

Iran Can Be a Partner of Choice for Arab Allies of U.S.

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Iran, Russia, China to hold naval drill

TEHRAN— Russia, Iran and China will hold joint naval exercises, the press service of the Russian Pacific Fleet said on Tuesday.

No further details have been revealed yet.

Earlier, Russian Ambassador to Tehran Levan Dzhagaryan said in an interview with RIA Novosti that Russia, Iran and China would hold joint CHIRU naval exercises in the Persian Gulf in late 2021 or early 2022.

According to the diplomat, the main task of the exercises is to work out actions to ensure the safety of international shipping and fight against pirates.

On Sunday, a detachment of ships of the Pacific Fleet anchored in the roadstead of the port of Chabahar in Iran.

“In the port, an official delegation of the Russian Navy will take part in a planning conference to hold a joint naval exercise of warships from Russia, Iran and China,” the message conveyed to the Iranian Navy through the Pacific Fleet said.

In addition, Russian ships will replenish food, water and fuel supplies.

It is planned that during the period of fulfillment of the tasks, the ships will visit the ports of a number of states, including the Republic of Seychelles. The call will be timed to coincide with the 105th anniversary of the visit by the armored cruiser “Varyag” of the Russian fleet to the port of Victoria of the Seychelles.

Iraqi, Afghan nationals top list of arrivals in Iran

TEHRAN – Citizens from Iraq and Afghanistan were the main tourists visiting Iran during a span of 70 days from October 23 to December 22, 2021, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

Over the past couple of years, neighboring Iraq has been one of Iran’s most important markets for tourism and pilgrimage.

During the mentioned period, 226,000 people from Iraq, 103,000 from Afghanistan, 90,000 from Turkey, 22,000 from Azerbaijan, and 18,000 from Bahrain arrived in Iran.

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic hosted 11,000 travelers from Pakistan, 6,000 from Russia, 2,000 from Germany, and a total of 88,000 people from other countries.

In addition, from December 22, 2021, to January 1, 2022, some 23,000 people from Iraq, 10,000 from Afghanistan, 6,000 people from Turkey, 2,000 from Azerbaijan, 341 from Bahrain, 20,000 from Oman, 3,000 from Pakistan, 703 from Russia, 472 from Germany, and 6,000 from other countries visited Iran, the report said.

Earlier this month, the deputy tourism chief Ali-Asghar Shalbafiana announced that Iran had renewed arrangements to facilitate travels for Iraqi nationals. “For Iraqi tourists visiting Iran, a new system has been implemented to ensure their safety and comfort.”

Under this new system, named “Border to Border”, Iraqi tourists are provided with decent and standard tourism services from the moment they cross the land border or fly into the Iranian airport until the end of their journey.

The top priority of the tourism ministry is to make sure that Iraqi tourists who choose Iran for various purposes of treatment, pilgrimage, and tourism can benefit from official services, the official explained.

Services such as licensed and standard accommodation centers, travel agencies, specialized tour guides, reputable medical centers, and other facilities required for travel could be included, he added. ► Page 6



Yemen takes on the UAE

In a military statement, read by Brigadier General Yahya Saree, Yemen’s armed forces have conducted a large scale military operation against the United Arab Emirates in response to the escalation of the “U.S.-Saudi-Emirati aggression”.

According to the statement, “Operation Hurricane Yemen” targeted Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports, the Musaffah oil refinery in Abu Dhabi and a number of important and sensitive Emirati sites and facilities. The Yemeni army spokesman pointed out that the

successful operation was carried out with five ballistic and winged missiles as well as a large number of drones. The Yemeni armed forces spokesman noted that “Operation Hurricane Yemen” had successfully achieved its goals. ► Page 5

Iranian, Iraqi chambers of commerce explore co-op during joint trade conference

TEHRAN – The Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce hosted a Joint Economic and Trade Conference for the Iranian and Iraqi chambers of commerce on Monday, in which the two sides signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for establishing an arbitration center for resolving business conflicts.

The conference was attended by senior

officials from the two sides including Head of the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce Abdul Razzaq al- Zuhairi and Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, the ICCIMA portal reported.

Head of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce Yahya Al-e-Eshaq, and Head of the Iranian Parliament’s Economic Committee

Mohammadreza Pour-Ebrahimi were also among the attendees to this conference.

During the event, Zuhairi pointed to the close cultural ties between the two countries and noted that familiarity and having 1,400 kilometers of shared border can greatly support the development of the two countries’ economic relations based on common interests. ► Page 4

Who Skocic and Hajisafi voted for in the Best FIFA Player Award

TEHRAN – Iran national football team coach and captain Dragan Skocic and Ehsan Hajisafi voted for Robert Lewandowski to win the Best FIFA Men’s Player Award.

Bayern Munich and Poland star Lewandowski won the prize on Monday for the second time in a row, coming in ahead of PSG star Lionel Messi and Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah.

Lewandowski received 48 points after all of his votes from national team captains, coaches, media and fans, while Messi came in second with 44 and Salah got 39 points.

Annual sale of nano products to reach \$727m

TEHRAN – Revenue from nanotechnology products will reach up to 200 trillion rials (nearly \$727 million) by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21), anticipated Saeed Sarkar secretary of the Nanotechnology Innovation Council.

He made the remarks during the opening ceremony of the nanotechnology achieve-

ments exhibition held on Monday at Tehran Permanent International Fairground, IRNA reported.

Over the past 20 years, 850 nano products have entered the market from 25 industrial sectors, showing that the industries have accepted that nanotechnology has developed the market, he stated.

In 2006, nanotechnology export was worth \$62 million, and we predicted that nanotech exports would reach \$1 billion in 2025, but unfortunately, sanctions, currency transfers, and the coronavirus pandemic affect the amount, he lamented.

Last [Iranian calendar] year, the sale of nano goods amounted to ► Page 7

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Interview



Vast majority of Lebanese elites have contributed to the current crisis: academic

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – A professor at the Lebanese International University blames the Lebanese authorities for the political and economic crisis in the country.

“The vast majority of the Lebanese political, economic and financial leaders are the ones who have contributed to this situation, and were responsible for the catastrophe that Lebanon is best by,” Tariq Aboud tells the Tehran Times.

“These politico-economic elites themselves prevent any solutions, and they want to protect the banks from paying the cost of losses and collapse,” Aboud adds.

Lebanese truck and bus drivers and others blocked main roads in the capital and other areas on Thursday in protest to the failure of politicians to address an economic crisis that has sent the currency into tailspin and driven prices sky high.

Lebanon’s pound has collapsed since 2019 when the economy crumpled under a mountain of debt. Yet a cabinet formed in September with a promise to start fixing the economy has not met for three months as rivals argue about the conduct of a probe into the devastating 2020 Beirut port blast.

Following is the text of the interview with professor Aboud about the roots of such an economic collapse that has led to a political crisis:

How do you see the future of Lebanon in light of the current economic crisis? Is it possible to adapt to such a situation?

The future of Lebanon is bleak in light of the economic crisis and the ongoing collapse. ► Page 5

President Raisi to visit Moscow on Wednesday

TEHRAN – In his first visit to Russia since taking over as president of Iran in last August, Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi will pay a visit to Moscow on Thursday.

The President of the Islamic Republic of Iran is visiting Russia tomorrow (Wednesday) at the official invitation of his Russian counterpart, in order to expand economic, political and cultural interactions between the two countries, the official website of the Iranian president said on Tuesday.

Raisi is going to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin during his visit to Moscow.

Addressing the Duma, meeting with Iranians residing in Russia, and meeting with Russian economic actors are some of the president’s plans for the two-day trip.

The ministers of foreign affairs, petroleum and economy will accompany Raisi on the trip. ► Page 3

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Snowfall in Iran

The photo depicts a container truck is navigating Zanjan-Qazvin highway in snowfall in northwestern Iran. Snowfall has blanketed some parts in Iran, especially in the country’s north, northwest, and west. The snowfall, which has become rare, has delighted the Iranian citizens.

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Iran's nuclear progress has left U.S. with some few options: Harvard Kennedy School professor

“Iran's gains in nuclear knowledge are irreversible”



TEHRAN - Writing an article in Foreign Affairs on Monday, January 17, Matthew Bunn, a professor from the Harvard Kennedy School, analyzes different options toward Iran in regard its nuclear program and concludes that restoring the 2015 nuclear deal is the best possible option.

Following is an excerpt of the article:

After President Donald Trump pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal, Tehran began enriching uranium to higher levels and stockpiling more of it.

Iran's leaders and President Joe Biden's administration both say they want to return to the 2015 deal, but the parties remain far apart on what nuclear steps or sanctions relief should come first and how far-reaching those steps would need to be. Every day that the talks drag on without resolution, Iran's centrifuges keep spinning: in late December, European governments warned that “weeks, not months,” remained before restoring the old deal would no longer be possible.

The hard truth is that the United States now has few good options for containing Iran's nuclear program. It can persist with the no-deal status quo. It can pursue a return to the 2015 agreement and then attempt to get Iran to agree to a “longer and stronger” pact, as the Biden team has suggested. It can try for various other deals, either more or less stringent than the 2015 agreement. Or it can attempt to destroy Iran's nuclear infrastructure with a military strike, but almost certainly provoking retaliation.

Of these options, a return to the 2015 deal is the least bad. It would offer modest hope for further talks. Iran's gains in knowledge are irreversible.

By 2015, Iran had mastered centrifuge uranium enrichment, installed thousands of first-generation centrifuges, started to test more advanced centrifuges that could enrich uranium even faster, and stockpiled substantial amounts of low-enriched uranium.

The 2015 nuclear deal changed all that. In return for sanctions relief, Iran took down and stored more than two-thirds of its centrifuges, disposed of 98 percent of its enriched uranium and accepted a far-reaching set of verification measures.

Trump withdrew the United States from the accord in 2018, imposing stringent sanctions on Iran with which companies around the world were forced to comply if they didn't want to be frozen out of the U.S. market and financial system. Remarkably, Iran continued to comply with the terms of the deal for a year after the United States withdrew. But then it began to step past the deal's restraints, gradually exceeding the limits on enrichment until in January 2020 it finally announced that its enrichment program would no longer be constrained by the deal at all.

The latest reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency, published in November 2021, show that Iran has surged far past the limits of the 2015 accord. Iran has also blown past the 3.67 percent enrichment limit set by the 2015 deal and is now enriching uranium at up to 60 percent. Meanwhile, Iran's stocks of enriched uranium have grown to over

seven times the 2015 limit. And Iran is running more centrifuges than the 2015 deal permitted, including hundreds of advanced centrifuges, and testing still more advanced devices.

A return to the 2015 deal could roll back some of Iran's nuclear progress

A return to the 2015 deal could roll back some of Iran's nuclear progress, getting rid of the extra enriched uranium stocks, dialing enrichment back down to 3.67 percent, and taking the advanced centrifuges offline. But the knowledge Iran has gained can't be erased. Day by day, Iran is gaining more insight into casting uranium metal, operating and manufacturing higher-performance centrifuges, handling highly enriched uranium without causing accidental chain reactions.

Iran's rapid progress on the nuclear front has left the United States with few good options. Without a deal, Tehran's nuclear program will be essentially unfettered.

Some experts have suggested settling for a “less for less” approach—for example, getting Iran to relinquish its stocks of 60 percent enriched uranium, stop stockpiling more enriched uranium, and halt the installation of new centrifuges in return for lifting some sanctions. Such an arrangement might buy some time for talks, but it is by no means a long-term solution.

Others have urged the Biden administration to give up on reviving the 2015 deal and instead impose tougher sanctions to convince Iran to compromise, offering a “more for more” arrangement in which Tehran would accept more substantial restraints than the 2015 deal—perhaps combined with some limits on its missiles and regional activities—in return for lifting even more sanctions (and perhaps other benefits). But the current mess is the result of Trump's “maximum pressure” campaign, so there is little reason to think that more of the same will lead to a breakthrough. In Tehran, Trump's exit from the deal has vindicated those who argue that Washington will never be a reliable partner. Moreover, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's most recent budget proposal assumes that Iran's economy will grow at eight percent in the coming budget year even without a deal, suggesting that he doesn't feel much urgency to compromise. And historically, Iran has responded to Western efforts to build leverage by trying to build counterleverage of its own—which partly explains why Iran has deployed so many centrifuges, stockpiled so much enriched uranium.

A more plausible path to a longer and stronger deal would be to first return to the original deal and then attempt to lengthen and strengthen it in subsequent negotiations. That's worth trying. But because a return to the 2015 deal would require lifting many of the sanctions on Tehran, Washington's leverage for better terms down the road would be reduced.

In short, Iran's nuclear progress has left the United States with some few options. Restoring the 2015 deal won't buy as much time or safety as the original deal did, but doing so is the best of choices. A return to the deal technically constrains Iran's program and creates a flow of benefits from cooperation with the West.

The Biden administration is therefore right to try to find a path back to compliance with the original deal and from there to a longer and stronger follow-on accord. But with Iran's leadership justifiably doubting American promises, there is no guarantee it will be possible to get back to the 2015 pact. Ultimately, what is needed is a different relationship between Iran, its neighbors in the Middle East, and the West. A return to the nuclear deal would be one step forward on that long and difficult road.

Iranian president to address Russia's Duma Thursday

TEHRAN - Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will address a meeting of the Russian State Duma lower house of parliament on Thursday, First Deputy Speaker Alexander Zhukov said on Monday after a Duma Council meeting.

“On Thursday, the meeting will begin with a speech of the president of Iran,” TASS quoted Zhukov as saying.

Late last year, Iranian cabinet spokesperson Bahadori Jahromi said Raisi will visit Russia at the start of 2022 at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

On Friday, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Putin and his Iranian counterpart would take inventory of the entire bilateral agenda during Raisi's upcoming visit to Russia.

‘Raisi visit to Russia seen as continuation of balanced foreign policy’

Also, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Monday that Raisi's planned visit to Russia is the continuation of Tehran's well-balanced foreign policy course.

“The president's visit will take place after several invitations of the Russian leader and has a special meaning. It is the continuation of the government's well-balanced foreign policy course,” he said, according to TASS.

According to the spokesman, the visit's agenda will include “various issues in the spheres of culture, politics, economy, technological and humanitarian cooperation.”

Iran FM: China has been playing constructive, rational role in Vienna

TEHRAN – “China has been playing a constructive and rational role in the Iran nuclear deal negotiations, especially in the recent talks in Vienna to lift sanctions against our country,” Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian told the CGTN before wrapping up his visit to China.

Amir Abdollahian visited China on Thursday and Friday.

Amir Abdollahian also elaborated on Beijing-Tehran relations, prospects for regional cooperation, as well as the future of the Iran nuclear deal in his interview with the CGTN published on Monday.

Following is the text of the interview:

This is your first trip to China since you took office. What do you hope to achieve in this visit?

During the visit, we reached a consensus on some significant issues, including the implementation of a comprehensive cooperation agreement between the two sides. In order to implement this long-term vision proposed by our leaders for the development of Iran-China relations, both sides need a road map, so we've reached a 25-year, long-term strategic comprehensive cooperation agreement. My visit here is to discuss with my Chinese counterpart Mr. Wang Yi how to implement the plan. We also exchanged views on major international and regional issues. For instance, we still face severe crises in Afghanistan and Yemen.

In what areas can China and Iran work together in the future?

Both sides will benefit from the agreement. It covers cooperation in



a number of fields, including trade, agriculture, science and technology, as well as in cultural fields like tourism. It also includes cooperation on regional and international affairs. For instance, mutual support in international organizations. I believe the plan serves the common interests of both sides.

It's been 50 years since China and Iran established diplomatic relations. How do you view the current state of relations? What are the major challenges and opportunities?

We believe there are no challenges in our current bilateral relations. However, the bullying behavior of the U.S. has affected some of our cooperation. I also pointed out during the talks that we need to find an appropriate path within the international framework to meet the challenges posed by the unilateral acts of the U.S. We believe that multilateralism will benefit all countries. The unilateralism and bullying of the United States is not appreciated by any country. International law and cooperation provide opportunities

for all countries to enjoy rights and benefits.

You have said Iran's priority is to cement ties with neighboring Asian countries. How do you intend to go about this and what does it mean for China?

The 13th Iranian government is following the “Asia First” and the “neighborhood first” policy. As you mentioned, we have explored ideas with our Chinese counterparts under this policy, such as joint projects in some of Iran's neighbors, as well as joint initiatives to promote regional stability, security and sustainable economic development. We'll also work to help those who cannot enjoy long-term security and stability. We will work with countries with a common background on projects related to economy, trade and culture in the form of tripartite or multi-party cooperation. We expect to provide more development opportunities for neighboring countries based on this policy.

China says it's committed to persevering the JCPOA and upholding security and stability in the Middle East. Your visit comes

Russian ambassador: Economic, regional issues will feature high in Raisi-Putin meeting

TEHRAN — After five years, Iranian and Russian presidents will meet to extensively discuss bilateral, regional and international issues, according to Russian ambassador to Iran, Levon Dzhagaryan.

Dzhagaryan told IRNA news agency on Tuesday that the presidents of the two countries have had several telephone conversations so far.

“Although a phone call is also very important, it cannot substitute a face-to-face meeting. This will be the first meeting between the two presidents and this meeting is very important for both Iranians and Russians.

The Russian diplomat asserted that a wide range of bilateral issues, especially economic and regional issues, are expected to be on the agenda of the talks between the presidents of Iran and Russia.

“We hope that the meeting of the presidents of the two countries will lead to the development of cooperation between the governments of Iran and Russia in various fields,” he remarked.

We are fully prepared to cooperate with the new Iranian government

Expressing his readiness to cooperate with the new Iranian administration, Dzhagaryan said, “I am fully prepared to expand relations with Iran.”

He added that he is optimistic about the future of Iran-Russia relations in all areas, “including economy”.

He then went on to recall his experience of more than 10 years in Iran as a diplomat, noting that the policy of the Raisi administration regarding having an eye on the East is “gratifying”.

According to the Russian envoy, the Kremlin government is fully prepared to cooperate with the Raisi government and it hopes to achieve good results.

He went on to express his satisfaction with the appointment of Javad Oji as the minister of petroleum and the chairman of the Iran-Russia Joint Committee and noted that he hopes Oji will find the time to meet with his Russian counterpart to determine the date and place of the next meeting of the joint committee.

Elsewhere, Dzhagaryan pointed out that two-and-half years have passed since the previous meeting of the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee was held and it is time for the committee to convene again.

“Now it is the turn of the Russian side to host.

Holding a meeting of the joint committee of the two countries is very important for the continuation of cooperation because the two countries are implementing many joint economic projects, including the [Garmsar-Inchehboron] railway, the Sirk thermal power plant in Hormozgan and the Bushehr power plant,” Dzhagaryan outlined.

Our relations with Iran have nothing to do with anyone

He also spoke about the psychological warfare of the Western media against the relations between the two countries on the eve of the visit of Raisi to Moscow, saying, “Our relations have nothing to do with the West, North, South and East, and for us the priority is bilateral relations. It does not matter to us whether the third parties are happy or not with the expansion of Tehran-Moscow relations.”

The Russian envoy added, “You are witnessing the imposition of sanctions by the Western parties against Iran and Russia, but these sanctions have no effect on relations between the two countries.”

“We do not seek the consent of third parties to expand relations with the Islamic Republic.”

I am optimistic about negotiations

In his interview, Dzhagaryan also spoke about the process of negotiations between Iran and the P4+1 group to lift sanctions on Iran.

According to the envoy, the decision of the previous U.S. administration to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was a “wrong, illegal and a move in obvious violation of international law, especially (UN) Security Council Resolution 2231.”

He added that the Americans did not live up to their commitments at all, and now the question arises as to whether the United States can be trusted under these circumstances.

Referring to the start of the eighth round of nuclear talks in Vienna, he said, “The talks started a little difficult, but now we are very optimistic about the future of the talks. The negotiating team of the Islamic Republic, led by Ali Bagheri Kani, has shown the necessary flexibility, but in any case, it seeks to protect Iran's national interests.”

The Russian diplomat assessed the criticism against Moscow's position in siding with Iran as “unacceptable” and said that Russia has always been, is and will be on the side of Iran.

Dzhagaryan praised Iran for adhering to its obligations to the JCPOA, even long after the U.S.



withdrawal.

“The scrapping of the JCPOA was the result of an illegal U.S. action. I hope that the Europeans will also play a constructive role in the negotiations. We still have a chance to return to the 2015 nuclear deal and we must seize this opportunity,” he asserted.

He added that the Russian side is fully prepared to help advance the talks and Russian representative in the talks Mikhail Ulyanov will do his best to play a constructive and positive role in helping to advance the talks.

Dzhagaryan also evaluated demand by Iran in seeking guarantees and verification of the sanctions as reasonable and said, “You remember that European and Asian companies came to Iran after the JCPOA, but fled Iran due to the threat of the U.S. government during the Republican tenure.”

Hence, Dzhagaryan added, Iran's demands for guarantees and verification of a lifting of sanctions are “natural and based on a bitter historical experience.”

“We fully understand this.”

Dzhagaryan also said Tehran-Moscow relations as not dependent on Tehran-Washington disputes. “Whether the United States imposes sanctions or not, we are fully prepared to cooperate with Iran because both countries are victims of U.S. sanctions.”

He added that Russia has never asked the United States or the European Union to lift sanctions against it, and although it welcomes the lifting of their sanctions against Russia, thanks to sanctions, agricultural production in Russia has increased dramatically, and the Russian farmers are happy about that.

“If the West continues to impose sanctions on Russia, we will continue to impose sanctions on them,” he said.

As the Russian envoy noted, the choice is theirs, but “Russia is not a country to give up.”

“It is a myth that Russia will reduce its relations with Iran if the Vienna talks do not end successfully,” Dzhagaryan concluded.

as talks are underway in Vienna among major powers, including China, to reinstate the Iran nuclear deal. What role can China play to ensure its revival?

China has been playing a constructive and rational role in the Iran nuclear deal negotiations, especially in the recent talks in Vienna to lift sanctions against our country. During these negotiations, China is always opposed to the cruel unilateral sanctions imposed by the U.S. on countries including Iran, and condemns the bullying practices of the U.S.

During the recent negotiations in Vienna, as I mentioned in my conversation with State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, we appreciate China's support and I expressed my hope for China to continue supporting Iran's position. We also assured Chinese officials that Iran is not playing with time or trying to derail the negotiations, and that we have made constructive, positive and realistic proposals at the negotiating table in Vienna. My colleague, Mr. Bagheri, and a team of professional senior Iranian experts are working against the clock in Vienna to develop proposals.

China and Russia support Iran's constructive plan, but Western countries, including the United States, have so far offered no innovative proposals in the talks. If the parties can resume their commitments under the Iran nuclear deal, Iran will also return to commitments based on the agreement. If Iran can get the expected economic benefits from the agreement, so will all the parties.

President Raisi to visit Moscow on Wednesday

From Page 1 ► Ayatollah Raisi has already travelled to Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in line with the 13th administration's approach to maximizing ties with neighbors and regional countries.

The foreign minister of Iran and Russia spoke over the phone on Monday to discuss the visit. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed pleasure with the forthcoming visit of the Iranian president to Russia. He said all necessary arrangements have been made for this visit. The two sides described the trip as an important development in the relations between the two countries and a good opportunity to expand and deepen ties.

In September, President Putin and Ayatollah Raisi held phone talks and expressed hope to meet as soon as possible. The Russian president called for coordination between the two presidents to meet at the earliest opportunity.

Referring to the Moscow-Tehran cooperation in the field of fighting COVID-19, as well as the joint production of the Sputnik vaccine, the Russian President stressed the continuation of this cooperation.

In the phone call the Iranian president said, "We are pursuing the development and deepening of cooperation between the two countries in all dimensions".

Ayatollah Raisi also stressed the need for continued cooperation between the two countries in fighting corona, including in the field of joint vaccine production, and said, "This cooperation should continue powerfully until the complete eradication of this global disease."

In November, the presidents of Iran and Russia spoke over the phone again. In the call, Ayatollah Raisi appreciated the phone call of the Russian president and



said, "We are ready to finalize a comprehensive document on long-term cooperation between the two countries so that the process of further development of the relations and cooperation between the two countries can be implemented as soon as possible."

He said that Tehran and Moscow share common views on many international issues, adding, "Countering unilateralism and strengthening multilateralism are among the common grounds of the two countries."

Ayatollah Raisi stressed the need for cooperation between the two countries on regional issues, and said, "We consider the continued presence of outsiders in Syria illegal and against the will of the Syrian people and government because it threatens the stability and security of the country."

Referring to developments in Afghanistan, the Iranian president said, "We consider the presence of ISIS in Afghanistan dangerous for the region and the country, and we must be aware of the dangers of this conspiracy."

Ayatollah Raisi stated, "The Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to help establish an all-inclusive government with the participation of all ethnic and political groups, and we believe that the formation

of such a government can guarantee the security of the country."

He continued by appreciating Russia's position in defending Iran's nuclear rights and the need to lift all sanctions against the Iranian nation, emphasizing, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is very serious in the negotiations and we are equally serious in ensuring the rights of our nation to lift sanctions as well."

The president also welcomed Russia's initiative for stability and peace in the Caucasus region. The two sides also stressed that "any change in the geopolitical state or change of borders of the countries in the region is not acceptable."

Ayatollah Raisi thanked the Russian leader and government for contributing to Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), as well as providing COVID-19 vaccines for Iran.

In the same phone call, Putin said that Tehran and Moscow share common position on many issues, adding, "Moscow supports Tehran's proposals in drafting a new document on long-term cooperation between the two countries, and we are determined to make it finalized and implemented as soon as possible."

Emphasizing that Moscow attaches great importance to improving the level of economic relations and finalizing joint investment program with Iran, the Russian president said, "We are witnessing positive inclinations for increasing the level of bilateral, regional and international cooperation, and there is no doubt that the development of cooperation will accelerate."

Referring to the two countries' cooperation on regional issues, especially Syria, Putin said, "By working together, we were able to preserve Syria's independence and destroy the terrorist hotspot in the country. Of course, we must continue our close cooperation, especially in various regional areas."

Putin also expressed support for the rights of the Iranian people on the nuclear issue and expressed hope that in the future negotiations, the parties would have sufficient political will to get out of the current situation.

Expressing concern over the situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, Putin said, "To increase the level of trust and cooperation in the region, we seek to launch a 3+3 consultative mechanism, and we hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran will support it."

The Russian president concluded, "Russia is determined to continue cooperation in the fight against COVID-19 and sending vaccine shipments to Iran."

The Russian news agency TASS reported on Monday that President Raisi will address a meeting of the Russian State Duma lower house of parliament on Thursday.

"On Thursday, the meeting will begin with a speech of the president of Iran," TASS quoted First Deputy Speaker Alexander Zhukov as saying.

Iran can be a partner of choice for Arab allies of U.S.

TEHRAN – With the U.S. withdrawing militarily from the region, Iran is best positioned to become the fulcrum of any security cooperation between the countries of the West Asia region.

After long decades of military domination over the region, the military imperium of the U.S. in the region is on the decline. The U.S.'s declining military presence in the region is best evidenced in the disorderly withdrawal from Afghanistan which invoked another Saigon moment has created anxiety and concern in many capitals in the region.

U.S. allies in the region, particularly the Arab states of the Persian Gulf region, have been looking at alternative options to secure their security in the post-American era.

A series of events taking place over the last few years and months have reinforced the belief that the Arab allies of the U.S. may one day wake up to the news that the U.S. has withdrawn its military assets from the Persian Gulf region just as it did with Afghanistan.

The Afghan withdrawal is one such event. The Biden administration carried out a chaotic and disorderly withdrawal from Afghanistan that led to the rise of the Taliban, the very same group the U.S. fought against for two decades.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has recently described the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan as "escape," calling it a prelude to America's withdrawal from other countries in the region.

"Look at the situation of the U.S. They fled from Afghanistan in that way. And in Iraq, they were forced to pretend that they had intended to withdraw their forces – of course, our Iraqi brothers should pursue this matter vigilantly. They were forced to announce that from now on, they will only play an 'advisory' role. In other words, they are acknowledging that they will not and cannot have a military presence there anymore. You should also look at the status of the U.S. in Yemen and Lebanon," the Leader said.

General Frank McKenzie, the outgoing commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), has confirmed in a private meeting that "Iran is still pursuing a strategic objective of ejecting the United States" from the region, the Tehran Times has learned.



The scene of Afghans clinging to and then falling from a U.S. airplane taking off from the crowded runway of Kabul's airport aroused concerns among the Arab states of the Persian Gulf.

A growing sense of abandonment is taking root in the Persian Gulf, prompting Arab leaders to mull options for alliances for the post-American region.

With the U.S. leaving the region, a unique opportunity comes along for the countries of the region to establish better relations based on cooperation.

Iran is the best option for the Arab states to work with after the U.S. withdrawal. These countries can secure their countries by taking advantage of Iran's vast military capabilities. This is possible if Arab states of the Persian Gulf shed their inhibitions and patch up their relations with Iran.

On the other hand, Iran has repeatedly expressed interest in closer cooperation with its Arab neighbors, which seems to be discovering the potential of Iran in various spheres.

In McKenzie's words, Iran has gotten "overmatch" – a level of capability in which a country has weaponry that makes it extremely difficult to check or defeat. "Iran's strategic capacity is now enormous," McKenzie said according to the New Yorker. "They've got overmatch in the theatre—the ability to overwhelm."

The American general repeated this assessment in the private meeting, telling participants that Iran's ballistic missile force has given it "an overmatch ability" in the region. McKenzie described the missile force as "the crown jewel" of Iran's military capability that is "very, very highly" valued by Iran.

In his detailed assessment of Iran's military

capabilities, McKenzie admitted in the meeting that "over the last five years" the military capabilities of Iran have "significantly" changed. "Their ability to build and deploy ballistic missiles to theatre depth is significant, and those missiles are accurate," McKenzie admittedly said.

He then described how accurate the Iranian missile strike was against Ain al-Assad airbase. "When they stuck our base at al-Assad, they hit within tens of meters of their target. The only reason we didn't take more casualties was because we had the ability to redeploy before they took that strike," the American general said wryly.

He described Iran's missile force and land attack cruise missiles as well as drones as "new capabilities in the Iranian basket of weapons."

Interestingly, McKenzie pointed to the resounding failure of U.S. economic pressures in preventing the development of Iran's military capabilities.

"I don't think you're gonna force a fundamental change in the Iranian policy through economic sanctions. That's just not the view I have. Look over the last five years, we've applied withering economic sanctions to Iran. And they have built a first-rate ballistic missile force while those sanctions have been in place," McKenzie pointed out.

The remarks are in stark contrast to what McKenzie has been saying during his tenure as the commander of CENTCOM which directly deals with Iran's sphere of influence. McKenzie, a holdover from the Trump administration, is one of the Iran hawks in the U.S. military.

McKenzie's duplicity is not limited to his assessment of Iran's growing military capabilities. He also revealed the truth about a motto undeservedly used by STRATCOM: Peace is our profession.

McKenzie said this motto has nothing to do with the responsibilities of CENTCOM.

"I always have discussion with STRATCOM about the motto 'peace is our profession' and I challenge that. Actually, I think in CENTCOM, we are not saying peace is our profession; rather the ability to deliver powerful combat effects when the United States needs. It is the nature of our profession," McKenzie said.

IRAN IN FOCUS

JANUARY 19, 2022

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Iran not an easy team to beat: Maryam Irandoost

TEHRAN – Iran's women's football team coach Maryam Irandoost says that they are not an easy team to beat in the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup despite they are debutants.



Iran will open the campaign with a match against India on Thursday in Group A at the D.Y. Patil stadium in Navi Mumbai.

"Despite our lack of experience, our team are motivated, and work hard. We have reached this level and are ready for the tournament," Irandoost said in pre-match press conference.

"We have analyzed the Indian team, and are aware that they are strong and fast. The opener is one for everyone to look forward to," she added.

"Iran are debutants in the competition but we are not an easy team to beat. We are here to show the Asian teams how powerful we are.

"Our team could be a role model for the Iranian women athletes. The condition for the country's sportswomen has started to develop and is getting better day by day," Irandoost stated.

"Australia, China, South Korea and Japan are favorites to win the title but we are here to do our best as well," Irandoost concluded.

The 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup will serve as the final stage of Asian qualification for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand (Regulations Article 4.6), in which Australia already qualified automatically as a co-host.

Five teams will qualify directly for the World Cup via the knockout stage (including play-offs for fifth place or possibly sixth place), and two more teams will advance to the inter-confederation play-offs.

Hazfi Cup: Mes Rafsanjan, Nassaji march on to quarters

TEHRAN – Mes Rafsanjan and Nassaji football teams defeated their rivals in Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 16 on Tuesday.

Mes edged past Padideh 1-0 in Rafsanjan. Mohsen Azarbad scored the only goal of the match in the 106th minute.

Nassaji beat Gol Gohar 3-1 in Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium in Isfahan. Morteza Mansouri, Karim Eslami and Reza Jafari were on target for Nassaji and Reza Shekari scored Gol Gohar's solitary goal.

Second Division side Khalij Fars Mahshahr defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman 2-1 courtesy of goals from Abbas Tahmasebi and Mostafa Badavi. Hadi Mirjavan found the back of the net for Naft from the penalty spot.

Paykan and Esteghlal match was canceled after several players of Esteghlal tested positive for COVID-19.

On Monday, Persepolis, Mes Kerman, Aluminum and Kheybar Khorramabad had booked their place in quarterfinals.

Erik Lamela beats Iran's Taremi to win Puskas Award

TEHRAN – Erik Lamela defeated Mehdi Taremi and Patrick Schick to win the goal of the year.

Now at Sevilla, Lamela won Puskas Award for his 'rabona' goal during Tottenham's north London derby clash against Arsenal last season.

Porto forward Taremi's strike against Chelsea in the Champions League in April came second in the list.

Patrik Schick's long-range goal for Czech Republic against Scotland during Euro 2020 finished in third place.

The Puskas Award, established by FIFA in 2009, is an annual honor given to the player "judged to have scored the most aesthetically significant goal, regardless of championship, gender or nationality and scored without the result of luck or a mistake and in support of fair play."

Captain Taherkhani confident of Iran's chance

TEHRAN – Iran women's football team captain Behnaz Taherkhani says that they want to do their best in the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup.

Iran will begin their campaign against host India in a Group A match on the opening day of the Continental Championship on Thursday. Chinese Taipei, and China are the other two teams in the group.

Nicknamed 'Team Melli Baanovan' (Ladies National Team), Iran played its first International match as recently as 2005, in the WAFF West Asian Women's Football Championship, when they beat Syria 5-0. It has come a long way since then, and are currently ranked 70th in the world, and 14th in Asia in the FIFA rankings.

"We are extremely excited, and happy to be a part of the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022. It is a proud moment for us, and we will do our best to be successful," said captain Behnaz Taherkhani at the official pre-match press conference.

"Our aim is to gain a lot of experience from this tournament. We know we have a long way to go, but being here is a good start.

"We have analyzed India but want to show how strong we are. I am sure we will play good in the tournament. We are waiting for such a tournament for a long time and it's time to do our best," Taherkhani concluded.

Iranian tennis player Safi to compete in Australian Junior C'ships

TEHRAN – Iranian tennis player Meshkatolzahra Safi left Tehran on Monday to participate at the 2022 Australian Open Junior Championships.

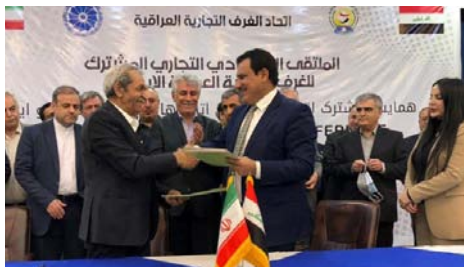
She will be accompanied by her Serbian coach. In the competition.

The Australian Open Junior Championships is one of the four Junior Grand Slam tournaments played as part of the ITF Junior 18/u world circuit.

The 2022 Australian Open is a scheduled Grand Slam tennis tournament that is scheduled to take place at Melbourne Park, from 17 to 30 January 2022.

It will be the 110th edition of the Australian Open, the 54th in the Open Era, and the first Grand Slam of the year. The tournament will consist of events for professional players in singles, doubles and mixed doubles. Junior and wheelchair players will compete in singles and doubles tournaments.

Iranian, Iraqi chambers of commerce explore co-op during joint trade conference



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (L) and Head of Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce Abdul Razzaq al-Zuhairi exchange signed MOU documents in Iraq on Monday

From page 1 ► "Iraq's annual trade is a large figure, of which we hope Iran will have a big share," the official stressed.

He further expressed satisfaction with the signing of the mentioned MOU, saying: "We are very pleased to sign a joint memorandum to reduce barriers to economic cooperation between the two countries. The aim is to reduce the problems in the way of the activities of the two countries' businessmen by establishing a joint arbitration panel."

"It is natural to have disputes in trade and we are expected to make a significant contribution

to the development of economic relations by establishing this joint arbitration panel," he added.

Elsewhere in this gathering Shafeie delivered a speech, saying: "We have come together in this conference to use the existing opportunities to develop economic relations for a better future. I need to thank Mr. Abdul Razzaq as well as the Iranian ambassador to Iraq for their coordination in this regard."

He pointed to the presence of the head of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber, along with the managers of a number of specialized commissions, economic organizations, and private sector companies active in the fields of technology and engineering services, oil, gas and petrochemical, construction, agriculture, home appliances, metal structures, steel, and polyethylene pipes, transportation and food industries in the conference, saying: "Hopefully, the talks will yield fruitful results for the two countries' private sectors."

Headed by Shafeie, the Iranian trade delegation had arrived in Najaf in central Iraq on Monday and attended a meeting with the representatives of the Iraqi Federation of Industries in order to discuss ways of removing obstacles in the way of expanding mutual trade.

165,000 public transport vehicles turned dual-fuel

TEHRAN – The director of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC)'s compressed natural gas (CNG) programs said 165,000 public transport vehicles have been already turned into dual-fuel cars.

According to Mohammad-Hossein Baqeri, the fund saved through turning the mentioned vehicles into the dual-fuel cars will be expended for the development of CNG industry in the country.

Since the implementation of a program for rationing subsidized gasoline and increasing fuel prices in November 2019, CNG consumption has been rising in the country.

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

In early December 2021, NIORDC and state-

owned Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) signed a \$20 million deal to co-manufacture 45,000 dual-fuel vehicles for the country's public transportation fleet.

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

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

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

According to that MOU, 146 million dual-fuel vehicles were supposed to be added to the public transportation fleet, reducing the country's daily gasoline consumption by 10 million liters.

Iran to export engineering services to Romania



TEHRAN – Iran and Romania have signed a memorandum of understanding based on which the Islamic Republic is going to provide Romania with engineering services related to the gas industry, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

As reported, the MOU was signed between Iranian Gas Engineering and Development Company and Romania's Gaz Vest Company.

Based on the mentioned MOU, Iran is going to cooperate with Romania in the construction of natural gas transmission lines, pressure boosting facilities, and the development of gas storage

tanks in the country.

Romania is the first European country to which Iran is going to export technical and engineering services.

As stated by Head of Iran Gas Engineering and Development Company Reza Noshadi, the purpose of signing this memorandum is also to study joint investment opportunities and to interact in other fields such as the construction of refineries, and power plants.

Under the framework of the said MOU, a joint working group is also going to be formed in order to exchange knowledge, expertise, and

experiences of the parties in common areas of work.

Over the past few years and especially since the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions on the Iranian economy, the country has been taking serious steps to boost its non-oil exports and cut dependence on oil.

In this regard, the Islamic Republic's policy has not been limited to increasing the exports of non-oil products, as the country is also determined to expand the export of technical and engineering services.

Based on the data provided by the Association of Iranian

Exporters of Technical and Engineering Services, Iran has the potential and capability to export technical and engineering services worth \$25 billion in a year.

Considering the country's huge potential in this field, boosting such exports would be an advantage for expanding the country's foreign trade.

According to the former head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum, TPO has been focusing on improving the exports of engineering and technical services to the neighboring countries as well as China, and India.

Export to ECO members rises 52%

TEHRAN – Iran exported over \$7.6 billion worth of commodities to the members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021) to register a 52-percent increase year on year, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said.

According to Ruhollah Latifi, the Islamic Republic exported 19,856,531 tons of goods valued at \$7,640,488,517 to the mentioned countries during the said period, IRNA reported.

The volume of exports also increased by 41 percent in comparison to the previous year's same nine months, the official said.

Latifi noted that Iran traded over 23.24 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$11.754 billion with the members of the said union in the first nine months of the current fiscal year, indicating a 44-percent increase in terms of value and a 30-percent rise in terms of weight, year on year.



He said major export destinations of the Iranian goods in the said union were Turkey with about \$4.131 billion of imports, Afghanistan with \$1.412 billion, Pakistan with \$911 million, and Azerbaijan with \$388 million.

Meanwhile, the country imported 3,383,507 tons of goods valued at over \$4.113 billion from the ECO member countries, with Turkey, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan,

and Kyrgyzstan being the top sources of imported goods.

The value of Iranian imports from the ECO union also increased by 27 percent compared to the previous year's same time span, the official said.

The Islamic Republic had traded over \$10.447 billion worth of non-oil goods with the ECO members in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 22, 2021) to register a 44 percent increase year on year.

The total value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 38 percent during the first nine months of the current year as compared to the same period of time in the past year. The country traded over 122.5 million tons of non-oil products worth \$72.1 billion with other countries in the mentioned period.

The Economic Cooperation Organization or ECO is an Asian political and economic intergovernmental organization that was founded in 1985 in Tehran by the leaders of Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey.

South Pars phase 11 digging operation expedited

TEHRAN – The managing director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has announced that digging operation has expedited in phase 11 of the giant South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf, Shana reported.

Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr said, "Developing and completing phase 11 is among the main priorities of NIOC. We are now in the stage of digging wells in this phase and some part of gas extraction from phase 11 will start in the next [Iranian calendar] year".

Of course, some measures were made that gas extraction will start sooner than previously planned, the official highlighted.

On Sunday, Seyed Shamsedin Mousavi, the managing director of Iran's Petropars Company, which is in charge of developing phase 11, has said the company is going to take all the necessary measures



to complete the first part of the mentioned phase's development project by the third quarter of the next Iranian calendar year (starts on September 23).

Earlier this month, Petropars' former Head Hamidreza Masoudi had announced the implementation of two new contracts which would accelerate the development of the mentioned phase.

According to Masoudi, the mentioned deals were concerned with the construction of an off-shore pipeline as well as the

installation of the phase's SDP11B platform.

"The engineering, procurement and implementation activities corresponding to these two contracts have officially started since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] month [December 22, 2021]," Masoudi said.

When fully developed, the South Pars phase 11 project will have a production capacity of two billion cubic feet per day or 370,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day. The produced gas will be fed into Iran's gas network.

Iran had previously awarded the development of phase 11 project to a consortium comprised of France's Total, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), and Petropars which is a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), however Total and CNPC

pulled out of the project in 2019 due to the U.S. sanctions.

Currently, Petropars is developing the phase 11 project after its partners left the contract.

The drilling operation for the first well of mentioned phase was officially started in December 2020. In the early production stage, the output of this phase will reach 500 million cubic feet (equivalent to 14 million cubic meters) per day.

South Pars is the world's largest gas field, covering an area of 3,700 square kilometers of Iran's territorial waters.

The giant field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate. The field is divided into 24 standard phases.

were traded at the mentioned market.

In the past year, several new records were achieved in terms of the volume and value of transactions in the mentioned market's various floors including the industrial, petroleum, and petrochemical floors.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

Commodities worth over \$434m traded at IME in a week

TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 1.765 million tons of commodities worth 126 trillion rials (about \$434.48 million) were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

The exchange experienced trade of 1.31 million tons of commodities valued at more than 68.17 trillion rials (about \$235.68 million) on its metals and mineral trading floor.

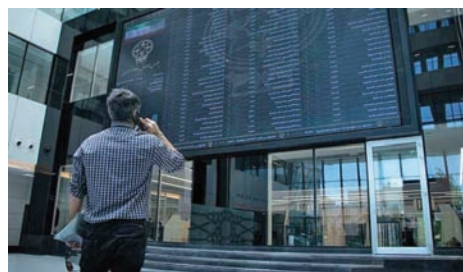
Furthermore, the IME saw on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical

trading floor 445,566 tons of commodities worth nearly 56 trillion rials (about \$193 million).

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 10,214 tons of commodities traded on it.

The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2021) rose 108 percent compared to the preceding year.

During the past year, about 3.5 quadrillion rials (about \$83.5 billion) worth of commodities



TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 30,534 points to 1.275 million on Tuesday.

As reported, 5.38 billion securities worth 28.516



million Iranians, which requires the cooperation and participation of farmers and suppliers in this industry," Hosseini said on the sidelines of the exhibition.

He underlined the significant impact of the proper use of pesticides and fertilizers as well as appropriate seeds in increasing agricultural production and added: "Millions of agricultural products are destroyed annually as a result of pest infestations, diseases and weeds and improper use of agricultural inputs. Also, improper use of such inputs can also have adverse effects on public health."

TEDPIX loses 30,000 points on Tuesday

trillion rials (about \$98.33 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index lost 26,648 points, and the second market's index dropped 48,174 points.

TEDPIX lost 29,000 (2.1 percent) to 1.334 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

During the past week, the indices of Mobarakeh Steel Company, Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Company, Social Security Investment Company, National Copper Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed ones.

Yemen takes on the UAE

From page 1 ▶ Saree, said “the armed forces are implementing today what they promised, and they renewed their warning to the countries of aggression that they will receive more painful and painful blows.”

Yemen's military has warned foreign companies, citizens and residents of the UAE “enemy state” to stay away from vital sites and facilities for their own safety.

The spokesman added, “we will not hesitate to expand the number of targets to include more important sites and facilities during the coming period”. He also declared that the UAE is an unsafe state as long as its “aggressive escalation against Yemen continues”.

Earlier, the UAE had confirmed that it was initially subjected to an air attack in two locations in the capital, Abu Dhabi, in conjunction with the Yemeni armed forces’ announcement of an upcoming statement to reveal a qualitative military operation against the Emirates in depth.

The Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported explosions at three petroleum tanks transporting petroleum gases in the Musaffah area of Abu Dhabi, in addition to a fire in the new construction area of Abu Dhabi International Airport.

Reports have also cited navigational sources as confirming the disruption of airlines at Abu Dhabi International Airport, with some stopping after the Yemeni armed forces announced the targeting of the Emirati site. This is while activists circulated videos of fires burning in Abu Dhabi.

Some foreign and regional media outlets also revealed that the air attack, which targeted vital places in the Emirati capital, Abu Dhabi, caused confusion and great concern for the Emirati leadership and cast a shadow over risks surrounding the oil market in the region.

The Bloomberg business news agency reported that the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and the de facto ruler of the country, Mohammed bin Zayed, canceled a meeting scheduled with the President of South Korea in Abu Dhabi, because he described it as “an unexpected issue related to state security”. The media outlet also noted the attack set fuel tanker trucks ablaze in a nearby industrial area and led



to confusion regarding air traffic control at Abu Dhabi international Airport.

Saree pointed out that this operation is the largest of its kind so far on UAE soil and that the retaliatory attack on Emirati oil installations has raised concern among oil market observers as there is a constant threat against oil infrastructure in countries waging war on Yemen.

It's not the first time, Yemeni forces have targeted the UAE, however Sana'a halted its military operations against Abu Dhabi for a few years after the Emirates backed off from attacking Yemen following reports Abu Dhabi concluded the war cannot be won militarily.

That formula recently changed and Yemen waged the latest operation in response to militants backed and funded by the UAE waging attacks and trying to advance against the Yemeni armed forces in the country's south. Attacks that the Yemeni army backed by Ansarullah forces have managed to successfully foil.

The National Salvation Government has also warned Abu Dhabi against intensifying its air campaign against Yemen.

“This operation is a prelude and there are still a lot of surprises in the pocket of our military forces to deter the UAE” an Ansarullah military commander told Yemen's al-Masirah news channel.

The Ansarullah forces’ commander, Mahdi Al-Mashat, later warned that if the UAE aggression continues, “this would pose serious risks to the economy and investments in the UAE.”

Just recently, the Yemeni navy managed to seize an Emirati flagged vessel carrying military supplies for the Saudi-led coalition. According to Saree, the vessel “entered Yemeni waters without authorisation” off the coast of Hodeidah and was carrying out

“hostile acts”.

The al-Masirah news channel aired footage of the vessel showing military-style inflatable rafts, trucks and other military vehicles on the ship, a landing craft that lowers a ramp to allow equipment to roll on and off. In another part of the footage a collection of military assault rifles and ammunition inside a container can be seen.

Yahia Saree dismissed claims that the vessel was carrying medical supplies saying “It is completely obvious today that the information that this ship was carrying a civilian field hospital is not correct. This is clearly military equipment”.

The Yemeni armed forces regularly launch retaliatory attacks against the UAE's neighbor Saudi Arabia with missiles and drones in a bid to halt the war and all out blockade of Yemen imposed by Riyadh.

Following the Yemeni military operation, the Saudi-led coalition's warplanes bombarded its southern neighbor with airstrikes in many provinces mostly hitting residential neighborhoods.

According to Yemeni media at least 20 civilians have been killed and around a dozen others wounded with search and rescue operations ongoing to pull bodies out of the rubble. An entire family of 14 people is among those killed. Most of the casualties are also reported to be women and children.

The majority of the airstrikes are said to have targeted the capital Sana'a with one district hit particularly hard leaving five houses completely destroyed and dozens of others also damaged.

Yemeni media say warplanes had been flying for hours non-stop making it difficult for ambulance crews to access the scene of the attacks. Rescue teams, in cooperation with the local residents, are searching for

victims under the rubble in the Libyan neighborhood amid fears the death toll will rise.

The provinces of Shabwah, Jawf, Hajja, Hodeidah and Maarib are among other provinces that have faced ferocious Saudi airstrikes.

The Kingdom, along with its regional allies backed by the United States, launched a war on its southern neighbor seven years ago in a bid to reinstate the former Yemeni government.

Over the past few years, Yemen's ability to manufacture indigenously made missiles and drones has changed the equation on the ground.

Where once Saudi Arabia had the upper hand in the war with hundreds of billions of dollars purchased from Western states; cheaply made drones evading advanced Western made radar systems has proven extremely effective and forced Saudi Arabia into a quagmire inside its southern neighbor.

Riyadh started the aggression in March 2015, but is proving increasingly incapable of ending the war. Intra-Yemeni talks have been strongly suggested by some regional countries as the only way to end the conflict.

The Saudi-led coalition has launched tens of thousands of air raids inside Yemen that have struck markets, schools, hospitals weddings and funerals that have killed hundreds of thousands of people, many of them women and children. Yemeni forces have regularly sent drones and fired missiles in the opposite direction, but reports of civilian casualties inside the Kingdom are extremely rare.

Some four million Yemenis have been internally displaced during the fighting. In September, the World Food Programme warned that 16 million Yemenis were “marching towards starvation”. According to the United Nations hundreds of thousands of Yemenis, mostly civilians, have been killed since the beginning of the war. The UN also says Yemen faces the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The Saudi blockade has suffocated the country, just recently Riyadh seized yet another fuel tanker at Hodeidah port, a commodity that is much needed in the country and something that could help ease the humanitarian catastrophe.

Vast majority of Lebanese elites have contributed to the current crisis: academic

From page 1 ▶ It is not possible to adapt to a collapse of this size and pace, with no serious and real solutions on the table.

What is the role of the Lebanese leaders in the deepening of the ongoing crisis that also suffers from corruption?

The vast majority of the Lebanese political, economic and financial leaders are the ones who have contributed to this situation, and were responsible for the catastrophe that Lebanon is best by.

These politico-economic elites themselves prevent any solutions, and they want to protect the banks from paying the cost of losses and collapse.

Add to it the insistence of some to protect accused officials and suspects who have exploited their positions to accumulate wealth at the expense of the Lebanese people's bankruptcy and the theft of depositors' money, especially the middle and poor classes.

How do you evaluate the role of foreigners in fueling the fire of corruption and riding waves to fish in troubled waters?

The West had a role in this economic collapse since the beginning of the aid conferences that started in Paris one to Paris four or the CEDRE conference; the West is the one who has protected and is still sponsoring those who plundered the public money and people's deposits.

These leaders put their smuggled money in Europe and the United States, in suspicious transfers, while the source of the transferred money was illegal; these assets belong to the Lebanese people, but the Western hypocrisy is obvious.

Add to that the spacious insistence on protecting suspects, who have lawsuits in some European countries.

But frankly, it was not the West who imposed on governments, successive parliaments, and state institutions to refrain from building electricity plants, railways, or subways, and efficient public transportation, but greed and the culture of plundering public money, and the sharing of national incomes and international loans led to this bankruptcy. The (Western countries) just invested in ongoing corruption.



Do you think that the current government in Lebanon is capable of handling the crisis and leading the country to a safe and stable state?

There is a difference between the government and the authority, the political, financial and supervisory authorities, and even most of the judiciary are not qualified to save the country, because this group has ruled for three decades, and it is the one that caused this economic havoc. It is illogical to count on the one who caused the ruin to be the reformer.

What will be the impact of the possible Iranian-Saudi reconciliation on the Lebanese political scene?

The external influence is usually clear on the Lebanese political reality, and this has happened since the establishment of the Lebanese entity at various historical periods.

The foreign interventions and successive mandates have always been working to postpone the dispute between the Lebanese by force, but so long as when the mandate period ended, and international interests conflict escalated, it was reflected in an internal scene.

Therefore, the solution is in a final, realistic and real agreement between the Lebanese, which constitutes a common denominator that reassures the concerns of the different Lebanese sects who are historically afraid of each other. So that the Lebanese can live for a longer period and see less wars, crises, etc.

Trade with China assisted Iran against US sanctions



By Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

TEHRAN – Referring to the effect of the Tehran-Beijing deal on thwarting US maximum pressure policy towards Iran, Barbara Slavin believes that trade with China has obviously assisted Iran against US sanctions.

Since the United States began to reimpose sanctions aimed at damaging the Iranian economy, Iran, under the strategy to neutralize the sanctions imposed on the country, has tried to boost its economic power by expanding its ties with Asian countries and striving to become self-sufficient in key domains.

In this regard, Iran and China signed a landmark 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership agreement on March 27, 2021, in defiance of the US unilateral sanctions to strengthen the long-standing economic and political alliance.

The importance of the agreement between Iran and China was such that since the news was released, many media outlets around the world covered it. Some experts said that the Sino-Iranian relations undermine the US and increasingly mitigate

the effectiveness of US sanctions against Iran.

In this regard, the acting director of the Future of Iran Initiative at the Atlantic Council's South Asia Center Barbara Slavin in an interview with Mehr News Agency commented on the effect that the deal can have on thwarting US maximum pressure policy towards Iran, saying, “It is obvious that trade with China has helped Iran survive sanctions.”

Touching upon the necessity of diversifying economic and trade partners to have a more healthy and stronger economy, she said that Iran would be better off if it was more integrated into the international economy.

Slavin noted that returning to the JCPOA can help Iran diversify its partners, too.

Referring to the impact of the Iran-China deal on Iran's oil and energy sector, Slavin said, “Iran would benefit from a more diverse set of customers and investors in its oil and gas sector. In particular, it would benefit from a return of European oil companies.”

Slavin believes that the cooperation between Tehran and Beijing is “important but China alone cannot satisfy Iran's needs.”

Commenting on the impact of the Iran-China deal on strengthening Beijing's position to confront the Washington policy while many believe that one of the main US policies all throughout the world is to contain China as its main rival, Slavin said, “The US is not so much interested in ‘containing’ China as in persuading it to follow international norms and not crowd out the competition in an unfair or risky manner.”

Iran-China ties to be at positive level during Raisi presidency: Turkish expert

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN – Dr. Alagoz says Iran-China ties will be at a positive level during the Raisi Administration because Iran's foreign policy has endorsed further relations with China and the neighbors on the axis of its “Look to the East” view.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian visited China on January 14 to discuss the implementation of last year's 25-Year Iran-China Strategic Cooperation Agreement. Speaking to reporters in Beijing after his meeting with Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, Amir-Abdollahian said the two countries have made “adequate arrangements” to set the agreement in motion, hailing it as “one of the important achievements” of his visit to China.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Thursday said that the 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership agreement signed with China enjoys a “win-win” approach for both nations since it serves the interests of both sides.

To shed more light on the significance of the deal, we reached out to Dr. Bilgehan Alagoz, Director of Foreign Policy Program Center for Iranian Studies-Ankara (IRAM).

Here is the full text of the interview:

Some believe that long-term strategic cooperation between Iran and China will result in the failure of US maximum pressure policy towards Iran. What do you think of this?

The answer depends on the perspective from which you approach the subject. If the aim of this policy was to limit Iran's nuclear activities, then since there is an Iran that has enriched uranium up to 60%, we can say that the policy



of maximum pressure is not a successful policy. The focus of the ongoing negotiations in Vienna for Iran is to remove the secondary sanctions imposed by the USA on Iran. If the parties achieve progress, the recent agreements with China will deepen under Vienna conditions.

Generally, how can this cooperation affect Iran's economy and Iran's regional role?

As reflected in the Belt and Road policy started in 2013, China attaches great importance to being influential in the Middle East in order to be a global actor. Economic relations with Iran are in the spotlight. However, although economic relations between China and Iran are due to deepen, there are potential restrictions. China is strengthening its relations with the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, Iraq, Syria and even with Israel. After a while, this will create a clash of interests. In order to avoid these risks, it is necessary for Iran to have a stable relationship with the regional countries. Iran's foreign policy has endorsed further relations with China and the neighbors on the axis of its “Look to the East” view. That's why I foresee relations with China at a positive level during the Raisi Administration.

How can long-term agreements between Iran and China affect Washington's policy to contain China? Can Beijing's cooperation with Iran boost

China's role in the region to protect its national interest?

There has been a global rivalry between China and the USA for a long time. This situation came to the fore, especially during the Trump era. The competition between the two countries made the Middle East the core of China's strategy. In this context, besides its economic cooperation plans, China created strategic partnership diplomacy with the Middle Eastern countries. Almost all the strategic partnership agreements China has signed with countries in the Middle East and North Africa have taken place in the last ten years. China's relative lack of security commitments in the region—compared to the US—is still the major disadvantage of Chinese involvement in the Middle East. However, the recent China-Iran agreement signals that China will initiate some sort of military cooperation with Iran, which is a new phase in China's containment policy towards the USA. Within this framework, China-Iran relations will continue to be on the US agenda.

What can be the effect of this agreement on Iran's oil and energy section?

During the Trump era, particularly in 2019, because of the US strict position to impose sanctions on oil imports from Iran, Iran's oil exports reduced to approximately 200,000 barrels. But in late 2020, this picture changed with Joe Biden becoming president. Since the Biden administration gave priority to the start of nuclear negotiations with Iran, the US turned a blind eye to Iran's oil sales in order to encourage Iran to use a new diplomacy mechanism. This has made China the largest buyer of Iranian oil. If there is no concrete result in Vienna, the USA will not ease as it did last year.

Iraqi, Afghan nationals top list of arrivals in Iran



From page 1 ► In December 2021, a group of Iraqi tour operators and tourism activists along with their Iranian fellows visited several Iranian provinces on familiarization tours. Moreover, several Iraqi travel insiders have requested Iran to waive visa requirements for Iraqi nationals who want to enter the Islamic Republic via land borders.

Last year the two neighbors agreed to abolish visa requirements for air travelers. The announcement came after Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi met in Tehran, discussing various issues including visa waiver, a joint railway

project, and increasing the level of trade.

Tourist visa reissuance

Back in September, Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami announced that by the order of President Ebrahim Raisi the issuance of tourist visas and the flow of foreign tourists from land and air borders will be resumed from the month of Aban (Oct. 23 – Nov. 21) following 19 months of suspension.

Months of steep recession have taken its toll. Many travel insiders, hoteliers, and tour operators have faced big dilemmas such as bankruptcy, unemployment, debts, and the prospects of not being competitive on the international level.

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

Archaeological work begins near Burnt City

TEHRAN – A team of Iranian archaeologists has recently commenced a fresh round of exploration in Tepeh Rostam, one of the satellite hills of the Burnt City, a UNESCO-registered site in southeastern Iran, ILNA reported on Tuesday.

This season of explorations is aimed to shed light on earlier discoveries of craft and residential accommodation, as well as teaching archeology students about the ancient site, said Hossein-Ali Kavosh, who leads the project.

It has been determined that some objects, pottery, and other data found in this area are connected to the Burnt City and reveal its importance in the Bronze Age, which is about 5000 years ago, he added.

This area is located on an artificial hill, and it has a circular fence with a high wall enclosing a large building in the center, he explained.

According to the excavations, it appears that this was a sacred building, whose function during the Bronze Age can be identified through further excavations and a full reveal of the



building from beneath the ground, he noted.

Called “Shahr-e Sukhteh” in Persian, Burnt City is associated with four rounds of civilization, all burnt down by catastrophic sets of fire. The site is situated in Sistan-Baluchestan province, which was once a junction of Bronze-Age trade routes crossing the Iranian plateau.

Founded around 3200 BC, Burnt City was populated during four main periods up to 1800 BC. Previous rounds of excavations showed that its residents had great skills in weaving, creating fine arts such as decorative objects, stone carving, and pottery painting.

Apartment hotels inaugurated in Sarein

TEHRAN – Seven apartment hotels have been inaugurated in Sarein during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021), Sarein's tourism chief has announced.

Inaugurations of new apartment hotels are deemed as a viable solution for buttressing the hospitality sector of the region, Alireza Vaseqi said on Tuesday.

Moreover, Sarein's first five-star hotel and phase one of a tourism complex and ski

resort were among tourism projects inaugurated during the mentioned period as well, the official explained.

The region's tourism sector has also been boosted by some 20 private investors as a result of the available facilities, he noted.

Sarein is a small city in the northwestern Ardabil province. There are many hot springs in the city, which makes it a popular tourist destination.

Due to its climate and hot springs, Sarein attracts more



than five million tourists annually from across Iran and around the world. Nine hot springs are located here, each with distinctive composition and property.

Some of the most notable tourist attractions

Harvest festivals aimed to underpin tourism in Iranian province

TEHRAN – Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad considers holding various harvest festivals to develop agritourism across the southwestern Iranian province.

“We consider to hold grape, apple, rice, and lemon harvest festivals in various counties of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad to support agritourism, which is an emerging branch of tourism in the province,” CHTN quoted the deputy provincial tourism chief as saying on Monday.

In addition, the provincial tourism department has ratified four plans to develop essential infrastructure in three counties of Boyer-Ahmad, Dena, and Gachsaran, Mohammad Hosseinzadeh said.

In the realm of accommodation, several ecolodges are under construction to serve visitors to rice paddies, fish farms, saffron farms, silkworm farms, ostrich farms, and other distinct destinations, the official noted.

Agritourism is a relatively new branch of the travel industry in which tourists stay with local people in rural areas. Farm/ranch recreation refers to activities conducted on private agricultural lands, which might include fee-



hunting and fishing, overnight stays, educational activities, etc.

Experts believe that in addition to the customer services jobs, agritourism pays special attention to the production sector, saying agricultural tourism is much more important and practical than other branches of tourism because it creates a new chain and diversity in the field of production and services.

Agritourism and nature-tourism enterprises might include outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, wildlife study, horseback riding), educational experiences (cannery tours, cooking classes, or tea or coffee tasting),

entertainment (harvest festivals or barn dances), hospitality services (farm stays, guided tours, or outfitter services), and on-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands).

Agritourism is a subset of a larger industry called rural tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers' markets, non-profit agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside.

The lesser-known province is home to various nomads and is a top destination for those interested in visiting in person the nomadic life. Sightseers may live

with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

Many tourists from all over the world tend to observe the lifestyle of these hardworking people and spend a few days watching activities such as milking, yogurt making, buttering, oiling, woolen, carpeting, and much more. Many Iranian and foreign tourists are interested in sleeping in nomadic black tents.

The varied natural setting of the country never disappoints visitors when it comes to tribal tourism as the culturally diverse country is home to many regional people including ones with Turk and Arab elements in addition to the Kurds, Baloch, Bakhtyari, Lurs, and other smaller minorities such as Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and others.

Language, music, indigenous cuisine, clothing, songs, anecdotes, crafts, live performances, and local rituals such as celebrations and wedding ceremonies have always spurred many to experience life among the tribes.

Workshops discuss know-how to make regional dolls

TEHRAN – Crafters and their trainers discussed the know-how of traditional doll-making in special workshops held in the city of Azadshahr, northern Iran.

In addition, courses dedicated to pottery, traditional needlework, and wickerwork were held for amateur craftspeople of the city, a local tourism official said on Tuesday.

“A total of 12 handicraft training courses have been conducted in Azadshahr, northern Golestan province during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021),” Mohammad-Taha Asgari said.

These courses were held to maintain current employment in this field as well as improve the skills of all activists in handicrafts and traditional arts, including craftsmen, artists, exporters, and producers, the official added.

Golestan is reportedly embracing some 2,500 historical and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus – a one-millennium-old brick tower – amongst



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

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 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.

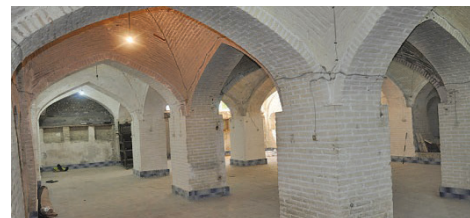
Properties in Lorestan added to national heritage list

TEHRAN – A total of nine historical buildings and aging structures across the western province of Lorestan have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

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

Suzani Mosque, Mohammadi and Mazhab mansions, the public bathhouse of Dodangeh Village, and Imamzadeh Valian Holy Shrine were among the properties added to the prestigious list.

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 Sasanid dynasties.

Iranian handicrafts: South Khorasan carpets

TEHRAN – South Khorasan is famed for its exquisite rugs and carpets woven in various villages of the eastern Iranian province according to know-now inherited from generation to generation.

South Khorasan was a bustling hub for carpet weaving during the Timurid era (1370–1507). The Timurid dynasty also governed the city of Herat that was quite famous for its floral carpets.

The motifs and designs of Herat carpets gradually grew smaller and regular and turned into their design of today, which are still considered popular and interesting designs of South Khorasan carpets.

Some of the famous centers of carpets of this province are villages of Dorakshh,

Mood, Gask, Nowzad, Sarbisheh, Behelgard, Nowghab, Dastgerd, and most of the villages of Ghaenat region and also the city of Birjand, according to Visit Iran.

With their two-hundred-years history, these carpets decorate Astan Quds Razavi institute, many museums, and carpets museums. According to the texts of the books written by the travelers that visited Iran “the designs of these carpets are mostly flowers and bushes that are also common in Kerman. Carpets merchandises export their goods to Istanbul, Egypt, and Vienna from Mashhad. The price of an excellent 11 in 14 meters carpets woven in the Ghayen style is about twenty pounds.”

Amongst the carpet collection of Golestan



Palace, is a beautiful and expensive piece of carpet that was woven about three hundred years ago in Ghayen. This carpet and similar products, which in terms of design, patterns, colors, quality, and beauty are considered quite elegant, prove the fact that in the past carpet making was at its highest level in Ghayenat. Carpets that were woven between

1924 to 1928 in the workshops of Birjand were completely known and famous for their paisley motifs, background motifs, and delicacy and color palettes in European markets, especially in West Germany.

There is another carpet in the collection of Golestan Palace that is woven in 1849 in Birjand in which a poem has been weaved saying that “the carpet is woven by the servant of the ruler of Ghahestan to cover the Golestan room”. The design of this piece is paisley that was considered popular in this region.

The most common motifs of South Khorasan carpets are: “Rizeh Mahi”, Paisley, “Robee Sa’di”, “Kaleh Asbi” or horse head, “Kheshti” or four seasons, and “Moharamat”.

“Rizeh Mahi” or small fishes, also known as

“Mahi” or “Mahi e Dar Ham” in other cities. Their difference is that a diamond accompanies the flowers in the Khorasan carpets. “Robee Sa’di” that is one of the original motifs of this province and is known for its delicate paisleys.

In all of these designs, the motif of the sun represents itself in different forms which is a characteristic we find only in the carpets of South Khorasan.

Iran's hand-woven carpets are sought after internationally for their delicate designs and good quality. A medallion pattern is arguably the most characteristic feature of all types of Persian rugs. Among Persian carpets, particularly those of the classic period, the medallion may represent an open lotus blossom with several petals.

Negotiations underway to export Spikogen vaccine

TEHRAN – Negotiations are underway with other countries to export the Iranian-Australian Spikogen vaccine, but the main priority is to meet domestic needs, Khashayar Roshanzamir, technical officer of clinical study of Spikogen vaccine, has said.

Referring to the provision of booster dose for the nation, he said that export becomes important when people's need for a third dose is met, IRNA reported.

Referring to a monthly production capacity of 4 million doses, he stated that some 6 million doses have been delivered to the Ministry of Health and the same amount is ready.

Payam Tabarsi, a researcher of the project, noted that a booster dose of the vaccine can increase neutralizing antibodies by 25 times.

"The results of a booster dose study show that people whose initial jab was a recombinant protein vaccine experienced an 11-fold increase in the neutralizing antibody by injecting a booster dose of this vaccine.

Those who were inoculated with AstraZeneca and Sputnik



got a 14-fold increase in antibodies. While, people who were vaccinated by an inactivated virus such as Sinopharm and COVIRAN, got 25 times more antibody," he explained.

The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday authorized Spikogen coronavirus vaccines as a booster dose of all vaccines, deputy health minister

Kamal Heydari said.

The vaccine is licensed for the first and second doses in the age group of 18 to 50 years and for the third dose in all people over 18 years of age, he added.

The Iranian-Australian Spikogen vaccine joined the national vaccination process in November 2021.

The results of the human test

showed that the vaccine provides more than 87 percent immunity, while it will be more precise after more research, Tabarsi stated in November 2021.

According to the latest statistics, so far, 60,269,896 people have received the first dose, 53,018,325 people the second dose, and 11,000,974 people are inoculated with the third dose.

Health Minister Bahram Einoollahi has said five coronavirus vaccines have been so far produced domestically.

Iran is one of the few countries that has all vaccine production platforms, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, former head of the Food and Drug Administration, said in June 2021.

Meanwhile, World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Iran Jaffar Hussain said in September 2021 that the Organization was collecting the necessary information for the registration and certification of Iranian-made coronavirus vaccines.

Iran has also produced vaccines jointly with two countries of Cuba and Russia.

A booster dose of Spikogen can increase neutralizing antibodies by 25 times.

Annual sale of nano products to reach \$727m

From page 1 ► trillion rials (about \$460 million), so we hope to exceed 200 trillion rials (nearly \$727 million) by the next two months.

"New technological products can lead to the creation of specialized employment. If we invest in technology, we will no longer face the migration of elites.

What has happened in the field of knowledge-based is only 10 percent of the country's capabilities, and if we invest in young people, we will have a prosperous economy," he highlighted.

Around 450 knowledge-based companies are currently working to use nanotechnology for manufacturing more than 850 products.

Nanotech progress in Iran

Iran has been introduced as the 4th leading

country in the world in the field of nanotechnology, publishing 11,546 scientific articles in 2020.

The country held a 6 percent share of the world's total nanotechnology articles, according to StatNano's monthly evaluation accomplished in WoS databases.

Iran has been introduced as the 4th leading country in the world in the field of nanotechnology. Iran ranked 43rd among the 100 most vibrant clusters of science and technology (S&T) worldwide for the third consecutive year, according to the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2020 report.

The country experienced a three-level improvement compared to 2019.

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, said that Iran is playing the

leading role in the region in the fields of fintech, ICT, stem cell, aerospace, and is unrivaled in artificial intelligence.

Iran has created centers in six Asian countries for exporting nanotechnology products, including China, India, Indonesia, Syria, Turkey, and Iraq.

Nanotechnology's trend of development is growing in Iran, as the number of nanoproducts and equipment developed in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 20, 2021) increased to 750, compared with 647 a year before.

Some 223 product manufacturing companies and 59 equipment manufacturing companies are active in the field of nanotechnology and by the end of last year, which developed a total of 750 products and equipment.

Over 6,500 houses constructed for the deprived

TEHRAN – The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has constructed 6,576 housing units and delivered them to financially-struggling rural residents over the first six months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21- September 23, 2021).

The Foundation also plans to build 360,000 housing units over the next four years.

The project will start next year and 90,000 houses will be built for the deprived annually, 60,000 of which will be built in cities and 30,000 in villages.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Mostazafan Foundation and Housing Foundation regarding the construction of 10,000 housing units in villages and cities with less than

25,000 populations.

Another memorandum of understanding has been inked with the Basij and Housing Foundation to build 40,000 houses, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

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

Support for villagers, underprivileged

Over the past couple of years, more than two million houses

have been built in rural areas and some 500,000 houses have been renovated, as well, Azizollah Mahdian, the Foundation's deputy director, said in July.

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

The construction of 10,000 houses will begin this year, Zolfagar Yazdanmehr, deputy head of the Organization, said in April 2021.

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

Many efforts have been made



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

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

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

SOCIETY

JANUARY 19, 2022

Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

7

Some \$2.3b allocated to facilitate marriage

TEHRAN – A total of 640 trillion rials (about \$2.3 billion) has been allotted in the form of low-interest loans to 750,000 couples, over the first nine months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21-December 21, 2021).

Last [Iranian calendar] year, 430 trillion rials (about \$1.5 billion) was allocated to facilitate marriage, Ehsan Khandouzi, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance said, IRINN reported.

The rate of marriage in the country has increased by 23.6 percent, over the first three months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21-June 21, 2021) compared to the same period last year, according to the data published by the Statistical Center of Iran.

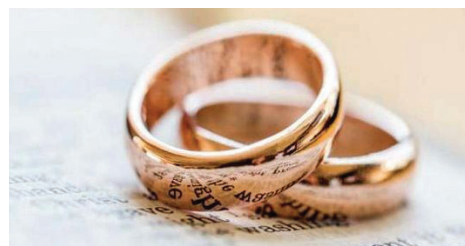
Last year, 557,649 marriages occurred.

Over the spring, some 158,992 marriages were registered, while a year ago, 128,621 marriages were recorded, which shows an increase of 23.6 percent.

The marriage rate in Iran has increased by 5 percent over the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021), despite the coronavirus pandemic, Masoumeh Ebtekar, former vice president for Women and Family Affairs said in May.

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 re-



gion 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 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.

This law was proposed in a situation when despite the announcement made by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in [the Iranian calendar year] 1393 (March 2014-March 2015) regarding 14 policies to support childbearing and the family; the lack of operational and systematic planning to solve this important and strategic issue was evident.

Study confirms sixth mass extinction is currently underway, caused by humans

The sixth mass extinction of the planet's biodiversity is currently underway, according to a new study confirming previous warnings that the Earth's species have been dying off at an accelerated rate in the last few centuries.

The planet has so far undergone five major species die-offs – extinction events marked by mass biodiversity loss due to extreme natural phenomena. But the current one is entirely caused by human activities, said the study published last week in the journal Biological Reviews.

The research estimated that since the year 1500, Earth could already have lost between 75 per cent and 13 per cent of its 2 million known species.

"Drastically increased rates of species extinctions and declining abundances of many animal and plant populations are well documented, yet some deny that these phenomena amount to mass extinction," Robert Cowie, lead author of the study from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, said in a statement.

Similar to climate denial, many still do not accept that the ongoing species die-offs amount to a sixth mass extinction, experts said. They added that this denial was due to a biased view of the unfolding crisis that focuses only on mammals and birds, ignoring the die-off rate of invertebrates, which constitute about 95 per cent of known animal species.

"Often, they use the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List to support their stance, arguing that the rate of species loss does not differ from the background rate," the researchers wrote in the study. "However, the Red List is heavily biased: almost all birds and mammals but only a minute fraction of invertebrates have been evaluated against conservation criteria."

With invertebrates, such as insect species, being less likely to be assessed than better-known species in other groups, researchers said these creatures may well be the "most likely to be threatened" and therefore to have gone extinct.

"Thus the numbers assessed as Extinct on the Red List are under-estimates, and inappropriate to use to estimate true levels of extinction," they wrote.

While the Red List suggests that about 900 species are extinct, researchers said the true number of die-offs vastly exceeds the normal background rate of extinctions on the planet. They estimated that between 150,000 to 260,000 of the nearly 2 million known species may already have gone extinct since around the year 1500.

Among the life forms on Earth undergoing extinction, the study found more evidence that land species, particularly island species, are suffering far greater die-off rates than continental ones.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON JANUARY 18

New cases	3,653
New deaths	18
Total cases	6,227,849
Total deaths	132,113
New hospitalized patients	306
Patients in critical condition	1,295
Total recovered patients	6,068,983
Diagnostic tests conducted	43,589,571
Doses of vaccine injected	126,779,652

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

‘Salt particles raising from Lake Urmia contained by %80’

Salt particles raising from the catchment basin of Lake Urmia has been contained by nearly 80 percent, Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the provincial department for the Lake Urmia restoration program at West Azarbaijan has said.

In cooperation with the Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization, some saplings and shrubs have been planted in the catchment basin of Lake Urmia to slow down the wind giving rise to salt particles since past three years, which cost 600 billion rials (nearly \$14 million), Sarkhosh said.

He went on to say that the major salt particle hotspots in the West Azarbaijan province include Jabal Kandi village in Urmia County, Saporghan, Urmia, Chooanloo and Miandoab, which are highly contained by planting vegetation, ISNA reported on Saturday.

کنترل ۸۰ درصد ریزگردهای نمکی دریاچه ارومیه

مدیر دفتر استانی ستاد احیای دریاچه ارومیه در آذربایجان غربی گفت: نزدیک به ۸۰ درصد از ریزگردهای نمکی حوضه آبریز دریاچه ارومیه کنترل شده است.

فرهاد سرخوش در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایسنا با اشاره به اینکه حجم آب ورودی به دریاچه ارومیه باعث مرطوب شدن نمک‌های سطح دریاچه و کنترل ریزگردهای نمکی آن می‌شود افزود: خارج از بستر دریاچه ارومیه و در حوضه آبریز با همکاری منابع طبیعی و کاشت نهال و درختچه‌ها ریزگردهای نمکی کنترل می‌شود که از سال ۹۳ تا ۹۶ در این راستا ۶۰ میلیارد تومان هزینه شده است.

وی با بیان اینکه کانون بحرانی ریزگرد در آذربایجان غربی خاطرنشان کرد: کانون بحرانی ریزگردها در استان شامل منطقه جبل کندي در ۴۵ کیلومتری ارومیه، منطقه سپورغان ارومیه، چوپان لو سلماس، و میاندوآب است که با نهال کاری تا حدود زیادی از این ریزگردها مهار شده‌اند. طبق مصوبه دولت توسعه اراضی کشاورزی در حوضه آبریز دریاچه ارومیه ممنوع است و با بررسی‌های انجام شده در حوضه آبریز دریاچه نیز هیچ توسعه‌ای انجام نشده است.

TEHRAN TIMES



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The mind of a wise man is the safest custody of secrets; cheerfulness is the key to friendship; patience and forbearance will conceal many defects.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:15 Evening: 17:38 Dawn: 5:44 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:12 (tomorrow)

Iran’s “Solar Eclipse” praised at Minimalen Short Film Festival

A scene from the Iranian drama “Solar Eclipse” directed by Raha Amirfazli and Alireza Qasemi

TEHRAN – Iranian drama “Solar Eclipse” has won an honorable mention at the 34th Minimalen Short Film Festival in Trondheim, Norway.

“To a film in appreciation of its honest depiction of a bold trio of girls intent on capturing a momentous event on film and the tension that results when one of the girls witnesses an act of betrayal. Brilliantly directed, shot and edited,” the jury said in its statement published on the closing day of the festival on Sunday.

Directed by Raha Amirfazli and Alireza

Hafez’s poetic art

Part 6

In the garden the poet encounters a nightingale, which utters a complaint while holding a rose petal. Several times he says that he went out to seek the advice of the pir-e moghan in the tavern.

Indications of time are added often to such scenes: they are marked as reports on an experience during the preceding night (dush), for instance when we are told that “last night I saw angels knocking on the door of the tavern”, or they are said to take place in the early morning (especially devoted to the morning drink).

However, these sketchy stories are never a goal in themselves, but merely introduce a discourse which is usually of a reflective or even paraenetic kind.

Many of the unusual attributes of the “beloved” can be understood by recalling that in the classical lyric poetry the image of the poet’s sweetheart refers more often than not to a male figure, normally a youth.

The mode of presentation in the ghazals is equally varied. Most often the speaking voice in a poem can be identified with the poet, in one or another of his personae: poet-lover, libertine, sage, seeker of wisdom.

Occasionally, a dialogue between lover and beloved may encompass an entire poem constructed on the “figure” of “question and answer”, known from the earliest Persian poetry. Other persons or personifications also converse with, advise or exhort the poet, for instance in 37, where an angel from the hidden world (sorush-e alam-e ghayb), a mystic mentor (pir-e tariqat) and a beggar admonish him in succession.

A mysterious voice (hatef) is often heard. Another common device is to put the wisdom imparted into the mouth of the pir-e moghan (the old man of the magi, i.e., the tavern keeper).

The poet entreats the wind (baad, saba) or the hoopoe (hodhod; both associated with the legend of Solomon and queen of Sheba) to carry a message to his departed beloved, or bring him the

Qasemi, the film is about Saghi and her two friends, who have come to the largest park in Tehran to take pictures of the once-in-a-century total eclipse announced to occur later that afternoon.

Mischievous and rebellious, they steal a camera stand, lie to their parents and discuss boys as well as an upcoming party. Their wanderings lead them to a remote part of the park. As the sun disappears, Saghi sees something that should have stayed hidden.

The best international film award, the Minimalen trophy and 1000 euro, was given to the Afghan drama “Three Songs for Benazir” by Elizabeth Mirzaei and Gulistan Mirzaei.

“An exquisitely realized, nuanced portrait of a young husband and wife as they embark on their life’s journey together amidst perhaps insurmountable obstacles. It delicately balances attention to the sweet, intimate details of the couple’s private moments together with the no-less powerful and unrelenting realities outside,” the jury said.

The audience award in the international competition – 500 euro – went to “Titan” by Valéry Carnoy from Belgium.

scent of the beloved’s perfume.

It is abundantly clear that Hafez’s poetry cannot be properly understood without considering its close association with his historical environment.

The glorification of his home town and its pleasure grounds, like Roknabad and Mosalla, are instances of city panegyrics, known also from the ghazals of earlier, especially Shirazi, poets, such as Sadi.

The frequent references to persons of political or social importance prove beyond doubt that, as a poet, Hafez was involved in courtly life and was in all likelihood dependent on the patronage of the rich and powerful.

The use of the ghazal for panegyric was not, however, an innovation by Hafez, but is already seen two centuries earlier in the ghazals of poets of the Ghaznavid courts of Ghazna and Lahore.

Nowhere is the hermeneutical problem of Hafez’s poetry more acute than in the case of the antinomian stance frequently adopted by the poet.

In this respect, too, he continues a tradition with which earlier poets had enriched the palette of the ghazal. The complex of motifs centered around the figure of the “tramp” (qalandar) is already a predominant element in the poems of Sanai, Attar and Eraqi, who were all mystical poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

They used it as a forceful metaphor in denunciation of false piety in Sufism and in adhortations to a radical renunciation of the world. Its main features were the celebration of intoxication and debauchery and the proclamation of a non-Muslim cult, an imaginary mixture of Zoroastrian and Christian elements.

The thought behind all this was that, at a higher level of piety, it becomes necessary to hide one’s spiritual progress behind a screen of sinful behavior so as to avoid the social respect that could so easily be won by a show of piety.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

Diego Maradona to come back to life at Tehran theater

TEHRAN – Iranian director Mehran Ranjbar plans to bring late soccer star Diego Maradona back to life in a play, which will go on stage at Tehran’s Neauphle-le-Château Theater on Friday.

Speaking to the Persian service of MNA on Tuesday, Ranjbar said that since his childhood, Maradona was his legendary soccer hero, and added that since his death in 2020, he has been planning to stage a play about him.

However, he was forced to cancel the plan due to his mother’s death, which led him into deep depression.

“Now, with great contributions and help from my crew, we are ready to bring the play on stage,” said Ranjbar who has previously directed the biographical plays “Steve Jobs” and “Marlon Brando”.

“Since childhood, I was an ardent fan of Maradona and the Argentina national football team and by this play, I want to pay tribute to the late legendary soccer who took great pains to enter the world of football and

become a champion for many people of the world and football aficionados,” he added.

Compared to “Steve Jobs” and “Marlon Brando”, Ranjbar said that his new play “Maradona” does not need to observe numerous parameters that were determined for his previous plays.

“It is about football; ‘Maradona’ is really simple and romantic; the ambiance of the play is operatic and romantic,” he noted.

Milad Moayyer, Mehdi Yeganeh and Alireza Abdolkarimi are the members of the cast.

Ranjbar planned to stage a play on Che Guevara in 2020. Written by Hamidreza Naeimi, the play

Nominees for 2022 Jalal Literary Awards announced

A poster for the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards.

TEHRAN – Nominees in different categories of the 14th edition of the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards, Iran’s most lucrative literary prizes, were unveiled on Tuesday.

Five books, including “Without Father’s Name”, are competing in the novel category.

Written by Seyyed Meisam Musavian, “Without Father’s Name” has been published by Jamkaran.

The story is about a corrupt general who is an English agent in the Shah’s regime. He is sent on a mission to suppress separatist Kurds

in the northwest of Iran. Meanwhile, he falls in love with a Kurdish girl.

The novel shared the award in the Adult Story section at the 19th edition of the Golden Pen Awards in 2021.

Other nominees include “Killing Angel” by Alireza Hassanzadeh, “The Prophet Who Made No Miracle” by Mohammad-Ali Rokni, “A Mute Sonnet” by Mitra Moeini, and “Sad Moon, Red Moon” by Reza Julai.

Four books received nominations in the short story collections competition.

“Prepare for Assassination” by Ali Barati-Kajvan, “Two-Eyed Ha” by Mahbubeh Hajiannejad, “Unhappy Hour” Mohammad-Esmail Hajalian and “Mad Saint” by Ahmadrza Amiri-Samani.

In the documentation category, seven books have been nominated.

“A Man Named Reza Who Was Then Called Reza Khan”, a biography of Reza Shah by Hedayatollah Behbudi, is a highlight of this section

The book recounts the life story of the first monarch of the Pahlavi dynasty from his birth in 1878 until 1921 when he was selected as the

commander of the Iranian Army in the new government after the 1921 coup.

This book was honored in the History Narration category at the 2nd edition of the Seyyed Ali Andarzgu Literary Awards, which are given to books on the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Other nominees include “Abu Baran” by Zahra Sadat Sabeti, “Daddy Rajab” by Nasrin Rajabpur, “Don’t Touch Me” by Faezeh Ghaffar-Haddadi, “Fascinating Grief” by Meisam Amiri, “Khanom Jan’s Neighbor” by Zeinab Erfanian and “The All-Rounder” by Mojtaba Qafelebashi, Hassan Rafiei and Masud Jalilvand.

“Albert Camus in Iran” co-written by Mohammadreza Farsian and Fatemeh Qaderi, “Silent Resistance” by Mehdi Mirkiani and “Narratology and Narrative Review” by Elham Haddadi and Farhad Dorudian are the books competing in the literary review category.

Winners, which will be announced in two weeks, each will receive from one billion rials (Over \$3,650 (based on Iran’s free-market exchange rate: \$1 = 273,360 rials) to 1.5 billion rials (about \$5,500).

Why should we read “Damascus Morning”?

Books have different readers who choose them based on their interests and beliefs. One of the most important types of books that are also considered significant documents is diaries. Books that are about important historical events and in many cases are explanations about an important topic or answers to future questions. Today, we will review a politician’s diary in Iran to see what we can get from every book about events or characters. Besides a brief introduction to the book, we will also discuss its importance which is also quoted by well-known faces in oral history.

What kind of book do we want to go through?

“Damascus Morning” by Muhammad Hasan Moshafi is a story about the Syrian crisis that has been published from Dr. Hussein Amir Abdullahian’s memories by Soore Mehr publication. The history of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Damascus dates back to the 1320s, and from those days until now, you can perfectly see that the relationship between Iran and Syria has never been based on hostility.

In “Damascus Morning” which is extracted from the memoirs of Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, the Syrian crisis story is presented in three parts.

In the first part, the awakening of the Islamic and Arab world and the conflicts that took place, abusing fro, creating quarrel between Shia and Sunni, US economic incentives for military intervention, and its

goals of promoting democracy in the Arab world, the difference between protests in Syria and other Arab countries, political efforts made between Tehran and Damascus, Iran’s four-point plan, heavy mental pressures on Damascus, the interests of countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey from the Syrian crisis, Russia and China’s positions and approaches from the Syrian crisis, Iran’s humanitarian assistance, as well as social and political advisory aid, categorization different terrorist groups, the necessity of the defenders of shrine’s action and a summary about the Syria situation after the crises has been examined.

In the second part, we will read about diplomatic efforts and trips made in connection with the developments in the region, and in the third part of this book, the vital role of Sardar Soleimani in controlling the Syrian crisis and ensuring the security of Iran and other countries in the region has been described.

What is significant about this book?

The tradition of keeping diaries among diplomats is very vital for the whole scientific world and at the same time, a useful approach for the future to learn about political and diplomatic things. So reading “Damascus morning” which is Dr. Hussein Amir Abdullahian’s memories, can be very helpful.

The book begins with an introduction to the relations between Tehran and Damascus

and continues with the editor’s foreword. After that, the book consists of two parts: memoirs and notes.

An important point here is that diplomats’ diaries usually will be published after their mission end, but in Iran, it’s less common. To defend the truth, we should publish the memoirs of diplomats like What Amir Abdullahian has done with the efforts of Hojjatoleislam Fakhrazadeh.

Amir Abdolhian also says that the idea of publishing his memoirs was due to the advice of the international anti-terrorism hero, Sardar Haj Qasem Soleimani. “ In a meeting, one year before his martyrdom, Haj Qasem emphasized that I should write and publish my memories to convey the message of bravery, martyrdom, and even crimes and betrayals in Syria and the West Asian region,” says Amir Abdolhian.

“Despite the general’s busy schedule, he would never miss a minor issue” he added.

Why is this story absorbing?

Hojjat al-Islam Fakhrazadeh, a consultant at the Culture Center and Sustainability Studies of the provincial centers of the arts has a positive opinion on this book and has reviewed it.

“Damascus Morning is a diplomatic story of the Syrian crisis. So far, we have read various stories of the events in Syria but, we need a complete narrative and overview also, the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in improving this crisis. We have to answer the questions about

the reasons the Islamic Republic of Iran participated in the Syrian issue. We have to answer the questions about the Islamic Republic of Iran participating in the Syrian issue and, the general atmosphere of the Syrian crisis and how it ended” says Hojjat al-Islam Fakhrazadeh.

“The answers to all these questions are in this book. Amir Abdullahian had a post as the region’s top political director on the Syrian crisis. So he was the best one to narrate the Syria crisis.” He added.

“It was more than a year and a half ago that we went to write the story of Amir Abdullahian with the help of Mohsen Momeni. The interview took about 13 sessions then, a text was prepared and given to the main author, Mohammad Hossein Mushafi. He matched the text to other documents and suggested that additional interview sessions be done. Finally, after so much effort, the final text came to an end; a story that had not been available to Iranian audiences before.