

Khan Reveals: U.S. Going Oldschool on Pakistan

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Report

U.S. mass shooting raises more gun violence questions

TEHRAN- Another fatal act of gun violence in America has triggered more anger among anti-firearm advocates amid a lack of government action to deal with the national gun epidemic after a single shooting incident resulted in 16 casualties.

In the latest deadly violence, at least six people have been killed and 12 others injured in an early-morning shooting on a busy Sacramento street in California.

The condition of the injuries has not been disclosed. In a video of the shooting spree that was aired on local media, more than 70 gunshots can be heard as people fled for their lives.

Police say there were "multiple shooters" during the violence and that they are searching for all the suspects.

Writing on social media, Mayor Darrell Steinberg said "words can't express my shock and sadness this morning. The numbers of dead and wounded are difficult to comprehend ... rising gun violence is the scourge of our city, state, and nation, and I support all actions to reduce it." ▶ Page 5

Opinion

To advance or not to advance

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN – Iran national football team discovered their opponents in the 2022 FIFA World Cup. For them, to qualify for the next stage for the first time ever is the main priority BUT to book a spot in the phase needs so many things to do.

Iran have been drawn in Group B with England, the U.S. and one of Scotland, Wales, or Ukraine.

Iran could have advanced to the next stage for the first time in the 2018 FIFA World Cup but finished third behind Spain and Portugal. But this time, the 'Persian Leopards' are drawn in a easier group but it doesn't mean the success for them since there is many things to do to make history in Doha.

First, the Iranians must know there is difference between confidence and understatement.

"I'm worried that the fans or the media may take the group lightly. They must understand how tough our mission is and there is no guarantee a spot in the next round," Iran captain Karim Ansarifard posted on his Instagram account.

Every team need good preparation for the tournaments. With eight months remaining, the football federation must arrange the best possible friendly matches for the National Team.

In addition, Iran football federation needs to know its president as soon as possible.

Extraordinary assembly of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) will be held on May 10.

And finally, will Dragan Skocic remain as Iran coach?

There's much speculation that the Croat will be replaced with a well-known coach. It hurts the team. The federation must make decision on the issue as soon as possible.

Hopes of Yemeni people for peace must be translated into reality

It is highly expected that a UN-brokered two-month truce in Yemen, that went into force on Saturday morning, would uphold so that the warring sides would begin to heal the wounds of seven years of absurd and senseless war.

The ceasefire is a giant step forward and a great opportunity.

"This truce is indeed good, an excellent thing, but let's see how it is actually implemented ... Should the strikes on Sanaa stop, the airport open, Hodeidah port open, then we will feel there is a truce, that it has something tangible," said Najeeb al-Bashiri, a government employee.

In a statement, the UN special envoy Hans Grundberg stressed the importance of building on the agreement to restore trust between the warring parties and resume a political process aimed at ending the conflict.

"The aim of this truce is to give Yemenis a necessary break from violence, relief from the humanitarian suffering, and most importantly hope that an end to this conflict is possible," Grundberg said, the Guardian reported.

The terms of the truce include facilitating the entry of 18 fuel ships into the ports of Hodeida and allowing two commercial flights a week to and from Sana'a airport to predetermined destinations. The terms also include

convening a meeting between the parties to agree on opening roads in the city of Taiz and elsewhere to improve civilians' freedom of movement inside Yemen.

"My heartfelt congratulations to all Yemenis on the start of the holy month of Ramadan," Grundberg said. "I hope the onset of this truce will give Yemenis a chance to celebrate the holy month in peace, safety and tranquility."

The truce has been warmly welcomed by Iran. It has been Iran's great wish that guns would be silenced in Yemen. The war in Yemen has been purely fratricide, whether Yemenis against Yemenis or the Saudis against Yemenis. ▶ Page 2

Annual production by major automakers exceeds 867,000

TEHRAN - Three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manufactured 867,363 vehicles during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), IRNA reported.

According to the data released by the Securities and Exchange Organization's information portal named Codal, the production by the mentioned companies has declined 3.7 percent compared to the preceding year in which the output stood at 900,794.

During the previous year, IKCO manufactured 451,121 vehicles, which was six percent less than the output in the Iranian calendar year 1399.

In the past year, this industrial group was able to produce 297,817 vehicles in the Peugeot group, 50,095 vehicles in the Samand group, 50,257 Dena vehicles, 35,630 Rana vehicles, 8,647 Haima vehicles, and 8,451 Tara vehicles.

SAIPA manufactured 304,533 vehicles in the mentioned year, registering a 3.4 percent decline in comparison to the figure for the preceding year. ▶ Page 4

Iran records 50m overnight stays for new year holidays

TEHRAN – Iranians made over 50 million overnight stays during the two-week new year (Noruz) holidays, starting March 21.

"Based on data obtained from all provinces, a total of 50,663,296 overnight stays have been recorded across the country during Noruz holidays which came to an end on April 2," a tourism official said on Monday.

The majority of the overnight stays were recorded in authorized accommodation centers, hotels, and guest houses in the provinces of Mazandaran, Khorasan Razavi, Gilan, Hormozgan, Fars, Isfahan, Bushehr, Yazd, Khuzestan, and Tehran, the official said, CHTN reported.

Domestic vacationers made almost 14 million overnight stays in the northern province of Mazandaran during the period, the provincial tourism chief Mehdi Izadi said on Sunday.

Noruz travelers made over 86,000 overnight stays in the lesser-known Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province during the period officially started on March 21.

On March 12, President Ebrahim Raisi said Iranians who have received the second dose of COVID vaccine were allowed to travel across the country during the new year holidays.

Noruz journeys as well as (public) gatherings and celebrations will be allowed if coronavirus protocols declared by National

Headquarters for Coronavirus Control are observed by people, Raisi said.

"Noruz ceremonies and trips, if practiced under health protocols, could be beneficial for the revival of the tourism industry and handicrafts, which have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic in many provinces," he explained.

Last year, in the face of intensive coronavirus restrictions, the number of domestic travels fell by 96 percent during the Noruz holidays compared to two years earlier, the tourism ministry announced. Iranians made some 2.5 million overnight stays across the country during the Noruz holidays, while the number added up to over 74 million in the same period in 1398 (March 21-April 2, 2019), which shows a drastic fall.

Available data suggest the country's tourism industry has suffered \$233m losses due to COVID restrictions over the past two years. "Iranian tourism facilities have incurred a loss of 69 trillion rials (\$233 million) due to the outbreak of the coronavirus over the past two years," an official with the tourism ministry said early in January.

Iranians traditionally make hundreds of thousands of domestic trips during the New Year holidays, when most businesses and workplaces are closed, as are schools. ▶ Page 6

Iran blames Afghanistan's inconsistent decisions for Hamoun wetland's critical condition

TEHRAN – An Iranian MP has said a lack of inconsistency among decisions made by Afghan rulers has caused a serious problem in resolving the Hamoun wetland's critical condition.

Many decisions have been made so far regarding the Hamoun wetland's water rights and officials in Afghanistan have made promises in this regard, IRIB quoted Fada-Hossein Maleki as saying.

However, decisions that are made by government officials in Kabul are not consistent with decisions that are made by local officials

in Kandahar or Nimroz provinces, he said.

"Recently, messages have been sent indirectly from Kandahar, the Taliban's seat of power, to us and we have positively replied to the messages."

The Hamoun wetlands, which once supported broad plant and animal diversity and were the main source of the region's economic viability, have nearly dried up due to climate change, dam construction, and other poor water management practices. This has led to large population migrations and a high unemployment rate. ▶ Page 7

"Radiograph of a Family", "Barter" honored at Beirut Intl. Women's Film Festival

TEHRAN – "Radiograph of a Family" has won the best feature documentary award and "Barter" received a special jury mention at the Beirut International Women's Film Festival in Lebanon.

Directed by Firuzeh Khosrovani, "Radiograph of a Family", is a co-production of Iran, Switzerland and Norway.

Khosrovani investigates her parents' unusual marriage in this documentary steeped in bittersweet history. Hossein, a radiologist, is secular and sophisticated, while his young bride Tayi is a devout Muslim, shocked by her new husband's Western tastes.

Khosrovani creates a poetic portrait of a fraught but loving relationship ▶ Page 8

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Lebanon needs a political solution before economic initiative: professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN- A professor of political science at the Lebanese University believes that the solutions to the economic problems in Lebanon must be political in the first place before any economic decision.

"The solution must be political in the first place, and after the political solution we can talk about the economic solution," Laure Abi-Khalil tells the Tehran Times.

"The political economy in Lebanon allows the ruling elites to monopolize wealth at the expense of the majority which has led to destroying the state," Abi-Khalil adds.

The Lebanese political scholar also says, "The (Persian) Gulf states should lift the boycott and the Western powers also must remove financial sanctions on Lebanon, and then we can talk about internal solutions."

Following is the text of the interview:

What are the main reasons for the miserable economic situation in Lebanon?

There are internal reasons and external ones. The internal reasons are due to the domestic economic policies that Prime Minister Rafic Hariri adopted in the 1990s when he set monetary policies that abolished production as the service sector was prioritized at the expense of the manufacturing sector.

Of course, this policy led to the so-called stage of bankruptcy of the Lebanese people, because the economy cannot be based on services without production and productive policies in the field of agriculture and industry.

The second reason is the rampant corruption in public institutions and the state. Of course, there are studies and ▶ Page 5



National train project underway

Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi (middle), accompanied by other officials, paid a visit to the national train project site in Tehran on Monday.

The project has increased the previously 25 to 30 percent share of domestic companies in designing, manufacturing, and supplying subway train parts to 85 percent.

Foreign Ministry: Vienna talks are hostage to U.S. partisan and internal affairs

TEHRAN — The United States is solely responsible for the current state of the Vienna talks, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Monday.

"Let us all not forget that the government which is in front of us today is not a government that adheres to its obligations. It wants to use legal means to escape performing its duties," Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters in his weekly presser.

The spokesman said the United States is trying to hold the remaining issues pertaining to the Vienna talks hostage to its internal affairs.

"Iran and Iranians cannot be patient forever. If the United States wants to reach an agreement, it must make a political decision as soon as possible," he asserted.

When asked about European Union coordinator Enrique Mora's trip to Tehran, Khatibzadeh said, "During this trip, he carried some points of views and wanted to exchange opinions with us. We told Mora about our issues. Our messages and demands were clear from the beginning. Mora's trip was to get us all out of this situation. Iran tried to use another way to resolve the remaining issues. So far, Iran has had the most initiatives."

The spokesman continued by saying that Iran is waiting for the other side's response, but it has not received it yet.

On the pause in the talks, the diplomat said it was clear to Iran in the last two weeks that Joe Biden and the White House have not made their decision and have taken the whole agreement hostage to U.S. partisan and internal affairs.

"The Biden administration takes the same approach that has led to the failure of many international agreements, which is to make an international agreement subject to their own internal conflicts. The JCPOA agreement and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 are the perfect examples, and it is in this context that the Biden government must make its political decision," Khatibzadeh noted.

The spokesman said that the United States is responsible for bringing the talks to a halt.

"The solution is in the White House," he reiterated.

The U.S. must respond logically to Iran's reasonable demands, which are approved by the P4+1 members, so that we are ready to return to Vienna, Khatibzadeh noted.

"An agreement is very much available if the United States understands that we will

not cross our red lines or fall short of our demands," the diplomat asserted.

Responding to a question about the remaining issues in the negotiations, the spokesman said, "It was not at all like we connected the (West Asia) region to the JCPOA."

Iran's benefits from the JCPOA are in accordance with the text of the agreement, and UNSCR 2231 is the main mission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the spokesman said.

"Now, in the final steps, the United States is trying to prevent Iran from benefitting from the various aspects of the JCPOA. We are at a point where the Biden administration wants to follow the failed legacy of the Trump administration or act as a semi-responsible government. International actors see that the Biden government is following the same path of the previous government," Khatibzadeh pointed out.

Responding to a question, the diplomat said that illegal and unilateral sanctions have become a common practice in the United States.

"The U.S. believes that it is the police of the world and the domestic laws of this country are international laws. Bullying will not work," the spokesman remarked.

Khatibzadeh once again reiterated that Iran's red lines are the interests of the people and the benefit of what was once discussed.

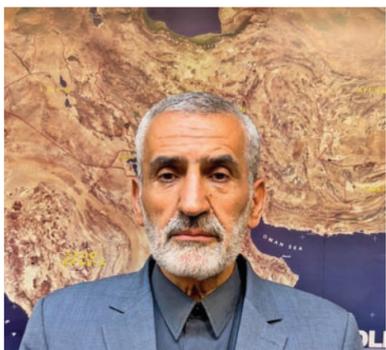
"The whole deal depends on Washington's political decision. This has been the situation for weeks now. It is a matter of individuals and entities that should be removed from the sanctions list according to the JCPOA, in addition to Iran's economic benefits from the deal. These are issues that are delaying Washington's political decision," he stressed.

The diplomat stated that the Biden government must show that it is the true representative of the American people.

"We have not yet received the final answer from Washington, and if Washington's answer is appropriate, we can go to Vienna as soon as possible with the points raised, not for new negotiations, but to finalize the agreement. The response and signal must come from Washington," the spokesman concluded.

Talks in Vienna over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal have come to a standstill due to the Biden administration's inability to make tough political decisions.

Official rebuffs claim of illegal entry of Afghan refugees into Iran



TEHRAN — The deputy interior minister for security affairs on Saturday dismissed as bogus a video clip showing a wave of Afghan refugees pouring into Iran.

"The video published on social media about the massive influx of Afghan refugees to the borders of Iran is related to the September of last year and was taken in Pakistan," Seyyed Majid Mir-Ahmadi said.

Mir-Ahmadi said the clip is made on the borders of Jaleq and Kalgan in the territory of Pakistan and has nothing to do with the arrival of Afghan refugees in Iran.

The deputy interior minister went on to

say that according to a report by border command and the Governor of Sistan-Baluchestan province, Afghan refugees have not entered Iran.

Mir-Ahmadi added, "In the summer of last year, due to the changes in the government and the concerns created for a part of the Afghan people, a significant number of Afghans marched towards the borders of Iran, but about 5,000 of them were stopped and were sent to Afghanistan."

He said illegal entry of some Afghan refugees into Iran at that time was possible, suggesting with the intensification of border security the illegal entry into the country is under more control.

The deputy minister added, "Now, more than one thousand people come to the borders every day, but the illegal entry of these citizens is prevented."

Mir-Ahmadi noted that due to the problems in Afghanistan, efforts to enter Iran illegally are continuing, although the trend has slowed down.

He added, "Controlling and managing this important issue requires a fundamental change in blocking, guarding and controlling the borders and managing the entry of illegal citizens."

MP: No draft regarding Vienna talks submitted to parliament

TEHRAN — A draft that is the basis of a final nuclear agreement has not been prepared yet, the deputy chairman of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said on Monday.

Ebrahim Azizi said since the negotiations are still in the final stage of negotiations, and it is not completely over, the draft that is supposed to act as the foundation of the final agreement has not been prepared yet.

In an interview with IRNA on Monday, Azizi said, "I believe we should not judge prematurely. So far, no drafts have been submitted to the parliament and the specialized committee of the parliament, but in several meetings held with the presence of Mr. Amir Abdollahian and Bagheri, the content of the talks and the issues raised and the views of the parties have

been explained."

The MP added that the parliamentary Committee has held several meetings with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, chief nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani and Mohammad Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), and the Vienna talks have been examined from several angles, but the MPs have not seen a written draft yet.

Vienna negotiations hasn't concluded yet

Elsewhere in the interview, Azizi stated that the negotiations in Vienna have not ended.

"It may have gotten close to a conclusion, but it has not reached the end point," he said, adding that until the full text of the talks is formally submitted to the Parliament and the parliamentary committee by the Foreign Ministry, any



Iranian Foreign Minister (R) meeting EU coordinator for the Vienna talks, Enrique Mora on March 27.

further speculation is merely a personal opinion.

Regarding observing Iran's red lines, the legislator said, "During all the meetings we had with Mr. Amir Abdollahian and Mr. Bagheri, they emphasized that we will do our best on this issue."

He then quoted the Foreign Ministry officials as saying, "We are focused on following the red lines set by the authorities and the parliament, and the law on lifting sanctions."

Azizi pointed out that the emphasis of the negotiating team and the chief negotiator is on observing the red lines that the Islamic Republic has set for the negotiations.

"There should be flexibility in the negotiation process, but it has never meant crossing the red line, and the parliament insists on these red lines and insists that these red lines be included in the final text," the

MP asserted.

He then noted that what has happened so far is that negotiations with intermediaries are still in the follow-up stage, and Iran does not have direct negotiations with the Americans.

In this regard, Fada Hossein Maleki, a member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the parliament, said, "As far as I know, no agreement has been reached between Iran and the West so that a draft would be prepared."

The legislator continued by saying that the Iranian negotiating team has presented proposals to the Western side in the new round of negotiations.

Maleki also noted, "To date, the Foreign Ministry has not submitted a draft of the Vienna agreement to the parliament because no agreement has been reached."

Hopes of Yemeni people for peace must be translated into reality



From page 1 ► Now that Yemeni people are eyeing on a permanent ceasefire and peace, it is not expedient to review that the tragedies and sufferings that the Yemeni people, especially children and women, have suffered. However, Saudi Arabia made a strategic miscalculation when it started a war against the Yemeni Ansarallah movement, also called Houthis, in March 2015 to restore the toppled government of Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

Instead of launching war on its neighbor to return Mansour Hadi, a Saudi ally, to power, rulers in Riyadh should have mediated between the warring sides for a power-sharing government in Yemen.

Iran's letter to then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in April 2015, especially Tehran's emphasis on power-sharing through intra-Yemeni dialogue, unfortunately went unnoticed by the Saudis. The inexperienced Saudi de facto leader Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) had the illusion that he could achieve his goals in Yemen in a matter of weeks.

However, he brought shame and humiliation for the Saudi kingdom.

The rebellion against Yemeni ruling system, which was influenced by the Arab Spring, was not something unexpected. However, MBS wanted to change the course of history and silence dissenting voices in the doorstep.

If certain Arab countries escaped unscathed from the revolt against corruption, unemployment, injustice and repression that started first in Tunisia in the early 2010s, it was mainly because these countries were rich and their people were enjoying a satisfactory standard of living. In fact, corruption and political repression lost color in the rich Arab countries, although the Bahrainis protested against discrimination and religious minorities in Saudi Arabia also sought justice.

Surely, Saudi Arabia would have been enjoying a better place today if it had mediated between the sides that were clashing for power in Yemen. Unfortunately, Saudi Arabia was, and still may be, oblivious of the fact that it enjoyed a respectable place in the Arab world and the Muslim nations at large and entered the war in favor of one of factions.

It is quite clear that Yemen doesn't just belong to the Houthis or other rival factions. Yemen belongs to all Yemenis, and all groups must be given a share in determining the fate of their country.

Regrettably, the United Arab Emirates

and some other Arab states also joined Saudi Arabia in the war against the Houthis in Yemen. In later years, some of these countries withdrew their support for the war, but the UAE remained in the Saudi-led coalition against Yemen. As a country which has made miraculous economic progress within just a few decades, the UAE was not expected to be caught in such a quagmire and frighten investors.

However, let's look to the future and use the mistakes of the past as a light to build on the future and establish peace in Yemen.

Saudi Arabia, which have been controlling Yemen's seas and airspace, must strictly stick to the ceasefire. It must think of the post-war Yemen. The rulers in Riyadh, particularly MBS, are morally responsible for the sufferings of the Yemeni people all through these seven years.

"We welcome this essential development for millions of Yemenis who need a respite after years of relentless fighting," said the Norwegian Refugee Council, a humanitarian agency operating in Yemen. "We really hope this is the start of a new chapter."

Let's pin hope that cool heads have prevailed in Riyadh and another mentality would rule Saudi Arabia once peace is established in Yemen.

Yemenis whose country has been ravaged by the seven-year war that has forced millions into hunger, poverty and homelessness want peace and respect to rights.

Iran has so far sent 30 aid convoy to Afghanistan: envoy

TEHRAN- Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi says the international community should assist Afghans in overcoming obstacles, stressing that the Islamic Republic has so far sent 30 aid convoys to the war-ravaged Central Asian nation.

Takht Ravanchi made the statements on Thursday during a virtual UN donor meeting co-hosted by the United Kingdom, Germany, and Qatar.

"The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate, and the country is currently facing great challenges, opportunities, fears and hopes. The international community is expected in the current difficult situation to contribute to helping Afghan people overcome challenges, seize opportunities, dispel fears and boost hopes for a brighter future," Takht Ravanchi underscored.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a neighboring country, stands by the people of Afghanistan and has used its capacities and facilities to overcome the challenges it has faced over the last four decades," he added.

According to the senior Iranian diplomat, "Iran has hosted millions of refugees, who have unfortunately received the least international aid in the last 40 years. Iran has dispatched more than 30 shipments of humanitarian aid to Afghan people in recent months. This is just one example of the assistance that Iran has provided to the people of Afghanistan."

"The financial support of the international community is vital to help Afghanistan surmount the current difficult situation," Takht Ravanchi underlined.

He also called the seizure of Afghanistan's frozen assets illegitimate and

demanded their immediate and unconditional release.

"Hopes for future must be guaranteed among the people of Afghanistan, especially among the younger generation who will lead the country in the future. This will not be possible unless an inclusive government is formed and sufficient attention is paid to the political and social fabrics of Afghanistan, which can involve people from all walks of life, including various ethnicities, men, women and youth," Takht Ravanchi said.

Afghanistan has been facing



serious economic crisis since the Taliban, who controlled the country from 1996 to 2001, retook power on August 15, last year and proclaimed the creation of a caretaker government.

The group's rebirth coincided with the rapid and chaotic withdrawal of American soldiers from the country.

The U.S. and its allies then virtually discontinued financial support to Afghanistan, exacerbating a refugee crisis that has severely impacted Afghanistan's neighbors.

Since the withdrawal of its occupation soldiers, U.S. President Joe Biden's administration has frozen roughly \$9.5 billion in Afghan central bank assets.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have also paused operations in Afghanistan, withholding funding and \$340 million in fresh IMF reserves.

Iranian president expresses willingness to help Qatar host 2022 World Cup

TEHRAN- President Ebrahim Raisi said on Sunday that Iran is ready to offer Qatar with any support it requires to better and more brilliantly organize the 2022 FIFA World Cup, which is set to take place in the Persian Gulf state from November 21 to December 18 this year.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to provide Qatar with whatever assistance and help it needs to better and more magnificently host World Cup fixtures through Kish Island and other islands nearby. We are confident that the world will see unforgettable matches, given the planning done," the Iranian president pointed out in response to a phone call from Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Tamim Al Thani.

The president also said today Iran and Qatar are determined to develop bilateral relations, adding, "Tehran welcomes the development of relations with Doha in various fields and believes that the development of these relations are in the interests of the two nations and the nations of the region."

Raisi also commended the holy month of Ramadan, noting to the tremendous potential for expanding the level of ties and collaboration between the two nations.

"Tehran and Doha can take effective steps in the interests of the two nations and establish



stability and security in the region by taking advantage of all the capacities of cooperation and establishing close coordination," the president said.

Referring to the Emir of Qatar's upcoming visit to Tehran, the president stated, "During this visit, major decisions will be made in order to further develop relations and cooperation between the two countries in various fields."

Raisi also wished Qatar success that plans to host the important sporting event, noting that "the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to provide any help on Kish Island in holding the World Cup games in the best and most glorious way possible."

For his part, the Emir of Qatar stated that his country is fully committed to develop relations with Tehran following the two

countries' lengthy meeting and negotiations in Doha. "We believe that your visit plays an important role in the development of brotherly relations and strengthening cooperation."

Raisi visited Qatar to participate in the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) in Doha on February 22.

Sheikh Hamad bin Tamim Al Thani expressed satisfaction with the Iranian national football team's participation in the World Cup, and said, "In this tournament, we will welcome our brothers well."

The Emir went on to say that Qatar's Minister of Transport and Communications, Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti, and Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development, Rostam Qasemi, will soon meet on Kish Island to discuss cooperation for the FIFA

World Cup matches.

"Regarding the cooperation between the two countries in holding the competitions, the minister of roads of Qatar will soon meet and discuss with his counterpart on Kish Island about how to cooperate," the Emir of Qatar noted.

Iran's national football team been drawn in Group B of the 2022 FIFA World Cup alongside England, the United States, and the winner of Europe's Path A playoff between Wales and Ukraine or Scotland on Friday night in the Qatari capital city of Doha.

The Iranian national football team, known as Team Melli, will play its first match against England on November 21, its second against Europe's Path A winner on November 25, and its third against the United States on November 29.

The Iranian national team finished first in their group in both the second and third rounds of the AFC qualifying competition, with 18 and 25 points, respectively.

Due to a higher FIFA ranking, Iran did not need to take part in the first round of the contests.

In the second round, Iran faced Iraq, Bahrain, Hong Kong, and Cambodia, while in the third round, it faced South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

Khan reveals: U.S. going oldschool on Pakistan

TEHRAN — Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, who was able to retain power after a no-confidence motion against him was rejected on Sunday, has revealed that U.S. diplomat Donald Lu was part of an alleged conspiracy to destabilize his government.

Khan escaped the opposition's attempt to depose him as the National Assembly deputy speaker rejected a no-confidence motion against him, claiming it was a "foreign plot."

Addressing a meeting of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders after the National Assembly Deputy Speaker rejected the no-trust motion citing national security, he said that during the National Security Committee's meeting, the country's highest security body, it was also noted that a foreign interference in the country's internal politics was made via a no-confidence motion.

Following that, Khan claimed that Donald Lu, the top American official in charge of South Asia at the U.S. State Department, was implicated in the purported plot to destabilize his government.

Khan alleged that Lu threatened Pakistan's envoy to the U.S., Asad Majeed, that if Pakistan's Prime Minister survived the no-trust vote in the National Assembly, there would be consequences.

He stated that minutes of a meeting between Pakistan's ambassador in the U.S.

and U.S. officials were disclosed during the National Security Council meeting.

The AFP news agency quoted Khan as saying, "A plan was perpetrated outside Pakistan to interfere in internal politics of the country, and when the highest national security body acknowledged it, it became meaningless as to how many numbers the opposition had in the assembly."

According to him, the embassy authorities of the stated country were also in contact with the PTI members who had defected.

Khan called the no-confidence vote against him a "foreign conspiracy," and he thanked God that it was defeated.

Referring to his declaration earlier in the day, the prime minister stated that the opposition was in shock and didn't know what had happened to them.

In response to Khan's remarks, White House Director of Communications Kate Bedingfield dismissed claims that Washington was involved in the alleged conspiracy.

"That claim is completely false," Bedingfield told reporters.

However, in a recent video footage of Lu testifying in the U.S. Congress, he admits that he approached Pakistani officials as Pakistan abstained to vote against Russian aggression against Ukraine.

In the footage, Lu says, "Prime Minister Khan has recently visited Moscow, so, I think, we are trying to figure out how to engage specifically with the Prime Minister following that decision."

Interestingly, Sri Lanka which also abstained from voting is now facing "financial crisis." It all comes together when you put the pieces of the puzzle together. Lu approached the Sri Lankan ambassador in Washington over the phone at 6:00 a.m., trying to convince them to vote for the UN resolution condemning Russia.

Who is Lu?

Lu is a Foreign Service officer with over 30 years of experience in the U.S. government. From 2010 to 2013, he was the deputy head of mission in India.

As the Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, Lu is the highest-ranking U.S. diplomat in the region. He is a former U.S. ambassador to Kyrgyzstan and Albania, and he has twice served at the U.S. embassy in New Delhi.

In September of last year, Lu was named assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian affairs.

Losing its allies, Washington is seeking to punish "unfaithful" friends, but Pakistan will prevail. Washington's oldschool tricks can't fool the smart people of Pakistan.

U.S. is to blame for halt to Vienna talks: Iran FM

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has blamed the United States for the protracted Vienna talks, saying Tehran is ready for a good and durable nuclear agreement.

During a phone call with Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi on Sunday, Amir Abdollahian slammed the U.S. for re-imposing sanctions on Iranian individuals and firms.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready for a good and sustainable agreement, but so far the American side, by some of its excessive demands, has been directly responsible for the protraction of the talks," the Iranian foreign minister remarked.

Negotiations have been underway since last April to resurrect the nuclear pact, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was abandoned by former U.S. President Donald Trump in May 2018.

With his withdrawal from the accord, Trump launched a "maximum pressure" campaign to bring Iran to its knees. Tehran argues that the policy has been

a colossal failure. The Joe Biden administration agrees, but has taken no concrete actions to fulfill its vow to rescind the program.

In recent months, Iran has blamed Washington's indecision for the protraction of the Vienna talks, since a number of major issues remain unresolved, ranging from the lifting of all post-JCPOA sanctions to the American side's failure to provide guarantees that it would not withdraw from the agreement again.

The other participants to the talks — Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany — have also stated that the negotiators are nearing a conclusion.

Earlier on Sunday, Amir Abdollahian told UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that the ball is now in the United States' court.

During the phone call, Amir Abdollahian and al-Busaidi also addressed bilateral ties as well as regional and international issues, including the recent UN-brokered truce between the Saudi-led military coalition and Yemen's

National Salvation Government.

Oman's top diplomat hailed the ceasefire and expressed gratitude to Tehran for its involvement and efforts in this respect, expressing optimism that the truce would pave the way for talks between all Yemeni parties and the reopening of the country's borders.

The Iranian minister also praised Oman's proactive action in this respect and expressed optimism that the truce would be maintained.

He emphasized the significance of fully removing brutal siege on Yemen and giving humanitarian aid to the Yemeni people.

Amir Abdollahian thanked his Omani counterpart, government, and people on Ramadan, hoped that the truce in Yemen would be durable, and praised Oman's positive contribution in this regard.

Meanwhile, Al-Busaidi greeted the Iranian government and people on the holy month of Ramadan and hailed the truce in Yemen.

On Friday, UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg stated that the two warring parties had agreed to a truce, which took effect

on Saturday morning.

In March 2015, Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies, most notably the United Arab Emirates (UAE), waged a savage war against Yemen. The battle was intended to demolish Yemen's popular Houthi Ansarullah movement and reestablish a previous administration.

The fight, which was backed by a tight siege, failed to achieve its objectives, killing hundreds of thousands of Yemenis. The Saudi-led coalition's siege has prevented much-needed gasoline imports from reaching Yemen.

According to the UN Office for Humanitarian Coordination (OCHA), more than 23 million Yemenis, out of a total population of 31.9 million, are facing starvation, sickness, and other life-threatening threats as the country's basic services and economy have crumbled.

Prior to the truce, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi had increased their bombings across Yemen, and in response, Yemeni troops launched many retaliatory drone and missile assaults.

SPORTS

Iranian judoka dies of electrocution

TEHRAN – Iranian judo player Arash Aghaei was killed after coming in contact with a power line.

The 30-year-old was electrocuted in a body building club in Iranian city of Tabriz.

Aghaei claimed a bronze medal at the Asian U21 Championships Hainan in 2013.

The late judoka was now a member of the national judo team and was in a joint camp with Iraq a month ago.

Tehran Times extends deepest sympathy to Aghaei's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

Iran to play Syria in 2022 FIBA Asia Cup opener

TEHRAN – Iran national basketball team will play Syria in the opening match of the 2022 FIBA Asia Cup.

Iran have been drawn in Group C along with Syria, Japan and Kazakhstan.

Iran will commence the campaign with a match against Syria on July 13.

Iran are scheduled to play Kazakhstan and Japan on July 15 and 17.

The Group Phase will be played from July 12-17. The 16 teams competing in Asia Cup 2022 were drawn into four groups of four.

The 2022 FIBA Asia Cup will be held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Iran futsal team to travel to Kyrgyzstan on Wednesday

TEHRAN – Iran national futsal team will travel to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on Wednesday to participate at the 2022 AFC Futsal Asian Cup qualification.

Team Melli, headed by Vahid Shamsaei, are in Group A along with Kyrgyzstan, Maldives and Turkmenistan.

Iran will start the campaign on April 10 with a match against Maldives.

The competition is the qualification process organized by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to determine the participating teams for the 2022 AFC Futsal Asian Cup, the 17th edition of the international men's futsal championship of Asia.

A total of 15 teams will qualify to play in the final tournament, excluding Kuwait - who automatically qualified as a host.

The qualification process is divided into four zones: ASEAN Zone, where the 2022 AFF Futsal Championship will serve as the qualifying competition, Central & South Zone, East Zone, and West Zone.

Iran, Qatar discuss interaction as FIFA World Cup looms

TEHRAN – The president of Iran and the emir of Qatar, whose country is going to host the FIFA World Cup in autumn, weighed plans for cooperation in holding the event, with the Iranian side offering help considering the available infrastructures on Iran's southern islands, including Kish.

In a telephone conversation with Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Tamim Al Thani on Sunday evening, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said Tehran welcomes the development of relations with Doha in various fields and believes that closer relations will be in the interests of the two nations and the region, Tasnim wrote.

Highlighting the vast potential for increasing the level of relations and cooperation between the two countries, Raisi said, "Tehran and Doha can take effective steps in the interests of the two nations and establish stability and security in the region by taking advantage of all the capacities of cooperation and establishing close coordination."

Iran football discover fate at Deaflympics

TEHRAN – Iran football team discovered their rivals at the 2021 Deaflympics.

Iran are drawn in Group B along with Brazil, Netherlands, Italy and Cameroon.

The 2021 Summer Deaflympics were postponed and will be held in Caxias do Sul, Brazil from May 1 to 15, 2022.

Group A: Argentina, France, Egypt, Ukraine, South Korea

Group B: Brazil, Iran, Netherlands, Italy, Cameroon

Group C: Mali, USA, Turkey, Iraq, Germany

Group D: Senegal, Greece, Mexico, Uzbekistan, Poland

AHF praises Iranian teams

TEHRAN – The International Handball Federation praised Iranian teams for their success in the Asian stages.

Iran's men's beach handball teams secured gold medals at both the 8th Asian Handball Federation (AHF) Men's Asian Beach Handball Championship and 2nd AHF Men's Asian Youth Beach Handball Championship.

After the women's youth side had won the 2022 AHF Women's Asian Youth Championship to become the first-ever handball side in either gender at any level to take a continental gold, the two beach teams added to that glory, taking top spots in their respective championships held side-by-side in the capital city of Iran, Tehran.

"Qatar has won Asian gold for 10 years and has been the undisputed champion of Asia in the last five editions," explained Iran beach handball coach Hassan Eftekhari to IRIHF.ir.

"It is a very big team in the world, but we were able to win against this powerful team. Iran's beach handball team has achieved this with many years of hard work with the handball federation, the beach handball association and all the coaches and workers in this field. I am happy that the championship remains in Iran."

Iranian players that could trouble England in 2022 World

TEHRAN – Sardar Azmoun, Mehdi Taremi and Saman Ghoddos are three players who could trouble England in the 2022 World Cup group stage.

Having been placed into Group B, Gareth Southgate's men will go up against Iran, the USA, and one of Scotland, Wales, or Ukraine, as they bid for global glory, planetsport.com reported.

But who should the Three Lions be keeping an eye on?

Azmoun:

Iran's main man in their World Cup quest will be Bayer Leverkusen striker Sardar Azmoun. The 27-year-old moved to Germany from Zenit St Petersburg in January after scoring 62 goals in 104 games for the Russian outfit, and was named Player of the Season in 2020/21.

He holds the record for most goals scored by an Iranian in the Champions League, with six, and alongside his domestic exploits, he also has 40 goals in 62 games for his country.

Taremi:

Another member of Iran's forward line who may have a part to play is Porto striker Mehdi Taremi. He moved to Portugal to join Rio Ave after spending the first nine years of his senior career with four different clubs in his homeland, before signing for Porto after one season.

Ghoddos:

A name who may be familiar to Premier League audiences is Brentford midfielder Saman Ghoddos, who initially played for Sweden, the country of his birth, before switching to Iran in 2017.

He came through the youth system of Malmo, and featured in Graham Potter's Ostersunds side, before joining the Bees in 2020. He has 73 career goals in 286 domestic games, and has been capped 31 times by Iran.

Annual production by major automakers exceeds 867,000



From page 1 ▶ Pars Khodro also manufactured 109,838 vehicles in the period under review, 6.4 percent more than the output in 1399.

Back in January, Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi-Amin announced the implementation of a two-year plan for the

auto industry based on which this industry will undergo serious changes and improve significantly.

Stating that nine transformation projects have been prepared for the automobile industry, Fatemi-Amin said: "The general plan is that in [the Iranian calendar year] 1401 (began on March 21) the structure of the automobile industry and the relations between parts manufacturers and automakers will be reformed and the overall promised production target will be achieved in [the Iranian calendar year] 1404 (begins in March 2025)."

The ministry had put the manufacturing of 1.2 million cars on the agenda for the previous Iranian calendar year.

Housing prices expected to fall as govt. pursues mass construction programs

TEHRAN – Iranian market analysts believe that housing prices in the country are expected to decline sharply in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) as the government is seriously pursuing its mass construction programs to provide people with affordable housing.

Reaching a nuclear agreement with the world powers and lifting of the U.S. sanctions is also another factor that is expected to contribute to the declining housing prices in the country in the current year, IRNA reported.

The growth of housing prices in Iran decreased in the last months of the previous year so that the point-to-point inflation of the housing market which had reached nearly 100 percent at the beginning of the year fell to 20 percent by the yearend.

Since then, the market has been stabilizing and as real estate intermediaries told IRNA, if the negotiations on lifting the sanctions reach desirable outcomes, the downward trend of housing prices will continue into the current year and the property market will see a significant drop in prices.

Some experts also believe that if the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is revived, housing prices will experience their biggest historical drop.

As Mostafa Gholi Khosravi, the head of Iran's Property Advisers Union, has recently stated, "The housing market is waiting for the results of the [JCPOA] negotiations, and with the positive shock that the agreements bring to the market, sales will increase in the coming months."

He believes that the market will stabilize towards the buyer and the price will decrease.

Mohammad Sadeq Al-Hosseini, an economist also said that "If the JCPOA is revived, the models predict that housing will have its biggest historical price decline; so that we will experience a 20 to 30 percent reduction in housing prices in large cities and a smaller reduction in prices in small cities."

Housing prices in Iran rose constantly over the past year due to various internal and external factors.

Loading, unloading of goods in Abadan ports rises 133% in a year

TEHRAN - Loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Abadan, in the southwestern Khuzestan province, rose 133 percent during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year, a provincial official announced.

Reza Saffari, the director-general of Abadan's Ports and Maritime Department, said that over 46,000 tons of commodities were loaded and unloaded in the three ports of Abadan in the previous year.

He named machinery and spare parts, agricultural products, sailors' goods, clothing and fibers as the major products loaded and unloaded in these ports in the past year.

The official said that the Persian Gulf littoral states were the main destinations of the commodities

exported from the port of Abadan in the previous year.

Based on the data released by Transport and Urban Development Ministry, loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran rose 17 percent during the past year.

The ministry's data show that loading and unloading of goods in the country's ports reached 152.91 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, while the figure stood at 130.69 million tons in the preceding year.

During the said year, loading and unloading operations in the container sector reached 2.1 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) with a weight of 24.57 million tons, which was 13.5 percent more than the 1.85 million TEUs in the Iranian calendar year 1399, the report said.

The loading and unloading of



goods during the previous year also grew by 12.8 percent in the dry bulk sector, while in the liquid bulk sector the figure increased by 12.6 percent, in the general cargo sector rose by 13.1 percent, and in the petroleum sector grew by 22.5 percent.

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play a significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more

development of them serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition, to facilitate loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there.

It is worth mentioning that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in a course of five years.

According to Ports and Maritime Organization, the capacity of the country's ports has increased from 180 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 250 million tons in 1399 (ended in March 2021).

1.432 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As stated by the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), the monthly sales of the shares of companies listed on the Tehran Stock Exchange has been very good in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), and it is predicted that the growing trend of the exchanges will continue in the present year as well.

"Considering the general provisions approved in this 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 past year,

Last year's oil income realized 10% more than budget targets: Oji

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji said the country's oil incomes in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) were 10 percent more than the target set in the national budget bill for the year, Shana reported on Monday.

"The government did not have a budget deficit in terms of oil revenues in [the Iranian calendar year] 1400," Oji said.

The official stressed that Iran is not going to reveal the ways through which the country handles its oil exports.

According to Oji, based on the previous year's national budget bill the government was supposed to realize 1.99 quadrillion rials (over \$7.9 billion) of oil revenues by the yearend while the oil ministry managed to realize 10 percent more than the mentioned figure.

Back in March, Oji had said Iran's oil exports were on the



rise despite the U.S. sabotaging the country's shipments.

"Iran's oil exports have risen under the toughest sanctions and without waiting for the outcome of the Vienna talks," said Oji on March 12.

The increase was thanks to "different methods used to win contracts and finding different buyers," the official added.

Tehran's oil exports have

been limited since former U.S. President Donald Trump in 2018 exited the 2015 nuclear accord and reimposed sanctions. Iran views U.S. sanctions as illegal and has said it will make every effort to sidestep them.

The Islamic Republic's oil exports rose to more than one million barrels per day (bpd) in February for the first time in almost three years, reflecting increased shipments to China.

Iran increased exports in 2021 despite the sanctions, according to estimates from oil industry consultants and analysts, but the shipments remained well below the 2.5 million bpd before sanctions were reintroduced.

Back in January, Head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr said the country's oil revenues have increased significantly over the past few months and the country has received the payment for all its crude oil sales since the new government administration.

"In the thirteenth government, part of the country's lost oil markets has been revived and we have received the payment for all the oil we have sold so far," Khojasteh-Mehr said.

According to the official, the private sector is also contributing greatly to the country's current oil sales.

Power plants' overhaul operation to be completed by late May

TEHRAN – Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH) has announced that overhaul operations for 100,000-megawatt (MW) capacity of power plants across the country will be completed by May 21 and the mentioned power plants will be ready for the summer peak consumption period.

Naser Eskandari, the deputy head of TPPH for strategic affairs, said so far, the overhaul operations for 65 percent of the above-mentioned power plants are underway and the rest will also go through the overhaul operations soon, IRNA reported.

"Before the summer peak electricity consumption period, repairing operations will be carried out in more than 100,000 MW capacity of power plants across the country," Eskandari stated.

According to the latest assessment, of the total capacity of the power plants going through overhaul operations, about 5,666 MW are steam units, and 8,912 MW are gas units, the official said.

"To prepare the power plants for the peak consumption period of this summer, about 700 overhaul operations will be carried



out in steam and gas units, hot track, and combustion chambers of private and public power plants," Eskandari added.

In order to ensure the proper operation of power plants in the peak consumption period, the annual overhaul program starts every year in early September and will continue until late May the next year, the official said.

Summer months constitute Iran's peak demand periods, so most of the power plant overhaul programs are scheduled to take place during the autumn, winter, and spring seasons.

Every year, during the overhaul program thousands of personnel constantly work to complete the annual repair program of the country's power plants on time and ensure the stable supply of electricity to customers during peak consumption days.

Last year, the annual overhaul program was also conducted for 100,000 megawatts capacity of the country's power plants.

The capacity of power plant units that went through the overhaul program last year increased by 11 percent compared to the preceding year.

Currently, the knowledge for producing 80 percent of the equipment and spare parts of the power plants has been localized by Iranian experts in cooperation with knowledge-based companies and research centers.

Iran's total power generation capacity currently exceeds 85,000 MW, more than 90 percent of which is supplied by thermal power plants.

Over 478 thermal power plants are currently operating throughout Iran including both gas power plants and combined cycle plants.

Commodities worth over \$380m traded at IME in a week

TEHRAN - During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), over 1.557 million tons of commodities worth more than \$381 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1.244 million tons of commodities valued at almost \$161 million.

On this floor, the IME's customers purchased 985,404 tons of cement, 168,943 tons of steel, 58,000 tons of sponge iron, 30,000 tons of iron ore, 25 tons of zinc and 2,675 tons of aluminum.

Furthermore, the IME saw trade 310,004 tons of commodities on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor valued at more than \$216 million.

The exchange's customers purchased on this floor 85,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 70,775 tons of bitumen, 68,217 tons of



polymeric products, 56,000 tons of lube cut, 26,363 tons of chemicals, 2,564 tons of base oil, 80 tons of sulfur and 50 tons of argon.

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 2,263 tons of commodities traded on it.

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

TEDPIX gains 6,800 points on Monday

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 6,868 points to 1.468 million on Monday.

As reported, over 15,189 billion securities worth 76.145 trillion rials (about \$298.6 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 9,448 points, and the second market's index gained 177 points.

TEDPIX rose 87,119 points (6.48 percent) to

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 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.

Back in October 2021, Eshqi had outlined new strategies and programs for the country's stock market during his tenure, among which supporting investors, creating a transparent, efficient, and equitable market, as well as reducing inclusive risk based on the market's broad objectives can be mentioned.

Eshqi had stressed the use of modern technologies and mechanisms to increase public access to market data as a major strategy in this regard.

According to the SEO head, another strategy would be amending the market's rules and regulations to increase justice and accountability, while strengthening the medium- and small-scale level financing through new mechanisms.

"Diversification and promotion of the capital market (in terms of market, tools, and institutions), increasing the transparency and quality of information published in the capital market, reforming business processes and increasing the efficiency of financial markets, development of financial institutions and demopolization, development and strengthening of technical infrastructure, facilitating and clarifying the issuance of licenses in the capital market and the development of the debt market and increasing its liquidity will also be pursued," Eshqi had explained.

Lebanon needs a political solution before economic initiative: professor

'There are internal and external reasons for problems in Lebanon'

From page 1 ▶ reports that indicate that about fifty billion dollars have been looted from the public treasury, and it is not yet known how it was spent.

The Lebanese President has called for a criminal audit because the political class rejected this matter and it does not want a criminal audit, but rather manipulates the value of the dollar and the fate of the Lebanese people in order to cover up its corruption.

Of course, they call for amnesty for financial crimes, because after the Lebanese civil war in 1990 came the Taif Agreement and then the general amnesty when it comes to all kinds of all war crimes, rather than accountability; it was a prelude to establishing a selective justice in the country. These Political leaders who were warlords, now demand a general amnesty for their financial crimes.

The third factor, which is also internal, is the smuggling of subsidized foodstuffs to other countries from Lebanon.

Of course, this problem is due to the culture of corruption among merchants in Lebanon, who don't care about the future of the Lebanese people. All of these things are for internal reasons.

As for the external causes, we witnessed that there was an American move to pressurize the Lebanese economy and its banking system under the pretext of Hezbollah's dealings with Iran.

This policy led to the suspension of foreign transfers and also hampering the dealing with the Lebanese banking sector via the imposition of sanctions on this system.

We do not forget that there are external pressures related to border demarcation and the gas wealth in Lebanon, which the Israeli enemy seeks to control in a tortuous way through Western countries and complicated agendas. This is also a major factor in the collapse of the Lebanese economy.

How did sectarianism affect the development process in Lebanon?

Of course, the concept of consensual democracy, which is used in the Lebanese model, consolidates sectarian identities, which have increased and institutionalized social inequality.

Sectarianism affects all aspects of life in Lebanon, including marriage, social relations, political represen-



tation, judicial appointments, and recruitment of people in the public administrations and so on.

All of these are included in the practice of what is known as nepotism, whereas consensual democracy activates the role of sectarian parties.

Political leaders provide services for their social base to obtain support from citizens, so these leaders help the members of their sect to secure jobs and here I am talking about "sect kings" who are ready to practice all kinds of corruption to protect their position or social base.

I can say that consensual democracy paralyzes the process of nation-building, which can hamper the process of adopting policies that achieve the public interest. Of

"The government establishment in Lebanon is worn out and there have been no appointments based on the principle of competence for more than thirty years."

course, these policies that are set by governments depend on what the leaders of the sects want in order to serve the interests of the sects and regions they represent.

There are no restrictions to stop sect leaders, so they are free to practice corruption to achieve the goals they intend in order to maintain their presence in power.

Don't you think Lebanon is suffering from a lack of belonging to the homeland?

In Lebanon, there is no strong feeling of belonging to the homeland. For example, the Lebanese ruling class and politicians have neglected the formal education system, whether in public schools or in Lebanese universities, which greatly have affected the

"Sectarianism affects all aspects of life in Lebanon."

level of social advancement, increasing inequality rates in the long run.

In Lebanon, spending on education is very low compared to other countries in the world.

I can say that the political economy in Lebanon allows the ruling elites to monopolize wealth at the expense of the majority which has led to destroying the state. Thus, the solution must be political in the first place, and after the political solution, we can talk about the economic solution.

Of course, the solution comes from the outside; The (Persian) Gulf States should lift the boycott and the Western powers also must remove financial sanctions on Lebanon, and then we can talk about internal solutions.

You pointed to the role of foreign countries in an expected economic relief for Lebanon. Could you update us on how did foreign states contribute to entrenching corruption in Lebanon?

Of course, the key to the solution is abroad, and any settlement in the region will push the Lebanese parties towards reconciliation.

The key to the solution in the first place is a regional settlement that includes Syria, Iran, America and Turkey, after which there must be an interna-

tional contribution that helps Lebanon financially. I am talking about the International Monetary Fund and the donor countries that demand economic reforms.

The political authority must endorse the process of close scrutiny, and there should be no bargaining to pass deals between corrupt leaders at the expense of the Lebanese people.

The role of some (Persian) Gulf States is important in terms of abandoning their interference to help the stability in Lebanon.

The Taif Agreement must be implemented, specifically the abolition of political sectarianism, the election of Parliament with no sectarian identity, and the building of a civil state that abolish the role of sectarian leaders and authorities.

The current economic situation in Lebanon helps increase corruption indicators due to the existing poverty and relative deprivation while getting out of the crisis becomes more and more difficult with time.

There must be a regional and international understanding that reflects positively on Lebanon's political scene especially when it comes to finding solutions that help in the establishment of productive economic projects.

Do you think the government establishment in Lebanon with its current structure is able to solve the problems facing the country?

The government establishment in Lebanon is worn out and there have been no appointments based on the principle of competence and merit for more than thirty years.

All employees in public administrations did not take the Civil Service Council exams in order to enter the public office. Employment in public administrations and public institutions is based on nepotism and the relationship of individuals to sect leaders.

Under this concept, we cannot say expect the government or public institutions to solve problems because every employee is affiliated with his sectarian leader and works according to the dictates of the sectarian leader.

To get out of this crisis, we must start restructuring the state's departments and institutions, keeping the employee who has competence and merit, and finding work for the employee who does not have competence.

Saudi Arabia and China: New best friends?

Riyadh is making overtures to China that threaten to upend its long-running relationship with the United States. How serious is the rift?

Following a report by the The Wall Street Journal that Chinese leader Xi Jinping could accept an invitation to visit Saudi Arabia as soon as May, the world's largest oil producer also said it might allow China to pay for its oil in its own currency, the yuan, rather than U.S. dollars.

Saudi Arabia sells around a quarter of all its oil exports to China. In the first two months of this year, it overtook Russia as the country sending the most oil there.

Amid geopolitical tensions surrounding Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, and as the world lines up on either side of the conflict, the news has sparked fears that Saudi Arabia could end up on Russia's side.

Allowing oil payments in yuan could help create a parallel system for international payments where the Chinese yuan becomes as important as the U.S. dollar. This, in turn, would help Russia bypass sanctions, as the invading nation might then also use yuan. Publicly, China has remained neutral in the conflict, but is widely suspected of being quietly supportive of Russia.

Will the Saudis really allow yuan payments?

The announcement by the Saudi leadership has mostly been seen as a way of putting pressure on their Western allies, experts said.

In fact, as the European Council of Foreign Relations, or ECFR, wrote in a 2019 policy brief called China's Great Game in the Middle East, the Saudis have done this before.

China is often used as a "bargaining chip," the ECFR analysts pointed out.

"For instance," they wrote, "only a few months after the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman appeared to use his tour of Asia to affect debates in the U.S. and European countries on arms sales to his country."

What about pressure on Saudi Arabia?

There have been attempts by the U.S. and Europe to shore up Saudi support. American security adviser Brett McGurk traveled to the Persian Gulf Arab state last week, as did UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Up until now, though, U.S. and European officials have tried and failed to get Saudi Arabia to pump more oil, in an effort to alleviate oil prices. Along with the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia is one of the only oil producing countries with spare capacity. If more oil was on the global market, this might help relieve oil prices, which have risen to record-breaking highs thanks to disruptions in oil supply from Russia.

It was not reported as to whether the recent talks with Saudi officials involved oil payments in yuan.

But, "even if Western diplomacy did succeed in bringing these countries on board, their [Saudi officials] worry is that the Middle East is destined to become less — not more — important," Cinzia Bianco, a visiting fellow at the Berlin office of the European Council on Foreign Relations, told DW, referring to the U.S. pivot toward the Asia-Pacific region and away from fossil fuel.

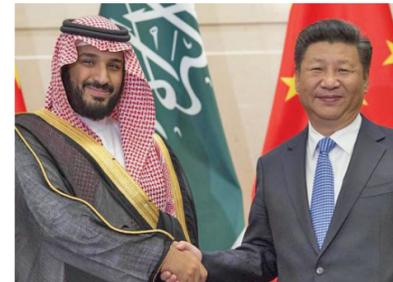
"They [the Persian Gulf states] believe Washington has less to offer and less to threaten than it once did," Bianco, an expert on the Persian Gulf region, explained further in a briefing published recently.

"Gulf monarchies' refusal to side with the U.S. and Europe against Russia is not about Russia. It is about navigating the new multipolar world order, taking a transactional approach to protecting national interests," she wrote.

How is China involved?

This is where China comes into it. Ties between Saudi Arabia and China have been deepening for several years already. In 2020, Saudi Arabia was China's largest trading partner in the region, with imports and exports worth over \$67 billion (€60.6 billion).

Mostly, these ties have been based on a mutually beneficial economic relationship, one that highlights synergies between China's trillion-dollar, trade-boosting Belt and Road Initiative and Saudi Arabia's own modernization project, Vision 2030.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (right) could soon be making a trip to Saudi Arabia

There are obvious advantages to dealing with a country that will be a long-term buyer of gas and oil, while European customers are increasingly looking into solar and wind power.

Part of Vision 2030 is about preparing Saudi Arabia for a future when oil is less important, and one aspect is to boost Saudi Arabia's potential as a logistics hub in West Asia. The Belt and Road Initiative fits into this, and China and Saudi Arabia have what is known as a "comprehensive strategic partnership" — although experts like Bianco caution against calling the two nations "allies."

Some analysts have recently suggested that a new era is beginning in Chinese-West Asian relations.

In January, Roie Yellinek, a non-resident scholar at the Washington-based Middle East Institute, observed that a number of foreign ministers from the region had traveled to China that month.

"The fact that it was foreign ministers travelling to China, rather than their counterparts with the ministries of trade or economy, suggests a shift in focus," Yellinek argued in an article on the institute's website. "After years of economic-oriented ties ... recent events have made it clear that a new era has begun with a greater focus on geopolitics."

This includes a growing military component to the China-Saudi relationship. Between 2016 and 2020, Chinese arms transfers to Saudi Arabia increased 386%, according to the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in a February research paper.

First China sold ballistic missiles to the Saudis, then it began to assist them with their production inside Saudi Arabia.

Also worth noting: The Chinese will deal with leaders the Americans won't. As analysts at the ECFR explained in their 2019 policy briefing, "the Chinese model of authoritarian capitalism already fascinates many Middle Eastern regimes, which see cooperation with China as a means to resist Western pressure to pursue governance reforms and human rights accountability."

Is this the end for the U.S. dollar?

The Saudis first suggested the Chinese pay for their oil in yuan about four years ago. But even if this happens, there is unlikely to be any impact on foreign exchange markets in the short, and even medium, term, economic experts have said. Most oil is priced in dollars and it would be a long, complicated process to disengage from that.

Analysts have also pointed out that even if all Saudi and Chinese trade was paid for in yuan, this would only equal around \$320 million (€289 million) per working day. Meanwhile all trade in U.S. dollars around the world is equal to roughly \$6.6 trillion (€6 trillion) every working day.

In the long term, though, there are fears that a parallel global system of foreign currency exchange could eventually emerge, using China's yuan as an alternative currency. India is reportedly also considering using the yuan for oil purchases from Russia, to avoid international sanctions.

This is seen by some analysts as a way for China to guard against a day when it might potentially become a victim of Western sanctions, the way Russia is being sanctioned now.

U.S. mass shooting raises more gun violence questions

From page 1 ▶ Sacramento's Police Chief Kathy Lester urged for the public's help to help identify "the suspects in this and provide any information they can"

The term suspects has also raised questions as to why the perpetrators are not referred to as terrorists? And why these mass shooting incidents are not referred to as acts of terrorism?

Others have argued the real suspects in the U.S. that should be labeled as terrorists in the country are American Presidents and other senior officials who have killed millions of innocent civilians by waging war after war.

Gun culture in the U.S. certainly reflects America's military adventurism overseas and the country's development coming on the back of brutal civil wars.

Back in Sacramento, family members were seen waiting outside police lines urgently seeking news about their missing loved ones. Footage has become a familiar site in American media.

In a statement, police said that they had recovered "at least" one firearm at the scene and had located 12 victims "with varying degrees of injuries."

Community activist, Berry Accius, is a member of the Voice of the Youth Leadership Program which is focusing on gun violence prevention. He says he rushed to the deadly scene shortly after the mass shooting.

"The first thing I saw was a young lady draped in her blood and others' blood. She was just on the phone saying 'My sister is dead! My sister is dead!'" Accius said.

The violence occurred in an area that has just recently been revitalized as an entertainment center and also just blocks from the state's capitol building; highlighting just how no place is safe from the gun violence epidemic in the U.S.

A separate shooting incident last month in the same city saw a man gun down four victims.

And in a separate shooting overnight in Dallas, Texas, a man was killed and eleven others sustained injuries after an individual opened fire into a crowd at a concert, Dallas police have said.

Gun violence is a leading cause of premature death

in the U.S. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (America's national health agency) in 2020, the most recent year for which complete data is available: 45,222 people died from gun-related injuries.

The figure means more Americans died of gun-related injuries in 2020 than in any other year on record. Complete data for 2021 has not been fully published yet but the chain of events and record firearm purchases last year means it could well override the 2020 death toll.

Some analysts have suggested it's not easy for congress to change the second amendment (which Americans claim gives them the legal right to carry arms) without a full-blown revolution in the country.

As firearms kills some 45,000 people and injure double that number each year, advocates for gun violence prevention are calling for authorities to come up with different public health approaches to address the growing crisis.

The issue is complex and rooted so deeply in American culture to the extent that today there are more firearms than there are American citizens. According to the Swiss-based Small Arms Survey, no other country has more civilian guns than its total population.

Easy access to guns, whether through legal or illegal means, is one of the main causes of gun violence.

Rights groups have long called for the U.S. to fulfill its obligations by introducing and implementing strict gun violence prevention laws and regulations. They say the U.S. has failed its obligation to protect human lives by creating a safe environment for ordinary people.

Some analysts argue that the national rifle association (NRA), with its increasing record numbers of membership, is such a powerful lobby group in Congress that lawmakers are unable to change the regulations. The NRA is a gun rights advocacy group.

The NRA and other gun-rights advocates claim the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects individual gun ownership.

The Second Amendment reads: "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state,

the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Those 27 words ratified on December 15, 1791, have been the subject of fierce debate for more than 250 years.

Arguments have been made as to whether a well-regulated militia refers to individuals. Nobody appears to have the answer as the founding fathers have passed on.

When the text was written, women were not allowed to vote and black slaves were considered the property of the white man. Many issues have been reformed since then, although black activists would argue black Americans are still the property of the white colonizer.

But congress surely has the power to reform the centuries-old piece of paper with 27 words written on it? Apparently not.

According to the NRA, guns are used for self-defense as the police cannot protect everyone all of the time, but the facts on the ground show firearms are rarely used for self-defense.

For example, between 2007 and 2011, there were 29,618,300 violent crimes committed, 0.79% of victims (235,700) protected themselves with a firearm. Official data shows that was the least-employed protective method.

In 2010 there were 230 "justifiable homicides" in which an American used a firearm to kill a criminal in self-defense. That is in comparison to 8,275 murders by criminals using guns as their weapon of choice.

Of the 84,495,500 property crimes committed between 2007 and 2011, 0.12% of victims (103,000) protected themselves with a gun.

In any case that is arguably a failure of the police who can not protect everyone, every time, everywhere, and also in every country; but not every country has allowed its citizens the legal right to carry guns.

The reality points to the U.S. being the epicenter where gun manufacturers make a respectable profit from tens of thousands of Americans being shot dead on the streets every year.

Iran records 50m overnight stays for new year holidays



From page 1 ► Prospects of international arrivals

Last September, Iran initiated preliminary steps for a bounce-back, restarting the issuance of tourist visas following a 20-month hiatus, and easing COVID-19 protocols for fully-vaccinated passengers.

It came when the tourism businesses faced a very complex situation due to COVID restrictions. There was a partial or even total closure of tourist accommodation during the toughest months of the lockdown, so the spring seasons were completely lost. Many travel insiders, hoteliers, and tour operators faced big dilemmas such as bankruptcy, unemployment, debts, and the prospects of not being competitive on the international level.

However, the pace of recovery remains slow and uneven due to varying degrees of mobility restrictions, vaccination rates, and traveler confidence. Iran's trump card is that the country benefits from a wide variety of travel destinations ranging from seacoasts and lush green woods to towering mountains and harsh deserts.

As a wallet-friendly destination with hospitable people, Iran has long been a desired destination for nature lovers, birdwatchers, powder chasers, culture devotees, pilgrims, museum-goers, foodies, adventurers, and medical travelers to name a few.

Going to statistics, some 1.47m foreign nationals visited the ancient land from the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year to January 1, a span most of which was subject to severe travel bans due to coronavirus. Citizens from Iraq and Afghanistan were the main source of tourism for Iran from October 23 to December 22, 2021. "226,000 people from Iraq, 103,000 from Afghanistan, 90,000 from Turkey, 22,000 from Azerbaijan, and 18,000 from Bahrain arrived in Iran during the mentioned period," according to data released by Mehr news agency.

As the data suggests, neighboring countries have been the main source of

tourism for the Islamic Republic. That is why the fair has invited travel insiders, tour operators, and exhibitors from neighboring states to reinforce the trend.

The average of international travels to and from the Islamic Republic fell by 80 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20, 2021) from a year earlier. "During this period, 4,343,163 passengers entered the country, which included 3,030,464 Iranian passengers and 512,699 international travelers," according to Arezou Ghaniun, an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran's Customs Administration. "From the beginning of 1399 to the end of it, we saw a significant reduction in passenger traffic to the country or vice versa in land, sea, rail and air borders, which were caused by various coronavirus restrictions."

On the international scene, tourism experienced a 4% increase in 2021, 15 million more international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) compared to 2020 (415 million versus 400 million), according to data compiled by the World Tourism Organization. International arrivals, however, show 72% below the pre-pandemic year of 2019, according to preliminary estimates.

To find a solution, panels of travel experts and tourism officials have mapped out new marketing strategies so far, to help tourism would get back on its feet once again. One of the strategies is to help lesser-known destinations to gain footholds on the tourism map. For instance, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has said much more attention should be devoted to lesser-known travel gems of the country.

"Introducing the lesser-known or less-favored travel destinations is part of the ministry's policies, and paying more attention to the western axis of the country is in line with those strategies," a tourism official Mohammad Qasemi has said. "The west axis is our concern for tourism, which we intend to raise at [various] international tourism conferences," the official stated. Other solutions are reinforcing medical tourism, ecotourism, and pilgrimage.

All things considered, mass COVID-19 vaccinations, consecutive fam tours for foreign tour operators, easing travel procedures, and fresh strategies, altogether, suggest Iran is determined to get through the coronavirus crisis to experience a tourism rebound with a greater reliance on its numerous tourist spots of which 26 are UNESCO World Heritage, and above all, its welcoming, sociable people.

TEHRAN - Constructed some 150 years ago, Lari house is a gem of traditional Persian architecture that is somehow resistant to quakes.

Situated in Yazd, the precious house was completed in 1869 and the owner was Haji Mohammad Ibrahim Lari. Its prosperity was preserved until the end of Pahlavi I.

Laries were among the affluent people of Fars (province) who came to Shiraz and Yazd for business purposes.

However, once the house was abandoned, it suffered from serious damage. Particularly remarkable is the level of the house which is lower than the level of the street due to the following reasons: it made the house resistant to earthquakes, it caused thermal equilibrium and it led the water in the street to the gardens of the house.

With an area of about 1700 square meters, this building holds three yards and six houses. The biggest yard stretches on the northwest-southwest axis.

The middle yard, which is smaller compared to the main yard, lies on the east to the west axis and the third yard is on the northeast of the building. It is the smallest yard with an independent entrance and it is built on a higher level than the other two yards.

The porch with a wind tower, located on the southwest, is the highest and the most prominent porch in this house. It used to be a place for all the seasons, especially summer, housing the

Discover 19th-century house resistant to tremors



people in its shadow and letting them enjoy the chill in the heart of the desert. The northern part was mostly used in the winter. The northwest wing holds three porches in the middle, two doors on the sides, and two corridors at the end.

The rooms encircling the yard are located three steps higher than the level of the yard. These 22 rooms are connected with wooden doors, each having a unique function. The southeast wing consists of two parts; the

private rooms and the service rooms. The service rooms include the kitchen, stable, and stores masterfully detached from the main yard. The most prominent mirror work, decorated with floral, diamond, and arabesque patterns, can be found in the mirror room on the eastern wing of the house. This room was restored for special ceremonies and guests.

In the middle of the southeastern wing, there is a five-door room with a porch and its surrounding rooms. This part of

the house is completely different from that of the northwestern. The northeast part of the house includes a yard that forms a completely detached space and is one level higher than the central yard. There is a cross-shaped area under this yard, with the necessary light brought to it by a skylight installed in the middle of the yard. The wooden platform above the pool used to be a cozy place to take refuge to it in the afternoon and enjoy the breeze caressing the face, without any fear of the heat or the big scorpions. The other part is Sardab; a basement with 38 steps under the ground which was mainly used for keeping food. Exquisite stuccoes, fine mirror works, delicate paintings, and the graceful wind tower all witness to the aristocratic character of the house.

With its winding lanes, a forest of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, being referred to as a 'don't miss' destination by almost all travel associates in the region. The oasis city is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains.

Yazd has an interesting mix of people as well, some 10 percent of whom follow the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism. Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.

UNWTO: global tourism enjoys strong start to 2022 despite uncertainties

TEHRAN - International tourism continued its recovery in January 2022, with a much better performance compared to the weak start to 2021, the World Tourism Organization has said.

However, intensive military operations in Ukraine, coupled with many COVID-related travel restrictions, add pressure to the existing scene of fragile tourism recovery.

Based on the latest available data, global international tourist arrivals more than doubled (+130%) in January 2022 compared to 2021 - the 18 million more visitors recorded worldwide in the first month of this year equals the total increase for the whole of 2021.

While these figures confirm the positive trend already underway last year, the pace of recovery in January was impacted by the emergence of the Omicron variant and the re-introduction of travel restrictions in several destinations. Following the 71% decline of 2021, international arrivals in January 2022 remained 67% below pre-pandemic levels.

However, the trend has been developed despite some uncertainties caused by rising COVID variants and the military conflict between Ukraine and Russia. The war,

according to UNWTO, poses new challenges to the global economic environment and risks hampering the return of confidence in global travel.

As mentioned by the UN body, all regions enjoyed a significant rebound in January 2022, though from low levels recorded at the start of 2021. Europe (+199%) and the Americas (+97%) continued to post the strongest results, with international arrivals still around half pre-pandemic levels (-53% and -52%, respectively).

West Asia (+89%) and Africa (+51%) also saw growth in January 2022 over 2021, but these regions saw a drop of 63% and 69% respectively compared to 2019. While Asia and the Pacific recorded a 44% year-on-year increase, several destinations remained closed to non-essential travel resulting in the largest decrease in international arrivals over 2019 (-93%).

Regarding prospects for recovery, the UN body says that after the unprecedented drop in 2020 and 2021, international tourism is expected to continue its gradual recovery in 2022. As of March 24, 12 destinations had no COVID-19 related restrictions in place and an

increasing number of destinations were easing or lifting travel restrictions, which contributes to unleashing pent-up demand.

Even though it is too early to assess the impact, air travel searches and bookings across various channels showed a slowdown the week after the war began but continued to rebound in early March.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates global economic growth could be more than 1% lower this year than previously projected, while inflation, already high at the start of the year, could be at least a further 2.5% higher. The recent spike in oil prices (Brent reached its highest levels in 10 years), and rising inflation are making accommodation and transport services more expensive, adding extra pressure on businesses, consumer purchasing power, and savings, UNWTO notes.

In 2020, international arrivals plunged by 73% from pre-pandemic levels in 2019, causing assessed losses of \$2.4 trillion in tourism and related sectors, according to the report by UNCTAD and the UN's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Neyshabur: a prosperous town of the ancient world

TEHRAN - A heaven for history buffs, Neyshabur (Nishapur) was once a prosperous town during the medieval times now situated northeast of modern Iran.

Situated some 70 km west of Mashhad, Neyshabur was founded around the third century CE. Narratives say "Nishapur" derived its name from its alleged founder, the Sasanian king Shapur I.

It grew to prominence in the eighth century and was ruined by invasions and earthquakes in the thirteenth century. After that time, a much smaller settlement was established just north of the ancient town, and the once-bustling metropolis lay underground—until a team of excavators from the Metropolitan Museum arrived in the mid-twentieth century.

The town underwent rounds of excavation as of 1935 by experts from the Department of Near Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, its affiliated archaeologists worked at Neyshabur between 1935 and 1940, returning for a final season in the winter of 1947-48.

The excavators had been drawn to the city because of its fame in the

medieval period when it flourished as a regional capital and was home to many religious scholars. It was also known as an economic center—Neyshabur was located on the trade route known as the Silk Road, which ran from China to the Mediterranean Sea, crossing Central Asia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey along the way.

In addition, Neyshabur was a source of turquoise and a center for growing cotton, producing cotton textiles as well as several types of fabric incorporating silk, called 'attabi, saqlatuni, and mulham. One of the most unusual products of Neyshabur, however, was its edible earth, which was believed to have curative properties. At its peak between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, Neyshabur had a population of approximately 100,000 to 200,000 people, and development covering an area of approximately six and a half square miles.

The Museum's team of researchers, Joseph Upton, Walter

Hauser, and Charles Wilkinson, worked at Neyshabur under a cooperative agreement with the Iranian government that permitted them to excavate so long as half of the material found was shared with the Iran Bastan Museum in Tehran, according to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Their trenches were located throughout the medieval city, sited where significant finds had already been made by locals or where they could obtain permission to dig (as much of the site was under cultivation). They gave each site a name based on its local nickname or a distinguishing topographical feature.

Two areas provided particularly rich finds. The first site to be excavated, called Sabz Pushan ("green mound" in Persian), had been a thriving residential neighborhood occupied between the ninth and twelfth centuries, with houses of three to four rooms connected by small alleys. Of the large area this neighborhood once occupied, approximately fifteen



A 10th-century bowl with green, yellow, and brown splashed decoration; excavated in Iran, Nishapur

houses were eventually excavated. One of these houses had particularly well-preserved decoration, with carved stucco panels covering the lower part of the wall, the dado, in several rooms. The panels were originally painted in bright yellows, reds, and blues, with equally colorful murals on the plaster walls above, but once the panels were exposed to the air, the colors that the excavators first saw quickly disappeared.

At a part of the site the locals called Tepe Madrasa, the excavators had expected to find one of Neyshabur's famed institutions of learning, or madrasa. Instead, they uncovered a largely residential area with a

mosque that had been developed and rebuilt in several phases between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Inside one of the residences, perhaps the palace of the city's ninth-century governors, they found a room with an extraordinary set of wall paintings whose iconography appears unique to the site.

Hundreds of objects were discovered during the excavations. Each year, the Museum's share was shipped back to New York, where the objects were restored and placed on display. Over the past years, the conservators in the Museum's Department of Objects Conservation have re-treated all the excavated objects under a special grant to preserve this important archaeological source.

These objects were significant in providing information on several different artistic traditions. In terms of ceramics, they brought to light several types whose decoration was unique to this part of Iran. These were typically decorated with strong-colored slips, made of diluted clay, in bold patterns. The distinctive ceramics produced in Neyshabur were traded around the region, and have been found at Herat, Merv, and Samarqand.

The evidence from the excavations

also revealed much about the development of architectural decoration in northeastern Iran. Walls in residences and public buildings throughout Neyshabur were decorated in many different ways, from frescoes to carved and painted stucco, terracotta panels to glazed ceramic tiles.

Carved stucco decoration, perennially important in Iranian architecture, was represented in examples found throughout the site. The exteriors of large public buildings were clad in baked bricks set in decorative patterns, large terracotta panels carved with multilayered ornament, or glazed tiles, often in shades of bright blue.

"Beautifully decorated spindle whorls were excavated by the hundreds. Smaller items such as toys, game pieces, musical instruments, and beads throw light on everyday activities in Neyshabur and give us a better understanding of daily life for its citizens," the Metropolitan Museum of Art says.

Furthermore, Neyshabur was a significant hub for the manufacture of glass, metal, and stone vessels as well as textiles. However, none of the latter were found in the excavations, probably due to their highly perishable nature.

DOE plans to protect wildlife genetic resources

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) has prepared plans for collecting, maintaining, and upgrading biobanks, as well as identifying, registering, and protecting genetic resources, and also monitoring, and licensing the exploitation of genetic resources.

The first of these measures is the creation and development of biobanks and the systematization of wildlife bio-sample banks throughout the country, including universities, research centers and provincial centers of the DOE, in such a way that a network of bio-sample banks is formed and keep biological samples based on standards, Mohammad Medadi, head of National Museum of Natural History and Genetic Resources, said.

Referring to the certifying of bio-sample banks and the samples kept in these banks as other programs of the DOE and said that "the purpose is to systematize the access and exploitation of wildlife genetic resources for research and non-research purposes."

The rules and instructions are being developed to determine the access to wildlife genetic resources from the stage of sampling and maintenance in bio-banks or in the stages of research and providing services, he said, IRNA reported on Monday.

Other important measures include monitoring the outflow of samples and genetic resources of wildlife from the country; the instructions for the departure of these samples have been prepared for research and non-research purposes and will be announced soon, Medadi stated.



The most important component of genetic resources, especially wildlife genetic resources, is the issue of biodiversity conservation. Genetic diversity is the most basic level of biodiversity conservation. Without the protection of the genetic diversity of species, the protection of biodiversity will not come true, he explained.

It is necessary to take the protection of wildlife, habitat, and biodiversity seriously in economic development and industrial activities, and the development programs should not be in conflict with the protection of biodiversity and natural habitats, he further emphasized.

Worldwide, conservation outside the habitat is a very important issue. Currently, the national wildlife biobanks are active in the National Mu-

seum of Natural History in Tehran and several other provinces, he noted.

In total, about 5,000 samples of wildlife genes are kept in these museums, which can be used in research activities, Medadi added.

The world's genetic resources have now become countries' strategic resources due to their vital role in health, economy, food security, and biodiversity conservation.

The diversity of plants, animals, and microorganisms in each country is a rich source in the field of food. Proper utilization of these valuable resources, identification, maintenance, and protection of them in suitable habitats and even outside standard habitats is an important aspect of food security,

he also explained.

Using genetic resources in medicine and vaccine production as well as the diversity of human genetic resources is an important component of health security according to modern medical approaches, he further highlighted.

The 15th of [Iranian calendar month of] Farvardin (April 4), has been designated as the National Day for Genetic and Biological Resources, the anniversary of the establishment of the National Biological Resource Center.

Persian species in danger

Iran has a high diversity of species due to geographical conditions, climatic diversity, huge water resources of the Caspian Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf, and the Sea of Oman in the south.

According to the latest studies, about 1,300 species of vertebrates, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic fish, about 30,000 species of invertebrates, and 8,000 species of plants have been identified in the country.

Unfortunately, over the past two decades, human activities have led to alarming degradation of ecosystems, deletion of genes, species, and biological capabilities; Human threats to biodiversity have accelerated the most over the past 50 years over the entire history of human life.

Out of 1,300 species of animals in the country, 130 of which are endangered and threatened, Hassan Akbari, deputy head of natural environment and biodiversity of the Department of Environment, said in December 2021.

About 5,000 samples of wildlife genes are kept in the country.

Technology upgrades seen in food, medicine industry

TEHRAN – The Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade and the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Monday to promote technology in the food and medicine industry.

Mostafa Ghanei, the secretary of the biotechnology development headquarters of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, and Mohammad Mehdi Baradaran, the deputy industry minister for public resources, inked the MOU, IRNA reported.

The influence of technology in the food and medicine industry, food and drug industry reform document, the reconstruction and modernization of the infrastructure, the promotion of knowledge-based culture, and encouraging public industries to become knowledge-based are among the issues of the MOU.

Sharing information and statistics for planning and policymaking in the food and drug industry and identifying the current and future needs and opportunities of the country in the field of health-oriented and food products are other areas of this joint cooperation.

According to this memorandum, the responsible bodies are committed to creating



the necessary conditions for the production of more pharmaceutical goods and a 50 percent reduction in the import of pharmaceuticals by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 2023).

Biotechnology development

Biotechnology today is 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.

In May 2021, 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, Ghanei said in October 2020.

So far, 27 biotechnology medicines, 12 vaccine projects, 90 pharmaceutical raw materials, and 55 projects in agriculture and food security have been implemented in order to gain a 3 percent market share and biotechnology assistance to the development of the economy, he explained.

Some 8 major companies are responsible for managing the country's 117 priority products in the fields of biopharmaceuticals, pharmaceutical raw materials, vaccines, probiotics, equipment, and chemical drugs, he emphasized.

Some 270 national projects have been developed to improve the quality of food and agricultural products with the help of biotechnology in the country, in addition to reducing production costs.

Health tips for Ramadan

Part 3

Fasting during the holy month of Ramadan requires dogged determination and as hard as it seems, considering the long hot days, it would greatly help to create balance in the body.

It is worth mentioning that everyone should keep in mind corresponding to one's distinguishing temperament is of utmost importance even during the month of Ramadan.

Fasting would help teenagers who hit puberty to be able getting a grip on the hormonal changes they might face during that stage.

Between the ages of 20 to 30 the body is characterized by excessive warmth and fasting would increase the heat in body as well. Now that the days are fairly long and hot it is necessary for the parents to set the scene for their children to experience better fasting condition to be able to continue fasting in the future.

Taking advices from Iranian traditional medicine would certainly help

us all to feel better after a month of abstaining from eating and drinking both mentally and physically.

Fasting is anti-aging, lowers cholesterol levels

Some studies reveal that fasting would reduce cholesterol levels and would slow down the aging process.

Less fatty, salty, spicy foods, fizzy drinks

The core principle of eating during

Ramadan is to eat lightly at Iftar, meal eaten after breaking fast, as the digestive system is not prepared for huge amounts of food.

It is also better to avoid consuming or cut down on fatty, salty, spicy, and fried food stuff and fizzy drinks both at Suhur and Iftar.

In general the meals eaten at the month of Ramadan ought to be small in quantity and rich in nutrients.

To be continued

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iran exports medical equipment to 55 countries worldwide

Some 105 medical equipment produced by 23 Iranian companies are exported to 55 countries across the world, Reza Masaali, an advisor to the health minister said on Sunday.

"Currently, a total of 280,000 medical equipment is produced in the country," Fars quoted Masaali as saying.

"In recent years, the production of medical equipment in Iran has increased by 9 percent," he added.

One of the main strategies of the Health Ministry is to boost exports, he said, adding that Iran exports medical equipment to 55 countries including Russia, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Croatia.

So far, a series of memorandums of understanding (MOUs) have been signed for export of medical equipment to various countries, including Brazil, Iraq and Oman, Masaali stated.

تجهيزات پزشکی ایرانی به ۵۵ کشور دنیا صادر می شود

مشاور وزیر بهداشت گفت: در حال حاضر ۱۰۵ محصول تجهیزات پزشکی ایرانی که توسط ۲۳ شرکت ایرانی تولید می شود، به ۵۵ کشور جهان از جمله کشورهای روسیه، آلمان، ایتالیا، بلژیک، هلند و کرواسی صادر می شود.

به گزارش گروه اجتماعی خبرگزاری فارس، رضا مسائلی، اظهار داشت: در کشور بیش از ۲۸۰ هزار قلم تجهیزات پزشکی در کشور وجود دارد و در سال های اخیر، تولیدات تجهیزات پزشکی در جمهوری اسلامی ایران، ۹ درصد افزایش داشته است. وی توجه به صادرات را یکی از مهمترین راهبردهای اساسی وزارت بهداشت در راستای حمایت از تولیدات داخلی دانست و افزود: تفاهم نامه های صادرات تجهیزات پزشکی ایران به کشورهای مختلف از جمله برزیل، عراق و عمان، امضا شده است.

Iran blames Afghanistan's inconsistent decisions for Hamoun wetland's critical condition

From page 1 ▶ In January, Arezoo Ashrafzadeh, director of the office for wetlands at the Department of Environment, said Hamoun wetland's dryness is a transnational issue that involves both Iran and Afghanistan.

"Natural ecosystems do not know borders and countries, and all countries must adhere to its guidelines. The inflow of water from Afghanistan depends on the flood and we want this water to pass through the natural path," she said.

The consequences of the drying-up Hamoun will affect both countries and the region, and will lead to problems such as sand and dust storms, she lamented, expressing hope that the problem will be solved through water diplomacy and the pursuit of responsible institutions.

Iran-Afghanistan water dispute

The Hamouns are transboundary wetlands on the Iran-Afghan border made up of three lakes: Hamoun-e Helmand, which is entirely in Iran, Hamoun-e Sabari on the border, and Hamoun-e Puzak, almost entirely inside Afghanistan. The three lakes are linked and fed by water from the Helmand River which starts in the Hindu Kush Mountains in Afghanistan.

In 1950, Iran and Afghanistan created the Helmand River Delta Commission with the task of measuring and dividing river flow between the two countries. In 1951, the Helmand River Delta Commission presented its report, recommending that Iran's share of the Helmand waters amount to twenty-two cubic meters per second. Iran, however, rejected the



report, asking for a larger share.

Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan Hassan Kazemi Qomi has said the Taliban officials had agreed to commit themselves to Iran's water rights in accordance with the existing agreement, Tasnim reported on Sunday.

The Iranian representative quoted Kabul officials as saying, "They stressed that the water issue must be implemented as stated in the (1973) agreement. In our return to Kabul, we will seek to work within the framework of that agreement"

Meanwhile, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said on February 10 that he was satisfied with good relations with Iran, adding that the Taliban administration is committed to Iran's water rights.

Mujahid said that there has been a drought in Afghanistan in recent years, so if there is enough water on the Afghan side, Iran will definitely benefit from this water according to the existing agreements.

High-speed internet for all villages by yearend

TEHRAN – All villages across the country will be connected to the national high-speed internet network by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2023).

Some 83 percent of villages with more than 20 residing families are currently provided with high-speed internet, Iraj Roohi, an official with the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, said on March 27.

By the end of the [current Iranian calendar] year, all the villages will be connected to the national high-speed internet network, he added, IRNA reported.

Statistics say 3,500 villages are linked with minimum communication services and 4,000 villages are deprived of any internet-based services.

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

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

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

The internet penetration rate in Iran has exceeded 123 percent, according to the latest statistics of the Communications Regulatory Authority, published in January.

The data showed that the mobile internet penetration rate in the country has reached 109.27 percent, up by over 26 percent compared



to figures reported in 2019.

Moreover, the number of Iranian mobile users reached nearly 135.890 million, according to the CRA which put the mobile phone penetration rate in the country at 161.67 percent.

The figures showed, however, that fixed broadband adoption in Iran had stalled at 14 percent with nearly 11.921 million customers having access to the Internet via those services.

This statistic shows that fixed broadband internet has grown by less than 2 percent compared to last year and mobile internet has experienced a growth of 10 percent. However, it can be said that the speed of mobile internet expansion is 5 times the speed of fixed internet.

The opposite is true in most countries, where fixed internet is growing faster.

Access to telecommunication services in rural areas of the country had improved over the period as the overall number of villages with access to communication services rose to 52,182, around 93 percent of all villages, while 47,837 villages had access to home landline services.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON APRIL 4

New cases	3,519
New deaths	53
Total cases	7,171,165
Total deaths	140,368
New hospitalized patients	450
Patients in critical condition	1,591
Total recovered patients	6,890,768
Diagnostic tests conducted	49,658,476
Doses of vaccine injected	147,235,430



APRIL 5, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Unfortunate is he who cannot gain a few sincere friends during his life and more unfortunate is the one who has gained them and then lost them (through his deeds).

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:13:07 Evening: 19:47 Dawn: 5:18 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:44 (tomorrow)

Abulqasem Ferdowsi: Life

Part 8

In the examples that involve moral advice there is normally a connection between the contents of the preamble and the subject of the story that follows, as in the introductions to the stories of Rustam and Sohrab, of Kavus' expedition to Mazandaran, and of Forud, the son of Siavakhsh.

Such a connection is sometimes also found in introductions containing descriptions of nature. Thereafter begins the story and proceeds quickly. In the important stories of the Shahnameh, events are neither given in so direct a manner as to join the opening of the story to its conclusion in the shortest possible manner, nor with such ramifications that the main story line is lost.

But the attention of the poet to certain details of the incidents described, without the story ever straying from its main path, fills the narrative with action and variety (e.g., see the quarrel between the gatekeeper of Mehrab's castle and Rudaba's maids in the Shahnameh).

Many of the narrative poems who followed Ferdowsi were more interested in the construction of individual lines than of their stories as a whole.

In such narrative poems, the poet himself speaks much more than the characters of his poem, and even where there is dialogue, there is little difference between the attitudes of the various characters of the story, so that the speaker is still the author, who at one moment speaks in the role of one character and the next moment speaks in the role of another.

The result is that in such poems, with the exception of Fakhr ad-Din Gorgani's Vis o Ramin and to some extent the poems of Nezami, the characters in the story are less individuals than types.

In contrast, the dialogues in the Shahnameh are realistic and frequently argumentative, and the poet uses them to good effect as a means of portraying the inner life of his characters.

This is so to such an extent that it is as if many of the characters of the Shahnameh lived among us and we knew them well. Since these characters are developed as distinct, genuine individuals, it is inevitable that sometimes differences between them should lead to conflicts that make each episode extremely dynamic and dramatic.

An instance is the conflict in the story of Rustam and Esfandiari, which has been described as "the deepest psychological struggle in the whole of the Shahnameh, and one of the deepest examples of its kind in the whole of world epic".

Ferdowsi is also very skillful in creation of tragic and dramatic moments, such as the dialogue between Sohrab and his father, Rustam, when Sohrab is on the point of death, Sam's reaction upon receiving Zal's letter, the disobedience of Rustam's loyal horse, Rakhsh, and his risking his life for Rustam (the anger of the natural world when Siavakhsh's blood is spilled), the minstrel Barbad's cutting off his fingers and burning his instruments while mourning for Khosrow II Parviz, and so on.

The final part of Ferdowsi's elegy for his son and the Barbad's elegy on the death of Khosrow II Parviz together with certain of the preambles to various stories and other descriptive passages show that Ferdowsi was also a master as a lyric poet.

Such moments in the Shahnameh distinguish it from other epics of the world; due to their simplicity and brevity, however, they do not harm the epic spirit of the poem, rather they

give it a certain musicality and tenderness; in particular, due to the descriptions of love in the poem, these lyric moments take it beyond the world of primary epic.

Since the greater part of the epic poetry before Ferdowsi's time, and even his own main source, the Shahname-ye Abu Mansuri, have disappeared, it is difficult to judge how far Ferdowsi's artistry is indebted to his predecessors.

From the thousand lines of Daqiqi in the Shahnameh, from certain other scattered lines by poets who had preceded him, and also from the Arabic translation of Ta'alebi, it can be seen that Ferdowsi was not an innovator but rather someone who continued an extant tradition, both in his epic style and in his narrative method.

At the same time, as Nöldeke has said, it can be shown by reference to these same works that Ferdowsi not only succeeded in preserving his poetic independence, but also that Persian epic poetry is indebted to him for its finest flowering.

Ferdowsi: Hajwnameh

Hajwnameh is the title of a verse lampoon of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna attributed to Ferdowsi.

According to Nezami Aruzi, after Ferdowsi presented his Shahnameh, the sultan, at the instigation of the poet's detractors, used the pretext of the poet's alleged Mutazilite and Shia (rafezi) orientation to give him only twenty thousand dirhams as the reward (seleh) for the epic.

Finding the amount humiliating, Ferdowsi distributed it among workers in the public bath and fled to Tabarestan, where he petitioned the Bavandid ruler Shahriar for asylum and wrote his verse lampoon.

Shahriar, who was on good terms with Mahmud, paid the poet a thousand dirhams for each of his lampoon's one hundred verses and destroyed it.

Nezami Aruzi recorded the six lines that survived. No other credible source speaks of Ferdowsi's trip to Ghazna and his escape to Tabarestan; moreover, the Bavandid ruler Shahriar ibn Sharvin, who has been identified with the ruler mentioned in the Chahar Maqala, could not have lived until 1009, which is considered the date Ferdowsi finished his composition.

Thus one cannot rely on the veracity of many of the details of Nezami's account. Introductions to manuscripts of the Shahnameh reproduce that account and embellish it with many accretions. In some of them, the Hajwnameh runs more than one hundred lines.

A great deal of textual evidence and scholarship has fed the controversy surrounding the Hajwnameh. Mahmud Khan Shiani established that many of the lines of the lampoon had either been taken from the Shahnameh itself or are too weak to be consistent with Ferdowsi's style.

He thus concluded that either the Hajwnameh was fabricated after Ferdowsi's time or that if Ferdowsi had indeed penned such a satire, it disappeared and the origin of what we have today is a mystery.

However, there is reason to suspect that Shirani may not have been entirely objective in his judgment, since his article was intended to be a defense of the Ghaznavid ruler rather than a critique of the Hajwnameh.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

"The Fourth Wall" named best at Monstra-Lisbon Animation Festival

TEHRAN – Iranian movie "The Fourth Wall" scored one more honor by winning the best experimental short film award at the Monstra-Lisbon Animation Festival in Portugal, the organizers announced last week.

Directed by Mahbubeh Kalai, the film 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



"The Fourth Wall" directed by Mahbubeh Kalai.

documentary and animated films.

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

In the Monstra short films competition, the Grand Prix went to "Bestia" by Hugo Covarrubias

from Chile.

In its statement, the jury said, "This film displays an extraordinary visual style, an unforgettable character design and a soundtrack in complete symbiosis with the atmosphere. It addresses a powerful political topic in a subtle, visceral and

disturbing manner."

The Grand Prix in the Monstrinha Competition was given to "The Secret of Mr. Nostoc" by French directors Patrice Seiler and Maxime Marion.

"The inventiveness with which he reuses materials makes Mr. Nostoc a deeply altruistic and humanizing character, at the service of a world of fantasy and magic," the jury commented.

In this category, "Stars in the Rain", another Iranian movie by Sara Namju, was awarded an honorable mention.

It follows passengers on a train who see a boy boarding on a rainy day. His presence is like a brief miracle.

Polish director Mariusz Wilczynski's movie "Kill It and Leave This Town" won the Grand Prix in the feature films competition.

This prize "is given to this film for the deep dive into subconsciousness and memories realized in artistic animation and drawings," the jury said.

"Radiograph of a Family", "Barter" honored at Beirut Intl. Women's Film Festival

From Page 1 ► set against 1960s Switzerland and revolutionary-era Iran using family photos, other archival materials, recreated and imagined dialogue, and the geographical dimensions of her childhood home.

"Radiograph of a Family" took fourth place among the top ten favorite films selected by the audience at the 2021 ZagrebDox festival in Croatia.

"Barter" by Iranian filmmakers Ziba Karamali and Emad Arad was screened in the short fiction films competition of the Beirut International Women's Film Festival.

The drama is about Parsa, a 13-year-old boy who is trying to hide a secret from his father. The film depicts a dramatic situation in a family, and how people change when their interests are

at stake.

Iranian director Farnush Samadi was a member of the short documentary and animation jury at the Beirut film festival that opened on Sunday in the Lebanese capital.

"How My Grandmother Became a Chair", a co-production between Germany and Lebanon directed by Nicolas Fattouh, was named best short animation, while the France-Lebanon co-production "Love in Galilee" by Nader Chalhoub and Layla Menhem won the award for best short documentary.

The award for best feature fiction film went to "Soula" by Algerian director Salah Issad, the award for best short fiction film was given to "It Must" by Jumana Issa and Flavio Luca Marano from Switzerland, while "Hors Champs" by Rita Rizk from Lebanon won the audience award.



"Radiograph of a Family" by Firuzeh Khosrovani.

"Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party" published in Persian

TEHRAN – Chinese-American author Ying Chang Compestine's novel "Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party" has been published in Persian.

Translated by Farideh Khorrami, the 2007 book has been published by Peydayesh.

In this novel, nine-year-old Ling is very comfortable in her life; her parents are both dedicated surgeons in the best hospital in Wuhan.

But when Comrade Li, one of Mao's political officers, moves into a room in their apartment, Ling begins to witness the gradual disintegration of her world.

In an atmosphere of increasing mistrust, Ling fears for the safety of her neighbors and, soon, for herself and family. Over the course of four years, Ling manages to grow and blossom, even as she suffers more horrors than many people face in a lifetime.



A combination photo shows author Ying Chang Compestine and the front cover of the Persian translation of her novel "Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party".

Compestine, who is also a television host and chef, has written "Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party" based on her life growing up during the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

The book has been featured on several lists, such as the 2008 American Library Association's (ALA) Best Books for Young Readers, and Publishers Weekly's best children's books for 2007.

Compestine was born and

raised in Wuhan, China. Her family was considered "bourgeois", so the Red Guard took her family's belongings and her father was put in jail twice. Because of the family's difficulties, Compestine was sent to live with her grandparents.

She earned a degree in English and American literature and taught English in China. She also worked as an interpreter for China's Bureau of Seismology.

Compestine graduated with

a master's degree in Sociology from the University of Colorado, Boulder in 1990. She met her husband just before she finished graduate school.

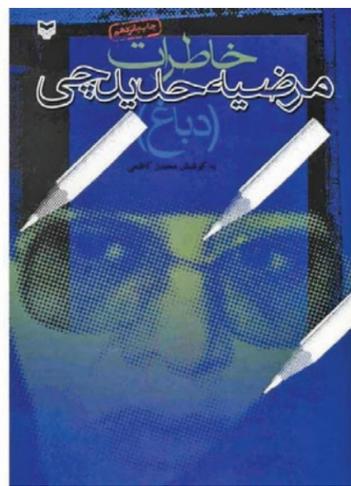
After immigrating to the United States, Compestine taught sociology and writing at universities in both the U.S. and China.

She has hosted several cooking shows on the Chinese Language News Broadcaster for Phoenix North America Chinese Channel, as well as appearing as a guest on the Food Network, Discovery Channel and HGTV.

Compestine began writing after her son was born, creating the cookbook, "Secrets of Fat-Free Chinese Cooking" in 1997. She began writing children's books after her parents died, because she missed China and her family. Since then she has written numerous children's books, and is actively writing today.

Memoirs of the late Marzieh Hadidchi

By Shahed Tuhidi



The book "Living in the midst of a revolution's history" by Muhsem Kazemi contains some of the memories of Marzieh Hadidchi that have been published by Soore Mehr publication.

"Women played an important role in the Islamic revolution, both in achieving and guarding some successes. In the battles against the imperial regime, women had both direct and indirect roles including field operations, printing and putting up posters, attending social-political classes, drawing supporters and members, financial aid, and a variety of other secret activities. Also, their indirect activities included raising intelligent and faithful children, encouraging husbands, brothers, and children to participate in battles, financially supporting their

families, and bringing peace to them. Addressing the role of women in the history of the Islamic Revolution is a cultural necessity, and the best method to do so is to document and publish the memories of women who directly played a role in the development and success of the Islamic Revolution. Mrs. Marzieh Hadidchi was one of the brave women who willingly entered the battlefield and overcame numerous obstacles, and her life was full of memories and tragedies. In February 2009, I met and spoke with Mrs. Hadidchi for the first time after making a few phone calls, with the goal of persuading her to publish her memoirs, which she eventually did, and we managed to create questions for her to answer and helped us in this process," said the author in the introduction.