Straight Truth

WWW.TEHRANTIMES.COM

TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 50,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 43rd year | No. 14193 | Tuesday | April 12, 2022 | Farvardin 23, 1401 | Ramadan 10, 1443

Iran Braces for Renewed Regional Diplomacy

▸ Page **3**

From Inside

- Diplomat: U.S. responsible for delay in Vienna talks **P2**
- Amir Abdollahian says Foreign Ministry seriously pursuing water rights **P2**
- Iran appoints new ambassador to Iraq **P3**
- Iran president meets media executives **P3**
- IRISL to seriously pursue shipbuilding in current year **P4**
- CBI to release list of major defaulters on bank loans next week **P4**
- IOTC accelerating development project in preparation for more oil exports **P4**
- Historical port of Siraf holds potential to become World Heritage, official says **P6**
- Bird paradise of Iran in favorable condition **P7**
- Iran commemorates World Health Day 2022 **P7**
- Islamic Revolution Art Week honors top stage, screen artists of the year **P8**
- John Burton's "The Collection of the Qur'an" published in Persian **P8**

Report

France on edge for two weeks over country's future

Incumbent French President Emmanuel Macron and challenger Marine Le Pen have qualified for what looks likely to be a very tightly fought presidential election runoff on April 24.

With all votes counted, the incumbent president secured 27.6 percent of the vote and his rival won 24.01 percent. Other major candidates admitted defeat, which means the two French heavyweights will face off in a rematch of the 2017 election.

Far-left candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon came in third place with 22% of the vote

However, unlike in 2017, this time around the two are projected to be neck and neck going into the second round.

The French president is elected by a direct vote. There is no electoral college or parliament involved. Any candidate who wins more than 50 percent of the popular vote is elected. If no candidate wins that majority in the first round, as happened in the early hours of Monday morning, the top two candidates go through to a run-off election two weeks later. ▸ Page **5**

Op-ed

Russia and a Gas Standard

By Chris Cook

The key question addressed by the COP26 conference in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021 as with previous COP conferences was how to finance and deliver transition to a sustainable zero carbon economy. So it was fitting that three years after my last visit to Tehran I should meet one of my Iranian friends in Glasgow during a brief academic visit.

From our long shared strategic geo-energy perspective there was much to discuss during our all too brief time together. We focused in particular on the extraordinary geo-economic and geopolitical events since we last met, culminating in Russia's "special operation" in Ukraine and the rigorous financial sanctions in response by the US and Western nations.

Energy Dominance and Dollar Weaponisation

The US has 'weaponised' the dollar by cutting off Russia from the dollar payments system so that not only can Russia no longer access dollar reserves but they are also unable to make dollar payments in respect of $ denominated debt, leading to potential loan defaults and inability to access global investment.

My Iranian friend observed that Russia had been struck in a matter of weeks by a financial sanctions regime developed, refined and applied by the US to Iran over decades. But by way of contrast, I reminded him concerning physical sanctions that the scale of Russia's energy production is such that the sanctions applied to Iran's oil exports are difficult to apply to Russian oil exports and impossible to apply to natural gas without crippling Europe's economy (which my Iranian friend joked might not trouble the US greatly). ▸ Page **4**

Qatar eyeing expansion of maritime ties with Iran's coastal provinces

TEHRAN – Qatar's minister of transport and communications has expressed his country's willingness for the expansion of maritime ties with Iran's southern coastal provinces in a meeting with the Iranian transport and urban development minister.

As reported by Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti met with Rostam Qasemi in Iran's southern Kish Island to discuss using Iran's maritime and port infrastructure as well as tourism capacities to support the holding of the 2022 World Cup.

Speaking in this meeting, Qasemi referred to the signing of 14 memorandums of understanding (MOU) between the two countries during the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Doha, and stressed: "[implementing] the memorandum of understanding on maritime cooperation between the two countries and the facilitation of trade and tourism are among the most important issues currently discussed."

Qasemi also mentioned the implementation of the mentioned memorandum of understanding during the visit of a Qatari delegation to Iran, and noted: "Due to the boom in trade between Iran's Dayyer port and Qatari ports, the issue of equipping this port's customs with X-ray monitoring devices is underway."

Stating that the coastal provinces of Iran can have extensive trade with Qatari ports, the official added that the International Imam Khomeini port in Khuzestan province can be a great source and destination of trading goods with Qatar.

Referring to the proximity of Bushehr province's ports to Qatari ports, Qasemi also underlined the important role of Hormozgan province's commercial ports, including Shahid Rajaei container port, in the expansion of trade exchanges with Qatar.

He further noted that 500,000 Iranian tourists are expected to visit Qatar to watch the FIFA World Cup games. ▸ Page **4**

$7b to be transferred to Iran: report

TEHRAN — A senior regional official will travel to Tehran on Tuesday with the goal of finalizing a mechanism to release $7 billion of the Iranian frozen assets, Tasnim reported.

According to the news agency, one of the main goals of the high-ranking regional official's visit to Tehran is to review the executive mechanism to release Iran's blocked assets within the framework of a recent agreement.

It is speculated that $7 billion will probably be transferred to the account of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) in the Central Bank of Oman.

Based on the agreement reached with some countries that are parties to an agreement with Iran, the necessary framework to lift the blockade on a significant portion of the frozen assets of the country has been determined and agreed upon.

Under this agreed framework, the blocked funds must be collected in Iranian accounts within a specified period of time within a few weeks.

The framework to remove the blockade on foreign assets is similar to the one agreed with the United Kingdom, in which a figure of about 390 million pounds was deposited to the accounts of Iran. ▸ Page **2**

Majority of Noruz travelers opt to holiday in tents, not hotels, expert says

TEHRAN – The majority of Noruz vacationers chose to pitch their tents instead of overnight accommodation in hotels or guesthouses during their two-week new year holidays, the head of the Iranian Travel Agencies Association has said.

It has been reported that Iranians made over 50 million overnight stays during the holidays, but the question is how many were tourists and generated revenue for the destination, ISNA quoted Hormatollah Rafiei as saying on Sunday.

Rather than staying in authorized accommodations, most of these tourists set up their tents, traveled in private cars, and damaged public property, the official lamented.

Those who proclaim that travel in this Noruz shows a magnificent growth over previous years should remember that travel over the past two years has been mostly banned due to the coronavirus outbreak, he added.

Earlier last week, the tourism ministry announced that based on data obtained from all provinces, a total of 50,663,296 overnight stays were recorded across the country during Noruz.

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 report added.

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.

Iran to host neighboring countries to solve environmental problems

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) will host a meeting of officials from neighboring countries in the near future to strengthen and develop regional environmental relations.

Strengthening environmental diplomacy by establishing regional institutions for combating dust, water pollution, and regional and international convergence in countering environmental hazards are the main tasks of the DOE.

President Ebrahim Raisi has ordered the DOE and other relevant agencies to eliminate the dust problem through diplomacy and international forums and in cooperation with neighboring countries.

Accordingly, the DOE organized a meeting of ministers and senior officials of neighboring countries and representatives of related international organizations to discuss the issue.

This meeting will soon be held with the cooperation of the related organization, in an effort to achieve an international document on various environmental problems in the region and their destructive effects on neighboring countries. ▸ Page **7**

Iran's Selen Arami wins Planet Earth Grand Prix at Kao children's painting contest

TEHRAN – Seven-year-old Iranian girl Selen Arami has won the Planet Earth Grand Prix at the 12th edition of the Kao International Environment Painting Contest for Children in Japan.

The contest is organized every year by Kao Corporation, a chemical and cosmetics company headquartered in Tokyo in the hope that paintings and thoughts expressed by children around the world on their sincere consideration in regard to conservation of the environment around them and the earth and its future, will inspire people across the globe, and lead to taking action for changing lifestyles. ▸ Page **8**

Interview

Biden's policy in Yemen is 'disappointing': professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - A professor of political science from the University of South Alabama says that the U.S. administration's performance in Yemen is disappointing despite President Joe Biden's pledges to put more pressure on the Saudi Kingdom which has been pounding Yemen since March 2015.

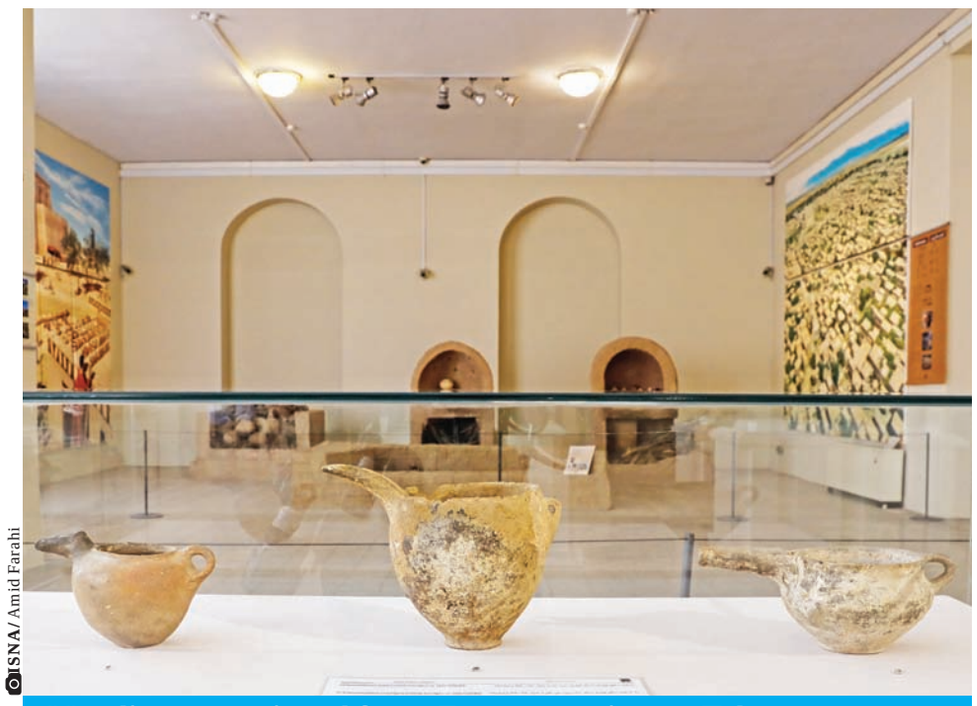
"One word explains Biden's policy in Yemen: Disappointing," Nader Entessar tells the Tehran Times.

"Although candidate Joe Biden had criticized Saudi Arabia's conduct in Yemen's conflict and expressed his desire to lessen Washington's carte blanche political and military support of the Saudi-led war in Yemen, President Biden followed Trump's policies in supporting the Saudi war efforts by enabling the Saudi war machine in the region," Entessar remarked.

A recent high-profile strike on an oil depot in Jeddah by Ansarallah has underlined Saudi Arabia's military defense vulnerability, while America is continuing its military support to the Saudi Kingdom under the pretext of sending defensive aid.

Ansarullah's attacks not only damaged the reputation of Saudi Arabia as a highly safe place for global investment it also questioned the efficiency of U.S.-made air defense system for failing to intercept Yemeni–made drones and missiles.

Following the March 25 attack on a Saudi oil factory by the Ansarallah movement, the Saudi-led coalition targeted positions of the Houthis near Yemen's capital, Sanaa, on March 27. ▸ Page **5**



©ISNA/ Amid Farahi

29 relics repatriated from France on view at Tehran museum

Photo depicts three of the ancient relics recently been returned home from France during an exhibition at the National Museum of Iran, April 11, 2022.

The recovered collection comprises 29 historical objects some of which date 5,000 years, according to Saeid Owhadi, a senior official with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Amir Abdollahian says Foreign Ministry seriously pursuing water rights

TEHRAN — The Foreign Ministry is seriously pursuing issues related to Iran's water rights from Afghanistan, Turkey, and Iraq, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said.

Referring to the formation of a joint committee between the ministries of foreign affairs, interior and energy to professionally follow up on issues related to border rivers and dams in some neighboring countries, Amir Abdollahian said, "During this administration, bilateral meetings with Turkey, Iraq and Afghanistan were held to follow up on the border water rights.

Amir Abdollahian said that the Foreign Ministry has formed a committee that has so far held two or three meetings in a coordination with the energy minister.

Establishment of joint committee for water diplomacy

The foreign minister further stated that a committee has also been formed between the ministries of foreign affairs, interior and energy to particularly examine the issues related to border rivers and dams in some neighboring countries.

He added, "On the other hand, during the time I was in charge of the diplomatic apparatus, we had bilateral talks with the Turkish foreign minister about the dams that have been built on the Aras River and that could have an impact (on the environment). I have also held talks with the Iraqi side."

Iran's top diplomat reminded, "During this period, we have talked with the current interim governing body of Afghanistan. A delegation from Turkey also came to Iran at the end of last year and we set up a joint committee to follow up on the relevant issues, we did the same thing on Afghanistan and we have to follow up to reach a conclusion."

Judiciary releases report to UN on improvement of human rights in Iran

TEHRAN- The Iranian Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights has issued its midterm assessment on human rights status in Iran to the United Nations, reporting "huge progress".

Kazem Gharibabadi, secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, drafted the report. It was sent to the UN Human Rights Council on Saturday in accordance with the Universal Periodic Review, or UPR, a procedure that entails a review of all UN member nations' human rights records.

According to the report, "huge progress" has been made in improving human rights situation in Iran based on Islamic values and the country's constitution.

"In accordance with the existing conditions and with the aim of upholding social justice and establishing people's welfare, Iran has made huge investment in economic, cultural and social fields, and has guaranteed people's rights to equal participation and progress," the report said.

The report delves into Iran's legislation and policies aimed at promoting human rights for various groups, ranging from the disabled to religious minorities, women and children, and refugees, during the Iranian year 1399 (March 2020-March 2021) and the first six months of the year 1400, which ended on March 20, 2022.

According to Gharibabadi, despite limits imposed by the U.S. as a result of "cruel and inhumane" sanctions over the last 43 years, Iran has achieved great progress in improving its human rights status.

"The unilateral coercive measures by the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran over the past four decades have extensively and discriminately violated the basic rights of the Iranian people and left irreparable harms," he wrote.

"Those measures are in clear violation of the UN Charter, international law regulations as well as international human rights laws," Gharibabadi noted.

The report cites some of the U.S. measures including embargo on import of medicine and medical equipment to Iran, highlighting that such policies harmed hospitals during the Covid-19 outbreak.

"To lower the effect of the unilateral U.S. sanctions, which have been tightened in the past two years, Iran has taken into consideration the impacts of the coercive measures in all processes involving the formulation of laws and policy-making, and has implemented plans supporting vulnerable classes of the society, particularly during the Covid pandemic," it stated.

The report underscored that there is always room for additional improvement in the human rights situation.

It also emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the countries that actively implements the UPR, and that "the country's basic policy is to support this balanced and non-selective mechanism."

Nuclear talks to result in long-term economic gains: parliament speaker

TEHRAN- The Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on Sunday that nuclear talks should yield results in assured, long-term, and verifiable economic advantages for the Iranian people.

Qalibaf made the remarks one day after Iran marked National Day of Nuclear technology during which a number of breakthroughs in nuclear industry were unveiled.

The parliament speaker congratulated the people on the national day, particularly Iranian nuclear experts, and stressed the importance of Iran's advances in high-tech radiopharmaceuticals.

"Among the amazing and proud advances of the nuclear industry in recent years we can refer to the production of high-tech radiopharmaceuticals," Ghalibaf added.

"We are pleased that in the proud path of these developments, Majlis by passing the Strategic Action Law, broke the locks on the nuclear industry and removed obstacles to progress and promotion of scientific achievements in this field," the speaker of the Iranian parliament pointed out.

"Fortunately, with the capacity created by the localization of the nuclear industry, the Iranian diplomats soon had a hand in the Vienna Talks," Ghalibaf noted.

He added, "Now we hope that the valuable treasure of advanced nuclear knowledge and technology, along with good negotiations, will reach a good agreement for the economic benefit of the Iranian people."

The speaker emphasized that Iran's nuclear progress represents significant support for the Iranian people's economic benefit, saying, "Majlis as in the past, emphasizes the principle that nuclear negotiations should achieve guaranteed, sustainable, and tangible economic interests of the honorable people of Iran."

April 9 was designated as National Day of Nuclear Technology 16 years ago, when the country's experts completed the nuclear fuel cycle.

On such a day in 2006, Iranian scientists succeeded to complete nuclear fuel cycle at laboratory scale.

With the knowledge of launching a complete chain of enrichment by homemade centrifuges, Iran is now one of a dozen countries in the world capable of processing uranium for peaceful purposes.

Today, Iran has a high degree of understanding in stem cells development, nanotechnology, and radiopharmaceutical synthesis by using nuclear technology.

Diplomat: U.S. responsible for delay in Vienna talks

TEHRAN — In an interview with a Croatian newspaper, Parviz Esmaeili, Iran's ambassador to Zagreb talked about the Vienna talks, regional issues, the Ukraine crisis, and the developments in Yemen.

The ambassador said Iran is seriously pursuing an agreement to revitalize the 2015 nuclear agreement, and has so far shown enough flexibility.

Below is a part of the interview:

The (Vienna) negotiations have been suspended for several weeks. Iranian officials stress that if the United States does not cross Iran's red lines, they are ready to sign a deal at any moment. What are these red lines? Are we really close to a nuclear deal between Iran and the world powers?

Our red line is our national interests and security. The new Iranian government has pursued the negotiations by offering initiatives for a lasting agreement. The European parties and the P4+1 know that we are seriously seeking an agreement and have shown the necessary flexibility, as well as good faith. The American side has received our message well that it is necessary to completely lift the sanctions that were lifted in the JCPOA, as well as all the sanctions that Trump imposed on us after leaving the 2015 nuclear deal.

It seems that we and the P4+1 are very close to the point of agreement. Now the main responsibility for any delay in striking the agreement lies with the U.S. government, which must reach an agreement with one or two important decisions. If Mr. Biden's administration wants to return to the 2015 agreement incompletely, or to exploit some of the sanctions imposed by Trump as a political tool against us, it must also take responsibility for not having an agreement in Vienna.

It is better for Mr. Biden not to repeat Trump's bitter and failed experience of hostility and maximum pressure on Iran. We see the success of the Vienna talks as a victory for diplomacy and a success for political and economic stability in the world. We have all had very difficult negotiations to reach this agreement. It must therefore be ensured that, if agreed, it is not easily violated by either party.

Rumors have been spread by the European Union and the United States that Russia is sabotaging the signing of the agreement. What does Russia really want, what kind of guarantee? Can Russia's demands make an agreement impossible? And if this is true, is Russia trying to prove that Iran cannot replace Russian gas and oil in the global market?

What matters to us is the outcome of the negotiations, not the rumors and quotes. Multilateral negotiations are naturally more complex and difficult. We have witnessed bilateral or multilateral negotiations between the parties of the JCPOA many times. Each of them has submitted comments and requests at different times. Sometimes France, sometimes Russia and sometimes others. This is the nature of multilateral negotiations. But we do not go into the details of their negotiations with each other and focus on the demands, national interests and rights of our country.

An agreement with Iran will be a great help to the political and economic balance around the world. We hope that cross-cutting or minor requests of each party will not have a negative impact on this important goal. Recent rumors are not true. The world energy market is very large and it is practically impossible to eliminate any of the major energy producers, including Russia and Iran.

What is Iran's position on the war in Ukraine? Has Russia's invasion of Ukraine affected Iran-Russia relations?

We are the victims of the longest war of the last century, in which world powers unitedly supported Saddam's aggression against my country. We are well acquainted with the suffering of the war-torn people. Therefore, opposing the war and insisting on resolving disputes through negotiations is one of the principles of Iran's foreign policy.

No dispute should be considered a permit to start a war and kill and injure women and children. From the beginning of the crisis, Iran, in contact with Russian or Ukrainian officials and other influential parties, has called for an immediate ceasefire, full respect for international law and the territorial integrity of both countries, providing full security for civilians, and the settlement of disputes through dialogue. The damage to the people of Ukraine and the destruction of the infrastructure of that country, and of any other nation, is very distressing, and we hope that the negotiations will lead to an end to the conflict and a lasting peace as soon as possible.

But it should be noted that long-term resolution of disputes requires addressing its roots. The situation in the Eastern European region is fragile, and a small mistake may extend the scope of the crisis. Therefore, the parties and other countries affected by the crisis must refrain from any provocative actions that ignores the security and national sovereignty of others.

I basically believe that war is avoidable. Prevention of war in Ukraine was also possible through negotiations, but some countries seem to have preferred war. Mr. Biden traveled to Poland and emphasized ousting Putin rather than being concerned for the Ukrainian people. They are used to making decisions for other nations. It is the right of the people of Russia, Ukraine and any country to choose their leaders.

Unfortunately, the world powers have shown in practice that they are more interested in weapons than in dialogue. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact also collapsed. But the West not only did not limit NATO, but also continuously expanded its geostrategic sphere and missions. There is nothing wrong with some countries having a common defense and security pact, but it is not acceptable for such pacts to become a tool to maintain the hegemony of powers and threaten the security of other countries.

International organizations should also avoid using double standards in dealing with issues related to world peace and security. Unfortunately, the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, have repeatedly ignored this issue, causing it to become discredited and responsible for crises. The people of Palestine and Yemen are a major example of this.

It has been more than 7 years since Saudi Arabia and its supporters invaded Yemen. So far, about 380,000 civilians, including 10,000 Yemeni children have been killed in bombings or from starvation and lack of medicine. Millions have been displaced. But we did not see decisive action from the United Nations. Not only did the Western powers not punish and sanction the Saudi government and the aggressors, but they also provided them with weapons and intelligence.

World peace will not be available until the day we discriminate between human beings and nations. I ask you: Saudi Arabia executed 81 Shias and critics in a single day. What was the reaction of the West and the international community?

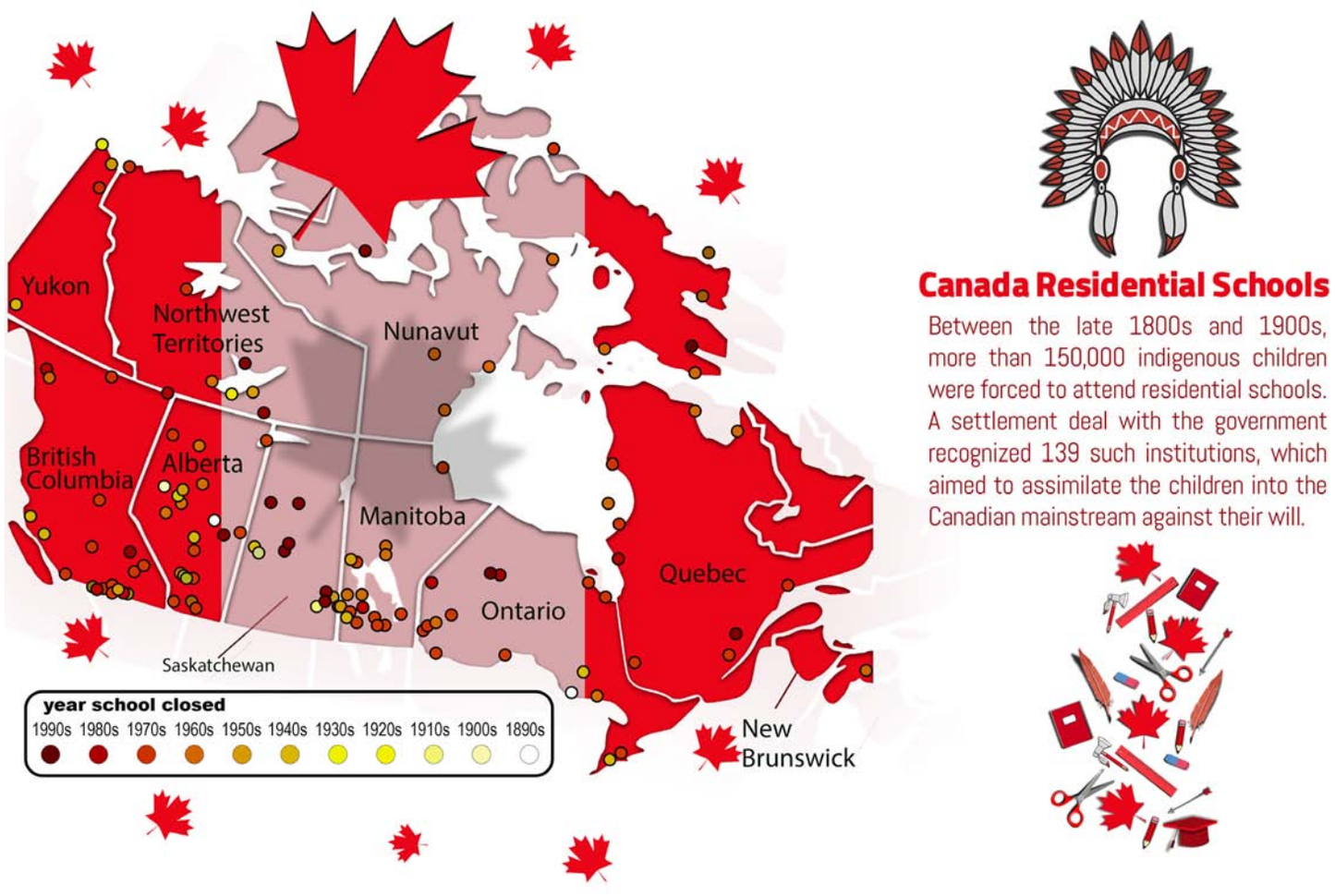
At the same time, our relations with Russia, Ukraine and any other country are solely subject to the fixed principles of our foreign policy and are based on respect and observance of mutual interests.

$7b to be transferred to Iran: report

From page 1 ▸ Earlier, the British government transferred 390 million pounds of its definite dues to the account of the CBI with the Central Bank of Oman.

The $7 billion will be transferred to Iran's accounts, which is a sign of the gradual opening of banking restrictions against Iran in a way that has not been the case even after the JCPOA went into effect.

The JCPOA was ditched by the Trump administration in May 2018 in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231.



Iran braces for renewed regional diplomacy

TEHRAN – A total of three Arab ministers are expected to pay visits to Tehran on Tuesday or the ensuing days at a time when Iran is adopting an open-arms approach toward the West Asia region.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh announced on Monday that Iran is appointing a new ambassador to neighboring Iraq. Mohammad Kazem Al Sadeq, the newly-appointed ambassador, will soon travel to Iraq to begin discharging his duties, the spokesman said, adding that Iran seeks to become a facilitator in the internal affairs of Iraq and talk to all parties with the aim of achieving a smooth and democratic transition of power in the Arab country.

The change of ambassadors comes as Iraq is gearing up for government formation in the wake of the recent parliamentary elections which handed cleric Muqtada Sadr a victory.

It also comes as Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein plans to visit Iran. Khatibzadeh said the visit of the top Iraqi diplomat is likely to take place at the end of this week. The spokesman said no exact date has been set for the visit but press reports suggested it could take place on Tuesday night.

In addition, there are also press reports suggesting that two ministers from Qatar and Oman are expected to arrive in Tehran on Tuesday. Qatar's minister of transport and communications, Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti, is expected to arrive in Tehran with an economic delegation. The Qatari minister met Sunday with Rostam Qasemi, the Iranian transport and urban development minister, in Iran's southern Kish Island to discuss using Iran's maritime and port infrastructure as well as tourism capacities to support the holding of the 2022 World Cup.

More importantly, Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, Oman's foreign minister, is also expected in Tehran on Tuesday. The Qatari-owned online newspaper Al Araby Al Jadeed reported on Monday that the Omani foreign minister will visit Iran on Tuesday accompanied by a political-security delegation. Citing well-informed Iranian sources, the newspaper said the purpose of the visit of Oman's top diplomat is to discuss the completion of the latest procedures of a prisoner swap deal between Tehran and Washington and the release of Iranian assets amounting to $7 billion, in exchange for Iran releasing three citizens with dual citizenship.

The sources added that the Iranian assets will be deposited in the accounts of the Central Bank of Iran abroad, noting that the U.S. administration will also release Iranians arrested at a later time on charges of circumventing the U.S. sanctions on Iran.

The sources revealed that the visit of the Iraqi foreign minister also comes at the heart of the regional moves to exchange messages between Tehran and Washington, and bring the views closer between them to reach a solution to the outstanding issues, and to reach an agreement to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement.

As regards soothing tensions in the region, Iran has long said it wants better relations with the countries of the region, namely Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In this regard, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian spoke over the phone just a few days ago with his Emirati counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

During the conversation, Amir Abdollahian also said good meetings and consultations have been held between the officials of the two countries. He added that the formation of the committees of bilateral ties regarding agreed-up issues and also the exchange of delegations has an effective role in strengthening and expanding relations. The top diplomat of the Islamic Republic of Iran added that there are no limits to the all-out expansion of relations.

President meets media executives

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi held a meeting late on Sunday with Iranian media chiefs in a bid to expound on the agenda of his administration.

Ayatollah Raisi said inspiring hope through media is one of the most important parts of the Jihad of Enlightenment and stated, "In this part, from me as the President to each of the managers and employees of the government and the media, all have a responsibility to provide responsible information to rebuild people's hope and trust, and take steps to thwart the enemy's conspiracy".

Addressing media managers, Raisi said, "I have firmly advised all my colleagues to have regular meetings with elites and even those who oppose the government, and use their ideas."

The president described administering justice as the central approach of his Popular Government, saying, "The administration of justice is what people want, and it is the legal duty of the government, (and) the emphasis of the Supreme Leader," according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

Raisi called on the media to be a bridge between the government and the people by providing honest and fair information. "As the Supreme Leader has emphasized, the revolutionary and pious people

are the most important component of power in the Islamic Republic, and it is very important to maintain their hope and trust," he added.

Pointing out that today is the era of narrative warfare, the president stated, "The media have an effective role in accurate, clear, fast and hopeful narration of various events, and without professional, fair and committed media, it is not possible to confront the enemies in the field of narrative warfare."

Referring to some issues raised at the meeting, including the process of nuclear talks, Raisi said, "We have repeatedly stated that our strategy in the nuclear talks is the strategy announced by the Supreme Leader."

Sometimes some people try to promote this idea nuclear negotiations are the only issue in the country's foreign policy, but this is incorrect in our opinion. From the government's point of view, nuclear negotiations are one of the country's foreign policy issues, not all foreign policy issues," he said.

Ayatollah Raisi stated, "The secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council is established by the government as a source of information and communication with the media and elites in the area of nuclear negotiations, and the media regularly hold meetings with relevant officials in the secretariat to be informed of the process of the negotiations."

Referring to the government's efforts to increase investment in the country, Raisi said, "The government has invited large companies... and banks to enter the field of investment in infrastructure and large projects based on a specific plan."

The president stated that the government's efforts to attract foreign investment have also begun, stating, "Work has begun in this area, but the process must reach a certain stage so that the details can be announced."

Ayatollah Raisi also said, "We all have a responsibility to provide responsible information to rebuild people's hope and trust, and take steps to thwart the enemy's conspiracy."

FM sends messages to foreign counterparts

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian sent replies and messages to a number of foreign counterparts.

The Iranian foreign minister, in a message to Prak Sokhonn, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, extended heartfelt congratulations to him and the government and nation of Cambodia on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Cambodia.

The message of Amir Abollahian reads, "I deem this occasion an opportunity to further expand the two countries' relations in all areas."

Iranian foreign minister added, "As two Asian countries, Iran and Cambodia have many commonalities in numerous fields; and over the last three decades, historical and cultural ties and the two nations' shared interests have guaranteed the continuation of relations and mutual understanding."

He noted, "By relying on shared political beliefs, we are witnessing the two countries' constructive convergence and cooperation in international institutions and in combating the approach of unilateralism in line with strengthening the principles mentioned in the United Nations Charter and global peace. There are of course more key opportunities for cooperation between the two countries in order to maintain and strengthen global peace by enhancing bilateral ties and through cooperation in international assemblies."

In response to the congratulatory message of Colombian Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs Marta Lucía Ramírez on the occasion of the Islamic Republic Day in Iran, Amir Abdollahian said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has, over the recent years, made significant progress in different scientific and technological fields including in nanotechnology, new technologies and, following the Covid-19 pandemic, production and export of Coronavirus vaccines," according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Amir Abdollahian added, "I appreciate your kind message and at the same time declare the Islamic Republic of Iran's readiness to send domestically made Covid vaccines to Colombia and also put expansion of political, economic, trade and technological ties on its agenda."

Also, Amir Abdollahian has congratulated Richard Randriamandrato on his appointment as Madagascar's foreign minister.

"Within the framework of the long-lasting relations between the two countries, there is always the hope to see the expansion of ties between the two countries in all spheres, and definitely, during your tenure at the helm of Madagascar's foreign ministry, this hope is felt more than ever," Amir Abdollahian said in his message.

He added, "I am willing to reiterate the will and interest of the new government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to strengthen and reinforce its relations with your country in the priority fields and in line with the interests of both countries, especially in the current sensitive situation in the international relations."

Also, Amir Abdollahian has offered his heartfelt congratulation on the appointment of Georgia's new Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili.

"With reliance on the historical bonds between the two nations and in the light of the will and determination of the top leaders of two countries, I am sure, during your tenure in office, with reciprocal efforts, we will witness the growth and expansion of ties between the two countries across all spheres, especially in the economic and trade fields," the Iranian foreign

minister said in his message.

He pointed out, "Also underlining the principal policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran on supporting the territorial integrity of countries and helping establish regional peace, stability and security, I would like to highlight the significance of continued consultations between the two countries on issues of mutual interest."

In addition, Amir Abdollahian has made remarks in response to the message of congratulation by Paraguayan Foreign Minister Euclides Acevedo on the Islamic Republic Day

"I am willing to express my gratitude for the message of congratulation on the occasion of the Day of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I hope we would witness further expansion and deepening of ties between the two nations with opening of new horizons in the bilateral cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Paraguay," he said.

Tehran appoints new ambassador to Baghdad

TEHRAN – Iran has appointed a new ambassador to Iraq who will head to Baghdad soon to begin discharging his duties.

The appointment was announced by Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Monday.

Speaking at a weekly press conference, Khatibzadeh said Mohammad Kazem Al Sadeq will soon replace Iraj Masjedi as Iran's top diplomat in Iraq.

According to Khatibzadeh, Al Sadeq will soon head to Iraq.

The spokesman also said that Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein is likely to visit Iran at the end of the current week.

Khatibzadeh added, "We strive to play the role of facilitator in Iraq."

SPORTS

Veselin Vujovic named Iran handball coach

TEHRAN – Montenegrin coach Veselin Vujovic has been named as new head coach of Iran national handball team.

The 61-year-old coach will head Iran national team in the 2022 Asian Games, Islamic Solidarity Games and 2023 IHF World Handball Championship.

"I attended Iranian league competition in Isfahan and I have to say the country has good infrastructure facilities. I know Iran handball. Since I arrived in Iran, I found out how hospitable the people are. We will start the training very soon," he said.

As a player, Vujovic competed at the 1984 and 1988 Summer Olympics for the Yugoslavia national team.

Vujovic was named as the best athlete of Yugoslavia in 1986.

He was first player to receive title of the IHF World Player of the Year.

In 1984 he was a member of the Yugoslav national team which won the gold medal at the Olympics. He played all six matches and scored 28 goals.

Four years later he was part of the Yugoslav team which won the bronze medal. He played all six matches again and scored 29 goals.

FFIRI extraordinary assembly postponed

TEHRAN - Extraordinary assembly of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) will be held on May 31.

The federation had previously announced that the assembly will be held on May 10.

Hassan Kamranifar, FFIRI secretary general, said that the board of directors have confirmed the postponement of the assembly.

"In the previous meeting of the board of directors, it was approved that the assembly to be held on May 31. According to the statute of the football federation, we have to announce the time of the gathering 70 days before the assembly," Kamranifar said.

Shahaboddin Azizi Khadem was removed from the presidency of IRIFF in February, a year later he had been appointed as president.

Foolad coach Nekounam laments lack of cutting edge

TEHRAN - Foolad coach Javad Nekounam lamented his side's lack of cutting edge as they drew 1-1 with Shabab Al Ahli of the UAE in Group C of the 2022 AFC Champions League.

The draw leaves the Iranian team in third place with two points out of two matches.

"We created opportunities successfully but six of our players were up on the field trying to score the second goal. That was a lack of experience and we accept the draw. You cannot make a mistake against a team like Shabab, they will punish you," said Nekounam.

After two draws from the opening two matches, the former Iran player hopes his team will turn the corner in the hotly contested group where it trails the leaders Al Gharafa by two points.

"We put in all our efforts to win this game but there are times when we were unlucky. The team created many opportunities but we didn't score. There is still a long way to go in the competition so hopefully our players will have more experience in the next matches," said Nekounam.

Iran defeat Turkmenistan in 2022 AFC Futsal Asian Cup qualification

TEHRAN – Iran beat Turkmenistan 3-0 in the 2022 AFC Futsal Asian Cup qualification on Monday.

Iran, who started the campaign with a 17-0 win over the Maldives, will play Kyrgyzstan in Group A on Tuesday.

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 qualifiers take place between April 1 to 15 in centralized venues. In the West Zone, the United Arab Emirates will be a host. Top two teams from each group and the winner of the play-off match between the third placed teams will qualify.

In the Central and South Zone, the matches will be played in the Kyrgyz Republic where top two teams from each group advance to the main tournament. The host for the East Zone will be announced soon. The group winners and the play-off winner between the runners-up will qualify for the tournament.

Navidkia disappointed by Sepahan loss against Al Duhail

TEHRAN – Sepahan coach Moharram Navidkia is disappointed after his side squandered a number of chances against Al-Duhail Sunday night.

Sepahan lost to Al Duhail 1-0 in Group D of the 2022 AFC Champions League.

"The result was disappointing for us, especially as we played a good first half," said Navidkia.

"In my opinion, Al-Duhail also performed very well, especially in the second half. I think that in this type of tournament it is necessary to take advantage of opportunities in the correct way in order to achieve a positive result.

"We congratulate them on the victory."

With all four teams level on three points after two games, Al-Duhail take on Pakhtakor next while Sepahan face Al-Taawoun.

Persepolis knocked out of Iran's Hazfi Cup

TEHRAN – Yayha Golmohammadi's Persepolis football team were knocked out of Iran's Hazfi Cup Sunday night.

The Reds lost to Aluminum 3-2 in quarterfinals in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Ehsan Pahlavan gave the hosts the lead just nine minutes into the match but Mohammadreza Azadi canceled out the goal in the 20th minute.

Mehdi Torabi doubled Persepolis' lead in the first half injury time from the penalty spot.

With eight minutes into the second half, Mohammad Alinejhad equalized the match with a long-range shot and Azadi completed his brace in the 65th minute.

Azadi could have scored Aluminum's fourth goal in the 71st minute but Persepolis goalkeeper Ahmad Gohari saved his penalty.

Aluminum will play Khalij Fars Mahshahr in the semifinals round.

Qatar eyeing expansion of maritime ties with Iran's coastal provinces

From page 1 "Given the Qatari government's interest in joint cooperation between Tehran and Doha to support the World Cup 2022 and the use of Iran's tourism infrastructure, we hope that with the signing of cooperation agreements between the two sides executive issues will be pursued quickly," the Iranian minister said.

The Qatari minister for his part stressed that Iran is one of the most important and influential countries in the region, saying: "The World Cup 2022 is not exclusive to Qatar and we intended to use the capacities of all countries in the region in this regard."

CBI to release list of major defaulters on bank loans next week

TEHRAN- Central Bank of Iran will release the list of major defaulters on bank loans in the next Iranian calendar week (starts on Saturday April 16).

CBI Public Relations Director Mostafa Qamari-Vafa announced in a tweet: "The central bank, within the framework of the comprehensive plan to reform the banking network and based on financial discipline and credit health of banks, according to paragraph D of Note 16 of Budget Law of 1401 (current Iranian calendar year) will publish the names of major defaulters on bank loans from next week."

According to the CBI, the table related to the large bank debtors' information will be completed in the middle of the next Iranian calendar month (April 20-May 20) after receiving the relevant information from the banks.

As announced on Monday by Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi, 11 state-owned banks have already published their list of major defaulters.

Pointing out that this level of transparency has been unprecedented in the country's banking history, the minister said: "The names of companies and real entities who were among the big deadbeats on bank loans have been revealed, and we hope that this will help the banks collect the debts and provide the ground for more creditworthy people, whether producers or ordinary people, to have access to the banking resources."

TEDPIX up 5,400 points on Monday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 5,477 points to 1.479 million on Monday.

As reported, over 11.387 billion securities worth 53.819 trillion rials (about $193.59 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 4,764 points, and the second market's index climbed 8,704 points.

TEDPIX rose 31,637 points (2.2 percent) to 1.463 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

IRISL to seriously pursue shipbuilding in current year

TEHRAN – Managing Director of Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) Mohammadreza Modares-Khiabani has underlined the significance of self-sufficiency in the development of the country's maritime fleet and said IRISL is going to seriously pursue building new vessels in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

Speaking in a meeting with IRISL's senior managers, Modares-Khiabani underlined supporting the construction of vessels and container ships by domestic manufacturers as one of the main strategies that the IRISL is going to pursue in the current year, Mehr News Agency reported on Monday.

"IRISL has begun a serious movement in the field of vessel construction using domestic capabilities, which will continue in the current year with more strength and vigor," he said.

Emphasizing the need for providing opportunities for growth and prosperity during the sanctions and international crisis, the official said: "Although sanctions have created difficult conditions for various sectors of the Iranian economy the country has been able to overcome the pressures by relying on domestic capabilities."

Modares-Khiabani further underlined the importance of human resources and asset management by the IRISL, saying: "Last year, historical records were achieved by the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines; however, the continuation of this trend must be accompanied by great strides in the development of the fleet so that new records can be set in this area as well."

"Special attention to the north-south corridor and the strong presence of the shipping fleet of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the port of Chabahar is also among the IRISL's main strategies in the current year," he added.

The IRISL head also mentioned his organization's special efforts for repairing the vessels of the IRISL fleet inside the country and said: "There is a serious approach to conduct the periodic repairs of ships inside the country and so far, effective steps have been taken in this area."

"At the same time, there is a serious emphasis on supplying all the items and parts needed by the vessels by domestic manufacturers," the official added.

IOTC accelerating development project in preparation for more oil exports

TEHRAN – The managing Director of Iranian Oil Terminals Company (IOTC) has said his company is accelerating its currently underway development projects in the country's oil terminals in order to be fully prepared for boosting oil and gas condensate exports, Shana reported on Monday.

"We are fully prepared to export crude oil and gas condensate up to the limit of oil production capacity in line with the macro policies of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)," Abbas Asadrouz said on the sidelines of a visit to Kharg Oil Terminal facilities and development projects.

Asadrouz stressed the importance of the Kharg Oil Terminal as a support terminal in the process of storing and exporting crude oil and gas condensate and said: "This terminal has all the necessary infrastructure including

berths, loading arms, flow pipelines, storage tanks, and systems."

Emphasizing that all activities of Iran Oil Terminals Company are pursued in line with the oil industry's long-term visions, the official stated: "Our general goals include increasing quality and sustainable productivity, increasing creativity and innovation, increasing the quality of life of employees while specific goals include increasing the stability, agility and operational resilience of the company, and continuous improvement of our performance and operational excellence."

Kharg Island is a continental island in the Persian Gulf south of Iran. The island is located 25 km (16 mi) off the coast of Iran and 483 km (300 mi) northwest of the Strait of Hormuz. Administered by the adjacent coastal Bushehr Province, Kharg Island provides a seaport for the export of oil and extends Iranian territorial sea claims into the Persian Gulf oil fields.

Due to its close distance to oilfield regions, its good offshore position, and suitable depth for gigantic oil vessel berthing, Kharg Island oil terminal has been recognized as one of the country's most suitable places for crude oil export and loading sites.

Commodities worth over $700m traded at IME in a week

TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 1.949 million tons of commodities worth more than $734 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), showing 91 percent and 25 percent growth in value and volume of trades, respectively, as compared to its preceding week.

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1.672 million tons of commodities valued at almost $525 million.

Commodities sold on this floor included 911,902 tons of cement, 477,382 tons of steel, 180,000 tons of iron ore, 9,200 tons of sponge iron, 7,260 tons of copper, 2,975 tons of aluminum, 720 tons of zinc, 200 tons of lead, 150 tons of molybdenum concentrate and 14 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the IME saw trade 269,115 tons of commodities on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor valued at more than $201 million.

The exchange customers purchased on this floor 98,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 76,504 tons of polymeric products, 38,430 tons of bitumen, 32,624 tons of chemicals, 19,990 tons of lube cut, 2,984 tons of base oil, 715 tons of sulfur, 200 tons of slops wax and 100 tons of argon.

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 8,449 tons of commodities traded on it.

As previously reported, the value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange rose 102 percent, and the volume of trades at the exchange increased 128 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), which was the highest level of growth in the history of the exchange since its establishment.

Statistical data show that in the past year, in addition to new records in the volume and value of trades of different products, 10 major records in total value and physical market trades were registered. In a way that besides the total value of trades, the volume and value of physical market trades, the volume and value of industrial products and petrochemicals trades, the value of oil products trades, and the volume and value of side market trades all hit records.

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).

Russia and a Gas Standard

From page 1 I pointed out that the US "Energy Dominance" strategy which commenced on 1st July 2017 when after 16 years Saudi Arabia abandoned the North Sea Brent crude oil 'BWAVE' benchmark is now approaching fruition.

In my analysis, the primary strategic US objective is to integrate the US WTI Cushing and North Sea Brent benchmark crudes into the recently launched WTI Midland (i.e. shale oil) benchmark crude oil deliverable into the Atlantic Gulf Coast (AGC) with a planned link to physical North Sea deliveries.

But while the WTI Midland AGC contract aims to enable US dominance of global crude oil pricing, it also enables US to fund development of US shale oil in a new way. The proposed long term prepay funding structure uses a production sharing "capital partnership" between well operators and major banks as well owners. Development finance, on the other hand, may be sourced from investment via tripartite prepay contracts similar to those used by Enron until 2001 to defraud investors and lenders.

If I am correct in my analysis, the planned outcome this year is that the US dollar and the currency of WTI Midland AGC physical buyers (initially China) will be pegged to US shale oil reserves. In this way, the common aim of the two greatest global oil consumer nations is to stabilise the financialised and dysfunctional global oil benchmark prices within an agreed affordable range.

It will be seen that the outcome is essentially for US and China to peg their currencies to an "Oil Standard" based on US shale oil reserves. While in principle China could be comfortable with a global oil market reset to a US Dollar Oil Standard, in practice, after US weaponised the dollar against Russia, China would have second thoughts in respect of keeping US dollar assets.

My Iranian friend summarised the issue by pointing out that the clue to the 2017 US Energy Dominance energy strategy is that it means exactly what the name implies: simply put, Energy and Dollar Dominance are two sides of the same coin.

But for China, Iran and most other nations the overarching geopolitical aim is the opposite: it is freedom from domination by the US or any other nation state – the principle of Non-Dominance.

Transition Through Gas

The Transition Through Gas (TTG) energy strategy aims to transform high carbon economies fuelled by coal and crude oil to a sustainable economy via natural gas as a relatively low carbon "bridge fuel".

Crude oil is found in many different grades: heavy/light; sweet (low sulphur) and sour (high sulphur) and it is typically measured in barrels or tonnes. But natural gas (methane/CH4) once processed, is the same everywhere and is measured by volume and thermal energy content (Million British Thermal Unit - MMBTU).

My Iranian friend and I agreed that by far the most important geopolitical event was Russia's decision to mandate payment in "Rubles" on "unfriendly" buyers of Russian natural gas. I observed that Russia's imposition of mandatory payment for natural gas in Rubles effectively backed the Ruble with Russia's immense gas reserves thereby fixing the Ruble to a "Gas Standard" denominated in MMBTU of thermal energy.

I remarked that the dramatically successful outcome of monetising Russian gas flows was that the Gas Standard dramatically reversed the collapse of Russia's currency from 80 Rubles/Dollar to 120 Rubles/Dollar caused by US & EU conventional financial sanctions.

My Iranian friend reminded me that the 'unitisation' of global flows of natural gas was first proposed in Tehran in October 2008. The proposed global gas clearing union agreement enabled producers (GECF members) to issue, mutually assure acceptance, clear and settle prepaid gas credits ("Petros") to consumer nations such as China, EU and Japan.

Such a clearing union agreement would not use a centralised clearing house legal design but would rather be a mutual risk and cost sharing agreement – Nondominium – which provides that no single stakeholder: whether gas producer, gas consumer, gas prepay investor or gas market service provider, can dominate any other stakeholder.

Clearly, no single nation state, no matter how great their gas reserves, will be trusted to issue a global reserve currency. My Iranian friend pointed out that since Russia, Iran and Qatar between them hold two thirds of global gas reserves then for political reasons no proposal for such a gas reserve currency would be generally acceptable from any or all of them.

I agreed that such a proposal could only be originated by a gas producer perceived both as neutral and market-friendly. By way of example, I reminded my Iranian friend of the 2008 oil market proposal – the Wade Formula. My friend agreed that this intelligent surplus sharing proposal by the former President of Senegal never received the consideration it deserved from greedy oil producers. Having heard Trinidad and Tobago's energy minister speak at a recent GECF online event it struck me that this island nation would be well-placed to propose the proposed new financial gas market architecture.

As we parted company, my Iranian friend mused that it would be fitting that instead of pricing US shale oil in dollars and indexing gas to oil, a smart market approach would see Crude Oil, US dollars, Euros, Yuan all priced in the thermal energy of the universal commodity of natural gas.

I agreed that in this way, Transition Through Gas (TTG) to a sustainable economy may be financed and funded. But the roadmap to such an economy through smart markets in energy services is another story.

Chris Cook is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategy, Resilience and Security, University College London

Manufacturing of refrigerators, freezers rises 7.3% in 11 months yr/yr

TEHRAN- The manufacturing of refrigerators and freezers in Iran rose 7.3 percent in the 11-month period from March 21, 2021 to February 19, 2022, as compared to the same period of time in the preceding year, according to the data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The ministry's data show that 2,044,700 million sets of refrigerators and freezers have been manufactured in the country during the 11-month period.

The manufacturing of home appliances in Iran increased 7.6 percent in the said 11 months, as 5,194,400 sets of the products were manufactured.

Back in April 2021, Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki had said that considering the Iranian home appliance industry's infrastructure and capacities, the country will be able to become an exporter of such products in the near future because most of the raw materials needed by the mentioned sector are produced domestically.

Stating that the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry will definitely support domestic manufacturers and national brands, the official added: "Today we have the necessary manpower, knowledge, and infrastructure in the field, so there is no reason to look for foreign sources to meet the country's demands."

Biden's policy in Yemen is 'disappointing': professor

From page 1 ▸ Yet the image that will be remembered is the dramatic black plume rising from the burning oil factory close to the Formula 1 racetrack in Jeddah — a powerful symbol exposing the vulnerability of Saudi Arabia, home to 35 million people.

Following is the text of the interview with Nader Entessar about the repercussions of the Yemeni attack on Aramco:

How do you see Ansarullah's recent attacks on Aramco? Nobody expected the attack on Aramco be repeated after the Saudis updated their air defenses. How could Ansarallah dare to target Aramco again?

The war in Yemen is entering its eighth year. So, it is natural for the Houthis/Ansarallah to have learned a number of valuable lessons from this conflict. They have experimented with different tactics and have learned how to penetrate Saudi Arabia's air defenses. Recent wars in the Middle East (West Asia) have demonstrated that the most sophisticated air defense systems can be penetrated if proper skills and tactics are deployed.

Ansarullah's missiles and drones are locally-made while Saudi air defenses are American-made which shows the Saudis' dependence on the United States. What are the messages of the Yemenis' success in penetrating the American Patriot missile defense system?

As I alluded to in my previous answer, there is really no completely impenetrable missile defense system, and that includes the vaunted Patriot missile defense. One important message of the Yemenis' periodic deep penetration of the Saudi air space is that the Saudi regime cannot pretend to possess all the tools to prevent retaliatory attacks by a militarily weaker side while continuing its onslaught on its southern neighbor.

Why did the Saudis decide to remove Abdo Rabeh Mansour? Is that a message to facilitate the negotiations with Ansallah?

A: Abdo Rabeh Mansour was already a politically spent figure, and the Saudi regime had already gotten as much mileage from him as had been possible. By forcing Mansour to renounce his claim to Yemen's leadership, Riyadh wanted to convey to the other side that it is, at least in theory, ready to entertain a negotiated exit from its Yemen quagmire and that Abdo Rabeh Mansour will no longer be an obstacle to a possible negotiated peace agreement.

Do you believe that the negotiations about the war in Yemen will reach a result while Saudi Arabia is actually a party to the war and tries to exclude Ansarallah from Yemen's political scene?

A: For a negotiated settlement of the war in Yemen, Saudi Arabia must play the role of an honest broker among the contending parties in Yemen's conflict, including the all-important Houthis/Ansarallah. Given the Saudi regime's immoral and illegal conduct in perpetuating the carnage in Yemen, I remain doubtful about Riyadh's willingness to change course when it comes to its destructive involvement in Yemen's conflict.

How do you evaluate Biden's policy in Yemen? He had pledged to put more pressure on Saudi Arabia to stop the war.

One word explains Biden's policy in Yemen: Disappointing. Although candidate Joe Biden had criticized Saudi Arabia's conduct in Yemen's conflict and expressed his desire to lessen Washington's carte blanche political and military support of the Saudi-led war in Yemen, President Biden followed Trump's policies in supporting the Saudi war efforts by enabling the Saudi war machine in the region.

> "Abdo Rabeh Mansour was already a politically spent figure, and the Saudi regime had already gotten as much mileage from him as had been possible."

France on edge for two weeks over country's future

From page 1 ▸ Macron, who has served a five-year term in office, is a pro-European economic liberal and will now be battling for a rare second term in office against the far-right nationalist Le Pen.

It's been two decades now since the last time a French president won a second term.

A victory for Le Pen in the second round will strike a similar jolt to the French establishment as Britain's Brexit vote did to depart the European Union or Donald Trump's 2017 victory to the White House.

Her radical, far-right anti-immigration platform would involve banning the Muslim headscarf from all public places, including the street, calling it a "uniform of totalitarian ideology".

She said: "People will be given a fine in the same way that it is illegal to not wear your seatbelt. It seems to me that the police are very much able to enforce this measure."

France would move away from being a driving force for European integration to being led by a euro-sceptic who is also suspicious of the NATO military alliance.

While Le Pen has ditched past ambitions for a "Frexit" or to pull France out of the euro zone's single currency, she envisages the bloc as a mere alliance of sovereign states.

IFOP pollsters predicted a very tight runoff, with 51% for Macron and 49% for Le Pen. The gap is so tight that victory either way is within the margin of error.

Other estimates by pollsters OpinionWay, Elabe, and Ipsos show Macron and Le Pen almost neck and neck. Those estimates, published as voting ended, are normally quite reliable in France.

Macron told his supporters "make no mistake: nothing is decided, and the battle we will wage in the next 15 days will be decisive for France and Europe," he told supporters at his campaign headquarters.

The incumbent leader also urged all voters to rally behind him on April 24th to prevent the far-right from ruling the European Union's second-largest economy.

Le Pen, who in recent weeks went up in the polls thanks to a campaign focused on matters related to the cost of living says she was the one to protect the weak and unite a nation tired of its elite.

"what will be at stake on April 24 is a choice of society, a choice of civilization," she told supporters "I will bring order back to France."

Just a month ago, Macron was on course to comfortably ensure a second term, riding high in polls thanks to strong economic growth and a split opposition.

However, he paid the price with his late entry into the campaign during which he avoided walkabouts in provincial regions in favor of a single large rally outside Paris.

Macron's policies of making people work longer also proved unpopular, enabling Le Pen to narrow the gap in opinion polls.

Le Pen, by contrast, for months has been touring towns and villages across the country, focusing on cost-of-living issues that trouble millions at the moment and tapping into anger towards the political elite. She also says her platform would protect the weak and make France independent.

Who will hold the Elysee Palace next will depend on how those who backed Macron and Le Pen's rivals cast their ballots.

The biggest shock of the night was the very low score of Valerie Pecresse, the candidate for former President Nicolas Sarkozy's traditional right-wing party Les Republicans.

She was projected to take less than five percent, a poor showing that is likely to lead to the implosion of her party in favor of its hardliners. This could leave France in a unique position in Europe of not having a traditional mainstream right.

Pecresse warned of "disastrous consequences" if Macron did not win the runoff.

As well as Pecresse, the Socialists' Anne Hidalgo, the Greens' Yannick Jadot, and the Communists' Fabien Roussel announced they would be backing Macron to block the far-right.

"So that France does not fall into hatred of all against all, I solemnly call on you to vote on April 24 against the far-right of Marine Le Pen," said Hidalgo.

But they all also had very harsh words for Macron and some of the very unpopular policies of his first mandate as well as an abrasive style that has put off many voters.

"Emmanuel Macron played with fire," Pecresse told supporters.

But another far-right candidate Eric Zemmour will call on his supporters to back Le Pen. He acknowledged disagreements with Le Pen but said Macron was a worse choice.

However, surveys suggest that the so-called "republican front" has crumbled, with many left-wing voters saying they are loathed to endorse a leader they view as arrogant and a "president of the rich."

Melenchon who took the third spot called on his supporters not to vote for Le Pen in the second round but stopped short of telling supporters they should back Macron.

"We know who we will never vote for... Not a single vote must go to Mrs. Le Pen," Melenchon said at his party headquarters in Paris.

"You are in a capacity to lead this battle, and the next, and the next, as many as there could be," Melenchon said.

Macron has voiced strong concern over the rise of the far-right telling French voters to avoid the country moving in that direction.

But analysts have accused the French President of the rise of the far-right, saying his heavy-handed crackdown on the Yellow Vest protests as well as his own anti-Muslim rhetoric has tapped into the sentiments of far-right voters.

Other experts also agreed to describe Macron himself as being on the right to try and win right-wing voters and only has himself to blame for the dramatic projection increase in votes towards Le Pen.

Many are expecting fierce campaigning between the two for the future of the country's political landscape with both candidates certain to try and tactically grab the votes of other parties who lost out.

Unlike five years ago, when Macron celebrated after the first round knowing the far right would never stand a chance, he has much work to do this time around amid a low voter turnout reflecting the frustration of the French and the deep polarization in the country.

Macron faces the heavy task to be the first French president to win a second term in 20 years and it really does feel like France is in uncharted territory.

UN Human Rights Council and dual standards

TEHRAN – At a special session on the Ukraine war, the UN General Assembly suspended Russia's membership in the UN Human Rights Council at the request of the United States and its allies.

The Human Rights Council is a UN body and a subsidiary of the General Assembly, which was established on March 15, 2006, after the dissolution of the UN Commission on Human Rights. One of the council's tasks is to strive to promote respect for human rights around the world. The following points should be considered in this regard:

1. After its establishment, the Human Rights Council experienced a political alignment in its structure, which affected its performance. For this reason, many countries consider the performance of this council to be tainted by political motives and with double standards. During the suspension of Russia's membership, the council did not even follow its professional principles based on the investigation into the Bucha incident and only used Western guidelines for judging and deciding.

2. The resolution adopted by the General Assembly states that this Assembly may suspend the membership of a member of the Human Rights Council who has committed gross and systematic acts in violation of human rights. Of course, no independent international investigation has been conducted to clarify the unknown dimensions of the Bucha incident and that Russia has committed gross and systematic acts of human rights violations. Only Ukraine and Western countries have blamed Moscow for the Bucha incident, An issue that the Russians called staging and denied. Unproven claims by the West that have suspended Russia's membership are legally "alleged violations" that take longer to prove. The council could have sent a fact-finding mission to Ukraine, regardless of the atmosphere in the West and their media, and submitted its report to the UN General Assembly for a decision without haste and independently.

3. The countries proposing to suspend Russia's membership, including the United States and NATO members, have been among the human rights violators in recent years and have always enjoyed a safe margin in the UN Human Rights Council. The United States and NATO have committed crimes in Afghanistan for nearly twenty years, repeatedly committing blatant human rights abuses in Bagram and Kabul prisons and war crimes in this land, worse than the Russians in Ukraine. The UN human rights body has never taken action against the United States or NATO. For many years, the United Nations has turned a blind eye to the crimes of the Zionist regime, which is a clear example of war crimes and genocide. It was for the massacre of the Yemeni people too. Numerous other reasons and evidences indicate the existence of dual criteria for judging the human rights situation in the world.

4. The suspension of Russia's membership in the Human Rights Council could have several consequences on international relations. Naturally, the expulsion or suspension of countries from the Human Rights Council is a reason to gradually reduce the sense of responsibility of these countries for the protection of human rights, and this is contrary to the duties of the UN Human Rights Council. Naturally, when countries are members of this council, they try to accept the council's rules and regulations for the protection of human rights, but in case of expulsion or suspension, they will no longer have a commitment in this regard and the issue of human rights will become a neutral and unreliable issue at the international level. On the other hand, the suspension of the membership of countries such as Russia, intensifies the differences in the UN, which reduces the consensus of the members at critical moments for the defense of human rights. Although Russia has stated that despite the suspension of membership, it is fulfilling its commitments to protect human rights in the world, despite the current differences, its implementation has been met with skepticism.

5. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in adhering to its principles while supporting the territorial integrity of independent countries, opposes war, crime and human rights violations, and at the same time does not allow the domination of major powers over world institutions and accepts the interference of political motives in international decisions. Accordingly, the text of the resolution of the General Assembly of the Human Rights Council was an example of the abuse of the UN human rights mechanism for political purposes, and in a correct and expert action, voted against the suspension of Russia's membership in the Council. Explaining its decision, the Islamic Republic of Iran also stressed the need for a peaceful settlement of disputes based on international law and full respect for all parties to the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Overall, the UN General Assembly vote on Russia's suspension from the UN Human Rights Council showed political motivation and dual criteria for making fundamental decisions and reaffirmed the United States' efforts to maintain its hegemonic position. Continuation of such an approach will exacerbate differences and divisions among members and make it difficult to make fair judgments about international issues. Separating human rights issues from any political considerations and avoiding double standards is an issue that the international community must work to achieve in a unified manner.

(Source: Mehr News Agency)

World Bank economist says Russia-Ukraine conflict poses big risks for developing East Asia and Pacific

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict poses big risks for the developing countries in the East Asia and Pacific region, a World Bank economist has said.

"I think that (the Russia-Ukraine conflict) has the potential to hurt these countries because of big increases in commodity prices, which are feeding into inflation and squeezing consumption," World Bank East Asia and Pacific Chief Economist Aaditya Mattoo told Xinhua in a recent virtual interview.

Noting countries that depend on trade and finance would suffer the most, Mattoo said, "Some countries might see a bigger contraction because they're more export-dependent, more fuel-dependent or the governments have greater financing needs and less capacity to remedy."

Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Cambodia are more exposed to global demand, said the economist, adding Mongolia has high government debt, high external financing needs and very high inflation, which makes it one of the most vulnerable in the crisis.

Aside from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Mattoo said that tighter global financial conditions amid the U.S. Federal Reserve's rate hikes, along with slower growth in China, also create headwinds for growth in the developing East Asia and Pacific.

"Higher interest rates tend to create pressure for capital outflows and that can lead to depreciation and force an increase in interest rates within these countries," said the World Bank economist.

This evidently hurts countries with high levels of debt, such as Cambodia and Laos, as well as countries which rely on short-term capital flows to finance their current account deficits, such as Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand, he said.

As China rebalances its economy, Mattoo said China has shown "a stronger willingness" in recent years to make regulatory changes that "favor sustainable, inclusive and stable growth over short-term needs."

Overall economic growth in developing East Asia and Pacific countries is projected to slow to 5 percent in 2022, 0.4 percentage point less than expected in October, according to the World Bank's recent East Asia and Pacific Economic Update.

The World Bank urged governments to enhance the efficiency of their fiscal policies for recovery and growth, and to strengthen macro-prudential policies to mitigate risks from global financial tightening.

It also called on policymakers to reform trade-related policies in goods, especially in still protected services sectors to take advantage of shifts in the global trade landscape, and encourage the diffusion of technology.

Mattoo said that it's "unfortunate" that over the last few years, many countries in the world have started "looking inwards," and have started thinking about bringing back value chains.

A World Bank analysis, however, showed that the best response to re-shoring policies or protectionist policies is not retaliation.

"Retaliation would hurt you even more," Mattoo said, urging countries to open up in a sensible, well-regulated way and to facilitate trade.

The World Bank economist said there is a risk of reversing globalization amid the conflict, but this would not be desirable, as a retreat from openness shrinks opportunities for trade, and barriers on goods, ideas, investment and beyond would hurt growth prospects.

Historical port of Siraf holds potential to become World Heritage, official says

TEHRAN – The tourism chief of Bushehr believes Siraf, which is situated in the southwestern Iranian province, has considerable potential to become a UNESCO World Heritage.

"The ancient port of Siraf can be registered in the World Heritage list due to its numerous historical monuments and its originality of maritime trade with other ports of the world," Esmaeil Sajjadimanesh said on Sunday.

The port is home to a customs office, grand mosque, aristocratic houses, troglodyte architecture, [ruined] fortresses and outposts.

"To achieve this goal, all responsible institutions should play their supporting role."

Moreover, the inspiration of local communities must not be neglected as the protection of cultural heritage is everyone's duty and must be institutionalized as a positive culture among the people, the official explained.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Sajjadimanesh urged the need for establishing a policy council to follow up on the matter of global registration.

Siraf was Iran's most important port from the Sassanid period to the 4th century AH. It bears plentiful evidence of Persian mastership and genius in seafaring, international relations, and interaction with other near and far cultures and civilizations.

Between 1966 and 1973, the British Institute of Persian Studies conducted seven seasons of excavation and survey at Siraf, which was a major city on the Iranian shore of the Persian Gulf that played a leading role in the network of maritime trade that supplied Western Asia with the products of India, the Far East, and Eastern Africa between 800 CE and 1050.

Siraf had a population of about 300,000 during the early Islamic era and this fact shows that it was a large city. However, today, just about 7,000 people live in Siraf in a small area.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens. Moreover, Bushehr embraces significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras.

Furthermore, Bushehr is home to various archaeological mounds including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion.

Marketplace devoted to Iranian cuisine to open in Tehran

TEHRAN – The Food and Gastronomy Club affiliated with the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO plans to inaugurate a special marketplace dedicated to Persian cuisine.

The marketplace is aimed to promote the cultural significance of indigenous dishes and foodstuff across the Iranian plateau with references to its numerous subcultures, Mohammad Babareza, who presides over the club said on Monday.

"Moreover, we are preparing to form various departments of Iranian food products at the UNESCO's Food and Gastronomy Club in order to introduce local food products to people from different countries," Babareza noted.

Iranian food is a highlight of traveling in the country, with considerable variety on offer. While you may often eat cheap meals on the run, remember that for many Iranians, eating is a social event in which food is only half the story.

No Persian meal is complete without an abundance of herbs. Every table is usually set with sabzi-khordan, a basket of fresh herbs, radishes, and scallions, which are eaten raw and by the handful. Persian cuisine is, above all, about balance — of tastes and flavors, textures and temperatures.

Iran affords opportunity to nominate tourism villages for UNWTO status

TEHRAN – Home to many top tourism villages, Iran has a considerable chance to have some of those registered by the World Tourism Organization.

The opportunity came late in March when the UN body announced its initiative for Best Tourism Villages will return for a second year to rural development.

Last September, Iran announced it nominated the villages of Kharanaq, Barandaq, and Lark for the 'Best Tourism Villages' label.

Home to thousands of ancient villages, the ancient land perfectly suits the tastes of many domestic and even international vacationers who are seeking unique natural experiences, unspoiled landscapes, stay in authentic accommodation, and feel local lifestyles.

Sightseers may stop for a rest with a rural or nomadic family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture whose magic know-hows passed down from generation to generation.

Launched in 2021, Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO promotes and enhances the role of tourism in safeguarding rustic villages, along with their landscapes, natural and cultural diversity, knowledge systems, and local values and activities, including gastronomy.

Moreover, the initiative promotes transformative approaches to the development of tourism in rural destinations that contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2021 over 40 villages from more than 30 countries across the five world regions (from over 170 applications) were recognized as Best Tourism Villages and a further 20 villages were selected to participate in the Upgrade Program. Now, UNWTO Members States are invited once again to present candidacies through their National Tourism Administrations (NTAs).

According to the UN body, applications

will be open until 28 June 2022 and the chosen villages will be announced at the end of the year.

The 'Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO' identifies outstanding examples of rural tourism destinations with recognized cultural and natural assets, that preserve and promote rural and community-based values, products, and lifestyles and have a clear commitment to innovation and sustainability in all its aspects – economic, social and environmental.

523 ancient relics recovered in northern Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian police have recovered 523 historical relics from a smuggler in Rudsar, northern Gilan province.

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

The relics, which include coins, rings, pendants, earrings, cups, jars, and rhytons, are estimated to date back to different historical eras including that of Achaemenids, Parthians, Sassanids as well as the (early) Islamic epoch, Hassan Mehri said.

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

Gilan is well-known for its rich Iron Age cemeteries such as Marlik that have been excavated over the past century. It was once within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenian, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE. The

subsequent Arab conquest of Iran led to the rise of many local dynasties, and Gilan acquired an independent status that continued until 1567.

Sophisticated Rasht, the capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

$78.5m invested in Fars tourism

TEHRAN – Some 21 trillion rials ($78.5 million) has been invested in the tourism sector of southern Fars province over the past Iranian year 1400 (ended on March 20), the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Tourism-related projects are expected to generate over 370 job opportunities for the locals through this investment volume, Farzad Zare explained on Monday.

"Those who wish to invest in this sector in this province have been provided with all the necessary facilities in a short period," the official added.

The ancient region of Fars also spelled Pars, or Persis was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the

Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

Celebrated as the heartland of Persian culture for over 2000 years, the capital city of Shiraz has become synonymous with education, nightingales, poetry, and crafts skills passed down from generation to generation. It was one of the most important cities in the medieval Islamic world and was the Iranian capital during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital.

Eram Garden, Afif-Abad Garden, Tomb of Hafez, Tomb of Sa'di, Jameh Mosque of Atigh, and Persepolis are among the historical, cultural, and ancient sites of Shiraz that are of interest to domestic and foreign tourists.

The ancient city is also home to some magnificent historical gardens such as Bagh-e Narenjestan and Eram Garden, which are top tourist destinations both for domestic and international sightseers.

UNESCO describes the Persian Garden as an idea that combines natural elements with manmade components to materialize the concept of Eden or Paradise on Earth.

28% rise in visits to Hamedan attractions during Noruz

TEHRAN – Visits by Noruz vacationers to historical sites and natural sights of Hamedan jump 28 percent over the Iranian new year holidays (March 21-April 2) compared to the same period last year, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Some 772,000 tourists and travelers toured tourist attractions and historical sites across the west-central province during the mentioned period, Ali Malmir explained on Sunday.

Noruz trippers also made some 120,000 overnight stays at the province's authorized accommodation centers such as hotels, apartment hotels, and guest houses, the official added.

During the time noted, 14 handicraft markets were established throughout the province, which sold more than 50 billion rials ($187,000), he noted.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

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

About 1220 Hamedan was destroyed by the Mongols. In 1386 it was sacked by Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, and the inhabitants were massacred. It was partly restored in the 17th century and subsequently changed hands often between Iranian ruling houses and the Ottomans.

Sitting on a high plain, Hamedan is graciously cool in August but snow prone and freezing from December to March. In summer the air is often hazy. Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Alisadr Cave, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan's attractions to name a few.

Discover Monjugh-Duzi practiced to decorate textiles

TEHRAN – Monjugh-Duzi is a special kind of Iranian embroidery which its know-how has been passed down from generation to generation for centuries.

Mojughs are small beads that look like glass and are sewed to clothing and other textiles.

There are some historical documents and evidence that prove this art was quite popular during the Achaemenid and Sassanid eras. Back then tents, carpets, and garments were ornated by Monjughs, however, it was a custom specific to aristocrats.

Narratives say that Monjugh flourished once again in the late 20th century, during

the Qajar era. Some of the valuable and elaborate Monjugh-Duzi pieces of this era are kept in the Decorative Arts Museum of Iran and can be visited.

Progressively the material for making Monjugh changed from gemstones to glass and they turned into a craft practiced and used by ordinary people.

According to Visit Iran, Monjugh-Duzi is the art of sewing Mojugh beads to fabrics. The first step is to pass the beads through yarn by using a needle and then, sew them to the fabric based on the pattern.

This delicate handicraft can be applied to ornate clothing, headwears, money bags, decorative tableaus, pencil holders, cases of stamps or brushes, bags, covers of boxes or utensils, belts, necklaces, anklets, coasters, and many more objects.

Bird paradise of Iran in favorable condition

TEHRAN – Kani Barazan International Wetland, called the bird paradise of Iran, is in a favorable condition waiting for migratory birds, thanks to the good precipitation over the current water year which began on September 23, 2021.

Located in the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan, Kani Barazan, was once recorded as the first bird-sighting site in the country and birdwatchers call it Iran's bird paradise.

Stretching to 907 hectares, Kani Barazan wetland is home to various bird species including, flamingo, little cormorant, great white pelican, stilt, sternidae, great crested grebe, graylag goose, lesser white-fronted goose, heron, common shelduck and etc.

Its high capabilities, diverse vegetation, and the annual migration of 200,000 species of birds have made this wetland a precious bird-watching site for nature lovers.

So far, 75 species of water birds belonging to 11 families have been identified in this wetland, which will reach more than 180 species counting terrestrial species.

Drought and lack of water rights caused the loss of 70 percent of the wetland, causing negative environmental effects with the beginning of the bird migration season.

In recent weeks, with the release of 2.5 million cubic meters of water from the Mahabad River, the wetland survived being wiped out, however, due to low rainfall, the wetland is still under threat.

Due to the favorable rainfall, it hosts 35,000 migratory birds these days, which has increased by more than 50 percent compared to the last 2 months, IRNA reported on Monday.

The water of this wetland is supplied from the Mahabad river, the spring of "Qarahdagh" village, the speed of water entry is in a good condition due to dredging.

The water volume of the international wetland has now reached about 10 to 12 million cubic meters due to the appropriate rainfall which is increased by about 50 percent compared to the same period last year, Mohsen Ma'arefpanah, director of Kani Barazan tourism services company, said.

Agricultural effluents and chemical fertilizers, entering the water body is a major threat to the wetland and its aquatic species and birds, he lamented.

However, an online monitoring system has been launched to measure water depth, oxygen level, temperature, pressure, and humidity of the wetland and send an online report to the Wetlands Office of the DOE, he added.

Unique birdwatching sites in Iran

Iran is decorated with impressive wetlands that hold a great share of aquatic and bird species and wildlife. Anzali wetland, Qeshm Island, Urmia Lake, and Miankaleh Peninsula are among the most important locations for bird watching in Iran.

Miankaleh International Wetland in Mazandaran, called the bird-watching paradise of Iran, stretches to a total area of 68,000 hectares, which is home to at least 130 species of migratory species with a population of 1.5 million.

Being an impressive bird-watching destination, the wetland displays a variety of bird species such as otters, all kinds of fish-eating ducks (common goldeneye and Mergus), pelicans, flamingos, cormorants, common pheasants, partridges, mute swan, tundra swan, and coots. Ashuradeh was introduced and registered as one of the world's first biosphere zones in 1975.

Gomishan wetland in Golestan province is home to over 20,000 water birds, and more than 20 species of birds, which supports three IUCN Red List vulnerable species of waterbirds, i.e., Pelecanus Crispus, Aythya nyroca, and Vanellus gregarious, as well as the vulnerable mammal Phoca (Pusa) caspica; it is also an important staging area for the fish subspecies Rutilus rutilus caspicas.

Located at the foot of the Zagros mountains in north-western Iran, Zarivar is a freshwater wetland hosting over 74 bird species, which is designated as a Ramsar Site.

The site provides a suitable breeding and resting place for birds and other wetland animals, and due to the relatively extensive reed beds, it is an important overwintering site for northern migratory birds.

Iran commemorates World Health Day 2022

TEHRAN – The World Health Day 2022 was commemorated by the World Health Organization in Iran in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education during a formal event organized on Sunday, 10 April by Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences in Tehran.

The event welcomed students in different fields of health and medicine at the university, as well as experts and specialists from a myriad of backgrounds and provided a platform for keynote speeches by WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iran Dr Syed Jaffar Hussain, University Chancellor Dr Alireza Zali, and Deputy Minister for Public Health, Kamal Heidari.

The World Health Day is seen each year as an opportunity by governments and organizations to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health including by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The joint commemoration of the global occasion, held to mark WHO's founding, will continue through a number of initiatives and events that officially commence on the 7th and run until the last week of April.

"We need to highlight operationalizing health in all policies, strengthening partnership of health and non-health sectors, focus of political, economic, and social drivers and their impact on health and well-being," said Dr Hussain in his speech. "Our vision in the region is Health for all by all and this is not achievable without intersectoral collaboration of all sectors."

Under the theme 'Our Planet, Our Health' for this year's World Health Day, WHO is focusing global attention on urgent actions needed to keep humans and the planet healthy and foster a movement to create societies focused on well-being in the midst of a pandemic, a polluted planet, increasing diseases like cancer, asthma, and heart disease.

WHO estimates that more than 13 million deaths around the world each year are due to avoidable environmental causes, which including climate change are responsible for 23% of the total burden of disease in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and as much as 30% of the disease burden for children. An estimated 1 million people die prematurely every year in our Region as a result of living and working in unhealthy environments.

"Countries can achieve health equity by changing policies to give everyone equal opportunity for being healthy, empowerment and engagement of communities, vulnerable and marginalized and affected population in decision making and implementation of solutions, to ensure timeliness and reliability of data to identify inequalities and evidence-based policy and decision making, having an inclusive vision and acting beyond borders," Hussain underlined.

Throughout the National Health Week (24-31 April), WHO will support the ministry of health in organizing coordinated meetings between UN agencies to discuss and consolidate ongoing efforts for climate and health, health promotion events on the sidelines, and encourage other plans and pledges by government and non-governmental organizations across the country to prompt political commitment for action and community engagement for impact.

WHO Regional Direction Ahmed Al-Mandhari has in turn stressed the critical need to tackle these challenges, by addressing the root causes of ill health. "Many aspects of environmental health go far beyond the health sector, so concerted action by many different actors across different sectors is required, focusing on upstream interventions to prevent, minimize or mitigate environmental risks," he said in his message for the occasion.

Our political, social, and commercial decisions are driving the climate and health crisis. Environmental hazards such as polluted air, toxic chemicals, and lack of access to water and sanitation exacerbate the Region's inherent vulnerability to infectious disease outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. There is growing evidence of a direct connection between environmental change and the emergence or transmission of COVID-19, while on the other hand the pandemic has diverted resources from development efforts and placed additional stresses on ecosystems and health systems.

Through the 'Our Planet, Our Health' campaign, WHO urges governments and the public to share stories of steps they are taking to protect the planet and their health and prioritize well-being societies. Recovery from COVID-19 also presents a historic opportunity to rebuild better and create cleaner, healthier and fairer systems and societies. Tackling environmental risks is also an essential part of WHO's vision of Health for All by All in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

On this World Health Day, WHO calls on everyone – governments, businesses, health professionals, civil society, communities, and individuals – to protect Our Planet and Our Health.

'Embassies play key role in expanding high-tech exports'

TEHRAN - Vice President for Science and Technology, Sourena Sattari, said on Monday that embassies play a key role in expanding the country's high-tech exports.

The ecosystem of innovation and technology should be developed on the basis of diplomacy and foreign relations, IRNA quoted Sattari as saying.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and some other officials in charge of international relations.

In recent years, different steps have been taken, such as launching houses of innovation in several countries, signing agreements, and participating in international exhibitions, in order to expand the market for Iranian-made knowledge-based products, Sattari explained.

Exporting technological products of Iranian knowledge-based companies is one of the important and key programs of the vice presidency for science and technology, and in this regard, five houses of innovation and technology have so far been inaugurated in Kenya, China, Russia, Syria, and Turkey.

The centers are mainly formed with the investment and support of the private sector to provide the necessary infrastructure for their exports through the innovation houses.

Mehdi Ghalehnoei, an official with the vice presidency for science and technology, said in February that knowledge-based companies gained about $800 million in revenue from export in the Iranian calendar year ended in March 2021, and the figure was expected to reach up to $2 billion in the year to March 2022.

Africa, neighboring countries, Southeast Asia and Eurasia are our export target priorities, and we hope to create Iranian innovation and technology in all these areas, he added.

In his New Year message, Ayatollah Khamenei called on the government and the nation to work hard to boost knowledge-based production and create new jobs.

The Leader reemphasized the importance of boosting domestic production, as he had done in past years, saying the reason he placed so much emphasis on production was "because it boosts economic growth, it creates employment, it reduces inflation, it increases per capita income and it improves public welfare."

Iran has risen 45 places in the Global Innovation Index, according to the UNESCO 2021 Report.

The Global Innovation Index in Iran from 2015 to 2019 has risen from 106 to 61 with continuous improvement, showing 45 steps growth.

Iran to host neighboring countries to solve environmental problems

From page 1 ▸

SDSs affecting Iran

Dust events originate predominantly in arid or semi-arid environments, which account for some 33 percent of the total world land area. In fact, the northern hemisphere generates some 90 percent of global airborne mineral dust, where it is also deposited.

Most "dust storm" occurrences are in the region beginning on the west coast of North Africa and extending through West Asia into Central Asia. North Africa is the main dust source area, alone responsible for generating more than 50 percent of the total desert dust in the atmosphere and almost five times as much as the second main source, the Arabian Peninsula.

In Iran, internal dust sources estimated at 34.6 million hectares, generate an average amount of 4.22 million tons of dust per year, of which 122.7 kilograms are raised per hectare annually.

Of this area, about 1.4 million hectares are from arid wetlands and about 2.5 to 3 million hectares are in habitats managed by the Department of Environment.

A study conducted in 6 provinces of Khuzestan, Ilam, Kermanshah, Sistan-Baluchestan, South Khorasan, and Hormozgan showed that this phenomenon has incurred a loss of about 590 trillion rials (nearly $2.1 billion) in a 3-year period.

€370 million to combat SDSs

In the past four years, about €370 million has been spent from the National Development Fund to combat SDSs, which had good results, but it seems that the annual credit is declining as conditions improve, Ali Mohammad Tahmasebi, head of the national working group for SDSs mitigation, said in March.

During the [Iranian calendar] year 1399 (March 2019-March 2020), €100 million was earmarked in this regard, but the next year's budget bill has proposed €20 million for SDS mitigation, which experts believe will even destroy those measures, he explained.

"However, various measures have been taken to fight the phenomenon, including, planting seedlings on about 26,000 hectares of dust centers in the past three years, as well as managing grazing in 2 million hectares of the protected areas and natural resources."

Conservation agriculture (sustainable agriculture) was conducted on 160,000 hectares of farming lands, in addition to 100,000 hectares of dredging, he concluded.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

$3b approved for improving safety of schools

The sixth five-year national development plan (2016-2021) has predicted a total budget of $3 billion to be allocated for rebuilding and retrofitting old schools across the country, director of the organization for renovation, development and equipment of schools has said.

There are some 107,000 schools nationwide with 530,000 classes, 160,000 of which are dilapidated, not meeting safety standards, ISNA quoted Mehrollah Rakhshanimehr as saying on Wednesday.

"However, after 2 years the budget has not been allocated yet," he lamented.

He went on explain that 30 percent of the schools nationwide are old, of which some 12 percent must be completely rebuilt and 18 percent must be retrofitted.

Renovation of schools and meeting the necessary standards requires a considerable amount of budget, however, current government funding and annual budgets are by no means enough, he added.

درخواست تخصیص ۳ میلیارد دلار برای ایمن سازی مدارس

رئیس سازمان نوسازی، توسعه و تجهیز مدارس کشوربا اشاره به وجود ۱۶۰ هزار کلاس درس ناایمن در سطح کشور خواستار تخصیص بودجه سه میلیارد دلاری تصویب شده در قالب برنامه ششم توسعه برای ایمن سازی مدارس شد.

مهراله رخشانی مهر در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا، با بیان اینکه حدود ۱۰۷ هزار مدرسه با ۵۳۰ هزار کلاس درس در کشور داریم اظهار کرد: از این میزان، ۳۰ درصد مدارس نیازمند مقاوم سازی و تخریب و بازسازی‌اند که به تفکیک می‌توان گفت ۱۸ درصد مدارس باید مقاوم سازی و ۱۲ درصد تخریب و بازسازی شوند.

رئیس سازمان نوسازی، توسعه و تجهیز مدارس کشور با بیان اینکه حجم نیازها بسیار بالاست اما اعتبارات فعلی دولتی و بودجه‌های سنواتی به هیچ عنوان پاسخگوی نیازها نیست گفت: تا کنون و با گذشت نزدیک به دو سال از تصویب قانون برنامه ششم محقق نشده است.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON APRIL 11

New cases	3,125
New deaths	34
Total cases	7,194,768
Total deaths	140,650,616
New hospitalized patients	433
Patients in critical condition	1,487
Total recovered patients	6,922,629
Diagnostic tests conducted	50,079,995
Doses of vaccine injected	147,858,838

TEHRAN TIMES

www.tehrantimes.com

Managing Director: **Mohammad Shojaeian**

Editor-in-Chief: **Ali A.Jenabzadeh**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran **P.o. Box:** 14155-4843 **Zip Code:** 1599814713

APRIL 12, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

To render relief to the distressed and to help the oppressed make amends for great sins.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:13:05 Evening: 19:53 Dawn: 5:07 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:35 (tomorrow)

Iran's Selen Arami wins Planet Earth Grand Prix at Kao children's painting contest

From Page **1** ▶ The Kao group announced the Environmental Statement in 2009, which stipulates they promote "eco together", working with consumers, business partners and communities.

Selen's painting entitled "Friendship between Man and Animals and Nature" shows people looking after an injured giraffe together, the jury said in their statement published on March 26.

"The painting is filled her thoughtfulness and adoration for nature. Overall, the painting looks shiny, embodying her strong wish for an ideal world and her hopes for the future. Giraffes are peeking through the trees, and it makes us realize that she is seeing plants and animals as equal creatures. Meanwhile, the giraffes' faces look as if they are keeping a certain distance from the humans, perhaps suggesting that nature and animals are testing humans to see if we are on their side. The dotted style fills the work with rhythm and joy," the jury added.

"Friendship between Man and Animals and Nature" by Selen Arami from Iran won the Planet Earth Grand Prix at the 12th edition of the Kao International Environment Painting Contest for Children in Japan.

Selen is a member of Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA-Kanoon).

Fatemeh Abiri, a ten-year-old member of Kanoon, also was among eight other children each of whom won a Kao Prize.

The jury praised her work named "Angel of Nature" by their comment.

"There is a moment just before sunset when the landscape is enveloped in a golden shine," the jury said.

"The painting reminds us that there are beautiful moments and happiness in our ordinary lives, which we are inclined to forget as we keep busy. The painting warms our heart as does the beauties of nature and the scenes we gaze at, and it makes us wish that the happy scene in this painting will last forever. The sensitivity is outstanding, catching and cherishing this moment, and wanting to draw it out, as well as the power of expressions that makes us viewers feel the birds chirping, the car revving, and even a whiff of the air in the town," they added.

"Friendship" by Kian Jamshidpur, another member of Kanoon, also won an Eco Friend Prize, which is a special jury prize.

Attar, composer of the Conference of the Birds

Part 3

He also states, in the introduction of the Mokhtar-nama, that he destroyed the Jawaher-nama and the Sharh al-qalb with his own hand.

Although the contemporary sources confirm only Attar's authorship of the Divan and the Manteq al-tayr, there are no grounds for doubting the authenticity of the Khosrow-nama and Mokhtar-nama and their prefaces.

One work is missing from these lists, namely the Tazkerat al-awlia, which was probably omitted because it is a prose work; its attribution to Attar is scarcely open to question.

In its introduction Attar mentions three other works of his, including one entitled Sharh al-qalb, presumably the same that he destroyed; the nature of the other two, entitled Kashf al-asrar and Ma'refat al-nafs, remains unknown. In the rest of this article the authentic works are discussed separately.

Divan

This consists almost entirely of poems in the ghazal form, as he collected his robais in a separate work, the Mokhtar-nama.

There are also some qasidas, but they amount to less than one-seventh of the Divan; their infrequency can be partly explained by Attar's abstention from panegyric poetizing.

His qasidas expound mystic and ethical themes and practical moral precepts, and are to some extent modeled on those of Sanai; the qasida Chashm bogsha ke jelwa-ye deldar is a reply to Sanai's Konuz al-hekma in exactly the same number of verses.

The ghazals often seem from their outward vocabulary just to be love and wine songs with a predilection for libertine imagery (qalandariyat), but generally imply spiritual experiences in the familiar symbolic language of classical Islamic mysticism.

Incidentally, Attar's lyrics express the same ideas that are elaborated in his epics. Normally the verses in each poem are coherent.

In many cases the poem goes into different aspects of a core-theme. The language of Attar's lyric poetry does not significantly differ from that of his narrative poetry, and the same may be said of the rhetoric and imagery.

Mokhtar-nama

This is a collection of quatrains arranged by subject. After Attar's friends had complained of difficulty in finding their way through the great store of verses in the Divan, he picked roughly a third of its 6,000 verses and arranged them in fifty chapters.

This was done after the completion of four of his narrative poems, the Khosrow-nama, Asrar-nama, Manteq al-tayr, and Mosibat-nama, but before the composition of the Elahi-nama.

Two-fifths of the chapters are about different aspects of the theme of love, and of these half portray the lover's state and the beloved's bearing, and half describe things used as elements of erotic symbolism such as the beloved's eyes, brows, down, mole, and lips, or rose, dawn, moth, and candle.

In chapter 44 some space is given to qalandariyat on the ground of their connection with erotic themes. Chapters 12-29 are on matters of practical morals and general or Sufi ethics.

The specifically Sufi themes of pantheism, self-effacement, and bewilderment (The Mosibat-nama) are discussed in earlier chapters.

The first three chapters are on tawhid (God's oneness), na't (the Prophet Muhammad's glories), and manaqeb (merits of the Prophet's companions). In the last chapter, the poet's own hope is expressed.

Tazkerat al-awlia

This is Attar's only prose work; it is a collection of biographies dedicated to exponents and pioneers of classical Sufism, beginning with Imam Jafar al-Sadeq (AS), Oways Qarani, and Hasan Basri, and ending with Hallaj, whom Attar evidently felt to be the perfector of Sufism.

The biographies of later Sufis, including Attar's favorite mentor Abu Saeid ibn Abil-Khayr, are not from his own pen.

The work gives a sort of hagiographic summary of his career in the ethical and experiential world of the Sufis. It is to be regretted that he hardly ever names his sources.

He appears to have relied almost entirely, if not exclusively, on written sources. In his choice and narration of edifying and memorable stories, he shows a distinctive taste of his own.

Comparisons with versions of the same material in works by other authors suggest that he presented and interpreted the stories somewhat idiosyncratically.

On the other hand, he translated sayings of his Sufis, which had come down in Arabic, very faithfully into Persian. The work has also interested Iranian scholars as a specimen of early Persian prose.

Khosrow-nama

This stands apart from Attar's other works, as it is not a mystic poem but a courtly romance.

Being about two lovers named Gol and Hormoz (later renamed Khosrow), it also bears the titles Gol o Hormoz, Gol o Khosrow, Khosrow o Gol.

Gol is the daughter of the king of Ahvaz, Hormoz is an illegitimate son of the Caesar of Rum (Byzantium). For protection against the jealousy of the Caesar's wife Hormoz is brought up at Ahvaz in the house of the court gardener.

The two see each other and fall in love, but neither knows of the other's love. This situation provides the background for an eventful and exciting story of self-denial and self-discovery culminating in the marriage of the lovers.

Attar's model was a prose work by an otherwise unknown author, named by Attar as Badr Ahvizi, which one of Attar's friends had asked him to versify.

Ritter has noted the significance of this author's surname. The location of the romance's opening at Ahvaz and the prevalence of folkloric types of adventure in the episodes suggest that the work was built on a foundation of local legends.

Two versions of the Khosrow-nama exist: an older one composed by the poet before the completion of his Manteq al-tayr, and a later, abridged one, which he brought out after his four mystical narrative poems.

No philological investigation of this matter has yet been undertaken. The latest printed edition does not distinguished between the two versions.

It is therefore not yet possible to answer the question whether or how far the second version was influenced by Nezami's Khosrow o Shirin, which was composed in the years 573-76.

Although certain thematic parallels strike the eye, such as the hero's discomposure at the end of his very stormy courtship (Khosrow-nama), the wonderful time which the lovers have together after their reunion (Khosrow-nama), or the heroine's love-distraught death on the tomb of her beloved, the correspondence does not extend to details and cannot therefore be taken as a sufficient argument for any dependence of Attar on Nezami.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

Islamic Revolution Art Week honors top stage, screen artists of the year

TEHRAN – Top stage and screen artists of the year were honored on Sunday as part of the programs for the Islamic Revolution Art Week.

The honoring ceremony held at the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization commenced with awarding stage artists Leili Aaj, Saeid Esmaeili and Nasrollah Qaderi.

Aaj was awarded for writing and directing "Daddy Adam", a play which presents the transformation of the Mojahedin-e-Khalq from a people's organization into a terrorist group.

Esmaeili was honored for staging "Season of Being Madly in Love", a multimedia performance about the fall of Adam (AS) and the appearance of Imam Mahdi (AS). The open-air performance was held across the country.

Playwright Qaderi received an award for his lifetime achievements.

Screen artists Mohammad Sarshar, Siavash Sarmadi and Hadi Hejazifar also received awards.

Sarshar, former director of IRIB Puya Channel, was honored for his lifetime achievements in animated films.

Director Sarmadi was selected for the feature film "Mansur" and his 8-episode documentary "Syria: A Report on a Major Crisis".

Directly based on a true story, "Mansur" portrays the efforts the late commander-in-chief of the Iran Air Force, Mansur Sattari, and his team of experts made during the 1980s to produce Iran's first jet strike fighter, Azarakhsh.

Sattari was one of the main Iranian commanders during the Iran-Iraq war. He was killed in a plane crash near Isfahan in 1995.

At the time, he and his colleagues were working on the project "Owj 110", which Iran initiated to make Azarakhsh.

Actor and director Hejazifar was picked for his acclaimed directorial debut "The Situation of Mehdi", which depicts part of the life story of Mehdi Bakeri, the chief of IRGC 31st Shura Division that carried out several major operations during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, and his brother Hamid.

Top stage and screen artists of the year pose with the organizers after accepting their awards during the Islamic Revolution Art Week at the Art Bureau in Tehran on April 10, 2022. (ANA/Amir-Hossein Jamebozorg)

The art week is organized by the Art Bureau every year to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of documentarian Morteza Avini.

He was killed by a landmine in 1993 during his last trip to the former Iran-Iraq war zone in southwestern Iran while making a documentary about soldiers who were still listed as missing in action.

John Burton's "The Collection of the Qur'an" published in Persian

TEHRAN – British author John Burton's book "The Collection of the Qur'an" has been published in Persian.

First published on October 28, 1977, the book has been translated by Hassan Rezai Haftadar. The Persian edition has been published by the Mofid University Press.

The most surprising feature of the Muslim traditions on the compilation of the Holy Quran is their denial of any role attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (S) himself in the collection process.

The merit of assembling and preserving the record of the momentous divine revelations has been variously ascribed to some half dozen of the Prophet's associates or companions, and these ascriptions have usually been treated as hopelessly conflicting.

Burton argues that they are in perfect agreement. Their sole function was the deliberate exclusion of Muhammad (S).

Front cover of the Persian edition of John Burton's book "The Collection of the Qur'an".

Burton demonstrates in his analysis of the original Muslim sources a series of subtle distinctions, the most significant being that between the Quran document and source.

This analysis of early Muslim traditions challenges existing scholarly interpretations, and Burton argues his case with a wealth of detail.

It is a book, which all students of Islam will find required reading.

Born in London in 1921, John was initially tempted to study medicine, but already as a teenager developed a passion for Western classical music.

In 1939 he enrolled at the Royal College of Music, London, as a horn player, where his fellow student was Dennis Brain, destined to become the best English horn player of the post-World War II period.

It was in India that John discovered both an attraction and aptitude for Oriental languages, becoming fluent in Hindi and Nepali, and partly in Urdu, within only a few years.

Gradually John's interest in Muslim culture prevailed, and he started to research and write on different aspects of Indo-Islamic history and architecture.

How exactly John made the seemingly arbitrary transition from the world of European Classical music to Indian languages, and then to Indo-Islamic architecture, must remain something of a mystery. He never discussed it and perhaps never reflected upon it, but merely pursued the different trajectories of his interests with natural facility and unbridled enthusiasm.

A different perspective on the war in "Atharia"

West Asia has always been associated with war, and every place we see bears the scars of it, yet art has always worked as a mirror to reflect these tragedies, sorrows, and bravery.

One of the largest and most deadly wars in West Asia is the war in Syria, which lasted for nearly a decade, and this war has been extremely crucial for Iran due to the involvement of Iranian forces in it. As a result, many books about the Syrian war have been released in Iran, with the majority of them focusing on the memories of the soldiers' mothers and wives; "Atharia" is one of these books which is written by Nima Akbar Khani and published by Soore Mehr. In this one-hundred-and-twenty-page book, the author tells the story of breaking the siege of a place called Atharia in Syria with a storytelling method and not as a documentary or memoir.

The story is well-constructed and is narrated in a conversational tone by one of the soldiers. Each character's tone is unique, and they don't talk in the same way, and the author's attempt at characterization is evident.

The young characters in this book are like any other young person. They smoke and curse when they are angry, they listen to music, they fight, and, most importantly, they enjoy life just like everyone else. The author didn't want to present a transcendental image of his characters, and he has given them the right to hate war and complain about it. While referring to the values and beliefs of the individuals in the story, the author reminds us of the horror of war through the narrator. He addressed all of the issues as though he wanted to convey that these were all aspects of the war, whether we liked them or not.