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Opinion



Just keep going girls

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN – Not so long ago, the Iranian women teams were a footballing minnow but today, they can win title in the international event. In the CAFA U18 Women's Championship, the Iranian girls showed how strong they are.

Iran, headed by Maryam Azmoun, won the title in Dushanbe, Tajikistan with three wins over Uzbekistan (1-0), Tajikistan (11-0) and Kyrgyz Republic (2-1).

What a wonderful result.

Iranian women football players have been beyond the expectations in the recent years.

In January, Iran took part in the AFC Women's Asian Cup for the first time. It is a proud moment for them. They failed to book their place in the next stage but they found a path to success.

The Iranian men's football and also volleyball teams sit top of the ranking in the continent and the women can follow in the footsteps of them.

On Monday, Iran also advanced to the 2022 Women's Junior World Handball Championship.

In 2018 Asian Games, the women's kabaddi team won the title for the first time ever, beating giants India in the final match.

The Iranian sportswomen have a bright future ahead. The attention is all they need because the Iranian women, in the recent years, have shown they are capable of achieving great things.

In November 2021, the Iranian women basketball team competed at the FIBA Women's Asia Cup Division B. It was Iran's international event after 47 years.

The changes have been made and it's time to change our outlook.

Op-ed



End of dream, return of history

By Sarah Khan

Russian military assault on Ukraine is debilitating blow to American-led Liberal Leviathan and final nail in the coffin of 'End of History' delusions. Western security analysts are incessantly scrutinizing that what led to this preventable catastrophe?

Blinded by oriental stereotypes, Putin is being condemned for his 'expansionist designs' and machismo politics. In its bloodthirsty eagerness to portray Russia as devil empire, U.S. Republican senator Lindsey Graham even openly suggested an assassination of Russian President Vladimir Putin, referring to Brutus, who was involved in assassinating Roman emperor Julius Caesar. Mark. B Smith in 'The Russia Anxiety' explained this contempt by stating that Russia Anxiety is a cycle, and disregard can soon turn into contempt and then to fear. Years after the end of the Cold War, the sum of these feelings is as dangerous as ever, even though history shows that the Anxiety is almost always misplaced. Western propaganda blitzkrieg, conspiracy galore and activation of financial nuclear weapons all have failed to defend Ukraine. **► Page 5**

Man of the Year

TEHRAN – With the Iranian New Year rolling around in a few days, the Tehran Times builds on its nascent tradition of introducing Man of the Year at the end of the current Iranian calendar year, which ends on March 20, 2022.

The Tehran Times's 1400 Man of the Year is Seyed Hassan Nasrallah, the Secretary-General of the Lebanese Hezbollah. This year's choice may seem a little bit unusual considering the relatively calm situation of Lebanon over the last 12 months. But beneath this apparent serenity lies the important leadership style Nasrallah exhibited in steering the resistance movement and Lebanon in general through multi-faceted crises.

Over the last 12 months, a new government was successfully formed in Lebanon with the active participation of the resistance factions. Perhaps, government formation was the biggest political event in Lebanon in 1400. It broke a year-long deadlock that was about to end up in chaos and disorder in the Mediterranean country. But with the leadership of Nasrallah, Lebanese factions successfully managed to agree on another consensual government at a time when the country was facing dire maladies on every level. **► Page 3**

IOEC inks deal with foreign firm to develop 2nd phase of SP oil layer

TEHRAN – Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company (IOEC) has inked a deal with a renowned foreign company to cooperate in implementing the second phase of the South Pars Oil Layer's development project, Shana reported.

The \$500-million deal, prepared based on the Oil Ministry's new model of upstream contracts, was signed on Tuesday in a ceremony attended by senior officials including Oil Minister Javad Oji and Head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Mo-hsen Khojasteh-Mehr.

The Oil Ministry has not revealed any details about the foreign contractor.

Under the framework of the development contract, which has been finalized for a 20-year period, the contractor is obliged to provide all the necessary financial resources to implement the project, including direct capital costs, indirect costs, and operating costs.

Based on the deal, the project description includes upgrading and modifying the existing processing vessel and platform, overhauling existing

wells, digging new wells including production and water injection and assessment wells, construction of oil discharge and loading system, and strengthening the existing water injection system.

During the implementation of this contract, while updating the reservoir models using new data analysis, new wells will be drilled using horizontal drilling technology and also, a new unloading and loading system will replace the existing one. **► Page 4**

Uzbekistan welcomes Iran's experience in biotech, AI

TEHRAN – Uzbekistan is eager to use Iran's experience to meet its technological needs in the field of biotech, agriculture, artificial intelligence, and drought management, Minister of Innovative Development of Uzbekistan, Ibrokhim Abdurakhmonov, has said.

He made the remarks in a meeting with the Iranian vice president for science and technology, Sourena Sattari, in Tehran on Tuesday.

Abdurakhmonov expressed interest in using Iran's experience in creating technology and innovation ecosystems, especially in areas such as agriculture, biotechnology, artificial intelligence and etc.

"With the help of Iran, we want to provide an ecosystem of innovation and technology for the job creation and employment of youth. Defining joint technology projects between the two countries will help achieve this goal and put us on the path to development," he further noted. **► Page 7**

Ali Sadr Cave open to public during Noruz

TEHRAN – Ali Sadr water cave in the west-central province of Hamedan will be open during Noruz (Iranian new year holidays, starting March 21) after almost two years of closure due to coronavirus.

"Due to the outbreak of the coronavirus, Ali Sadr Cave has been closed for two years, however, it will reopen to tourists and Noruz trippers next week," Hamedan Governor Alireza Qasemi-Farzad has said on Wednesday.

Visitors who have received the second dose of the COVID vaccine are allowed to explore the cave, as long as they follow strict health protocols and social distancing rules, ISNA quoted Qasemi-Farzad as saying.

Creating jobs, wealth, and added value through tourism is one of the province's main priorities, the official added. **► Page 6**

Report



Yemen on brink of "seismic hunger crisis"

TEHRAN– The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) has issued a new stark warning over the humanitarian crisis in Yemen saying the desperate levels of hunger are "set to become catastrophic".

In a statement WFP said the number of Yemenis relying on food assistance has risen to 17.4 million, an increase of 1.2 million Yemenis compared to last year and is estimated to reach 19 million Yemenis who will go hungry in the second half of this year.

The UN organization has cited a lack of funding and the Ukraine crisis as two reasons for the deepening "catastrophe" in what is the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

WFP Executive Director David Beasley says "we are looking at a seismic hunger crisis if we do not step up now. Unless we receive immediate funds, hungry people will lose assistance right at the time they need it most." **► Page 5**

Dear readers,

The next issue of the Tehran Times will be published on Sunday, April 3.

Nazanin Zaghari released, returns to Britain



TEHRAN – Nazanin Zaghari, a British-Iranian national who had been serving prison terms in Iran on charges of trying to overthrow the Islamic Republic system, was released on Wednesday and returned to Britain.

Zaghari, 43, was released after six years in prison. She had been detained by the IRGC intelligence service on espionage charges while trying to leave Iran in 2016.

Hojat Kermani, Zaghari's lawyer, told IRNA on Tuesday that his client's passport had been given to her.

Kermani added that Zaghari's prison term for one of her convictions had ended in March 2021.

Back in October 2017, the prosecutor general of Tehran stated that she was being held for running “a BBC Persian online journalism course which was aimed at recruiting and training people to spread propaganda against Iran.”

Smart submarines delivered to IRGC Navy

TEHRAN – A series of new advanced homegrown defense hardware with special capabilities, including smart sub-surface vessels along with missiles and speedboats, were delivered to the IRGC Navy on Tuesday.

The new armaments were handed over during a ceremony attended by top military officials, including the IRGC chief Hossein Salami, in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas.

For the first time, the IRGC naval fleet was unequipped with domestically developed smart submarines, which will significantly boost its capabilities in detecting and thwarting sub-surface threats.

The new speedboats, which feature high maneuverability, are capable of traveling at up to 95 knots. They can also carry and fire various missiles and rockets.

The IRGC Navy was also furnished with new maneuverable missiles, whose range has been increased and can be used in electronic warfare, Press TV reported.

The explosive and destructive power of the new missiles has been enhanced in comparison with the previous versions.

Addressing the ceremony, IRGC Navy Commander Ali Reza Tangsiri said the smart submarines opened a new chapter in his force's capabilities in various operations.

For his part, Salami said, “The barriers of the sanctions are flimsy for our youths, who have built all the equipment in the era of the enemies' cruel and tough sanctions. They have neutralized the sanctions.”

Amir Abdollahian: Russia to cooperate with Vienna talks until agreement reached

TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Wednesday that Russia has reassured Tehran about its cooperation towards the conclusion of a final agreement in Vienna, Press TV reported.

“Reassured that Russia remains onboard for the final agreement in Vienna,” Amir Abdollahian tweeted after his talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow on Tuesday.

The Austrian capital of Vienna has been hosting eight rounds of talks aimed at a potential revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a 2015 deal between Iran, the European Union, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany.

Former United States President Donald left the deal in 2018 under his “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran and returned the sanctions that had been lifted under the

A report published by the Fars news agency on Monday said Zaghari would be released soon in return for London's commitment to pay off a long-overdue debt to Tehran.

In return, Britain would pay \$530 million (400 million pounds) to Iran to settle a debt related to an unfulfilled military contract that dates back to before the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, Fars reported.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday declined to comment on the Zaghari case and whether there have been direct talks on the debt issue in Tehran although he admitted that talks on consular cases have been going on for a long time.

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said on Wednesday morning that her country is looking at ways to pay the 400-million-pound debt to Iran.

“We have been clear this is a legitimate debt that we do owe Iran and we have been seeking ways to pay it,” Truss told Sky News.

Anoush-e Ashouri, also another Iranian-British national who had also been detained and imprisoned on security charges, departed Tehran for Britain.

Ashouri had also been jailed for involvement in espionage activities against the Islamic Republic.

Ashouri, who previously lived in southeast London with his family, was detained in August 2017 and was sentenced to 10 years in prison for cooperating with Israel's spy agency Mossad and two years for obtaining 33,000 euros in “illicit funds” nearly a year later.



Major General Salami highlighted the significance of upgrading the defense power and adopting new methods to boost national military power.

With the addition of smart sub-surface vessels, the geometrical structure of the IRGC naval power was completed at surface, above-the-surface, sub-surface, and land vehicles, Major General Salami stated.

Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made substantial headway in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in the arms sphere.

Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has repeatedly called for efforts to maintain and boost Iran's defense capabilities, hitting back at the enemies for disputing the country's missile program.

agreement and added new ones under different labels. And now Washington and American media outlets have been throwing accusations against Moscow that it is trying to prevent the conclusion of an agreement by making “last-minute” demands.

Meeting with Amir Abdollahian in Moscow, Lavrov however said that Russia, contrary to the U.S. claim, would not be the party to prevent the conclusion of an agreement. Moscow, instead, would keep up its constructive approach towards the collective efforts that are being made towards the purpose, he added.

On Monday, 49 of the 50 U.S. Republican senators said that they would not back any potential agreement in Vienna.

The chief Iranian diplomat said, “More than ever, ball is in U.S. court to provide the responses needed for successful conclusion of the talks.”

Vienna talks nearing conclusion: IAEA chief

TEHRAN- Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi has hinted out that striking an agreement with Iran is nearing completion.

Speaking with FRANCE 24, Grossi said that he believed there had been a problem in recent days as a result of restrictions and sanctions imposed due to the situation in Ukraine. Consequently, he said, some issues discussed in the Vienna talks for the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal have remained ambiguous.

The international community now has a “way forward” with Iran, the IAEA chief said.

The director general went on to say that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a multifaceted mechanism that imposes a set of constraints on Iran while also giving incentives, technical cooperation, and projects to Tehran.

Such collaborations, of course, take shape under the supervision of the IAEA, including trade activities such as purchasing equipment from countries such as China and Russia, he said, adding that this part of the agreement was suddenly shrouded in mystery, causing a pause in the Vienna talks and



negotiators to return to their capitals for further consultations.

Meanwhile, Grossi raised severe worries about the safety of Ukraine's 15 nuclear power reactors in the aftermath of Russia's operation in Ukraine.

Grossi stated that he has had positive talks with the opposing parties, who both agree that “something needs to be done” to assure the safety of the facilities, but that the IAEA is still working on an agreement to ensure that the risk “of a nuclear accident is completely excluded.”

The IAEA chief also expressed delight with Russian Foreign Minister

Sergei Lavrov's statements on receiving written guarantees from the United States, expressing hope that an agreement would be reached soon.

In a joint news conference with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir Abdollahian in Moscow on Tuesday, Lavrov stated that Russia has written guarantees and that such assurances have been mentioned in the text of an agreement to restore the JCPOA.

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, said in tweet on Tuesday that “we observe a lot of speculations regarding ‘last-minute

Russia's demands at the final stage of the Vienna talks which allegedly block the agreement on restoration of JCPOA. This is a lie, as I tweeted a number of times over the last week. Some demands were accepted, by the way.”

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Saeed Khatibzadeh, stated on Monday that the negotiators' return to respective capitals is a short interval, noting that some observers have portrayed the scenario as the conclusion of talks, but the pause came at the request of European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, whose deputy Enrique Mora acts the coordinator of the talks in Vienna.

Khatibzadeh also stated that there are remaining concerns that must be resolved in Washington.

“Pause in #ViennaTalks could be a momentum for resolving any remaining issue and a final return,” Khatibzadeh said in a tweet.

Delegations from Iran, the European Union, and the P4+1 group (Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany) met in Vienna for eight rounds of talks to decide if the U.S. should return to the agreement and lift anti-Iran sanctions. The talks started in April 2021.

Iran, China FMs discuss issues of common interest

TEHRAN- On Tuesday, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian spoke on phone with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi about bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Iran's foreign minister said that if the U.S. is serious, a good and robust agreement on reviving the U.S.-abandoned Iran deal may be reached through the Vienna talks.

During the phone call Amir Abdollahian briefed his Chinese counterpart on the latest developments in efforts to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran deal.

“If the American side is realistic, we will finalize a good, strong, and lasting agreement with the support of all negotiating parties in Vienna,” Amir Abdollahian said.

He stated that Iran is ready to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible to settle the remaining unresolved concerns through consultation with relevant parties in order to strike a good deal.

Iran expresses gratitude to China for its constructive engagement in the talks, and expresses optimism that China would continue to give assistance.

“Iran is ready to resume the negotiations as soon as possible to resolve the final outstanding issues through consultation with other parties and strive for a good agreement,” Abdollahian told Wang, thanking Beijing “for its constructive role in the negotiations.”

He also mentioned his meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, stating that the Russian side reaffirmed its support for the lifting of U.S. sanctions against the Islamic Republic by participating constructively in the Vienna talks.

Iran backs OIC campaign to counter Islamophobia

TEHRAN – Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has voiced Tehran's support for efforts by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to fight Islamophobia.

Majid Takht Ravanchi made the remarks after the UN General Assembly on Tuesday voted in favor of a resolution naming March 15 as International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

Iran led the talks that culminated in the development alongside Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Indonesia, Tasnim reported.

In a general statement after the adoption of the draft resolution, Takht Ravanchi said, “The growing trend of intolerance and prejudice against Islam and Muslims worldwide poses a daunting challenge. Over the last few decades, harmful stereotypes and prejudices regarding Muslims and Islam have been chronically reinforced by mainstream media, senior politicians, influencers of popular culture and within academic discourse. Simultaneously, numerous discriminatory practices have been implemented in various parts of the world, including restricting Muslims from living according to their belief system, securitization of religious communities, restricting access to citizenship, socioeconomic exclusion and pervasive

Iran insists it wants assurances that the U.S. would not abandon the agreement again. It also wants that U.S. sanctions to be lifted in a verifiable way.

For his part, Wang stated that China has long supported achieving an agreement on restoring the JCPOA and is open to and supportive of efforts to this end.

“China is willing to strengthen coordination and cooperation with Iran to push the settlement of the Iran nuclear issue in a direction conducive to regional peace and stability,” the chief diplomat pointed out.

He went on to say that the Chinese side recognizes Iran's genuine concerns, supports Iran in protecting its legitimate rights and interests, and opposes unilateral sanctions that have no legal basis.

“China understands Iran's legitimate concerns (and) supports Iran in safeguarding its legitimate rights and interests and opposes unilateral sanctions that have no basis in international law,” Wang asserted.

In reference to the continued growth of bilateral relations, the Chinese foreign minister stated that Beijing places a high value on expanding exchanges with Tehran and has no reservations about extending such relationships.

“In the face of the rapidly evolving international and regional situation, China is ready to strengthen coordination and cooperation with Iran to push for the resolution of the Iran nuclear issue in a direction conducive to regional peace and stability,” Wang said.

Amir Abdollahian also emphasized the importance of Tehran-Beijing relations and the necessity to strengthen them, stating that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's government prioritizes the development of ties.

China plans to host the summit of the foreign

stigmatization of Muslim communities.”

The ambassador said UN members are tasked to fight “discrimination, racism and xenophobia” and called on the international community to strongly fight against hate speech against Islam.

“We, as responsible members of the United Nations, bear a heavy burden in fighting discrimination, racism and xenophobia. We need to strongly condemn hate speech and acts of hate against Muslims while taking the necessary measures to prevent this violation of basic human rights of Muslims. It is critical for the United Nations to unite against attempts at embracing Islamophobia, including through such measures as the Muslim travel ban, banning Muslim symbols and the abhorrent use of such ignorant terms as ‘Islamic terrorism.’ It is our firm conviction that terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group,” Takht Ravanchi added.

The ambassador said the world can

gain a better understanding of Islam by observing the resolution by UN General Assembly in naming a day to combat Islamophobia.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran affirms its full support for OIC initiatives to combat Islamophobia, in particular the designation of the 15th of March as an International Day to Combat Islamophobia by the UN General Assembly. Through the observance of this day, we can build a better global understanding of Islam and Islamic precepts and convey, through the General Assembly, a message of international solidarity and cooperation,” stated Iran's top ambassador to the UN.

“In this regard, we welcome the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution today by General Assembly. This resolution demonstrates our determination to effectively and constructively address Islamophobia as one of the main challenges faced by the international community. We urge all Member States to shoulder their

responsibilities and live up to their legal obligations in order to advance the shared values of peaceful co-existence, tolerance and mutual understanding. Let us keep striving for justice, dignity and inclusion. For our Muslim brothers and sisters -and for all humanity,” he concluded.

Pakistan plans to host the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on March 22-23 to discuss topics on Islamophobia, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Palestine, according to Pakistan's ambassador to Turkiye.

Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi told Anadolu Agency in an interview that this year's session also coincides with Pakistan Day parade, where the OIC foreign ministers will be guests at the event as well.

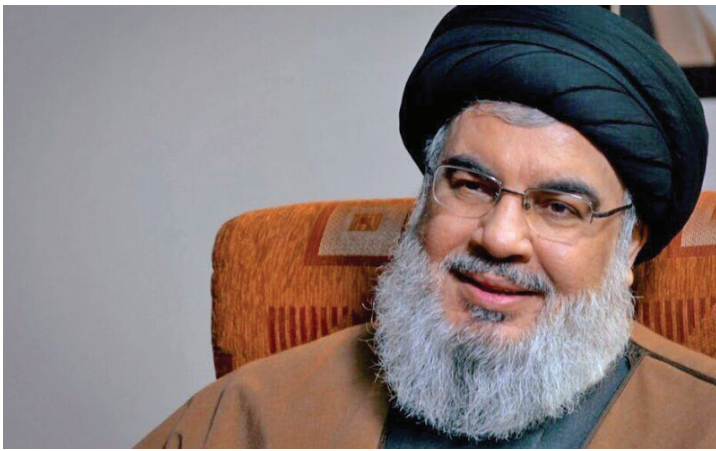
“In 1940, the All-India Muslim League met in Lahore and decided that the Muslims of South Asia deserved and wanted an independent homeland of their own. Seven years later on Aug. 14, 1947, Pakistan came into being as a result of the resolutions adopted in 1940 on March 23,” Qazi said.

Regarding the meeting's agenda, Qazi said it will encompass everything that is of interest to the Muslim world, with this year's theme “Partnership for unity, justice and development”

Man of the Year

From Page 1 ► Ever since the 2020 destructive explosion that wreaked huge damage on the port of Beirut and the surrounding districts, the economic situation in Lebanon has been steadily deteriorating, with the country's lira currency significantly losing much of its value against the U.S. dollar. Many gas stations and power stations ran out of fuel needed to power Lebanese cars and light homes.

The explosion led to a political vacuum in Lebanon after Hassan Diab, who assumed premiership in late 2019 by virtue of consensus among Lebanon's main religiopolitical factions including Hezbollah, resigned. Diab remained in power as caretaker prime minister for about 13 months, highlighting the challenges of forming government in a country where political factions are divided along sectarian lines and pulling in different directions. Diab sought to strike a balance and render services to the Lebanese people without



prioritizing foreign pressure to undermine certain groups that are part and parcel of Lebanon's political system.

Lebanon, however, needed a new government whose formation would almost certainly exacerbate foreign pressure on Hezbollah and its allies. And that is what happened exactly during the political consultations that led to Najib Mikati taking over as prime minister.

Foreign countries such as the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel sought to use the process of government formation to undercut Hezbollah's influence. They all put huge pressure on anyone whose name was considered for the premiership. Their demand was pure and simple: undermine Hezbollah's influence or you will face an economic, political, and

diplomatic boycott.

Hezbollah refused such pressures and considered it meddling. And Nasrallah quietly and constructively engaged in the political process to help find solutions to many challenges without allowing the foreigners to make decisions for the Lebanese.

He positively contributed to solving hurdles getting in the way of government formation, and he is now laying the grounds for the victory of resistance factions and their allies in the upcoming elections slated for May. Just as what happened during government formation, the foreign countries would use the next election to undermine Hezbollah and its allies.

But Nasrallah is aware and vigilant. He recently said, "Our battle in the next election is the battle of our allies, and just as we strive for the victory of our candidates, we will strive for the success of our allied candidates."

Russian demands incorporated into JCPOA text: spokesperson

TEHRAN – Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova has said that at Moscow's request, some necessary provisions had been added to the text of a possible Vienna agreement to ensure cooperation between Tehran and Moscow on nuclear projects.

"The situation in the international arena is changing rapidly, and the hostile attacks of the United States and the European Union on Russia have made us think about preventing obstructions to international cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran," Zakharova said, according to IRNA.

She added, "Additional necessary provisions are included in the text of the forthcoming agreement to ensure that all projects and areas of activity envisaged in the JCPOA, including cooperation with Iran at the Bushehr nuclear power plant, are protected from the negative effects of U.S. and EU sanctions against Russia."

She pointed out that Moscow was not to blame for the slow pace of the Vienna talks.

"We have not delayed the process of reaching an agreement to resume the implementation of the JCPOA," she continued.

Zakharova statements are similar to what Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said during his meeting with Iranian Foreign

Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

"We discussed in detail the current situation around the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program," Lavrov said. "We are in favor of the earliest possible resumption of full implementation of this agreement, which was backed by the UN Security Council resolution, on the basis of the original balance of interests contained therein."

The remarks were made during a visit by Amir Abdollahian to Moscow. "We are waiting for the U.S. to return to the legal framework of this nuclear deal, and we are also waiting for the lifting of the illegal sanctions the U.S. has imposed to hurt not only Iran and its people, but a number of other countries," Lavrov pointed out, according to Russian TASS news agency.

The Iranian foreign minister, for his part, said the U.S. new demands are hampering the conclusion of the Vienna talks. "Russia is not creating any obstacles towards reaching agreements, there is no connection between the developments in Ukraine that we talked about and the Vienna talks," he stressed, according to TASS.

He added, "We hope that the Americans will give up their unbridled demands right as we get close to reaching [the deal], and we will be able to announce a good deal in the near future, so

to speak, with the support of all parties that are involved in the Vienna talks."

During their meeting in Moscow, the foreign ministers of Iran and Russia discussed bilateral relations and regional as well as international issues of mutual interest.

The Iranian foreign minister stressed that the process of developing relations with neighbors and Russia will be defined and continue regardless of any third party or international developments, and regardless of the outcome of the talks in Vienna, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Amir Abdollahian reviewed the latest developments in Vienna and described Russia's approach as constructive and empathetic during the past 11 months of talks and expressed confidence that this approach will continue until a good and reliable agreement is reached.

He said it is a fundamental principle that the definitive interests of the Iranian people determine the path of the Iranian Foreign Ministry and the negotiating team in Vienna. Amir Abdollahian stressed that the ball is in America's court, and if Washington responds to the few remaining important issues and refrains from killing the time any further, the parties can return to Vienna as soon as possible to conclude the talks.

Iran president speaks to current and former Turkmen counterparts

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi spoke over the phone with the current and former presidents of Turkmenistan.

In response to a phone call from the Speaker of the National Assembly of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow on Tuesday evening, Ayatollah Raisi congratulated him on holding presidential elections and congratulated him on Nowruz and stressed the need to develop relations with Central Asian countries, especially Turkmenistan.

Referring to the development of Tehran-Ashgabat relations during the presidency of Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, Raisi said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always wanted to develop cooperation with Turkmenistan in the fields of energy, politics and security, and your role in achieving these goals is admirable."

Referring to his visit to Turkmenistan and meeting with the President of the country, the President said, "You can always rely on long-term and sincere friendship with the Islamic Republic of Iran," according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

Turkmen National Assembly Speaker Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow also thanked Ayatollah Raisi for his efforts to develop bilateral relations between the two countries.

In his first phone call with Ayatollah Raisi after the election results were announced, the new President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedow thanked President Raisi for his congratulatory message and stressed the need to expand comprehensive cooperation between the two countries, saying, "I announce the full readiness for the development of Tehran-Ashgabat relations in all bilateral, multilateral, regional and international fields."

In response to this phone call, Ayatollah Raisi said, "The nations of Iran and Turkmenistan are relatives alongside being neighbours."

Referring to the importance of the North-South corridor, the President stressed, "We hope that in the new presidential term in Turkmenistan we will see cooperation and greater activation of the economic capacities of the two countries."

Earlier on Tuesday, the Iranian

president sent a message to President-elect of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedow to congratulate him on his election as President of Turkmenistan.

In this message, Ayatollah Raisi stated, "I sincerely congratulate Your Excellency and the honourable people of your country on your election as President of Turkmenistan."

The President stated, "I hope that in the new term, the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan will have a favourable growing trend in bilateral, regional and international dimensions."

He wrote, "The priority of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to develop relations with neighbouring countries, and Turkmenistan has a special place in this regard."

Earlier in January this year, the Special Envoy of the President of Turkmenistan, together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, delivered a written message from the President of Turkmenistan to Ayatollah Raisi.

Speaking in the meeting with the Special Envoy of the President

of Turkmenistan and the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan Ra'it Meredow, Ayatollah Raisi stated that Tehran-Ashgabat relations are on the path to development, adding, "We are determined to take effective and useful steps in political, economic, cultural and social relations for the benefit of our nations".

Raisi called the bilateral meeting with the President of Turkmenistan in Ashgabat and the telephone calls between the two sides the beginning of a new chapter in the development of relations between the two countries and said, "In these talks, proper decisions were made to remove the existing obstacles on the path of the development of cooperation, including in the field of transportation and energy, and the ground for expanding and deepening relations between the two countries has been facilitated".

Ayatollah Raisi pointed out, "Tehran welcomes the proposals of the other side in the field of strengthening and promoting cooperation in various sectors, especially in the field of energy, trade and commerce, and there are no obstacles and restrictions in this regard".

IRAN IN FOCUS

MARCH 17, 2022

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Tehran derby a title decider

TEHRAN – Tehran derby can be the most important match in entire careers of Persepolis coach Yahya Golmohammadi and Esteghlal trainer Farhad Majidi.

Persepolis sit second in Iran Professional League (IPL), six points behind leaders Esteghlal.



The loss will cost the title for Golmohammadi, former Iran defender. On the other hand, Esteghlal could bring an end to their nine-year title drought.

Majidi will, without a shadow of doubt, be a hero for the Blues' fans with a win over archrivals.

With six weeks to spare, Esteghlal could win the title with a win in the match.

Persepolis have won IPL title in the past five seasons and look to win that for the sixth time in a row. To lose against Esteghlal means they will have an impossible mission to make history and must try in the next season.

The match will be held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium and the fans can enter into stadium after about two years.

Esteghlal and Persepolis have played each other 97 times with Esteghlal narrowly lead the encounters by 26 wins to 25 with 46 draws.

The Tehran derby, also known as Blue-Red derby, is a football match between the two prominent Tehran clubs Esteghlal and Persepolis.

It is widely considered the major crosstown derby in the Persian Gulf Pro League. This match was declared as the most important derby in Asia and 22nd most important derby in the world in June 2008 by World Soccer magazine.

It is considered one of the world's most intense derbies. Despite being a derby between two teams from Tehran, the match has been played in other Iranian cities as well. Taking place at least twice during the year via the league fixtures, this cross-town rivalry has extended to the Hazfi Cup, as well as in minor tournaments and friendlies.

WCQ 2022: Iran to travel to Seoul on Saturday

TEHRAN – Iran national football team will travel to Seoul, South Korea on Saturday.

Team Melli are scheduled to meet the Korean team on March 24 in Group A of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification.

The top two teams from each of the two groups in this round will earn automatic berths. Iran and South Korea have already qualified for the 2022 World Cup.

Facing Iran has been a challenge for South Korea for years. South Korea's last victory against the 'Persian Leopards' came in January 2011. In their most recent meeting, held in Tehran in October, the teams ended in a 1-1 draw, with South Korea blowing a 1-0 lead in the second half.

South Korea have managed just nine wins against 10 draws and 13 losses all time versus Iran, Yonhap reported.

Iran's Sarkhosh claim title at Asian Men's Snooker Championship

TEHRAN – Amir Sarkhosh claimed the title in the Asian Men's Snooker Championship on Wednesday.

The Iranian player completely outclasses Indian Ishpreet Singh Chadha with a score of 5-0 to become the champion. With this win, Amir managed to avenge his loss in the finals last year.

The tournament was held at Doha, Qatar. The top players and best runners-up qualified for the knockout rounds. The top players from each group qualified directly for the Round of 16 stage while the runners-up from all groups qualified for the Round of 24 stage.

Handball coach Motamedi optimistic on his girls in world championship

TEHRAN – Head coach of the Iranian women's junior handball team, Mahsa Motamedi, reflects on the national team's qualification for the 2022 Women's Junior World Handball Championship.

On Monday, Iran booked their place at the Championship by finishing in the runner-up position in the 2022 Women's Junior World Handball Championship.

"It was a high-level and competitive tournament. Comparing the previous editions, which we had analyzed them, all the teams had made significant progress," said Motamedi in her exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

Iran lost to Kazakhstan 30-24 in their opening match but defeated India (42-37), Thailand (28-21), and Uzbekistan (25-21) in their next games.

"India are one of the teams that have made a lot of progress over the last two or three years. They have invested a lot in handball. Other countries had the same situation," she said.

"Iran have never beaten Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in handball in any age category – junior and senior – and was a great success for us to beat Uzbekistan," the national team coach added.

When asked about the reasons for the defeat in the first game against Kazakhstan, Motamedi said: "If we had not played Kazakhstan in the first game, we would have defeated them. The main reason for our defeat, in my opinion, was the lack of international experience of most of our players. But for the next games, this problem solved. Even in the second half of the game against Kazakhstan, the players did a great job, but we could not bounce back," Motamedi added.

About the preparation for the 2022 World Handball Championship in Slovenia, Motamedi explained: "first of all, I thank the handball federation, and especially the president Mr. Pakdel, for helping the team participate in competition despite all the difficulties. It was the first time in eight years that the Iranian team were sent to the junior competition, and I am glad that we gained the federation's trust."

"Secondly, we need precise and accurate planning to participate in the world championship because we have an arduous task ahead of us in the competition," Motamedi concluded.

Chemidor win Iran's women's basketball league

TEHRAN – Chemidor claimed the title of the Iran's Women's Basketball Super League on Wednesday.

Chemidor defeated Bahman Group 72-57 in their fourth match in the final.

Chemidor defeated Bahman Group 3-1 in the best-of-five basis.

The Iran's Women's Basketball Super League was founded in 2002.

FM advisor discusses Yemen with Sweden diplomat

TEHRAN – Ali Asghar Khaji, senior advisor to the Iranian foreign minister for special political affairs, and Peter Semneby, Sweden's special envoy for Yemen, on Sunday discussed latest developments in the Arab country over the phone.

The senior advisor to the Iranian foreign minister criticized the UN Security Council's biased approach to the Yemeni crisis, saying it was under the influence of considerations and

political lobbying by the aggressor countries. Khaji said this approach goes against the political process aimed at resolving the Yemen crisis and will increase mistrust between the warring sides more than ever before.

Khaji and Semneby further underlined the need to expand cooperation for the purpose of resolving the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen as soon as possible.



CBI, SEO to cooperate in launching money market funds



TEHRAN- The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) plans to collaborate with the country's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) to launch money market mutual funds in the next Iranian calendar year (starts on March 21), the bank's governor announced.

"One of the plans of the central bank and the securities and exchange organization for the next year is to launch money market funds that [currently] exist in the world but not in Iran, so we hope to create them in the next year," IRNA quoted Ali Saleh-Abadi as saying on Tuesday.

Saleh-Abadi made the remarks at the unveiling ceremony of SEO's new capital market assessment and monitoring system in Tehran.

"Due to the development of the capital market, the increase in the volume of stock transactions, and the emergence of new instruments, this market also needs more monitoring and observation," the official said, underlining the significant role of the mentioned system.

Emphasizing that such instruments will help develop and create a healthy business environment in the capital market, Saleh-Abadi said: "Article 2 of the securities market law

states that creating a transparent, fair and efficient market is one of the major duties of the Securities and Exchange Organization, so this type of oversight and monitoring can help ensure fairness, transparency of transactions and appropriate access to market information."

The CBI governor also referred to the plans for establishing interactions between parallel markets and added: "The joint committee of Securities and Exchange Organization and Central Bank of Iran has been formed and several meetings have also been held, these meetings will be aimed at establishing the necessary coordination between the two markets (money and capital markets)."

Capital market to have a better condition next year

Following the remarks of the SEO head, Chairman of the Economic Committee of the Iranian Parliament Mohammadreza Pour-Ebrahimi said on Wednesday that the country's stock market is expected to have a better condition in the next Iranian calendar year.

"According to nuclear deal negotiations and new developments abroad, new windows are expected to be opened for the country's economy and, most importantly, for the capital market," Pour-Ebrahimi said.

According to the official, the trend of the stock exchange trading in the next year is expected to be upward.

The parliament and the government are taking serious measures to solve the problems of the capital market and this can have positive consequences in the long run, he stressed.

IOEC inks deal with foreign firm to develop 2nd phase of SP oil layer

From page 1 ► According to Khojasteh-Mehr, due to the special situation of the oil layer, ordinary vertical drilling methods cannot be used for drilling wells at this field so using the new horizontal drilling technology by the foreign contractor will also be a step toward transferring this technology into the country.

South Pars Oil Layer, which holds about 900 million barrels of oil, is located in southern Iran in the Persian Gulf waters, where the Islamic Republic shares giant South Pars gas field with Qatar.



The field is the northeastern extension of Al-Shaheen oil field in Qatar. The Iranian portion of the field is located at 67 meters of water depth.

The huge South Pars gas field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters. The remaining

6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The 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 development of the South Pars field started in 1998 and 29 different phases were defined for the project along with a separate oil block. The field, however, is currently divided into 24 standard offshore phases, the output of which is processed by 14 gas refineries on land.

Iran imports 10 second-hand airplanes over past 3 months



TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) Mohammad Mohammadi-Bakhsh said the country has imported 10 passenger airplanes with an average age between 15-20 years over the past three months, Tasnim news agency reported.

Speaking in a press conference on Wednesday, Mohammadi-Bakhsh announced that the CAO is negotiating with European companies to supply the equipment and parts needed by the

country's airlines.

"Our negotiations for the supply of airplane parts are being pursued simultaneously with the negotiations for the revival of the nuclear deal," the CAO head said.

The official noted that his company has a specific plan and strategy to solve the problems of the aviation industry in recent years, saying: "For the past 42 years, despite the country's toughest sanctions, the aviation industry has survived."

"Despite the sanctions of the last four decades, we have provided the most services and have met the needs of airlines in repairing and supplying parts using domestic capacities," he added.

He further stated that currently seven ATR airplanes are active in Iran Air, which means six of the airline's ATR fleet are going through overhaul operations.

"Normally about 25 percent of an airline's airplanes should go through maintenance in each overhaul period," he added.

Having the oldest airline in West Asia and second oldest in Asia, Iran started developing its aviation industry nearly 80 years ago and this industry is still improving in the country.

Developing this industry would have major positive outcomes for the country's economy; in addition to creating new job opportunities for thousands of people; it will increase the air traffic while creating a capillary network across the country which would impact all other economic areas like industry, agriculture, tourism, trade and etc.

The Iranian Atmospheric Science and Meteorological Research Center was established in 1989 with the aim of meeting the scientific needs of the country in the related areas.

73 idle industrial units revived in Alborz province

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 73 idle industrial units have been revived in Alborz province during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20).

Hamidreza Oqabneshin, the managing director of the province's Industrial Parks Company, also said that the mentioned units returning to the production cycle created jobs for 1,017 persons.

One of the most important programs of Alborz Province's Industrial Parks Company is the revival of stagnant and inactive units, which tries to revive these stagnant units and return them to the production cycle by using the existing capacities, he further stressed.

By forming a working group and using the capacity of executive bodies, an effort is made to identify the problems of production units and then provide appropriate solutions to solve their problems, the official added.

The scope of activities of the revived units included food industry, animal and poultry feed, metal, textile, chemical, packaging, detergent, medical equipment, dairy and household appliances, Oqabneshin said and announced that 5.01 trillion rials (about \$20 million) has been invested to revive these units.

As announced last week by the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization



(ISIPO), over 1,900 idle industrial units have been revived in the industrial parks and zones of the country in the current Iranian calendar year.

Ali Rasoulia also said the number of idle units is decreasing.

Referring to the high demand for investment in industrial parks and zones he said: "Given that the demand for investment in this filed is high, we seek to provide infrastructure such as water, electricity and gas for the companies so that the capabilities of these areas to attract investors will be developed."

Of course, the important point is that the applicants must also complete the construction, install the machinery, obtain the operation and production licenses within the framework of the obligations and within the legal period specified in the land use right contract, he added.

The official had previously said that the number of idle industrial units is hoped to reach 2,000 units by the end of the present year.

The ISIPO head had also

announced that 1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to the production cycle in the industrial parks with a financing of 35 trillion rials (nearly \$140 million), providing employment for 27,000 people, in the last Iranian calendar year.

With the aim of reactivating stagnant units or units that are operating below capacity, 900 consultants from the private sector and knowledge-based companies were selected in the form of industry clinics across the country to recognize the weaknesses of these units, Rasoulia stated.

"Despite the two major challenges of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic, which imposed severe restrictions on the country, we tried to activate domestic capacities by turning to localizing the technology of manufacturing parts and equipment", he added.

Sanctions have caused problems for financial exchanges and the export of goods to other countries, he said, adding, "The negative effects of coronavirus pandemic on various parts of the country, including industry, are not hidden from anyone, and the economic growth of some countries has reached below zero during this period."

Iran is proud that despite these restrictions and pressure from these two important challenges, its industry has grown by more than seven percent, according to the statistics and reports from

various sectors, the official further highlighted.

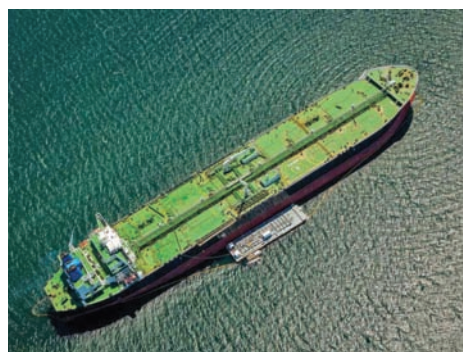
Also, as announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, over 6,500 new industrial units were established across the country during the past year which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the official has said: "In the year that has been dedicated to the production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and executive bodies should be towards supporting the country's industrial and mining units."

Niaraki pointed to a 40-percent increase in the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the previous year, saying: "The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest in the productive sectors."

He also mentioned an 85-percent rise in the allocation of land for establishing industrial units across the country and noted that over 4,500 hectares of land were handed over to applicants in the previous calendar year.

Iran raises April oil prices for Asian buyers



TEHRAN - National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has raised its official crude oil selling prices for

Asian buyers in April, Shana reported citing the NIOC data.

As reported, the National Iranian Oil Company has set the prices of light, heavy and Foruzan crude grades for sale in April at \$4.70, \$3.65 and \$3.75 above the Oman / Dubai average prices, respectively.

The prices of light, heavy and Foruzan crude grades for sales in the mentioned month are also \$2.5, \$1.95 and \$2.05 above the March prices, respectively.

Iran has priced its light, heavy, Foruzan and Soroush crude grades below the Brent prices in northwestern Europe, West Asia and South Africa.

Over 2.5m tons of basic goods transported from Mazandaran ports in 11 months

TEHRAN- More than 2.5 million tons of basic commodities were transported from the ports of Mazandaran province, in the north of Iran, to the designated destinations during the first 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-February 19, 2022), according to a provincial official.

Hassan Jahanian, the director-general of road maintenance and transportation of the province, said, "From the beginning of this year to the end of the eleventh month, 150,498 bills of lading have been issued to transport all cargos, with a tonnage of 5,419,496 tons, from the ports of the province, including Fereydunkenar, Amirabad and Nowshahr ports, of which 120,619 bills of lading for a volume of 2,580,667 tons were related to basic goods."

Back in May 2021, former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani had ordered the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) to take the necessary measures to accelerate the clearance of basic goods deposited at the country's customs.



According to IRICA Deputy Head Mehrdad Jamal Orounaqi, in a meeting of the government economic coordination headquarters, some problems and issues were raised regarding the clearance of goods in the country's customs, and a report was presented to the president.

Following the mentioned meeting, Rouhani issued a decree ordering to investigate and resolve the mentioned problems and also agreed with the IRICA and Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's proposals in this regard.

companies were also mentioned as other steps taken in this regard.

Eshqi also pointed to the launch of Iran's largest and most advanced capital market data center earlier this month and said that in order to promote the use of information technology in this sector, a smart system is also going to be unveiled for monitoring and assessing the capital market and investment companies.

The above-mentioned data center was established with the aim of stabilizing and developing technology infrastructure in all areas of processing, storage, and security in order to protect the interests of shareholders and meet the technological needs of the capital market.

TEDPIX rises 7,800 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 7,808 points to 1.345 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 9.699 billion securities worth 101.842 trillion rials (about \$391.7 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 5,625 points,

and the second market's index gains 16,007 points.

TEDPIX rose 67,000 points (5.2 percent) to 1.348 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

During the past week, the indices of Tehran Oil Refining Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Company, National Iranian Copper Company, Social Security Investment Company, and Isfahan Oil Refinery were the most widely followed ones.

The head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has said this year, the monthly sales of the shares of companies listed on the Tehran Stock Exchange has been



very good and it is predicted that the growing trend of the exchanges will continue in the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21) as well.

"Considering the general provisions approved in next year's budget bill we expect that

companies will have good capital increase and take positive development measures, and it will be easier for investors to make decisions," Majid Eshqi told the press on March 12.

Mentioning the measures taken for the improvement of the market in the current year, the official said: "For nearly 12 years, no new brokerage companies were established across the country, but since late October 2021, a licensing permit has been issued in this regard and a new brokerage firm has also been established."

The establishment of new financial institutions including investment funds, investment consulting companies, financing firms, and financial information processing

From page 1 ► What led to vivid display of Russian revanchism? John Mearsheimer, the realist international relations theorist at the University of Chicago has been clamoring for years that NATO's eastward expansion would catalyze Russia's war machine and only option to salvage Ukraine is its non-alignment with Western bloc. The EU itself is subordinate to U.S. strategic interests and blocking the Nord Stream 2 is suicide for Europe but inclusion of Ukraine in the EU and NATO is portrayed as sovereign decision to join 'free world'. Weaponization of ideology is standard regime change tool of Western playbook under garb of 'freedom' but Ukrainian leadership miserably failed to understand that beating the drum of Atlanticism is tantamount to slavishly follow the dictates of Washington while impoverishing Eurasia.

In order to understand the Ukraine quagmire, let's delve into history. After disintegration of USSR, Russian leaders made it categorically clear that former Soviet states would not join NATO or hostile military consortium in return for sovereignty. The U.S. led Western bloc accorded legitimacy to principle of 'sphere of influence' and 2008 Bucharest declaration exposed Western hypocrisy when NATO announced that Georgia and Ukraine would also become part of the alliance. Peter Conradi in "Who lost Russia?" elucidates the way U.S. was interfering in Ukrainian politics behind the scenes. He mentioned a recording of a phone call between Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and Geoffrey Pyatt, the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, can be accessed on YouTube apparently courtesy of the Russian intelligence services. The conversation featured European Union and their frustration that it was not doing more to contain Russia. "Fuck the EU!" exclaimed Nuland.

In retrospect, instead of striking a delicate balance between the East and the West, Ukraine's destiny was hijacked by pro-EU liberals to thuggish far-right nationalists, lacking astute leadership but united



End of dream, return of history

in their cause to topple pro-Russia former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych. Myriad instances testify outrageous Western meddling in Eurasian Great Power's underbelly. For instance, Yanukovych emerged victorious in Ukraine's political architecture under tutelage of dubious American political consultant Paul Manafort, a long-time American Republican strategist. Manafort dramatically choreographed Yanukovych's party's public perception from mobsters to legitimate political authority. Sensing Ukraine's longstanding yearning for stability, Yanukovych dashed Western hopes of steering country out of Kremlin's sphere of influence. The Ukrainian parliament approved a law proposed by Yanukovych that abandoned the previous administration's fatal fantasy of acquiring NATO membership. Western Machiavellian tactics to hamper Ukraine's efforts in joining Eurasian Customs Union, a Russian initiative aimed at economic integration of region, led to escalation of geopolitical tug-of-war in the country. The protests aimed at ousting legitimate political government of Yanukovych saw solidarity visits by German foreign minister Guido Westerwelle, the

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton and the U.S. State Department's hawkish assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs Victoria Nuland.

In a commentary for the Washington Post, published just over a week after Yanukovych's fall, Henry Kissinger accused the EU of turning a "negotiation into a crisis by failing to appreciate that in Russia's eyes Ukraine could never be just a foreign country. Kissinger wrote, "But if Ukraine is to survive and thrive, it must not be either side's outpost against the other, it should function as a bridge between them."

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere but global North exhibited callous disregard for injustice in Global South as toxic cocktail of tyranny, imperialism and Western enlightened despotism took toll upon Muslim nations. It's not just selective outrage of international community that exposed Western contempt for 'barbarians' in the East but sheer display of discrimination against refugees as multiple media reports suggest that 'civilized' Ukrainians are denying non-Europeans safety passages. Moreover, European refugee crisis post-Arab Spring

unraveled shocking cruel face of 'free world' when they mercilessly closed doors of Europe to war-ravaged Muslim refugees fleeing CIA choreographed proxy battles in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Africa. Displaying blatant double standard, Europe is now embracing Ukrainian white refugees with progressive jubilation, offering them visas and other benefits concomitant with mass movements showing solidarity with refugees. Adding insult to injury, racist and orientalist rhetoric plagues coverage of Ukraine conflict whereby many Western media outlets are hell-bent upon depicting blue-eyed white Ukrainians as civilized enough who do not deserve war. CBS News foreign correspondent Charlie D'Agata had audacity to mock Iraqis and Afghans by normalizing war in those 'uncivilized' places. This racialized framing of Ukraine gambit testifies colonization of global media.

There is a method in Russian madness since bombardment of Ukraine is final blow to U.S.-led world order and U.S. as benign desperate hegemon helplessly sees possibly the worst European war in over 75 years. The U.S.-led Ukrainians down the primrose path and bequeathed Russians an opportunity to flex their military muscles over second largest European country. The blind American exceptionalism has rendered Ukrainians collateral damage and NATO's bellicose rhetoric is also hurtling Taiwan towards Ukraine's faith without committing protection. U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders in the Guardian article debunked Western obduracy by expounding that invasion by Russia is not an answer; neither is intransigence by NATO. World order is increasingly becoming de-Westernized and eroding credibility, legitimacy of the U.S. remains inevitable consequence of the Ukraine quagmire.

The writer is MPhil in international relations from National Defence University Islamabad. She currently works as script writer at PTV World, the state broadcaster of Pakistan.

Yemen on brink of “seismic hunger crisis”

From page 1 ► And in a more dire assessment, Beasley says “funding for Yemen has never reached this point,” adding “we have no choice but to take food from the hungry to feed the starving.”

WFP says at the beginning of this year, it was forced to reduce food rations for eight million people due to a shortage of funds. For now, the UN agency says five million people who are at immediate risk of slipping into famine conditions have continued to receive a full food ration. But unless new funds arrive further reductions will be unavoidable.

WFP says it is currently only eleven percent funded and needs more than US\$887.9 million to provide food assistance for 13 million people over the coming six months.

Yemen's deputy foreign minister in Sana'a, Hussein al-Azi, says “the ongoing siege on Yemen will remain an indicator of war, with which any talk of peace can be discredited.”

Al-Ezzi noted Yemen's armed forces are prepared to end their resistance as soon as the war on the country ends saying “our readiness to stop our defense will always remain as soon as [the Saudi-led coalition's] aggression stops, just as surrendering or abandoning the rights

“an end to the aggression, withdrawal [of foreign forces] from the Republic of Yemen, and ending the siege,” adding that “Israel must refrain from any actions harmful to the Yemeni people, otherwise very sensitive sites will be targeted.”

He also restated Yemen's official position that “the United States is leading the aggression against Yemen, and any movement does not come without directions from it,” noting that “the planes cannot take off from Saudi Arabia to bomb in Yemen until the coordinates are sent from the United States.”

Separately al-Houthi says “what is being circulated in the media about the GCC invitation for talks is in fact an invitation by Riyadh,” adding that “Riyadh is itself a party in the war, not a mediator.”

Meanwhile, the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths has noted that Yemen relies on commercial imports for 90 percent of its food and nearly all its fuel.

He says one-third of its wheat comes from Russia and Ukraine, where the conflict, which began on 24 February may push food prices, which already doubled last year, even higher.

Yemeni officials say the “Saudi-led-



of our people and our country will forever be rejected.”

Yemeni officials argue the Saudi-led American-backed coalition waging war on Yemen is using starvation as a method of warfare to force the Yemeni people to accept terms of surrender during peace talks.

Similar remarks on the use of starvation as a weapon of war has been echoed by various human rights groups.

The leader of the Ansarallah movement whose forces have fought side by side with the Yemeni army, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, has also declared that the siege and economic war on Yemen “aims to torture the Yemeni people and raise the level of their suffering.”

Al-Ezzi pointed out that “the United States has drawn out the roles and tasks for each country [involved in the Saudi-led coalition] and the United Nations in an integrated manner in a way that they do not deviate from the ongoing war.”

“Washington prevented the countries waging aggression from engaging with Sana'a in any real peace negotiations that would stop the war, so that [Washington's] exclusive mission becomes only war” al-Ezzi stressed.

The Yemeni diplomat added “The United States has robbed the United Nations of all the characteristics of a true peace mediator, that is able to move productively towards peace negotiations,” saying Washington has “led the [UN] mission to waste time in media activities, or following up on the news, for example, and writing it down in a monthly report or periodic briefings.”

He explained that “in accordance with its specific goals, Washington pushes for negotiations that only lead to our surrender and then publicize the reaction of Sana'a, by turning our refusal to surrender into an accusation of obstructing peace, with a shameful and scandalous number of lies.”

During an interview with the Lebanese based al-Mayadeen news channel,

a senior official with the Supreme Political Bureau in Yemen Muhammad Ali al-Houthi says “the humanitarian aspect is a scandal for the United Nations and the Security Council, and for all countries that claim democracy.”

Al-Houthi warned that “there is a deliberate starvation campaign of the Yemeni people, and the United Nations is covering it up,” declaring that “we will not remain idly by.”

Al-Houthi laid out Yemen's demands saying

Moscow sees ‘some hope’ for compromise with Ukraine

Zelenskyy says Ukraine ‘must recognize’ it may not join NATO

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov sees “some hope” for reaching a compromise in the negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv to end the war, according to local media.

The Russian foreign minister told the RBK newspaper that he believed there were already positions upon which the sides “are close to agreement”.

While the talks are difficult, “there is some hope of reaching a compromise”, he said.

Lavrov said Ukraine's political and military neutrality in exchange for security guarantees from Moscow were now being “seriously discussed”.

Ukraine security guarantees ‘on negotiating table’

Mykhailo Podolyak, a Ukrainian negotiator in the talks with Russia, says a “model” of legally binding security guarantees that will offer his country protection from a group of allies in the event of a future attack is “on the negotiating table”.

“Model of security guarantees is on the negotiating table. What does this mean? A rigid agreement with a number of guarantor states undertaking clear legal obligations to actively prevent attacks,” negotiator Podolyak said on Twitter.

Zelenskyy seeks more help in speech to U.S. Congress

Zelenskyy was to make an urgent appeal to the U.S. Congress for more help in fending off the Russian invasion.

The president's virtual address to members of the House of Representatives and Senate, scheduled for 9am EDT (13:00 GMT), came a day after he made a plea to Canada's parliament for more Western sanctions on Russia and the imposition of a no-fly zone over Ukraine.

A no-fly zone is a step that U.S. President Joe Biden and NATO allies have resisted out of a fear of escalating the war that began with Russia's February 24 invasion. Biden on Tuesday signed into law \$13.6bn in emergency aid to Ukraine to help it obtain more weaponry and for humanitarian assistance.

Polish, Czech and Slovenian PMs return to Poland after Kyiv trip

Delegations including the prime ministers of Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia have arrived in Poland after their visit to Kyiv, a Polish government spokesperson has said.

“The Polish, Slovenian and Czech delegations safely returned from Kyiv to Poland,” Piotr Muller wrote on Twitter.

Ukraine downed several Russian aircraft: ministry

The Ukrainian Air Forces has said that their air defense units shot down three Russian planes, one helicopter and three drones.

Two of the planes were SU-34 bombers, the third is yet to be identified, air force spokesman Yuri Ihnat said in a video.

The defense ministry said that 81 planes and 95 helicopters had been downed since the Russian invasion began on February 24.

Prosecutor general: 103 children have been killed in war in Ukraine

The Ukrainian prosecutor general has said that 103 children have been killed so far in the war in Ukraine.

Russian forces have struck more than 400 educational establishments and 59 of them have been destroyed, Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova said on Facebook.

The information could not be independently verified.

NATO begins planning to reset military posture on eastern flank

NATO is set to tell its military commanders to draw up plans for new ways to deter Russia following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, including more troops and missile defenses in Eastern Europe, according to officials and diplomats.

Defense ministers from the alliance were to order the military advice at NATO headquarters on Wednesday, just over a week before allied leaders, including the U.S. president, gather in Brussels on March 24.

“We need to reset our military posture for this new reality,” NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said. “Ministers will start an

important discussion on concrete measures to reinforce our security for the longer term, in all domains.”

20,000 residents left Mariupol in private cars so far: official

About 20,000 civilians have managed so far to leave the besieged port city of Mariupol in private cars, interior ministry adviser Vadym Denysenko has said.

Mariupol residents have been trapped in the city by Russian shelling without heating, electricity and running water for most of the past two weeks, Ukrainian officials say. At least 200,000 people are in urgent need of evacuation, according to official Ukrainian estimates earlier this week.

G7 to hold meeting over Russia: Japan

The Group of Seven industrialized nations were to hold an online meeting after 12:00 GMT to discuss Russia's actions in Ukraine, according to Japanese finance minister Shunichi Suzuki.

Suzuki, who made the comment in parliament, did not specify whether the meeting would be held among G7's financial leaders or other representatives.

Air-raïd sirens in major Ukraine cities: Report

Kyiv Independent, a Ukrainian news outlet, says air-raïd sirens have gone off in several major cities, including Kyiv, Odesa, Dnipro and Lviv.

Zelenskyy says Ukraine ‘must recognize’ it may not join NATO

Ukraine's president has said his country should accept that it may not become a member of the U.S.-led NATO military alliance, a key Russian concern that it used to justify its invasion.

“Ukraine is not a member of NATO ... We have heard for years that the doors were open, but we also heard that we could not join. It's a truth and it must be recognized,” Zelenskyy told the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force on Tuesday.

“I am glad that our people are beginning to understand this and rely on themselves and the partners who are helping us,” Zelenskyy said, while renewing his appeal for a no-fly zone to protect Ukraine from Russian air raids.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Five million Noruz trippers estimated to visit Hormozgan



TEHRAN – Up to five million travelers are estimated to visit the southern province of Hormozgan, the province's governor has announced.

“There will be a lot of travelers in the province over the upcoming holidays, roughly three to five million people, and in this regard, there should be an increased monitoring process,” IRNA quoted Mehdi Dusti as saying on Tuesday.

The province needs to prepare its tourism facilities to welcome tourists and travelers, the official added.

Known as the province of islands, Hormozgan province is located on the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf. It embraces scenic islands among which Kish, Hormuz, Hengam, and Qeshm are the most beautiful ones and top tourist destinations in southern Iran.

Over the past couple of decades, the coral Kish Island has become a beach resort where visitors can swim, shop, and sample a laid-

back and relatively liberated local lifestyle. It is home to free-trade-zone status, with ever-growing hotels, shopping centers, apartment blocks, and retail complexes.

Hormuz, which is mostly barren and hilly, is situated some eight kilometers off the coast on the Strait of Hormuz, which attracts many tourists by its colorful mountains, silver sand shores, and great local people.

Hengam Island has scenery rocky shores, serene sunset, and kind natives, which can attract travelers who enjoy a relaxing trip by spending time on this tranquil island.

Qeshm Island is a heaven for eco-tourists as it embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines. The island also features geologically eye-catching canyons, hills, caves, and valleys, most of which are protected as part of the UNESCO-tagged Qeshm Island Geopark, itself a haven for nature-lovers.

Historical bazaar of Qom to be renovated



TEHRAN –The historical bazaar of Qom will be renovated at a cost of 50 billion rials (about \$189,000).

The project involves strengthening the historical structure and repairing damaged parts and wooden doors, CHTN quoted provincial tourism chief Alireza Arjmandi as saying on Wednesday.

The Safavid-era (1501-1736) bazaar has been inscribed on the national heritage list.

In the Iranian culture, bazaars have been traditional public spaces in the Iranian cities with great contributions to commercial activities in urban life meanwhile their extended activities can be traced to social, cultural, political, and religious roles.

People watching and even mingling with them in the bazaars is one of the best ways to take the pulse of the country. Bazaars have traditionally been major economic and social centers in any Iranian city.

Most mazes and passages offer

certain commodities such as carpets, metalwork, toys, clothing, jewelry, kitchen appliances, traditional spices, herbal remedies, and natural perfumes. One can also bump into colorful grocery stores, bookbinders, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, tobacconists, tailors, flag sellers, broadcloth sellers, carpenters, shoemakers, and knife-makers.

Several divided carpet sections across the bazaar enable visitors to watch or buy hand-woven Persian carpets and rugs with different knot densities and other features. From another point of view, bazaars are also synonyms of foods, with their unmissable colorful stalls of vegetables, herbs, and spices. Yet, most of these ingredients might be mysterious to a foreign eye.

The country's second-holiest city after Mashhad, Qom is home to both the magnificent shrine of Hazrat-e Masumeh (SA) and the major religious madrasas (schools).

Apart from sightseers and pilgrims who visit Qom to pay homage at the holy shrine, the city is also a top destination for Shiite scholars and students who come from across the world to learn Islamic studies at its madrasas and browse through eminent religious bookshops.

The city's antiquity goes back to the Sassanid era (224 CE–651) and several historical mosques, mansions, and natural sceneries have been scattered across the city as well as towns and villages nearby.

a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage has said.

The accused people were traced and finally arrested after police received reports from cultural heritage aficionados and local people about their misdeeds, CHTN quoted Mohammadreza Bahmaninejad as saying on Wednesday.

The culprits were handed over to the judicial system for further

Ali Sadr Cave open to public during Noruz

From page 1 ► Ali Sadr water cave is a top destination for domestic and foreign sightseers, researchers, history buffs, and day-trippers.

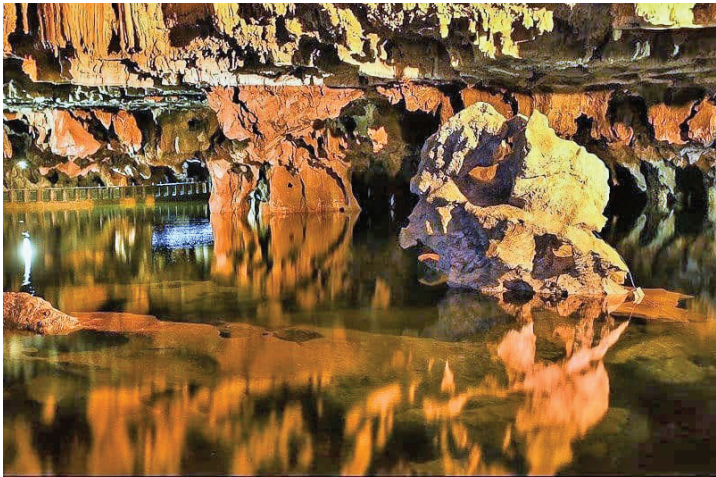
The cave is a gigantic water-filled cavern widely believed to date from the Jurassic era. It embraces a huge matrix of sunless channels, ponds, grottoes, and water passages which are stretched along with imposing rock formations and stalactite-covered tops in a span of several kilometers.

The entrance to the lengthy cave is situated some 70km north

of Hamadan.

Sightseeing there is connected with traversing in well-lit labyrinths of waterways via paddle boats, walking on subterranean islets, as well as observing rock carvings of hunting scenes, artifacts, paintings, and vessels that are associated with prehistorical troglodytes.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the



capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

Hamedan has had many names: it was possibly the Bit Daiukki of the Assyrians, Hangmatana, or Agbatana, to the Medes, and Ecbatana to the Greeks. One of the Median capitals, under Cyrus II (the Great; died 529 BC) and later Achaemenian rulers, it was the site of a royal summer palace.

About 1220 Hamedan was destroyed by the Mongols. In 1386 it was sacked by Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, and the

inhabitants were massacred. It was partly restored in the 17th century and subsequently changed hands often between Iranian ruling houses and the Ottomans.

Sitting on a high plain, Hamedan is graciously cool in August but snow prone and freezing from December to March. In summer the air is often hazy.

Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan's attractions to name a few.

Tehran museum to host handicrafts exhibit

TEHRAN –Darvazeh Dolat Gas Station Museum in downtown Tehran will be hosting an exhibition of Iranian handicrafts and traditional arts, Tehran's deputy tourism chief has announced.

The three-day exhibit, which will open on March 22, will include artworks of different fields, such as pottery, miniature, embroidery, leatherwork, woodcarving, and traditional jewelry, Parvaneh Heidari said on Wednesday.

The exhibit aims at promoting domestic handicrafts as gifts to celebrate Noruz, the Iranian New Year, the official added.

From ancient times to today, gift-giving tradition on a fresh new year symbolizes wealth, prosperity, fertility, or luck. Perhaps the most enduring image of Noruz is about socializing, deepening family bonds, and meeting up with old friends mostly in their homes.

Wide-ranging handicrafts

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

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC-Asia Pacific

Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

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

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

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

Darvazeh Dolat Gas Station Museum

Darvazeh Dolat Gas Station Museum was active as a gas station till the 1990s, after which it ceased operations to the construction of the subway. In 2017, the museum



department of the Oil Ministry restored and turned the building into a museum.

This museum houses some 500 historic objects, all of which are registered on the national heritage list and date back 50 to 100 years.

The highlights are two industrial treasures including a 1947 Leyland petrol tanker and a 1921 Satam gas pump.

Leyland was a British automotive engineering and manufacturing company, while Satam was a French company supplying metering solutions to the oil and gas industry.

During the 1940s, fourteen gas stations were built in Tehran with the assistance of a British company, of which only the Darvazeh Dolat Gas Station Museum and Station No. 4 still exist. Other gas stations have slowly crumbled and repurposed.

Medical tourism center to be inaugurated in northwest Iran

TEHRAN –The first phase of a center dedicated to medical tourism will be inaugurated in the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan on Friday.

A budget of 300 billion rials (\$11 million) has been invested in the project, which is estimated to create 30 job opportunities, provincial tourism chief Jalil Jabari has announced.

West Azarbaijan embraces a variety of lush natural sceneries, cultural heritage sites, and museums including the UNESCO sites of Takht-e Soleyman and Qareh Klise (St. Thaddeus Monastery), Teppie Hasanlu, and the ruined Bastam Citadel.

The region was home to several ancient civilizations. According to Britannica, it was conquered by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander's generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. Ultimately, the area returned to the Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the



3rd century CE.

Medical tourism in Iran

The developing health tourism industry is one of the most important fields of Iran's travel sector, which is trying to prove its capabilities and capacities in attracting medical and health tourists to the country.

Many domestic experts believe that medical tourism in Iran is a win-win opportunity both for the country and foreign patients, as they are offered affordable yet quality treatment services and the country gains considerable

foreign currency.

Iran's two most popular medical tourist cities are Tehran and Mashhad, but the coronavirus outbreak has significantly reduced the number of travelers.

Iran is one of the major destinations for health tourism in the region, and patients with 55 different nationalities, mostly from neighboring countries including Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan are seeking to use Iran's services and facilities in

this field.

Iranian hospitals admitted nearly 70,000 foreign patients over the Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2018–March 2019) and it made an economic contribution of around \$1.2 billion to the country, according to the medical tourism department at the Ministry of Health.

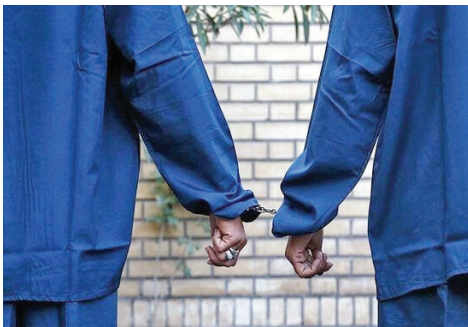
In April 2018, the rotating presidency of the International Health Tourism Conference of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was handed to the Islamic Republic for a three-year term.

Mohammad Jahangiri who presides over a national center for developing health tourism said in May 2018 that Iran can annually earn \$7 billion in medical and health tourism, though the sector now brings in only one-seventh or even lesser of the sum.

The Islamic Republic has set its goals to exceed its yearly medical travelers to around 2 million in the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025–March 2026).

Illegal diggers arrested in Fars

TEHRAN – Iranian police have recently arrested two illegal excavators in Kazerun, southern Fars province,



investigation, the official added.

The ancient region of Fars, also spelled Pars or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (c. 550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

The capital city of Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent

buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital which was the literary capital of Persia during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

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

915 nanoproducts based on domestic technologies

TEHRAN – Some 915 nanoproducts are being produced and marketed in more than 15 industrial areas based on domestic technologies, according to the Nanotechnology Innovation Council.

One of the industries that have experienced good growth in Iran in recent years, proving the country's scientific development, is the nanotechnology industry, a subject area that has brought Iran to the world's fourth place.

These achievements are the result of the efforts of knowledge-based institutions, and the Nanotechnology Innovation Council of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Currently, nanotech products are produced and marketed in more than 15 industrial fields based on domestic technologies and are being exported to 49 countries from five continents.

Over the current year (ending March 20), the total sale of Iranian nanoproducts has been equal to 115 trillion rials (nearly \$425 million).



The expansion of nanotechnology export programs in recent years and the establishment of bases for exporting nanoproducts to China, India, Indonesia, Syria, Turkey, and Iraq have provided the opportunity for the entry of Iranian nanotechnology goods, equipment, and services to global markets.

Some 42 percent of the products in this field are related to construction, more than 17 percent to the field of oil, gas, and petrochemicals, 13 percent to the field of automob-

iles, over 10 percent to the field of optoelectronic.

Some 270 companies are active in the nanotechnology field and it is predicted that their revenue will reach up to 80 trillion rials (nearly \$310 million), Vice President for Science and Technology, Sourena Sattari, announced.

Iran improves in nanotechnology

Iran's ranking in nanotechnology articles citation in 2019 has significantly improved compared to 2018,

as it moved 26 levels higher, according to the StatNano's statistics collected from the WoS database.

Based on a report Nanotechnology Publications report, Iran ranked 38 worldwide for the average times the nano-articles have been cited in the Journal Citation Reports in 2019, while in 2018, it was placed 64.

Iran ranked 4th for the highest number of nano-article publications.

Some 42% of the products are related to construction, 17% to oil, gas, and petrochemicals, 13% to automobiles, 10% to optoelectronic, and the rest to other fields.

Botanical gardens in Iran

Part 2

The Botanical Garden of Iran

In 1968, a board of trustees for the country's botanical gardens was formed.

Accordingly, a board statute in eight articles was drawn up and a board of trustees selected. In 1969 the board approved a plan for establishing a dignified, well-equipped botanical garden, measuring 1 x 1 km, about 22 km west of Tehran to the north of Tehran-Karaj highway, and set the execution of this plan as its prime goal.

Within a year the garden area was enclosed, a windbreak was set up along the west side, and the activities for improving the soil, building offices and the like, water supply, planting trees, sowing seeds, creating a rocky hill, digging the ground for artificial lakes, etc., got under way.

In 1972, over 45 ha of land were annexed to the garden on its north side.

The administration of the garden was entrusted first to Tabeti (till 1972), and then to Mohammad-Baqer Chaychi (till 1978).

After the Revolution of 1979, the garden was assigned its present name and was placed under the direct supervision of the director of the Botanical Department of the Research Institute of Forests and Range Lands.

Parviz Babakanlu was in charge of the post-revolutionary garden till 1988; he has been replaced by Mostafa Asadi.

The region where the garden is situated is flat with a gentle southerly slope. Alborz mountains form its background in the north. The climate is dry (average annual precipitation is about 250 mm). The temperature may reach up to 43° C in summer and down to -10° C or lower in winter.

The natural flora of the region consists in the dry steppe vegetation in Iran, abounding particularly in the dermana (*Artemisia herba-alba* Asso).

Construction and improvement work in the garden is ongoing. Three of several excavated ponds are now filled with water. Two man-made hills (the larger one 19 m high) are designed to represent Alborz and Zagros mountains; other hills to represent Himalayan mountains have been set up, but are not planted yet.

Five hectares are allocated to the Caspian area forest. The garden also includes a large rock garden with cliff walls and a waterfall,

a special section for desert plants, another section for medicinal plants, large areas planted with trees, a fruit garden, several greenhouses, etc.

The garden's collection, comprising about 2,000 plant species now, is supplemented by an herbarium of the Iranian flora which houses now some 100,000 specimens.

The garden has also a special library of over 5,000 volumes. A seeds list in English, published annually by the garden, is sent to reputable botanical gardens in the world, with which institutions the garden has established scientific relations since its foundation.

Other projects

The relatively small botanic garden which Ahmad Parsa (then professor of botany at Tehran University) and later Tabeti attempted (respectively in 1936 and 1946) on the main campus of the university (where the university mosque was later built) was short-lived.

Another ill-fated plan of the university for a botanical garden relates to the one initiated in 1966 on a large piece of land (nearly 3.5 ha in area) in the hamlet Vasfenar (southwest of Tehran on the road to Saveh) donated by Mrs. Golnar Farmanfarmaian to the university; but the planning and planting work stopped in 1969, and in the following year the plants cultivated there (including 170 species of woody plants) were transferred to another garden.

The only noteworthy live project for a new botanical garden in the country is that by Shiraz University, which, after the 1979 Revolution, decided to turn the expropriated famous private Bagh-e Eram in Shiraz into a "botanical garden" reportedly for public display and educational purposes.

What has actually been done in Bagh-e Eram in the past decade may be summarized as follows: the cultivated plants already there have been scientifically labeled, a list of these plants with a map of the garden (20 species of fruit trees, 75 other species of outdoor plants, and 55 species of greenhouse plants) has been published, and the old mansion in the garden has been placed at the disposal of the university's Law School and of the Center for Studies in Islamic Sciences.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

Concluded

Iran, Turkey to enhance co-op on women empowerment



TEHRAN – Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Ensieh Khazali, in a meeting on Tuesday with Turkish Minister of Family and Social Services Derya Yanik, discussed joint cooperation in the field of women.

The two officials met on the sidelines of the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) being held in New York from March 14 to 25.

Explaining the scientific and social advances of Iranian women, Khazali pointed to winning gold medals as an achievement of Iranian women in

sports, expressing hope that Iran and Turkey could cooperate in all fields.

She further suggested holding joint sports competitions and launching scientific projects between Iranian and Turkish women, which was welcomed by the Turkish official.

Yanik, for her part, said that Turkey has a similar program for the empowerment of women aged 18 to 29 and that joint actions and activities can have positive effects on this area, expressing readiness on the expansion of cooperation on the empowerment of women.

The priority theme of CSW66 is, "Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls in the Context of Climate Change, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction Policies and Programs."

Earlier this month, Zahra Ershadi, Iran's ambassador and deputy representative to the United Nations, has said that Iran has made significant progress in empowering women, despite U.S. ille-

gal and inhumane sanctions.

According to the Statistical Center of Iran, out of twenty-two (22) million families in Iran, over three (3) million are Women's Head Households and most of them are in less-developed areas.

The Government prioritized such families for targeting socio-economic support."

Addressing the CSW66 meeting on Tuesday, Khazali called on the international community to stand up against unilateral coercive sanctions which have violated the right to development of Iranian women.

"It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the women of my country are practically fighting against the effects of unilateral coercive sanctions.

The heroic women of this land, who in various fields, along with the men, have recorded remarkable achievements and proved that they do not lag behind; They are currently battling the pressure of oppressive and unilateral sanctions."

The two sides welcomed holding joint sports competitions and launching scientific projects.

Uzbekistan welcomes Iran's experience in biotech, AI

From page 1 ► Four technology parks have been established in Uzbekistan, he said, adding that his country is interested in cooperating with the Iranian technology parks to develop this ecosystem. "One of our most important priorities is to benefit from Iran's experience in planting agricultural products in saline lands."

Sattari also expressed Iran's preparedness to provide indigenous and investment models of scientific development to Uzbekistan, especially in its priority areas such as agriculture, salinity, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, etc.

The agricultural industry is one of the most difficult industries for technology and innovation to penetrate into, and Iran, despite having many research centers in this field, has not yet achieved great success, he added, IRNA reported.

Iran's technology and innovation ecosys-

tem is designed based on the native unique climate characteristics. Iran faces a wide variety of climates and its innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem is completely indigenous and defined based on domestic needs. Uzbekistan, for its scientific development, also needs to create an ecosystem that meets the scientific and indigenous needs, he explained.

Iran's progress in artificial intelligence, biotechnology

Iran is in 13th place among the top countries in artificial intelligence by the total number of publications in 2021, according to the Nature Index database.

The SCImago ranking database at the University of Granada, Spain, ranks countries and universities based on the number of scholarly articles from higher education institutions in the Scopus database. This ranking uses three indicators of research, innovation, and soci-



ety in combination.

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

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

In electrical and electronic engineering,

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

Biotechnology today is also widespread in all fields and is no longer limited to biomedical drugs; So it has replaced the injured limbs.

Nearly 800 knowledge-based companies in the country are currently operating in the field of biotechnology and supplying their products and services to the domestic market

Earlier in May, the Biotechnology Development Council launched 129 production projects with the aim of saving up to \$1.44 billion of foreign currency.

Iran is ranked 12th in the world and first in

West Asia in terms of biotechnology, as 9.5 percent of the income of knowledge-based companies and more than 60 percent of their exports are related to biotechnology.

Foreign exchange savings of \$1 billion per year by producing 22 biopharmaceuticals, gaining the first rank in biotechnology products and vaccines in West Asia, and the presence among the top five biotechnology producers in Asia are among the country's achievements, Mostafa Gha-nei, secretary of the biotechnology development office of

the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, said in October 2020.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Special plan prepared to attract overseas Iranian researchers

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has prepared a special plan to attract scientists and researchers living abroad, IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

The project aims to promote "supporting technological activities and startups", "postdoctoral facilities", "supporting employment in innovation centers and accelerators as a trainer and consultant", "providing facilities for opportunity studies", "providing housing facilities", "supporting employment in reputable domestic companies", "support for lectures and specialized workshops" and "support for cooperation as invited and appointed professors".

It is estimated that about one percent of all Iranian students are studying abroad, which is not above the international average of around 3 percent.

طرح ویژه برای جذب پژوهشگران ایرانی مقیم خارج

جذب محققان و پژوهشگران خارج از کشور یکی از اولویتهای کشور محسوب می شود و در این راستا معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری طرحی ویژه پیشنهاد کرده است.

به گزارش ایرنا، معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، این طرح شامل «حمایت از فعالیتهای فناوریانه و ایجاد شرکتهای نوپا»، «تسهیلات پسا دکتری»، «حمایت از اشتغال در مراکز نوآوری و شتابدهندهها به عنوان مربی و مشاور»، «تسهیلات دوره فرصت مطالعاتی»، «تسهیلات مسکن»، «حمایت از اشتغال در شرکتهای معتبر داخلی»، «حمایت از برگزاری سخنرانی و کارگاههای تخصصی» و «حمایت از همکاری به عنوان اساتید مدعو و معین» است.

بر اساس برآوردها نزدیک یک درصد از کل مجموع دانشجویان ایرانی در خارج از کشور تحصیل می کنند. این رقم در مقایسه با میانگین بین المللی که حدود ۳ درصد است، رقم بالایی محسوب نمی شود.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Poverty often disables an intelligent man from arguing his case; a poor man is a stranger in his own town.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times» Noon:12:13 Evening: 18:31 Dawn: 4:48 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:11 (tomorrow)

Abulqasem Ferdowsi: Life

Part 5

On the other hand, the intellectual quality of the Shahnameh shows that we do not deal simply with a great poet but with someone who judges many of the vicissitudes of life with wisdom and understanding, and this would not have been possible if he had not been in possession of a knowledge of the sciences of his time.

However, Nöldeke thought that Ferdowsi had not received formal education in the sciences of his time Ferda[o]ws al-Morshediya, especially in scholastic theology, but considered him simply to be a reasonably educated person in such matters.

Nöldeke also believed that Ferdowsi did not know Pahlavi. Taqizadeh and Shirani, on the other hand, believe that Ferdowsi was completely conversant with the sciences of his own time.

Badi uz-Zaman Foruzanfar and Ahmad Mahdawi Damghani believe that Ferdowsi even had a thorough knowledge of Arabic prose and verse.

Similarly, Saeid Nafisi, Habib Yaghmai, and Lazard believe that Ferdowsi knew Pahlavi. However, Mohammad-Taqi Bahar and Shapur Shahbazi agree with Nöldeke on the matter of Ferdowsi's knowledge of Pahlavi.

In a later article on Ferdowsi, Nöldeke, following Taqizadeh, wrote that he had previously underestimated the poet's knowledge of Arabic, but it appears that he did this mainly to satisfy the amour-propre of Persians.

Certainly, it is probable that Ferdowsi learnt Arabic in school. The problem of Pahlavi in his time and for a person like him lay mainly in the difficulty of its script; thus if a person read a text in this language to the poet, he could probably understand it in the main.

But in the Shahnameh there is nowhere any direct indication that Ferdowsi knew either Arabic or Pahlavi. In the exordium to the story of Bijan and Manijeh, he says that his "loving consort" (mehrban yar) read a "Pahlavi book".

But Ferdowsi refers to Shahnameh-ye Abu Mansuri as being in Pahlavi, and thus it could be interpreted as meaning "Pahlavani" or "eloquent/heroic Persian." There is, however, no evidence in the Shahnameh to indicate that Ferdowsi could read Pahlavi.

Religion: Ferdowsi was a Shia Muslim, which is apparent from the Shahnameh itself and confirmed by early accounts (Nezami Aruzi).

In recent times, however, some have cast doubt on his religion and his Shiism. Some have simply called him a "Shia"; others, such as Bahar, have raised the question of whether Ferdowsi was an adherent of Zaydi Shiism, Ismaili Shiism, or Twelver Shiism.

Nöldeke believed that he was a Shia but did not consider him to be a member of any of the extremist Shias. Shirani called Ferdowsi a Sunni or Zaydi Shia, but Shirani was mainly concerned with defending Mahmud's Sunnism.

Mohit Tabatabai also considered Ferdowsi to be a Zaydi Shia. Abbas Zaryab Khoyi argued that he was an Ismaili Shia, while Ahmad Mahdawi Damghani believed him to be a Twelver Shia.

The basic supporting evidence for the view that Ferdowsi was a Sunni or Zaydi Shia has been the lines that appear in many manuscripts of the Shahnameh, in the exordium to the book, in praise of Abu Bakr, Omar, and Othman, but these lines are later additions, as is apparent for lexicographic and stylistic reasons, and also because they interrupt the flow of the narrative; with the excision of these lines no doubt remains as to Ferdowsi's Shiism.

One must also take into account the fact that

Tus had long been a center of Shiism and that the family of Abu Mansur Mohammad ibn Abd al-Razzaq were also apparently Shias.

On the one hand, Ferdowsi was lenient as regards religion. As Nöldeke remarks, Ferdowsi remembered the religion of his forbears with respect, and, at the same time, nowhere did he show any signs of a deep Islamic faith.

Indeed, to the contrary, here and there are moments in the Shahnameh which, even if they were present in his sources, should not strictly have been given currency by the pen of a committed Muslim.

On the other hand, however, Ferdowsi showed a prejudice in favor of his own sect and, as is apparent from the exordium to the Shahnameh, considered his own sect to be the only true Islamic one.

The explanation for this contradiction, in the present writer's opinion, lies in the fact that during the first centuries of Islam, in Persia, Shiism went hand in hand with the national struggle in Khorasan, or very nearly so, such that the caliphate in Baghdad and its political supporters in Persia never made any serious distinction between the "Majus" (i.e., Zoroastrians), "Zandiq" (i.e., Manicheans), "Qarmatis" (i.e., adherents of Ismaili Shiism), and Rafezis (i.e., Shias in general).

Ferdowsi was, as Nöldeke remarks, above all a deist and monotheist who at the same time kept faith with his forbears. Ferdowsi attacks philosophy and those who attempt to prove the reality of the Creator, believing that God can be found neither by the eye of wisdom, nor of the heart, nor of reason, but that His existence, unity, and might are confessed only by the existence of His creation; thus he worshipped Him, remaining silent as to the whys and wherefores of faith.

According to his beliefs, everything, good or evil, happens to an individual only through the will of God, and every kind of belief in the benign or evil influence of the stars is a derogation of the reality, unicity, and might of God.

This absolute faith in the unicity and might of God is disturbed in the Shahnameh by a fatalism that is possibly the result of Zurvanite influences from the Sassanid period, and this, here and there, has produced a self-contradictory effect.

Due to his upbringing as a dehqan, Ferdowsi was acquainted with the ancient culture and customs of Iran, and he deepened this knowledge by his study of ancient lore so that they became part of his poetic world view.

There are many instances of this in the Shahnameh, and here as an example one can mention the custom of drinking wine. According to the poet, in accordance with Iran's ancient beliefs, wine shows the essence of a man as he really is (Shahnameh, ed. Khaleghi); one must drink at times of happiness, but it is happiness that is to be sought in drinking wine, not drunkenness, and he reproaches the Arabs who are strangers to the custom of drinking wine.

The most important of the poet's ethical attitudes include maintaining a chastity of diction, honesty, gratitude toward his predecessor Daqiqi and, at the same time, frank criticism of his poetry.

With the same kind of frankness the poet admonishes kings to act justly. His belief in the permanence of a good reputation, in fine speech, and in fairness toward enemies in so far as this is compatible with the heroic code of behavior, are all apparent.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

East Los Angeles College festival to hold Iranian Animation Day

TEHRAN – The East Los Angeles College plans to hold the Iranian Animation Day in its 7th Annual Animation Film Festival on March 26.

The event will be opening with remarks by Linda Kallan, Chair of Art Department at ELAC and Bijan Tehrani, editor-in-chief of the Cinema without Borders Foundation, who is also the director of the Festival.

Nine animated short movies, including "The Sixth String" directed by Bahram Azimi, will be screened in the event, which will be organized with contributions from the Cinema and Without Borders Foundation and Aduren Studio.

A video message that shows Azimi talking about "The Sixth String" and a short film about the production of the animation will also be screened.

The film is about a musician who wants to compose his new music inspired by his new car.

The story of the movie is based on the life of Darvish Khan, a Persian classical musician and tar player, who passed away 90 years ago in a car accident. He is considered as the first victim of a car accident in Iran.

"Am I a Wolf?", winner of the Golden Dove for best animated film at the 62nd DOK Leipzig in Germany, will also be reviewed.

Directed by Amir-Hushang Moin, the movie is about a group of children who perform the familiar story of the wolf and the yearlings in school as a puppet show. The nanny goat grieving for its yearlings and the angry wolf in its solitude face each other.



"Flower Storm" by Ali-Akbar Sadeqi.

Monstra animation festival picks five movies from Iran

TEHRAN – The Monstra-Lisbon Animation Festival that opened on Wednesday in the Portuguese capital has selected five movies by Iranian filmmakers to screen in its different categories.

"The Fourth Wall" by Mahbubeh Kalai and "People and the Moon" by Yunes Kaffashian will be screened in the short competition.

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

This exuberant animation, dotted with real-life elements – fried eggs, broken plates, pieces of cheese – develops a subtle wit, ironizing ingrained family patterns.

The movie produced at the Documentary, Experimental and Animation Film Center has previously received the Mephisto 97.6 Award for the best animated film at DOK Leipzig, Germany's major international festival for documentary and animated films.

The 31st edition of Animafest Zagreb, a Croatian international festival for animated films, honored the film with the Zlatko Grgic Award.

"People and the Moon" shows that the moon always has an important presence when one is in love.

"Stars in the Rain" and "Sympathy Syndrome" have been chosen to be screened in the Family Program category.

Directed by Sara Namju, "Stars in the Rain" follows passengers on a train who see a boy boarding on a rainy day. His presence is like a brief miracle.

"Sympathy Syndrome" by Maral Alizadeh tells the story of a kid who is at home, but the desire to see the beauty of the city makes him leave the

"Stars in the Rain" directed by Sara Namju.

Iranian photographers win gold, silver medals at Montenegro exhibition

TEHRAN – Iranian photographers have won gold and silver medals at the 1st FKNS SLM Circuit, a circular exhibition of photography in Montenegro.

The exhibition was organized in Podgorica from February 21 to 28 with contributions from the Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP), the Photographic Society of America (PSA) and several other centers in the categories of monochrome, nature, woman man child, portrait and open color.

"Cry Underwater" by Mohammad Esteki won the PSA Gold Medal in the open monochrome category.

The photo shows a man attending an Islamic mourning ritual in Iran.

In this section, "Siren" by Arlen Keshishian received a FIAP honorable mention.

Esteki also obtained the PSA Gold Medal in the woman man child category for his photo "Nushin" that depicts a woman walking in a central Iranian city.

Ahmad Khatiri's photo "Prayer in Warzones" won a Salon honorable mention in this category.

He also was honored with the Salon Silver Medal in the nature category for "Brave Looking" that shows a fox gazing into the camera.

In this section, Esteki was awarded a Salon honorable mention for "Esferjan".

In the portrait category, Esteki received a Salon honorable mention for "Margaret".

Winners were chosen by a jury composed of Ali Samei from Iran,

"Nushin" by Iranian photographer Mohammad Esteki won the PSA Gold Medal in the woman man child category at the 1st FKNS SLM Circuit in Montenegro.



Tianyi Xiong from China and Serbian photographer Zoran Djordjevic, who was also the chairman of the exhibition.

The exhibition was also organized in Luxemburg and Serbia. The Serbian city of Novi Sad hosted the event from February 15 to 22 and the Luxemburg exhibit took place in Kaerjeng from February 17 to 24.

In the Serbian exhibition, Esteki won an honorable mention for his photo "Old History" in the portrait category, while Seyyed Ehsan Mortazavi received an honorable mention for "The Magic Window" in the open color section.

An honorable mention in the open color category of the Luxembourg exhibition went to Esteki's "Hard Man", while Kiarang Alaei's "The Alley" won the same honor in the open monochrome category.

They've been conveyed indirectly because stating them straight wouldn't be very beneficial. Educational content is meant to train children and help them develop their individual and social abilities, where to take care of themselves, where to escape and where to defend themselves. Kindness, friendship, and assistance are some of the other things that have been addressed indirectly. Children will learn about their emotions, how to properly express them, how to communicate more effectively, and how to create a peaceful world in their hearts by reading this book.

* Today, children have access to a wide range of animations, with many surprises, and these animations have a negative impact on the enjoyment of reading. Is this anything that the authors consider?

Yes! As writers, we need to be familiar with all of the tools and material available to children, including movies, animations, and games, because if we don't, we won't be able to develop books that are more engaging to read than watching movies, and as I said before, advertising in the media, such as television, is crucial, yet we do not see any commercials related to children's books.

Children's books should not be inferior to children's animation

An interview with Laleh Jafari

By Muhammad Sadeghi

Children now spend more time watching TV and movies than reading books or listening to stories because of the unfair competition between the worlds of animation and books, and the cultural effects of children avoiding books will be seen in the future. But the book "Do Not Cry, Mr. Cow" by Laleh Jafari, and published by Mehrak publication, is a good children's book.

* First, tell us a little about your new book.

As you know, this series of stories have been written for children and each one has a different story and character. Simple language, short sentences, and compactness are its features.

* Many parents have difficulties buying suitable books for their kids, but the question is, but the question is whether the problem is a lack of output or a lack of knowledge.

About a decade ago, there was no clear distinction between children's and young people's books in Iran, and the stories that were written were all childish, with age group A written only on the cover of few volumes; however, several meetings were eventually held to separate children's literature. Since then, we've tried

to develop children's books with special standards as they were much needed, and there are now a lot of them, and I believe parents need more data.

* What is your recommendation for making these books more well-known?

They need to be more widely advertised on social media, in my opinion, so that people can find them easily. Also, writers must do a better job of representing their books, and relevant organizations can publish a list of good books for children so that parents can find them with a simple search.

* What are the other standards of children's books?

I believe the stories shouldn't be complicated because their young mind does not have the capacity to understand many things at the same time, and the number of characters should be small. Animals or items that they see around themselves can be the good topics of the stories since they must have had a prior experience in order to comprehend the narrative; otherwise, they will be unable to picture it.

* Did you follow any specific guidelines when writing the book's content?

Yes, and some of the content is instructive, thus