzban’s troupe rehearsing for political romance “Dr. N.”



Director Hadi Marzban in an undated photo.

TEHRAN – Director Hadi Marzban’s troupe is rehearsing for his political romance “Dr. N. Likes His Wife More Than Mossadeq.”

He first announced his plan to stage the play in January 2020, however, the COVID-19 pandemic forced him to cancel it.

The play is an adaptation of a novel by Iranian writer Shahram Rahimian. It is about Dr.

Esfandiar N., an ardent supporter of Mohammad Mosaddeq, Iran’s former prime minister, whose great efforts to nationalize the oil industry in 1951 were nullified by the Anglo-American coup against the national icon in August 1953.

After the coup, Esfandiar was detained after refusing a call from the SAVAK intelligence services to criticize Mosaddeq in an interview. SAVAK agents know about Esfandiar’s love of his wife, Malektaj, therefore they shift the focus on Malektaj to bring Esfandiar to his knees. Now, he is faced with the dilemma of choosing between his family and political commitments.

The play is scheduled to be performed at the main hall of Tehran’s City Theater Complex in April.

Farhad Aiih will play the role of Dr. N., while Sadreddin Zahed will star as Mosaddeq.

Shiva Makinian, Zohreh Partovi, Ali Khazeni and Faezeh Zekavati are the other members of

the cast.

Marzban returns to the stage after over a three-year hiatus. He staged playwright Akbar Razi’s “Slowly with Red Rose” in 2019.

In July 2020, he said that teleplays are viable alternatives to stage performances during the coronavirus pandemic.

“Television has forgotten teleplays but if it decides to show more interest in them, we can negotiate with the managers for several teleplays every week,” Marzban said.

“I know this will not be the theater we like and expect, and the attendance of the theatergoers is very important for us. Still, we need to understand the situation; now that the coronavirus is fighting with us we need to fight back this way,” he said.

However, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting ignored his proposal.

## Iran’s Payman Maadi on Sundance Film Festival panel

TEHRAN – Iranian actor Payman Maadi, the star of the Oscar-winning drama “A Separation”, has been selected as a member for a jury of the 2022 Sundance Film Festival.

He received the Silver Bear for Best Actor at the Berlin International Film Festival for his role in “A Separation” in 2011.

Maadi co-starred with Kristen Stewart in U.S. director Peter Sattler’s debut “Camp X-Ray” in 2014 and collaborated in Japanese director Kazuaki Kiriya’s action-adventure “Last Knights” in 2015.

Along with television producer Chelsea Barnard and actress Marielle Heller, Maadi will select the winners in the U.S. Dramatic Competition, the Sundance Institute said after announcing juries for other categories of the festival, which will take place in Park City, Utah, from January 20 to 30.

Garrett Bradley, Joan Churchill



Iranian actor Payman Maadi in an undated photo.

and Peter Nicks have been selected for the U.S. Documentary Competition, while Andrew Haigh, Mohamed Hefzy and La Frances Hui will judge the films in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition.

The winners in the World Cinema Documentary Competition will be selected by Emilie Bujès, Patrick Gaspard and Dawn Porter.

Joey Soloway has been picked for the NEXT competition section, while Penelope Bartlett, Kevin Jerome Everson and Blackhorse Lowe are members of the jury for the Short Film Program Competition.

The jury for Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize is composed of Heather Berlin, Mandë Holford, Tenoch Huerta, Lydia Dean

Pilcher and Shawn Snyder. They deliberated in advance of the Festival and awarded the Prize to After Yang, directed by Kogonada.

The Iranian short films “The Fourth Wall” by Mahbubeh Kalai and “Orthodontics” directed by Mohammadreza Mayqani will be screened at the Sundance Film Festival.

The acclaimed animation “The Fourth Wall” shows a stuttering boy who transforms an Iranian kitchen into a fantastic cosmos. The father’s body becomes a refrigerator, the mother’s belly a washing machine whose spin cycle gives birth to a screaming baby. Even birds on tiles and detergents have a surprising life of their own.

The short drama “Orthodontics” tells the story of Amitis, a teenage girl who always has headgear as part of orthodontic treatment, and suddenly does something strange to her friend Sarah.

## New Persian translation of “A Matter of Death and Life” published

TEHRAN – A new Persian translation of “A Matter of Death and Life” co-written by Irvin D. Yalom and Marilyn Yalom has come to the Iranian bookstores.

Nazi Akbari is the translator of the book published by Qoqnus.

Four other Persian translations of the book by Zahra Ebrahimi, Ghazaleh Beigi, Elham Sharifi and Mehdi Azizi have been published in Iran since the original book was released by Redwood Press in March 2021.

The book relates a year-long journey by the renowned psychiatrist and his writer wife after her terminal diagnosis, as they reflect on how to love and live without regret.

Internationally acclaimed psychiatrist and author Irvin Yalom devoted his career to counseling those suffering from anxiety and grief. But he had never faced the need to counsel himself until his wife, esteemed feminist author Marilyn Yalom, was diagnosed with cancer.

In “A Matter of Death and Life”, Marilyn and Irv share how they took on profound new struggles: Marilyn to die a good death, Irv to

live on without her.

In alternating accounts of their last months together and Irv’s first months alone, they offer us a rare window into facing mortality and coping with the loss of one’s beloved.

The Yaloms had numerous blessings – a loving family, a Palo Alto home under a magnificent valley oak, a large circle of friends, avid readers around the world, and a long, fulfilling marriage – but they faced death as we all do.

With the wisdom of those who have thought deeply, and the familiar warmth of teenage sweethearts who’ve grown up together, they investigate universal questions of intimacy, love and grief.

Informed by two lifetimes of experience, “A Matter of Death and Life” is an openhearted offering to anyone seeking support, solace and meaningful life.

Irvin David Yalom, is an author of fiction and nonfiction, emeritus professor of psychiatry at Stanford University, an existentialist, and an accomplished psychotherapist.

Marilyn Yalom grew up in Washington D.C.



Front cover of a new Persian translation of “A Matter of Death and Life”.

and was educated at Wellesley College, the Sorbonne, Harvard and Johns Hopkins. She was a professor of French and comparative literature.