

# Leader Cautions Against Negative Effects of Vienna Talks

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## Opinion

### Conspiracy theory in Iranian football clubs

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN - There has been a long-held conspiracy theory that the 'boys in the backroom' to determine the champions of Iran football.

All Iranian clubs used to write statement before and after a game in the recent years while there are lots of reasons why they have not won a single Asian award for about 30 years.

Iranian most popular teams Persepolis and Esteghlal sit on top of the list. The Public Relations of these clubs start the day with the statement and end the day with that.

The coaches also share their protest on their social media accounts. All the clubs say the same thing: "They don't want us to win the title."

Ridiculous. Really ridiculous.

Sunday night, Manchester City and Liverpool football teams shared the spoils in a 2-2 draw and Pep Guardiola and Jurgen Klopp shared a warm hug at the final whistle. It was a EPL decider.

At the same time, Persepolis were playing Aluminum in Hazfi Cup quarterfinals in Tehran. There were so many moments that the players from both teams got involved in an on-field brawl.

Monday night, the scenes were repeated in Esteghlal and Nassaji match in Tehran. The coaching staff of both teams, especially Esteghlal, protested the referee's decisions in most of the match.

Esteghlal coach Farhad Majidi said he would quit coaching if his striker made a foul and TV reply showed that the striker pushed the Nassaji defender in the area.

One month ago, Persepolis coach Yahya Golmohammadi attacked the officials in Tehran derby. It's usual in Iran football.

There is conspiracy theory in Iranian football and the coaches want to make excuse instead of accepting responsibility for what they do in the match.

It's disappointing.

## Report

### SDSs mitigation requires enhanced diplomacy

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN - Controlling sand and dust storms (SDSs) requires strengthening diplomacy, and it will never be eradicated unless international institutions reach a consensus.

The SDSs phenomenon is no longer an uninvited guest because it has been plaguing the country for several years and has caused problems in many provinces. According to experts, natural and human factors are involved in the occurrence and severity of this phenomenon which is mainly caused by excessive consumption of water and drying up reservoirs.

The internal dust sources are estimated at 34.6 million hectares, generating an average amount of 4.22 million tons of dust per year, about 1.460 million hectares are dried wetlands.

Some 4.23 million tons of dust are raised per year, which means the loss of soil fertility will hit the agricultural sector.

Moreover, 300 million hectares in the neighboring countries are giving rise to SDSs, which transport dust into Iran. The total dust density is estimated at about 150 million tons.

In fact, the dust is raised from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in the northeast; Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan in the south, southwest, and west. ► Page 7



Hezbollah chief to Israeli leaders: "You are delusional"

Hezbollah's Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has, in a speech assured the Israeli regime that the Palestinians will continue their "courageous" resistance.

Over the past few weeks, Israel has intensified its crackdown on Palestinians who

have responded with resistance operations.

"Despite the betrayal of some Arab monarchies and dictatorships who have stabbed the Palestinians in the back instead of standing alongside them," Nasrallah said.

### Iran's annual non-oil trade with neighbors up 43%

TEHRAN - The value of Iran's non-oil trade with its neighbors during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20) stood at \$51.875 billion to register a 43 percent increase year on year, head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Alireza Moghadasai put the weight of non-oil trade with the neighboring countries at 100.131 million

tons in the said year, stating that trade with the neighbors also increased by 23 percent in terms of weight, IRIB reported.

The official put the annual non-oil exports to the mentioned countries at 75.445 million tons valued at \$26.29 billion, with a 29 percent rise in value and a 12 percent growth in weight.



### National festival of toys underway in Tehran

The seventh national festival of toys opened in Tehran on Sunday aiming at promoting Iranian toys and supporting domestic producers.

The Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults plays host to the 8-day event.

### Ferries to operate Iran-Qatar route during World Cup

TEHRAN - Iran considers operating passenger ferries to and from Qatar during the 2022 FIFA World Cup to be hosted by the neighboring state in November and December.

"Iran has considerable capacities to support and facilitate maritime traffic for [football] fans who are willing to travel between the country and Qatar during the World Cup," the head of Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) said on Sunday.

Preparations for the sea routes are expected to become finalized by late September, Ali-Akbar Safaei added.

"For the safe transportation of tourists and fans of World Cup teams, the services will be offered by standard and advanced vessels, which are currently operating in the passenger ports of Bushehr, Khuzestan, and Hormozgan province," the official explained.

Moreover, the Iranian government, at the sugges-

tion of its Foreign Ministry, is considering to offer free visas to draw spectators from neighboring Qatar during the major competition.

He noted that the Lebanese resistance movement will continue to stand in solidarity with the Palestinians in their battle to achieve victory and liberation as well as liberation of the holy sites for the Islamic world. ► Page 5

### Afghans and Iranians are brothers

TEHRAN - In the past days, there have been seditions intended to sow discord between the people of Iran and Afghanistan. Falsely edited videos circulated in social media depicts Iranian border guards mistreating Afghan refugees. The videos caused anger in Kabul, Herat and other cities. But what is the truth?

As a country that hosts over 4 million Afghan refugees, Iran is known for its hospitality, and one of the countries hosting the highest number of refugees in the world. Afghan refugees in Iran are benefitting from all kinds of social services, just as every other Iranian. However, things are not going according to the Westerners' plans, although the interim Afghan governing body is also responsible for all these troubles.

On Monday, protesters in Herat broke the windows and CCTV cameras of the Iranian consulate. They also set tires on fire in front of the consulate's building. ► Page 2

Additionally, nationals of all countries (except those from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Somalia, Sri Lanka) who are subject to tourist visa requirements, as well as all nationals of the U.S., UK, and Canada, can apply for a free visa once, twice or multiple times if they provide a ticket from Doha. ► Page 6

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## Interview

### Highly unlikely that Pakistan would go back to U.S. camp: professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - A leading Indian academic says that Washington is happy over the development in Pakistan, however, it looks highly unlikely that Islamabad would go back to the U.S. camp.

"The U.S. is happy over the development; however, it looks very less likely that Pakistan will go back to the U.S. camp," Ashok Swain tells the Tehran Times.

"The U.S. was not happy with Imran Khan's outright shift to China's camp. His support for Putin in the Ukraine crisis has not gone down well with the U.S.," Swain adds.

Pointing out that the U.S. has many more things on its table to worry about, the Indian academic is of the opinion that "the U.S. has not led the process to oust Imran Khan from the power, but some powerful forces within Pakistan have managed to use the growing rift between Imran Khan and Washington to their use."

His ouster came as a result of the alignment of major opposition parties with the instigation of the Army, according to Swain.

Following is the text of the interview:

**What are the main reasons that Imran Khan failed to get the confidence vote of the Pakistani parliament? Critics say his economic policies were unsuccessful. Your opinion please.**

Imran Khan's downfall has several reasons, internal as well as external. He had promised a lot before the election but failed to deliver. Besides the lack of experience in administration, the Covid-19 ► Page 5

### Art Bureau honors top experts, writers on Islamic revolution studies

TEHRAN - The Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization honored top experts and writers of the year on Islamic Revolution studies on Monday.

Kianush Motamedi, Razieh Yasini, Mohammad-Ali Rajabi-Davani, Mohammadreza Aryanfar, Abdorrahman Onaq and Hossein Qornabzadeh received their awards in a ceremony held as part of the Islamic Revolution Art Week, which the bureau organizes 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.

Motamedi was honored for organizing "Mirror on the Mirror", an exhibition of artworks on the Islamic Revolution at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in February during the 14th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts. ► Page 8



## MP: Iran's red lines in Vienna talks not violated

TEHRAN — The spokesman for the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian parliament said that the final draft of the Vienna talks is not ready yet, therefore, it is too soon to make judgments.

In an interview with IRNA on Tuesday, Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini talked about the content of the meeting between members of the parliamentary committee with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and top nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani, which took place on Monday night.

Talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA, started in April last year. However, the talks have come to a standstill as the U.S. is refusing to take certain political decisions, including removing the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) from its list of foreign terrorist organizations.

Meshkini said that a detailed report on the Vienna talks was presented to the committee members by Amir Abdollahian and Bagheri Kani.

In addition, representatives of special committees in the Foreign Ministry presented reports on Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan and the region.

The MP added, "The questions of the committee members were raised and all the questions were answered. My understanding and that of the members of the committee from all the reports that have been presented, and given the serious responses provided by the foreign minister and the Iranian negotiating team, is that fortunately, so far, the progress of the negotiations has been good and the negotiating team has acted within the red lines of the country."

The parliamentary committee spokesman stressed that based on what was stated, no draft has been officially presented yet that MPs on the committee can make their judgements.

Of course, he said, an overview of the negotiations in Vienna is recorded by the negotiating parties. However, Meshkini added, there are still differences of opinion regarding the form of the negotiations and what has been said.

### 'The draft is not ready to be judged'

The MP underscored that the draft is a text on which the sides express their agreements and prepare for signature by the foreign ministers of the involved parties. In other words, he said, the final draft is not ready yet to be judged.

Meshkini also called the meeting between Amir Abdollahian and the MPs important in line with the policy to see that the red lines of the establishment are observed.

According to the reports presented, "no violation of the red lines has been seen so far," he underlined.

"Of course, there are some issues in the

media that we have nothing to do with. I am quoting the official report of the authorities that, based on the documents provided, the members of the committee have not yet concluded that the red lines have been violated," he added.

### 'Negotiating team has not deviated from red lines'

Meshkini continued by saying that according to what was said in this meeting, there are still debates on some issues and the negotiating team is following up on those debates.

"The Western side is resisting and in some cases they are insisting and we are resisting. Because they were asking us to deviate from our red lines and the negotiating team does not accept that," he stated.

The spokesman reiterated that according to reports, Westerners, especially the Americans, need this agreement more.

"Of course, we do not consider the agreement out of reach and we are looking for a good result. The tangible result, based on the removal of some restrictions on our economic system, must be visible," the legislator continued.

### 'Good agreement is achievable'

Referring to the remarks made by the minister of foreign affairs and the chief negotiator at the meeting on Monday night, Meshkini said, "The negotiating team is looking for a good agreement and the work process shows that the agreement is within reach. Only if the other parties have the least amount of fairness, seriousness and good faith, we can reach an agreement to ensure the interests of both parties."

### 'Negotiating team coordinates Vienna talks step by step'

The legislator added that the negotiating team emphasized at the Monday night meeting that the contents of the Vienna talks are coordinated step by step with the institutions of the establishment.

"The team coordinates the proposals and there is no need to worry. If there is an agreement, this agreement will serve our national interests. If there is no agreement, we will not go under the burden of the imposed agreement," Meshkini remarked.

Regarding the time of preparing the draft, the MP said, "If the remaining issues are resolved and the other side shows good faith and does not sabotage the talks, the official draft will be prepared within 24 hours. But at this point, the Americans are behaving in a contradictory way, and they may have come to the conclusion that if they erode the work, they will succeed."

He concluded his remarks by saying that seemingly, the Europeans are also critical of this behavior by the Americans.

"Of course, if we do not reach an agreement, we have other options. But according to reports, the deal is not far off," the spokesman noted.

## Ambassador: Iran does not mistreat Afghan refugees

TEHRAN— The ambassador of Iran to Kabul said in an interview on Tuesday that it is not the policy of the Iranian government to misbehave Afghan immigrants, saying videos circulated on social media are bogus that are intended to create rift between Iran and Afghanistan.

"The purpose of these seditions is to disrupt relations between Kabul and Tehran."

In an interview with Tolo news, Bahador Aminian said that videos and rumors of mistreatment of Afghan immigrants in Iran "are published under the auspices of the Mojahedin-E-Khalq (MEK) terrorist group."

People affiliated with this organization are systematically engaged in the production of such videos, he added.

The diplomat then went on to note that the purpose of these measures is to disrupt Kabul-Tehran relations.

"Mistreating Afghan immigrants is not the policy of Iran and it is emphasized that

the Afghan embassy in Tehran is currently working in cooperation with the Afghan government," the Iranian envoy stated.

He stressed the need for national reconciliation in Afghanistan, suggesting this such a policy will prevent widespread migration.

Aminian also expressed hope that the problems in Afghanistan would be resolved, suggesting that if there will be a "national reconciliation" all the tribes will consider themselves "partners in the government".

The Iranian ambassador then expressed Iran's readiness to cooperate with Afghanistan in various fields to help resolve the economic crisis and to work for Afghanistan's self-sufficiency so that Afghan citizens are not forced to leave their country.

Iran has been insisting on an inclusive government in Afghanistan since the Taliban took power in August last year.

# Afghans and Iranians are brothers

From page 1 ► On Tuesday, the director general of South Asia at the Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned the charge d'affaires of the Afghan embassy in Tehran to strongly protest against the attacks on the Iranian embassy in Kabul and the consulate in Herat.

Recalling the responsibility of governments in ensuring the security of diplomatic missions, the diplomat called for legal action against the attackers on the Iranian missions in Afghanistan.

The director general also informed the Afghan chargé d'affaires that the consular sections of the missions of Iran in Afghanistan have ceased their activities until further notice in order to get the necessary assurances from the Afghan Foreign Ministry about full security of the diplomatic offices.

Meanwhile, Afghan social media activists quoted local witnesses as saying that the Iranian embassy in Kabul is closed down for four days.

In this regard, Na'em al-Haq Haqqani, head of the Taliban government's information and culture department, called the gathering and attacks of an unidentified group in front of the Iranian consulate in Herat "an arbitrary act".

He wrote on his Twitter account, "A number of people had protested arbitrarily in front of the Iranian consulate, and the demonstrators immediately were dispersed with the intervention of the security forces of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban). After the Taliban took action, the situation



was brought completely under control, and since this move (attack) was controlled very quickly, nothing special happened."

The Taliban official's remarks came a day after the incident, when the men broke the security cameras of the Iranian consulate in Herat on Monday after attacking it.

Reports indicate that the attackers failed to enter the consulate when security guards fired air shots. The riot reportedly ended with the arrival of Herat Governor Molawi Noor Ahmad Islam Jar at the scene.

He also visited the Iranian consulate in Herat last night at around 1:00 AM and met with Mohammad Sediqifar, the consul general.

The governor of Herat expressed his deep concerns over the Monday attack on the diplomatic office in Herat, saying, "We did not anticipate that the protesters would intend to attack and disrespect Iran."

Islam Jar also promised that the security of Iran's diplomatic

properties and diplomats will be fully ensured and there are no security obstacles to the continuation of Iran's mission in Herat.

Reportedly, the consulate is closed until further notice.

However, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh announced on Tuesday that Iran's embassy in Kabul and its consulates in other cities in Afghanistan are open and are continuing their activities.

"Yet, it is expected Afghanistan's interim governing body to responsibly provide the full security of diplomats and diplomatic buildings of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Afghanistan," Khatibzadeh told reporters.

This is the third attack on Iran's missions in Afghanistan since the Taliban took over Kabul on August 15, 2021. Western seditions aside, the Taliban has failed miserably to provide security for the Iranian missions, much like their other promises.

Struggling with the problem

## Tehran slams police harassment of Iranian citizen in Denmark

TEHRAN- Iran's top human rights official has submitted a letter of protest to Denmark's immigration minister in response to the horrific maltreatment of an Iranian asylum seeker by the European country's immigration police.

Gharibabadi denounced the use of physical force by Danish police against the Iranian woman in a letter written to Danish Minister of Immigration, Mattias Tesfaye.

"Posted videos and photos show four people violently nailing this Iranian citizen to the ground and holding her head against the pavement. A plain clothes officer also exits a vehicle with handcuffs and leg cuffs to restrain the woman's movement. Some reports said the violent mistreatment of the mother took place right in front of her children's eyes," Gharibabadi stated.

He regarded the actions of the Danish police as a breach of the European country's duties under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the prohibition of violence against women, and Articles 5 and 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Gharibabadi asked Tesfaye and other relevant Danish officials to put an end to such violent acts and to cease treating foreign nationals with double standards.

He further requested that Tesfaye should take steps to recompense the victim for the material and spiritual harm she has suffered, as well as to avoid the woman's forced deportation from the Scandinavian country.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

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★ End of the Investigation for WMD ★

★ ★

In 2002, the White House informed Congress that the U.S. is prepared to use force against any country.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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Months later, for disarming Iraq of any weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. invaded the country.

★ ★

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It led to near half of a million dead, more than 2\$ trillion in expense, and many other short and long-term consequences.

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After almost three years, without any findings, the White House announced the end of the search for the WMD in Iraq.

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# Ayatollah Khamenei cautions against negative effects of Vienna talks

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei met on Tuesday afternoon with a number of high-ranking government officials at Imam Khomeini’s Hussainiya.

In the speech he delivered at the meeting, the Leader addressed a variety of issues in connection with the situation in the country.

At the beginning of the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei shone a light on the notion of seeking forgiveness from God, saying that seeking forgiveness means apologizing to God for all “the deeds that we have done and haven’t.”

One should not approach forgiveness in such a way that it would be confined to personal sins or purifying hearts, the Leader said, adding that “forgiveness also has function and effect on the big social and national realms.”

“It gets us to great successes,” the Leader underlined.

The Leader then addressed the current state of play between Iran and major world powers in Vienna, where protracted talks are underway between Iran the P4+1 group of countries (China, Russia, France, and the UK plus Germany).



Ayatollah Khamenei instructed government officials not to tie things to the outcome of the talks in Vienna over how to remove U.S. sanctions on Iran and revive a 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Addressing government officials, the Leader said, “In planning for things, you should by no means keep waiting [for the outcome of the Vienna talks] and move things forward.”

The Leader underlined that the officials should not act in such a way that their work be disrupted if there

was a positive, quasi-positive, or negative outcome coming out of the Vienna talks.

“Negotiations are going well, and the negotiating team, the president, the Supreme National Security Council, and others are being informed, and they make decisions, and move forward,” the Leader stated.

Ayatollah Khamenei also praised Iran’s negotiating team for holding firm in the face of the “excessive demands of the other side.”

“Our negotiating team has so far resisted the excessive demands of

the other side, and God willing, it will continue to do so,” the Leader noted.

Also, Ayatollah Khamenei shone a light on the need to be fair and acting in good faith when criticizing the officials.

“There is no wrong with criticizing the officials’ behaviors. But criticism should have an optimistic view and be free of distrust. No one should be distrustful of an official who is on the front line,” the Leader remarked.

Ayatollah Khamenei defended the negotiating team against criticism that is being directed at it for the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA.

“The party that didn’t comply is the other side. And now they are entangled in their non-compliance. Now they have reached a dead end, not us,” the Leader said.

The United States withdrew from the JCPOA in May 2018. But after the election of Joe Biden in 2020, Washington expressed a willingness to rejoin the nuclear pact. Since April 2021, negotiations over how to get the U.S. back into the JCPOA have been underway with no tangible success. Iran has said that the main obstacle to concluding the talks is the excessive demands that the U.S. keeps presenting in the talks.

## Terror act in Imam Reza shrine targets national unity: intelligence chief

TEHRAN – Iran’s Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib has highlighted the motives behind a recent knife attack that took place inside the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, saying the terrorist attack aims to sow division among the Iranian people.

During his meeting with Ayatollah Kazem Noorimofidi, representative of the Leader in Golestan Province and the Friday prayer’s imam of Gorgan on Monday, Khatib warned that the enemy always seeks to sow division and undercut national unity by launching media attacks.

He added, “However, the Iranian people showed with their intuition and intelligence that they have full hope and confidence in the state, and that this hope and trust has led to the steadfastness of the state and the people in the field.”

Khatib noted, “The enemy is always trying to undermine this unity, but the vigilance and management methods that prevail in the province have been able to thwart all the enemy’s plans and conspiracies.”

The intelligence minister pointed out, “The



enemy will not abandon its hostility because of its own inclination, and it is natural for it to increase its hostility and try to deal a blow to the Islamic Republic.”

It is noteworthy that, on April 5, a Takfiri element attacked 3 clerics in the courtyard of the shrine of Imam Reza in the city of Mashhad, which led to the death of two of them.

Gholam Ali Sadeghi, the head of the judiciary of Khorasan Razavi province in northeastern Iran, announced that the perpetrator of the crime is the only accused in the file.

In a statement to Iranian TV on Monday evening, Sadeghi said, “After the incident at the Razavi shrine, in which the accused attacked 3

clerics, a number of suspects were summoned, but there was no evidence that they were directly involved in the crime or assisted and supported it.”

He explained that after the accident the Razavi shrine cameras were examined and the testimonies of witnesses were taken, which greatly helped in the investigation of the file, as well as the confessions of the accused and the statements of the suspects.

He stated that the terrorist committed the crime under the creed of Takfiri groups, and his file will be decided on urgently after being sent to the special room of the Revolutionary Court.

He pointed out that before committing his crime on the same day, the assailant had attacked two students of religious sciences, but he failed to stab them for some reasons, and then attacked the three students of religious sciences, and he had no prior knowledge of them.

He stated that the accused had received, through the virtual space, the necessary training on how to hide weapons, as he was able to hide his knife and enter it to the shrine of Imam Reza to commit his crime.



## Iran FM meets ambassador of Yemen’s National Salvation Government

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Hossein Abdollahian has met with the ambassador of Yemen’s National Salvation Government to Iran to discuss the situation in the war-torn Arab country, the Foreign Ministry reported on Tuesday.

In the meeting, Amir Abdollahian touched on the resistance of the people of Yemen against the attacks by the coalition and expressed concern about the critical situation in the country.

Amir Abdollahian underlined the need to fully remove the blockade on Yemen, establish permanent truce and set the stage for Yemeni-Yemeni talks to determine their fate.

“The people of Yemen decide on their fate while enjoying a spirit of resistance and shrewdness,” he added.

During the meeting, Ambassador Ebrahim al-Dailami thanked the

stance of Iranian government and people in their support for Yemen.

During the meeting, he also briefed the Iranian foreign minister on the temporary ceasefire in Yemen and the latest developments there.

UN special envoy Hans Grundberg started his first visit to Yemen’s capital on Monday, following an April 2 ceasefire that the warring parties have accused each other of violating.

The Swedish diplomat is scheduled to meet Houthi officials during his first Sanaa visit since taking office in September, Al-Monitor reported.

### Phone conversation with Burkine counterpart

Also, Amir Abdollahian and Burkina Faso’s Foreign Minister Olivia Rouamba, in a phone conversation, discussed and exchanged views on bilateral issues, the Foreign Ministry announced on Tuesday.



The Iranian foreign minister congratulated Rouamba on her appointment as the new foreign minister of the government of Burkina Faso and wished her success in her new position.

Amir Abdollahian talked about the importance of the African continent in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic and stressed Iran’s serious resolve for expanding relations with this continent, including with Burkina Faso.

The Iranian foreign minister also underlined the readiness of the

Islamic Republic to hold the joint commission for cooperation between the two countries.

Amir Abdollahian also described the activities of extremist and Takfiri terrorists in the country and the West Africa region as concerning.

During the phone call, Olivia Rouamba also congratulated the arrival of the blessed month of Ramadan and expressed hope mutual ties would expand.

The Burkina Faso foreign minister also expressed her country’s willingness for wider political and economic ties with Iran, and called for expansion of scientific-technical cooperation with Iran and reception of various forms of assistance from the country.

She added that Iran, as a country that has been fighting terrorism for years, can share its experience with Burkina Faso.



and said, “I always urge the officials to use motivated revolutionary human resources in different categories, especially the young.”

The president also shone a light on those who created the current economic problems, saying, “The government respects everyone, but certainly those who are the perpetrators of the current situation should not take managerial positions.”

## Raisi underlines importance of domestic capabilities

TEHRAN – President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has underlined the need to tap the domestic capabilities to achieve development goals.

Speaking on Monday in a meeting with eulogisers, Raisi said that today all have a heavy responsibility for the progress and development of the country and solving the problems of the people, according to the official website of the presidency.

Referring to the unfavorable economic conditions at the beginning of his administration, the president said, “With God’s help, we were able to generate income for the country and pay employees without borrowing from the central bank or print money that would greatly increase inflation.”

“Unfortunately, in the last 8 years, the average economic growth rate was very low, but in this government, we have targeted 8% growth for

this year,” he said.

Stating that this government does not look beyond the borders, Ayatollah Raisi added, “We pay attention to our resources and capacities to run and develop the country and believe that relying on domestic capabilities, it is possible to run the country, national economy and (achieve) economic growth.”

Referring to the slowdown in inflation rate in recent months, the president said, “Today, with the measures taken, the growth of inflation has been somewhat curbed and we hope that with the coordination of the three branches (of the government), including the parliament, we can take steps to control inflation and increase economic prosperity.”

In another part of his remarks, Raisi emphasized the government’s commitment to tap the potential of the revolutionary workforce

## SPORTS

### Paykan eye French volleyball star Earvin N’Gapeth

TEHRAN – Paykan volleyball club are going to sign international French outside hitter Earvin N’Gapeth.

The 31-year-old star is a member of Italian club Modena Volley at the moment and Paykan hopes to sign him to strengthen for the 2022 Asian Men’s Club Volleyball Championship.

The competition will be held in Tehran, capital of Iran in mid-May.

Paykan have been also linked with Mohammad Mousavi, who has recently parted company with Turkish giants Fenerbahce HDI Sigorta.

Paykan Tehran hold the record for most victories, winning the 2022 Asian Club Volleyball Championship seven times. Teams from Iran have won the tournament 15 times out of 21 editions, the most for any nation.

### Iranian volleyball teams to compete at Cornacchia Cup

TEHRAN – Iran sent three volleyball teams to Italy for taking part at the 2022 Cornacchia Cup.

Boys U19, Girls U19 and Girls U17 will represent the west Asian country in the prestigious competition.

The event will be held in Pordenone, Italy from April 15 to 18.

Cornacchia World Cup was ideated by Tiziano Cornacchia in 1983, in memory of “grandpa Ferruccio”. Now the tournament is managed with Stefano and Matteo (Tiziano’s sons) and the support of the whole family, who grew up with a unique passion for volleyball.

In four decades, Cornacchia World Cup hosted the most important Italian volleyball Clubs and hundreds of foreign teams from five continents.

### 2022 AVC Men’s Club Volleyball Championship fixtures announced

TEHRAN – Paykan volleyball club announced the fixtures of the 2022 AVC Men’s Club Volleyball Championship.

The Iranian club will host the competition from May 14 to 20 in Tehran.

Shahdab Yazd are another Iranian team in the competition.

Paykan have been drawn in Group A along with Nakhon Ratchasimai (Thailand), Oztelium (Uzbekistan) and Santori Sunrise (Japan).

Group B consists of Yazd Shahdab (Iran), Al Rayyan (Qatar), Taraz (Kazakhstan) and Al-Bahr Club (Iraq).

#### Fixtures:

##### May 14:

\* Santori Sunrise v Nakhon Ratchasimai

\* Al Rayyan v Taraz

\* Paykan v Oztelium

\* Shahdab v Al-Bahr Club

##### May 15:

\* Nakhon Ratchasimai v Oztelium

\* Taraz v Al-Bahr Club

\* Santori Sunrise v Paykan

\* Al Rayyan v Shahdab

##### May 16:

\* Santori Sunrise v Oztelium

\* Al-Bahr Club v Al Rayyan

\* Paykan v Nakhon Ratchasimai

\* Shahdab v Taraz

The quarterfinal round will be held on May 18 while semifinals and final are scheduled for May 19 and 20.

### Bijan Moghanloo named Iran taekwondo head coach

TEHRAN – Bijan Moghanloo was named as new head coach of Iran’s men’s taekwondo national team.

He returned to the national team after six years. Moghanloo stepped down as head coach of Iran, following poor performance in the 2016 WTF World Team Championships.

Under guidance of Moghanloo, the Iranian team lost to South Korea and Turkey in the event which was held at the Sarhadchi Sports Olympic Center in Azerbaijan’s capital.

The Iranian team, as a powerhouse in the world, had also shown a pretty poor performance in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio as well.

Minoo Maddah was also named as head coach of Iran’s women’s team.

### Persepolis has to pay 950,000 USD to Radosevic: FIFA

TEHRAN – FIFA has ordered Iranian soccer club Persepolis to pay 950,000 U.S. dollars to its former goalkeeper Bozidar Radosevic.

The Croatian goalkeeper left the club in last December after Persepolis failed to meet its financial commitment.

Radosevic joined Persepolis from Hungarian team Debrecen in 2016 but didn’t regularly play for the team over the past five years.

Persepolis have encountered so many financial problems in recent years.

### Iran offers Qatar help in holding FIFA World Cup

TEHRAN – Ministers from Iran and Qatar, which is going to host the FIFA World Cup in autumn, weighed plans for cooperation in holding the event.

In a meeting on Iran’s southern island of Kish, Iranian Minister of Road and Urban Development Rostam Qassemi and Qatar’s Minister of Transport Jassim Saif Ahmed Al Sulaiti explored the ways Iran can support Qatar in hosting the FIFA World Cup games.

The two sides also discussed plans to launch regular shipping lines between Iranian and Qatari ports.

In a telephone conversation with the Emir of Qatar last week, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi expressed satisfaction with the holding of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, wished the neighboring country success in holding the important sporting event, and said, “The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to provide any help on Kish Island in holding the World Cup games in the best and most glorious way possible.”

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has proposed a plan for approval in the government that will enable foreigners visiting Qatar for World Cup 2022 to travel to Iran by obtaining visas free of charge.

The visas issued under the scheme will be valid for two months and for 20-day stays and visitors will be able to apply for one, two or multiple entries.

The nationals of countries that have qualified for the World Cup 2022 will be granted free of charge visas to visit Iran without any need to supply extra documentation.



## Iran's annual non-oil trade with neighbors up 43%



From page 1 ► Moghadasi further stated that Iran imported 24.686 million tons of non-oil commodities worth over \$25.846 billion in the previous year, with a 60-percent growth in value and a 68-percent rise in weight year on year.

The United Arab Emirates was the top exporter to Iran in the said period exporting \$16.5 billion worth of goods to the country, followed by Turkey, Russia, Iraq, and Oman, he

stated.

Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Armenia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain were other top neighboring countries that supplied goods to Iran in 1400, respectively.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

Iran shares land or water borders with 15 countries namely UAE, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia.

According to IRICA, Iran currently exports non-oil commodities to 40 European countries, 21 Asian countries, 28 African countries, and 12 American countries, while importing from 41 European countries, 31 Asian countries, 12 American countries, and 11 countries in Africa.

## TPO inks cooperation MOU with ICC Iran

TEHRAN – Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and the Iranian Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC Iran) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to cooperate in the facilitation and development of the country's international trade.

The MOU was signed by TPO Head Alireza Peyman-Pak and Secretary-General of ICC Iran Mohammad Khazaei on Monday, the TPO portal reported.

Cooperation in developing the application of new trade tools and knowledge-based solutions to enhance the export potential of Iranian companies, promoting the application of new financial technology tools to facilitate foreign trade, holding training courses required by the country's businessmen and exporters, providing legal and trade advisory services to traders and businessmen, cooperation in resolving disputes between Iranian businesses with foreign parties using non-judicial methods within the framework of the ICC Iran and TPO duties are mentioned as some of the areas that the two sides are going to cooperate on based on the signed MOU.

Furthermore, developing and facilitating Iran's trade relations with other countries, translating

and localizing ICC's international agreements within the framework of the ICC regulations, providing advisory assistance by the ICC Iran to TPO for the development of international trade, cooperation with companies, and facilitating and encouraging their membership in the International Chamber of Commerce, cooperation in translation and publication of reports and statistics published by the International Chamber of Commerce, cooperation and planning in holding joint business events, cooperation in the development of international trade using the capacities of both institutions, coordination, and cooperation for exchanging trade delegations within the framework of the duties of the Iranian Committee are also among the provisions and areas of cooperation.

ICC Iran, as the ICC representative in Iran, was founded in 1963 to promote international trade and investment.

The Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) is in charge of the presidency of ICC Iran and the Secretary-General of ICC Iran is in charge of the executive affairs.

All domestic banks, corporates, and the majority of domestic chambers of commerce such as ICCIMA are ICC Iran members as well.

## Over 230,000 tons of alumina powder produced in a year

TEHRAN- Iran has produced 230,682 tons of alumina powder in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), according to the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

The IMIDRO's data put the alumina powder output at 231,612 tons in year 1399.

Aluminum oxide, which is commonly called alumina, is an inert, odorless, white amorphous material often used in industrial ceramics.

Alumina is an important ceramic material

for industrial applications. The numerous fields of application range from construction materials, to filling materials, as well as abrasives and catalysts.

In plants and mechanical engineering, alumina ceramics are mainly used for wear and corrosion protection.

The particle size distribution largely determines the application range and the quality of an alumina powder. Reliably identifying the differences in particle size is therefore an essential requirement of the measuring instrument.

## TEDPIX loses 33,000 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 33,522 points to 1.445 million on Tuesday.

As reported, over 10.368 billion securities worth 50.654 trillion rials (about \$194 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index lost 32,351 points, and the second market's index dropped 43,404 points.

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

## Output enhancement operations begin in some Iranian gas fields



TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji said his ministry has started output enhancement operations in some of the country's gas fields to supply more gas to the country's refineries, Shana reported on Tuesday.

According to the official, increasing the output of the gas fields is aimed at supplying the necessary feedstock for the country's gas refineries to be able to operate at full capacity.

# Development of greenhouses on agenda

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- In recent years, the water crisis has caused serious challenges in Iran's agriculture sector.

To solve this problem, several solutions, including the implementation of pressurized irrigation project and greenhouse cultivation, have been emphasized by experts and officials in this sector.

Iranian Agriculture Ministry's Greenhouse Development Program is one of the priority projects of this ministry which aims at increasing productivity, efficiency, and water consumption management in the agriculture sector.

The program was approved in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (ended on March 20, 2017) under the framework of the National Resilient Economy Plan.

The development of the country's agricultural parks and greenhouses not only is going to create new job opportunities but also increases the country's non-oil exports and helps preserve the environment and the national water and soil resources.

In last August, Darioush Salempour, the director of the Agriculture Ministry's Greenhouse Development Program, had mentioned the ministry's plans for the modernization and renovation of the country's traditional and old greenhouses, saying: "Our plan in the 10-year horizon is to improve and renovate more than 5,000 traditional, wooden and worn-out greenhouses across the country."

"We have planned to renovate about 650 to 700 hectares of traditional and worn-out greenhouses each year," he added.

Due to the growing need of the market for flowers and



ornamental plants, as well as off-season vegetables and summer crops, greenhouse cultivation has become one of the most profitable agricultural sectors today.

Cultivation in the controlled space of the greenhouse will have an average of 10 times higher yield per unit area than outdoor cultivation due to suitable environmental conditions.

For example, in the case of cucumber, each square meter in the greenhouse will have a production capacity of 20 kilograms of cucumber, while compared to outdoor production, the production capacity of one square meter of arable land will be much lower and about two kilograms.

Significant reduction in water consumption in modern greenhouses is in fact the major advantage of greenhouse cultivation.

In greenhouse cultivation, due to the closed environment, water loss through various evaporation ways is greatly reduced. Also, through mechanized irrigation methods such as irrigation canvas and irrigation tape, water consumption is minimized.

Increased control over pests, weeds and diseases is the other advantage of greenhouse cultivation.

In greenhouse cultivation, due to accurate monitoring and control of pests and diseases, especially the use of biological control methods and a sharp reduction in the use of chemical pesticides, we will see an increase in product quality, that will lead to the popularity of the product in the market and increase export capability.

As a result, along with preserving the soil and environment, we will see good foreign currency income.

**Establishment of 3,200 hectares of greenhouses targeted for this year**

As announced by the director of the Agriculture Ministry's Greenhouse Development Program, 3,200 hectares of greenhouses is targeted to be established in the country in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

Darioush Salempour said that according to the plans and coordination made with the agriculture departments of the provinces, 3,200 hectares of greenhouses will be created in the country, and 686 hectares will be improved and renovated this year.

Greenhouse development in each of the provinces will be done based on climatic conditions and capacities,

infrastructure for access to facilities, manpower status, proximity to the target consumer market and export markets, population, development history and investment in this field, he further explained.

This year, based on the plans and also the mentioned factors, provinces such as Sistan-Baluchestan, Fars, Kerman (south of the province), Tehran, East Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Bushehr, Khorasan Razavi, Hormozgan, Yazd and Isfahan will be given priority in the development of greenhouses, the official added.

The director of the Agriculture Ministry's Greenhouse Development Program further underlined that despite economic conditions caused by the coronavirus pandemic, sanctions against the country, and limited credit facilities, 1,510 hectares of new greenhouses, equivalent to 50 percent of the development goal, was established, and 597 hectares of greenhouses, equivalent to 86 percent of the notified plan, was renovated in the past year.

"We try to achieve the maximum goals set in the greenhouse sector this year by coordinating with the provinces, allocating timely and cheap facilities and providing incentives", the official added.

He also named elimination of production barriers, expansion of government and legal protections, facilitation of licensing conditions, payment of bank facilities, shortening of investment process, empowerment of implementers and experts by holding training courses, and holding specialized exhibitions as some of the programs of the ministry's Horticulture Affairs Department for greenhouse development.

## Iran, Qatar ink several co-op MOUs on air, maritime transportation

TEHRAN – Iran and Qatar have signed six memorandums of understanding to cooperate in various areas of transportation including air and maritime as well as in the preparations for the World Cup 2022.

The MOUs were endorsed by Iranian Minister of Transport and Urban Development Rostam Qasemi and Qatar's Minister of Transport and Communications Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti in Iran's southern Kish Island on Monday, IRNA reported.

The documents included an agreement previously approved by Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi during his visit to Qatar, as well as, three cooperation MOUs on air transportation, an MOU on maritime transportation, and a document on cooperation regarding Qatar World Cup 2022.

As reported, the maritime agreement was signed by the heads of the two countries' maritime organizations.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti arrived on Kish Island



*Iranian Transport Minister Rostam Qasemi (R) and his Qatari counterpart Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti exchange signed MOU documents in Kish Island on Monday*

on Sunday to hold talks with his Iranian counterpart.

During the talks, the two sides discussed cooperation in a variety of areas including collaboration in free trade zones and also finalized some previously reached agreements on economic cooperation.

During his meeting with Qasemi, Al Sulaiti also expressed his country's willingness for

the expansion of maritime ties with Iran's southern coastal provinces.

He 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."

Qasemi for his part referred to the signing of 14 MOUs between the two countries during the visit of President 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."

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.

holdings or banks can jointly finance one major project in the country."

"This approach is being implemented and we will use this method both in the development of fields and in the oil industry's downstream development projects," Oji added.

**NIOC to award EOR projects to knowledge-based firms**

He further announced that the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) is planning to award some enhanced oil recovery (EOR) projects to domestic knowledge-based companies.

Referring to the motto of the current year, which is "Production: Knowledge-Based and Employment-Creating" the official said: "The Oil Ministry uses the capacities of knowledge-based companies in increasing the output of the country's offshore, onshore, and joint fields."



# Highly unlikely that Pakistan would go back to U.S. camp: professor

From page 1 ► crisis also contributed to worsening the country's economic crisis. After the failure to improve the economy and governance of the country, he redirected his focus to targeting political rivals, which brought together the opposition. His pro-China tilt and wish to make some unilateral decisions on military appointments resulted in losing key support from the Army.

**Imran Khan accused Washington of being involved in a conspiracy against his government, but the White House rejects such a claim. Do you think foreign meddling is possible in Pakistan?**

The U.S. was not happy with Imran Khan's outright shift to China's camp. His support for Putin in the Ukraine crisis has not gone down well with the U.S. However, at this point, while the U.S. has many more things on its table to worry about, it seems to me that the U.S. has not led the process to oust Imran Khan from the power, but some powerful forces within Pakistan have managed to use the growing rift between Imran Khan and Washington to their use. His ouster became possible with the alignment of major opposition parties with the instigation of the Army. Judiciary also played along. The U.S. is happy over the development; however, it looks



very less likely that Pakistan will go back to the U.S. camp.

**How do you see the future of Pakistan after ouster of Imran Khan? Will Pakistan degenerate towards instability?**

Imran Kahn and his party members have resigned from the National Assembly en masse. That has brought a big question mark over the legitimacy of the new government's decision under a parliamentary system. I see Imran Khan leading the street protests against the incoming government in months to come as he would like to keep his constituents enthused before

next year's election. That is likely to lead to his arrest, or he will be forced to be confined to his home. His popularity has grown among Pakistan's youth and the educated mass, and his cult-like status among the Pakistani diaspora remains intact. He is undoubtedly the most popular leader in the country at this time, and he is an excellent divider like other populists. That makes him a mighty force in the 2023 election.

**What are Imran Khan's options to confront political rivals and foes? Legal process or streets?**

It will be most likely a street

fight between Imran Khan's supporters and the security forces before the next election. I don't think the judiciary will come to his rescue. Imran Khan is projecting himself as a victim of foreign conspiracy and alleging that his opposition is working against Pakistan. It will be a dirty political street fight in Pakistan for some time to come, at least until the next election.

**Who are the main supporters of Imran Khan? Can he count on his social base while the Pakistani Army is reluctant to support him?**

Imran Khan's support base consists of youths, conservative poorer sections of the society, and the middle class. He is seen as a clean politician by his supporters, and his opponents are seen as a corrupt political dynasty. Many Pakistani celebrities and the majority of the Pakistani diaspora also support Imran Khan. After his removal as the prime minister, his popularity has grown, and he is seen as a fighter who sacrificed his position to fight for the country and its people. The Army is less likely to be openly aligned with Imran Khan's opposition due to fear of losing its support among Pakistanis. So, it seems to be a matter of time only before Imran Khan is back in power.

## Hezbollah chief to Israeli leaders: “You are delusional”

From page 1 ► The Hezbollah chief declared “we must stand with all reverence and pride with the heroism of the men of occupied Palestine, its youth, women, children, and elderly.”

He pledged Hezbollah's support amid “a long history of massacres, wars, displacement, oppression, loneliness, diaspora, and stabs in the back.”

He pointed out that “what is happening in occupied Palestine has great implications regarding the conflict with the enemy, and the future of the temporary Israeli entity.”

Addressing Israeli regime leaders, he said: “If you are betting on the despair and frustration of the Palestinian people, then you are delusional,” stressing that “if you think that some official Arab states' warming of ties will lead to the retreat of Palestinian youth [from resisting], you are also delusional”

“This nation,” he says “passes on the resistance from one generation to the other”

“This is something we have seen recently with the generation of the youth”

The Hezbollah leader called for a high turnout on International Quds Day, which see rallies across the world and falls on the last Friday of the Islamic month of Ramadan in solidarity with the Palestinians. The annual event was an initiative by the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam Khomeini.

He expressed the resistance movement's “absolute support for the liberation of Palestine and support for the Palestinian people, sacrifices, patience and their resistance,” stressing that “we are their partners in achieving the victory that is coming.”

Sayyed Nasrallah recalled that in April 1996 the Israeli regime waged a wide-scale offensive [in southern Lebanon],” saying that “despite the massacres, in particular the massacre of Qana village” (the first Israeli massacre in Qana killed 106 civilians).

“The resistance managed to impose on the enemy an equation that resulted in protecting civilians while at the same time continuing to conduct resistance,” he said.

He pointed out that “the equation for protecting civilians from Israeli attacks still exists thanks to the resistance to this day.”

Sayyed Nasrallah also highlighted how “the United States always defends the aggressor enemy and its massacres, wars, and occupation in the occupied Palestinian territories and Lebanon, and prevents others from condemning [Israeli massacres]. at the UN Security Council. Despite the Israeli war crimes, the U.S. imposes sanctions against others [for Israel's benefit]

Sayyed Nasrallah noted “take a look today at how America treats Israel in comparison to how it treats the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the massive historical sanctions it has imposed [on Russia]”

“This is also a reminder for America's friends in the country and also the region,” he said.

Touching on the electoral process in Lebanon, the Hezbollah Secretary-General said “over the past two weeks, there is an atmosphere transmitted from the U.S. embassy and other embassies as well as internal elements that the current political side [which Hezbollah is a member of] with a parliamentary majority, will get two-thirds of parliamentary seats and not a majority of 50%+1”

“and that this is a danger because the political side wants to change the constitution and political system,” Nasrallah added.

He denounced these allegations saying “no one believes that obtaining two-thirds of the parliamentary seats is either realistic or logical, and we are convinced that our nation understands even if a political side wants to make these changes, this requires the participation of every Lebanese citizen, political figure, a national discussion and consensus and does not happen with a majority of 50%+1 nor a two-thirds majority”

The Secretary-General of Hezbollah denounced the American embassy's destabilizing role in the country saying “It is our right to accuse the U.S. embassy of seeking to postpone the parliamentary



elections.”

Nasrallah highlighted that “there are [elements in Lebanon] whispering in some embassies to postpone the parliamentary elections, in order to arrange the affairs of the other side.”

“One of the objectives of talking about postponing the elections may be to reduce the voter's enthusiasm to participate,” he said.

Nasrallah denounced these plots saying: “we see an electoral battle being waged, and [the Lebanese nation] must participate with all enthusiasm in the polls,” slated for May 15.

Nasrallah recalled there was a similar atmosphere in the weeks leading to the 2009 election and revealed that a Saudi official told him “Riyadh had spent a massive amount of money in Lebanon in the 2009 election, [to back the opposition]” noting that “most of the Saudi money was not spent on the elections, but rather put into the accounts of political officials.”

The Hezbollah leader called on all those eager to participate “not to rely on opinion polls and ‘definitive results’” asking them to “go to [the polls] and participate with full enthusiasm and effort.”

He stressed that “we must work to ensure the success of our candidates and the candidates of our allies, who are advancing in many constituencies, even without our support,” according to Sayyed Nasrallah, explaining: “We want our allies to succeed in these elections in order to cooperate together in shouldering responsibilities.”

Nasrallah emphasized that “Hezbollah does not have alliances under the table, but above it, and in broad daylight,” declaring that “Hezbollah's endorsement of the preferential votes for other allies will be made public.”

And he saw that “the abolitionist was the one who was betting in the July 2006 war on crushing the resistance and its environment, and he was the one who sat with the Americans and incited them to defeat Hezbollah in that war, and he is always ready to present himself abroad, and he shows his willingness to ignite a civil war to crush others.”

Sayyed Nasrallah asked his political opponents: “How do you talk about the taking of arms over political life, and you obtained a parliamentary majority in more than one electoral station, and formed governments?”

Adding “who is trying to mislead the Lebanese that the resistance's weapon is the cause of crises, why not talk about corruption and politics?” economy for 30 years?

With regard to relations with Arab countries, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah asked: “who is sabotaging Arab relations: who has taken a position on the aggression against Yemen, or who has launched a devastating military aggression seven years ago?”

Sayyed Nasrallah stressed that “the Yemenis imposed their will on the international community in their steadfastness and fight,” hoping that “the [two months] truce [between Saudi Arabia and Yemen] would be the starting point for a political solution.”

He explained, “from the beginning we have been calling for this war and massacres [in Yemen] to stop, and no one has any intentions or seeks to target Saudi Arabia.”

The Hezbollah chief reiterated his movement's position that “the only solution in Yemen is to negotiate and talk directly with Sana'a,” stressing, “do not expect anyone to pressure [the Yemenis into submission].”

Sayyed Nasrallah concluded his speech by paying tribute to the late scholar and philosopher Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al-Sadr who was brutally executed, along with his sister, Bint al-Huda a political activist, by the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, 42 years ago last Saturday.

## France is facing an attack on its democracy

As Marine Le Pen and President Emmanuel Macron go into a runoff election, French voters will need to ask themselves if they want to preserve their democracy, Lisa Louis writes.

Though this might seem like a rerun of the 2017 second round of voting, the situation is not quite the same. Five years ago, as international observers were fearing a Le Pen victory, the country's own political analysts categorically and unanimously excluded that outcome.

This time around, French pundits, with an air of resignation, say the far-right Le Pen could win. French polls show her neck-and-neck with Macron in round two.

How did this happen — especially as polls had predicted Macron would win comfortably? His ratings went up even further after Russia invaded Ukraine as the French rallied around their leader in times of crisis.

But that effect waned quickly. As the West imposed sanctions on Russia, prices at home increased further and with it the main worry: how to make ends meet?

Le Pen seemingly addressed that concern. She had roamed small villages, towns and markets for months playing the part of the candidate close to the people, telling everybody that, once elected, she'd hold prices steady for essential goods and lower VAT on fuel and energy commodities.

**Le Pen in touch with the electorate?**

Macron waited until the very last moment to enter the campaign. He seemed preoccupied dealing with Russian President Vladimir Putin. His campaign amounted to a few small gatherings and one larger meeting. Voters got the impression that their president didn't care about their day-to-day lives and was just a bit too certain of his victory.

What's more, someone else inadvertently helped Le Pen gain ground: the far-right political journalist-turned-candidate Eric



Zemmour. Campaigning with blatantly racist slogans, he seemed even more extreme than Le Pen.

That bumped him up in the polls for a while, even above Le Pen. But then his ratings took a plunge not least as he hesitated to support taking in Ukrainian refugees and maintained an ambiguous attitude towards Putin, for whom he had expressed admiration in the past.

Bizarrely, her campaign didn't take a dent despite her historic proximity with Putin and the financial backing she has received in the past from Russia. If anything, she gained ground. Zemmour's crass remarks slowly but surely established her as the soft far-right candidate.

**Playing the populist card**

Make no mistake. The 53-year old's platform is still very much rooted in the spirit of the party's co-founder, her father Jean-Marie Le Pen, convicted multiple times for downplaying the Holocaust and inciting racial hatred.

As president, Le Pen would hold a referendum to enshrine a so-called principle of national preference in France's constitution. People with French nationality would then have precedence over foreigners when it comes to access to jobs, housing or health care. Discrimination would be legalized.

And as president she would also make it punishable by law to help migrants enter and remain in France without authorization. She would limit the right to asylum and not

hesitate to send foreigners back to countries where they face persecution or death.

Although she doesn't directly mention a Frexit in her program anymore, these reforms would in practice lead to one, and fit in with her anti-globalization vision and the plan to control French borders and reinforce economic protectionism.

**Pro-European but not perfect**

While all that is in stark contrast to Macron's pro-EU, pro-integration position, he's far from flawless. The French criticize him for his market-orientated reforms favoring entrepreneurs, earning him the moniker the “president of the rich.”

He has said he'd go even further if reelected by increasing the retirement age and forcing people on welfare to work or participate in job training.

Meanwhile, environmental groups have slammed Macron for failing to tackle climate change; women's rights' groups have accused him of not doing enough for gender equality.

But, under Macron, unemployment has gone down and the economy is doing relatively well — also due to the billions of euros that the government has spent to soften the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

And, although he promises to limit immigration, he wants to introduce new laws to prohibit discriminating against foreigners when it comes to jobs or housing.

**French democracy at risk**

Most of all, the criticism against Macron does not compare to the threat a Le Pen victory would mean for the very foundations of French democracy.

The only way to protect the country against totalitarianism is to stop her from getting to power. French voters should ask themselves how dearly they cherish their democracy before making their choice in two weeks.

(Source: DW)

## Consensus on EU fresh sanctions on Russia proving increasingly difficult

Horried by the devastation wreaked by Russian troops in Ukraine, EU foreign ministers launched discussions Monday on a sixth round of sanctions but a consensus was proving increasingly difficult.

“Discussing about Ukraine means certainly to discuss about the effectiveness of our sanctions,” Josep Borrell, the European Union's top diplomat, told reporters in Luxembourg

as he arrived for the foreign ministers' meeting.

While five rounds of sanctions have already been implemented since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24 -- the last just last Friday -- “certainly ministers will discuss which are the further steps,” he said, AFP reported.

The European Union is now committed to what European Commission chief Ursula von der

Leyen says are “rolling sanctions” on Russia. But it has so far held back from those which would hit Moscow's coffers the hardest: a boycott of Russian oil and gas exports.

The fifth round of sanctions includes a ban on Russian coal imports into the EU -- an important first step towards what could become a broader prohibition on energy supplies.

Many ministers arriving for

Monday's meeting were in favor of a maximalist approach that would entail banning Russian oil and gas.

But they also stressed the importance of maintaining EU consensus and unity.

One obstacle to widening energy sanctions is Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, an EU leader close with the Russian president who won re-election to a fourth term a week ago.



## Handicraft courses help provide jobs for inmates, official says



TEHRAN – Providing jobs for inmates is one of the benefits of craft courses offered at prisons throughout southwestern Bushehr province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Courses in handicrafts provide an income source for prisoners as well, CHTN quoted Esmail Sajadimanesh as saying on Tuesday.

Handicrafts can provide support for the deprived and needy sections of society, which when accompanied by training, creates the conditions for sustainable employment, the official added.

The prisoners and even their families can be empowered through the training courses as markets for their products have been set up already, they can succeed, he noted.

In October 2020, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts signed a memorandum of understanding with the Prisons, Security, and Corrective Measures Organization to create jobs and make

income for prisoners.

The MOU also aimed at implementing special educational and promotional programs, identifying talented prisoners, and improving their social status.

The deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian said that handicraft products made by prisoners have been displayed in various exhibitions, and the income generated from selling these products has been returned to the prisoners and their families.

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

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC-Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

Shiraz was named a “world city of [diverse] handicrafts”. Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a “world city of filigree”. And Qassemabad village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts. Chador Shab, a kind of homemade outer garment for women, was, however, the main subject for the WCC assessment for the village.

## Ferries to operate Iran-Qatar route during World Cup

From page 1 ► Iranian tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami has said that Iran must take an immense opportunity to be provided by the upcoming Qatar World Cup to properly introduce the county to the international spectators of the major event.

“A significant number of travelers, mostly young people, would arrive in Qatar to attend the World Cup... It provides an

exceptional opportunity for us to properly introduce tourist attractions of the country,” he added.

“Over the past months, we have prepared some plans to arrack attendees to the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup soccer championship.”

Iran football team became the 14th team to book their



place in the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Moreover, the ‘Persian Leopards’ became the first Asian team to book their place in a major competition. Iran, No. 21 in the current FIFA world rankings, will kick off the World Cup campaign in Qatar against fifth-ranked England on November 21 before facing Wales/Scotland/Ukraine on November 25. The Iranians

will close out Group B play on November 30 versus the U.S. (No. 15 in FIFA ranking).

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

## Average of 23,000 visitors toured Persepolis per day during Noruz



TEHRAN – An average of 23,000 visitors toured Persepolis per day during the Noruz holidays, the director of the World Heritage site has said.

Persepolis played host to an average of 23,000 visitors per day during Noruz as the World Heritage site was fully prepared for such an upsurge of visitors [following two years of decline caused by coronavirus restrictions], ILNA quoted Hamid Fadaei as

saying on Tuesday.

No damage either intentional or unintentional was inflicted on the premises of the UNESCO site during the two-week holiday, the official said.

Furthermore, we are currently analyzing critics and suggestions that visitors submitted to polling stations during Nowruz, he stated.

The royal city of Persepolis ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art.

Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy) is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars province.

The city was set on fire apparently upon the order of Alexander the Great in 330

BC as revenge on the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt Athens around 150 years earlier.

The city's immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire's king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall (“Hundred-Column Hall”).

This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world's greatest archaeological sites.

Persepolis was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showplace and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire.

## Permanent handicrafts market to open in Hormuz

TEHRAN- A permanent handicrafts marketplace is under construction in Hormuz Island to assist local artisans in putting products directly on sale.

The marketplace is expected to generate sustainable income for craftspeople of the island, Hormozgan province's tourism chief said on Monday.

The bazaar, being constructed on a piece of land covering 400 square meters, will help generate jobs for 40 people after its inauguration, Sohrab Banavand explained.

With its colorful soils, salt caves and mountains, and ocher-stained streams and beaches, Iran's Hormuz Island in the Persian Gulf packs a big punch. It resembles a salt dome—a teardrop-shaped mound of rock



salt, gypsum, anhydrite, and other evaporites that have risen upward through overlying layers of rock.

Most of its visitors are day-trippers, who come from Bandar Abbas or Qeshm Island, so even

the only settlement. Some say that Hormuz is a sleepy little village that kicks off its shoes each evening and relaxes into mellow contemplation of the setting sun!

The ocher soil on the island

has proven appealing to cooks, artists, and miners alike. Locals reportedly use the red soil to season a certain type of bread. Groups of artists have used it to create expansive sand carpets. Sand from a mine in the northern part of the island has also been used in paints, cosmetics, ceramic tiles, and the exteriors of buildings.

The arid island gets unbelievably hot during midday so ideally, winter may be the best time to pay a visit. In the summertime, its temperate can rise to over 43 °C. Traditionally, its reddish soil, which indigenous people call “Golak”, is used for making local foodstuff for decorative arts and even as spices for cooking fish to making pickled vegetables.

## Old trees, waterfalls in western Iran made national heritage

TEHRAN – A selection of nine natural properties across the western province of Lorestan has recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

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

Old plane, elm, and walnut trees as well as Abgarmeh and Sezar waterfalls were among the properties added to the prestigious list.

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



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

Having an opulent tourist circuit with 26 UNESCO World Heritage sites, of which the vast Hyrcanian Forest and Lut Desert are among the natural properties, Iran seeks to acquire a greater share of the global tourism industry by 2025.

## Khalkhal nominated for national city of Jajim weaving

TEHRAN – The ancient Iranian town of Khalkhal has been nominated for recognition as the national city of Jajim-weaving, a local official said on Monday.

The [possible] inscription is expected to be a step towards economic revival in Khalkhal and its surrounding villages long been famous for the ancient craft, the official explained.

Jajim is a handwoven product usually with stripes, diamonds, and colorful designs. In past, Jajims have been used as Korsi (a low table with a heater underneath) covers. In addition, they were used to wrap beddings or “Jay-e khab”.

That is why they are also known as “Jay-e Jam-e” which means “bedding wraps” and gradually turned into Jajim.

To weave a piece of Jajim, two or three professional and skillful masters are needed. The first step is to stretch the wraps in an open space. Since spaces linger more than fifteen meters are rarely found in village homes, the Jajim loom is usually set up in public passages like alleys and



squares.

When no one is working on the Jajims, the looms and the tripod are stacked up and they have easily stretched again. Then, by using a wooden bar, several wraps are separated. That is when the weaving can be started.

A Jajim has usually ten to fifteen meters long and has a width of fifteen to twenty-five centimeters. After one piece is finished, they are cut and sewed to another one to make a piece of Jajim in the desired size.

Khalkhal is considered one of the important handicraft hubs of Ardabil province in northwest Iran.

## Centuries-old human remains to be transferred to museum displays

TEHRAN- Recently-found human skeletons will be put on show at a museum near the location where they were discovered in the central Isfahan province.

Two centuries-old skeletons recently discovered in a mine in Ardestan county, are planned to go on display at the Museum of History and Civilization of Zavareh, Ardestan's tourism chief has said.

Last November, the skeletons were found accidentally and they were immediately handed over to the Ardestan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department to undergo studies, Mehdi Mashhadi explained on Tuesday.

It was decided to separate the parts of the mine that were of archaeological significance and value from the other parts in order to preserve the site of discovery, which is estimated to date several million years back, the official added.

Experts examined the skeletons and the site of their discovery, and after summarizing the initial analysis, it was determined that they did not exhibit any signs of corruption or

damage, he noted.

However, it will take more detailed tests to determine the gender and age of those human remains, he mentioned.

Last November, mineworkers found the skeletons accidentally inside canals about 30 meters beneath the surface.

The skeletons are considered “natural mummies” and they mark unparalleled discoveries in the history of Ardestan's civilization.

The site seems to be an abandoned zinc mine that was used in the distant past and the melting furnaces in it date back to the Safavid era (1501-1736), while the structures found in it date back to the Qajar period (1789-1925).

The decorations under the roof of the old mine indicate that it is at least 600 to 1000 years old.

**Discovery of exotic mummies is not unprecedented in the country**

The highlights of the findings in the historical mines in Iran are salt mummies. In 1993, miners in the Douzlakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli

and Chehrabad villages in Zanjan Province, accidentally came across a mummified head, dated to 300 CE. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot, according to the Ancient History Encyclopedia.

However, in 2004, the miners discovered yet another “saltman”, which was followed by further excavation of unearthing remains of a human body along with a large number of artifacts made of wood, metal tools, clothing, and pottery.

In 2005, a systematic excavation began, three more mummies were excavated, and a sixth remained in situ, due to a lack of funds for its storage. The context of the remains suggested that a collapse in the mine had caused the death of the miners in question.

The first mummy, dubbed the “Saltman”, is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive.

This particular “saltman” was originally dated based on the archaeological material found with him. Later, the mummy was carbon dated, which placed him in 500 CE (1750 BP, that is, “before present” or 1750 years ago), the height of the Sasanian Empire. The second “saltman” was carbon-dated to 1554 BP, which placed him in the same era as the first “saltman”, the Sasanian era.

The third, fourth, and fifth “saltmen” were also carbon dated. The third body was dated and placed in 2337 BP, the fourth body in 2301 BP, and the fifth mummy was dated to 2286 BP, placing them all in the Achaemenid period.

The individual “Saltmen” have a few secrets of their own, for instance, the first “saltman” that was discovered had the blood type B+, and 3D imaging of his skull revealed fractures around his eye and other damage that occurred before death by a hard blow to the head. His clothing (the impressive leather boot) and his gold earring, show a person of some rank; the reason for his presence in the mine still remains a mystery.



# Health Week to highlight ‘Our Planet, Our Health’

TEHRAN – The Ministry of Health has announced that the current year’s Health Week will be held from May 7 to May 13 with the theme of ‘Our Planet, Our Health’.

Development of the health sector, promotion of clean energies, management of natural disasters, improvement of family health, management of wastes, improvement of eating styles, and reduction of tobacco consumption are the main topics of the Health Week, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

World Health Day 2022 was commemorated in Iran on Sunday. 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.

In a keynote speech, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iran Dr. Syed Jaffar Hussain said, “We need to highlight operationalizing health in all policies,



strengthening the partnership of health and non-health sectors, the focus of political, economic, and social drivers and their impact on health and well-being.”

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.

After the Islamic Revolution (1979), many advances have been made in the health sector, namely, increased medical facilities, increased life expectancy and reduced infant and maternal mortality, growth of medical universities, and upgraded medical equipment.

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the life expectancy index at birth increased from 49.5 to 51.5. In other words, life expectancy among Iranians before the Islamic Revolution has been among the lowest in the world. While ten years after the revolution, despite the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, the life expectancy rate has increased to 61.5 years, showing a 10-year increase.

The World Bank report shows that the life expectancy rate experienced a growth of 22 years since the beginning of the revolution, raising to 76.7 years.

## Charity to launch 5,000 small businesses for the deprived

TEHRAN – Barekat Charity Foundation, affiliated with the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, will launch 5,000 small businesses in deprived areas over the current [Iranian calendar] year (began on March 21), IRNA reported on Tuesday.

With the goal of creating employment for 50,000 people, each workshop employs 5 to 10 individuals, directly and indirectly, Mor-teza Niazi, deputy head of Barekat Foundation, said.

A total of 25 trillion rials (nearly \$96 million) will be allocated to launch 5,000 small businesses in the underprivileged areas of the country, he explained.

According to Niazi, 16,000 villages and 800 towns across the country are covered by the Barekat Foundation’s employment-generating activities. By the end of last year (March 20), the Foundation had implemented 180,000 community-based job creation projects in deprived areas of the country.

The number of villages covered by the Foundation’s employment activities next year will reach 20,000 villages, equivalent to



50 percent of the country’s villages, and also will include small towns with a population of less than 30,000, he added.

Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam was founded in 1989. In the Iranian calendar year, 1386 (March 2017-March 2018) Barekat Charity Foundation- the social arm of the organization- with the aim of promoting social justice was established.

Socio-economic empowerment of communities by encouraging entrepreneurship prioritizing breadwinner women, developing infrastructures such as water supply and

power grids, building roads, constructing schools and increasing educational spaces, promoting health for all, granting non-repayable loans and insurance, especially in less developed areas and regions most affected by 1980s war and natural disasters are of the priorities of the charity foundation.

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

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

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

Rural tourism, agritourism, religious tourism, and ecotourism are alternatives or complementary economic activities that could further stimulate rural development while decreasing rural community dependency on one main economic sector (agriculture, forestry, energy, or mining).

## SDSs mitigation requires enhanced diplomacy

From page 1 ► On Friday, a dense mass of sand and dust storms entered Iran from Iraq and affected the western and central provinces, and eventually hit 25 provinces, including Tehran, Alborz, Kermanshah, Ilam, Zanjan, and Kordestan, causing the air pollution index of Tehran to reach a very dangerous scale.

Dariush Gol Alizadeh, Head of Iran’s National Climate Change Office (NCCO) of the Department of Environment told IRNA on Tuesday that the hotspots of the dust haunting the country in the last few days in eastern Syria, western Iraq, as well as Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

These dust sources have appeared many years ago, and due to the drought and water shortages that have occurred in recent years, they have both intensified

and increased in number. In fact, abandoned agricultural lands in those countries are a source of SDSs, he explained.

If serious action is not taken in the form of diplomacy and international institutions do not comply with the requirements to eradicate SDSs, the countries will always be haunted by the phenomenon, he lamented.

SDS not only affects people’s health but also has a psychological effect, it also has a great negative effect on agricultural products, and on the reproduction of plant species and activities such as beekeeping, he further noted.

At present, this phenomenon cannot be dealt with, but the damage can be minimized, he said, adding, programs to be carried out in this regard can be planting crops, shrubs, and final-

ly soil stabilization by biological mulches.

### €370 million to combat SDSs

In the past four years, about €370 million has been spent by 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.

Last [Iranian calendar] year (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.

## Blood donation up by 23%: health minister

TEHRAN – Iranians have donated blood 23 percent more since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), compared to the same period last year, Health Minister Bahram Eimollahi has said.

Annually, some 2.5 million people refer to blood donation centers nationwide, of whom 2.1 million donate blood, IRIB quoted the minister as saying.

The coronavirus pandemic has decreased blood donation in the world by 25-30 percent, but the figure has just been 8 percent in Iran, he noted.

### Highest blood donation in Eastern Mediterranean

While blood donation in 70 countries still depends on replacement or paid donors, Iran is the first country in the region that has enjoyed voluntary blood donation by 100 percent since 2007.

More than 85 percent of all donated blood worldwide is used to produce blood products, while the rate is 65 percent in Eastern Mediterranean countries. Iran ranks among the highest-income countries in terms of converting more than 97 percent of the blood donated by people to plasma-derived medicinal products (PDMP).



Only 55 of 171 countries produce PDMP through the fractionation of plasma collected in the reporting country. A total of 90 countries reported that all PDMP are imported, 16 countries reported that no PDMP was used during the reporting period, and 10 countries did not respond to the question, according to WHO.

Iran currently has the highest blood donation rate in the Eastern Mediterranean region so out of 9.9 million blood donation units in this region, more than two million belong to Iran.

Also, the index of blood donation is 25 per 1,000 populations, while in the member states of the Eastern Mediterranean region, this number is 14.9 per 1000.

## Mahmud Hesabi, renowned Iranian polymath

Mahmud Hesabi, contemporary Iranian physicist, senator, and minister of education was born in Tehran in 1903 to Abbas Hesabi, a Qajar government official from Tafresh, central Markazi province.

He received his primary and secondary education in French and American Schools in Beirut, 1910-19. He completed his degree in road engineering in 1922 from the American University of Beirut and subsequently worked for the road ministry in Beirut.

In 1923 he moved to Paris and obtained a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from the École Supérieure d’Électricité in 1925. He then worked as an electrical engineer in the Paris railway system. In the meantime, he continued his studies in physics at Paris University, Sorbonne under the noted physicist Aimé Cotton and obtained his doctorate in 1927.

On his return to Iran in 1927, Hesabi was sent to Bushehr to start work on mapping the coastal roads along the Persian Gulf. Thereafter he was invited by Teachers College to form the science department in 1928.

In 1934, Hesabi participated in the formation of two faculties at The University of Tehran: first, by assisting to develop the science department of Teachers College into the Faculty of Science of the University; and secondly, by forming and supervising the freshman class of the School of Engineering.

Hesabi also helped in adopting new methods of teaching science and suggesting Persian equivalents of scientific terminology as a member of the Academy of Persian Language. Many of the terms that he proposed



are still being used in modern Persian scientific language.

Meanwhile, in a trip to Princeton in 1947 he had the opportunity to meet Albert Einstein, discussing his scientific activities with him.

Hesabi served as minister of education in 1951-52 in Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq’s nationalist government. He was also elected to the Fourth Session of the Senate from Tehran in 1957.

Hesabi was fluent in English, French, and Arabic, and had learned German by himself. He obtained several honors, including the Legion d’Honour and the “distinguished Professor of the University of Tehran” (1971). In 1987, the annual Iranian Physics Conference was held in his honor. That same year the “Hesabi Prize” was established, to be given each year to the best Iranian undergraduate researcher in physics. He died in Geneva on September 3, 1992.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON APRIL 12

New cases	2,737
New deaths	28
Total cases	7,197,505
Total deaths	140,678
New hospitalized patients	378
Patients in critical condition	1,411
Total recovered patients	6,927,042
Diagnostic tests conducted	50,137,256
Doses of vaccine injected	147,955,947

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Education, labor ministries ink MOU on out-of-school children

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare have signed a memorandum of understanding aiming to bring out-of-school children back to school.

The memorandum of understanding will pave the way for future steps, ISNA news agency quoted Education Minister Mohammad Bat’haei as saying on Sunday.

He made the remarks over the 8th session of council meeting for improving educational standards in underprivileged and underdeveloped areas at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. “The meeting is aiming to live up to educational standards, however, the current conditions are unjustifiable, and we should move faster,” he added.

## تفاهم وزراء برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل به مدارس

وزارت آموزش و پرورش تفاهم نامه مشترکی با وزارت رفاه برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل امضا کردند.

به گزارش روز یکشنبه ایسنا، محمد بطحایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش گفت: امروز تفاهم نامه‌ای امضا می‌شود که نقشه کار برای ادامه مسیر کاملاً مشخص شود.

بطحایی در هشتمین جلسه شورای هماهنگی بهبود و ارتقای شاخص‌های آموزشی و پرورشی مناطق محروم و کمتر توسعه یافته که در وزارت رفاه برگزار شد گفت: هدف اصلی این برنامه و شورای هماهنگی ارتقای شاخص‌ها بود، هرچند این روند قابل قبول نیست و باید با سرعت بیشتری حرکت کنیم.



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APRIL 13, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

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

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times» Noon:13:05    Evening: 19:54    Dawn: 5:05 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 6:33 (tomorrow)

## Attar, composer of the Conference of the Birds

Part 4  
**Asrar-nama**

This is the earliest of Attar’s mystical narrative poems; it has attracted less scholarly attention than the other three.

This may be partly due to its lack of a frame-story. The contents are arranged in 22 discourses (maqalas) in random order, without regard to sequence of ideas.

Each maqala begins with an outline of an idea, which is then developed by means of short anecdotes. Frequently the anecdotes are accompanied by reflections which lead into thematically related fields or, in some cases, stray quite far from the basic idea.

The work thus lacks a definite conceptual structure. Its concluding message is the hope of release of man’s spiritual substance from the world’s grasp.

In no other work does Attar propound the gnostic concept of the soul’s fall and the duty to free it from worldly and material bonds so comprehensively and forcefully as in the Asrar-nama.

The resultant belief that this work influenced the preamble of the Masnavi-e manavi, probably gave rise to the legend that the aged Attar donated it to the young Jalal ad-Din Rumi as his testament.

The concluding message naturally leads the author into moralizing reflections of the world’s transience, vanity, and depravity, which fill whole chapters in the last third of the work (chap. 14 onward).

After the three introductory chapters on tawhid, na’t, and manaqeb, the fundamentals of the gnostic concept are expounded; certain aspects are elaborated in chapters 8 and 11, and in chapter 5 the favorite theme of reason and love (aql o eshq) is introduced.

Chapter 12 also seems worthy of special mention, because it is about the impenetrability of celestial and extramundane secrets (asrar) and is thus more pertinent to the book’s title than the rest.

**Manteq al-tayr (also entitled Maqamat-e toyur)**

This work has a frame-story, inspired by the Resalat al-tayr of Ahmad or his brother Mohammad Ghazali, which combines two well-known themes, the assembly of birds to choose the worthiest of them as their leader, and the journey of the birds to the distant seat of the bird-king.

Foruzanfar (Sharh-e ahwal) has traced the second theme back to the Resalat al-tayr of Ebn Sina. Attar embellished and expanded the allegory of Ghazali and gave it a deeper meaning, but kept the frame.

The birds acknowledge the Simorgh as their king. Smitten with desire to see him, they decide to set out for his faraway palace.

The journey costs the lives of many of them. The few birds, according to Attar only thirty, who survive to reach their goal are made aware of the Simorgh’s inaccessibility and self-sufficient majesty.

Only after they have apprehended the vastness of the gulf between their own dependence and the Simorgh’s independence are they granted admission for an audience.

Attar then consummates the epic with an affirmation of his cherished belief that man will find the sought supreme being, within himself, and he expresses his meaning through an ingenious pun: The thirty birds (si morph) find to their amazement that the Simorgh is none other than their own selves (maqala 45).

In contrast with the birds of Ghazali, Attar’s birds are not an anonymous flock, but often come onto the scene as individuals concerned with problems of the venture (maqalas 3-12 and elsewhere).

Their leader, the hodhod hoopoe, (mentioned in

Quran 27:20 as Solomon’s messenger) is the moving spirit of the whole enterprise.

Attar also interweaves numerous tales and anecdotes into the frame-story just as he does in his other mystical narrative poems, for the purpose of developing the various themes.

Sometimes the role of reciter is given to an actor in the main drama as a means of keeping the plot on course; for example, it is after hearing the hoopoe tell the tale of Shaikh San’an’s fateful love that the birds decide to set out on their quest for the Simorgh (maqala 15).

**Mosibat-nama**  
This expounds a basic theme of Attar’s world of thought, namely the inner restlessness and bewilderment from which deliverance is attainable on the Sufi path.

In the Mosibat-nama, the person who has these experiences is a salek (wayfarer) guided by master.

Attar insists explicitly here on the necessity of guidance by a master. He identifies the salek with the ideal mystic and relates this ideal to remembrance of God.

Mystical experiences in the privacy of vigil probably form the background of the whole work, as the forty stages traversed by the salek apparently correspond to the forty days of religious vigil (chella).

The idealized salek appeals to forty celestial and terrestrial beings for advice on deliverance from his tormented state of mind: They are Gabriel and the other angels, God’s throne and its pedestal, the tablet and the reed-pen, paradise and hell, the sky, sun, and moon, the four elements, the mountains and seas, minerals, plants, and different orders of animals, demons, spirits, and humans, Adam and the other prophets to Muhammad (S), the faculties of perception, imagination, reason, and heart, i.e., emotion, and finally the universal soul (ruhai).

All but one give him the same answer in the unspoken language of mood (zaban-e hal): they are in no better state than he is. Only from the universal soul does he get the salutary advice that he can find the deliverance he seeks nowhere except in himself.

He must cast himself into the ocean of the soul and utterly efface himself (maqala 40). From time to time the salek’s appeals to the different beings and their replies lead the poet into rhetorical disquisitions in the panegyric verse style about ideas and themes associated with the particular luminaries.

Sometimes the salek, after one of his conversations with a being, gets comments on it from his master; this also probably reflects a practice in Sufi vigils.

The various beings are transformed into symbols or occasions for explanation of specific aspects of mystical progress or Sufi ethics.

Also instrumental to this end, as in Attar’s other mystical narrative poems, are more or less lengthy interposed stories which he explains and discusses as the occasion requires.

**Elahi-nama**  
This work owes its name to the poet’s intention that it should open the “door to the divine treasure” (dar-e ganj-e elahi).

The frame-story tells of a caliph who has six sons and asks each about his heart’s desire. The first son longs for the daughter of the king of the fairies, the second for mastery of the art of magic, the third for the Jam-e jam, the world-reflecting cup of Jamshid, the fourth for the water of life, the fifth for the demon-controlling ring of Solomon, and sixth for knowledge of alchemy.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica  
To be continued

# Tehran Intl. Holy Quran Exhibition returns to live programs

TEHRAN – The 29th edition of the International Holy Quran Exhibition will be held in person in Tehran after last year’s online-only version.

The 2020 edition was totally canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

This year’s exhibition will take place in Imam Khomeini Mosallah from April 16 to 29 with the motto “Quran, the Book of Hope and Peace”, the organizers announced on Monday.

“Given the meanings of many verses and stories in the Holy Quran, it is the book of hope and we chose the motto, which will be represented in all parts of the exhibition,” the director of the exhibition, Alireza Maaf, said.

He also noted that an online version will also be set up for those who cannot visit the exhibition in person.

The exhibition plans to dedicate a section to promoting the Nahj ul-Balagha, a collection of the

sermons, letters and short sayings of Imam Ali (AS), and the Sahifeh Sajjadih, a collection of prayers attributed to Imam Sajjad (AS), the fourth Imam of the Shia.

Experts on the books will be acknowledged during the closing ceremony of the exhibition.

Maaf referred to Iran’s large child and adolescent population and said, “We did our best to bridge between Quranic meanings and games.”

“In a section dedicated to children and young adults, 15 computer games developed based on Islamic teachings and cultural values have been showcased,” he added.

In addition, “The Garden of Verses”, a special section for children, has been initiated to familiarize children with the meanings of some verses in the Holy Quran.

Artworks and handcrafts representing Quran verses and teachings will also be showcased

## Art Bureau honors top experts, writers on Islamic revolution studies

Top experts and writers 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 11, 2022.

TEHRAN – “Orthodontics” by Iranian filmmaker Mohammadreza Mayghani won a special jury mention at Filmfest Dresden, a German international short film festival, the organizers announced on Sunday.

The film received the special mention in the Golden Horseman Short Film International Competition judged by a jury consisting of Mariana Hristova, John Canciani and Martina Scarpelli.

“This film stood out among the titles in competition: It’s awkward, it’s surreal, it’s imaginative, it’s original, it’s colorful, and yet dark at the same time,” the jury said in its statement.

The movie follows Amitis, a teenage girl who has always had to wear orthodontics headgear and is under pressure because of her orthodontic treatment. She suddenly does a strange thing to her friend Sarah.

TEHRAN – A Persian translation of Milan Kundera’s 1967 novel “The Joke” has been published by Saleess in Tehran.

Forugh Puryavari is the translator of the book that describes how a student’s private joke derails his life, and the entwined stories of his lovers and friends grappling with the shifting roles of folk traditions and religion under Communist Czechoslovakia.

All too often, this brilliant novel of thwarted love and revenge miscarried has been read for its political implications.

Now though, a quarter century after “The Joke” was first published, and several years after the collapse of the Soviet-imposed Czechoslovak regime, it becomes easier to put

“Orthodontics” by Iranian filmmaker Mohammadreza Mayghani.

The Iranian movies “The Fourth Wall” and “Form” were also screened in other categories of the festival, but failed to win an award.

“Heltzear” by Mikel Gurrea from Spain won the prize money of €7,500 and the Golden Horseman for best short film.

“The title of the film originates from the verbs to hold, to grow and to arrive,” the jury said.

“It portrays the process of overcoming personal grief arising

A poster for the 29th International Holy Quran Exhibition.

in a special area.

Due to the country’s special regard for diplomacy, Maaf said that a series of international webinars on the latest studies on the Quran and Islamic topics will be organized by the exhibition.

One hundred publishing houses have also been invited to showcase their latest offerings on the Quran at the exhibition, which is organized every year during the month of Ramadan.

from Mati Khan and other leaders of the Turkmen tribes in the northeastern regions of Iran, who warn of the establishment of border checkpoints by the government during the early days of the reign of Reza Shah.

The Turkmen are not optimistic about the government’s plan, so Reza Shah selects a tough bunch of his men to implement it. As a result, the Turkmen now face harsh restrictions imposed by the border patrol agents even on their daily movements.

Qorbazadeh was selected for his novel “Prints of the Main Fingers”.

Golden Horseman for best short animated film.

In its statement, the jury said, “This film tickles the viewer by exploring the textures and forms, as well as the multifaceted sensuality of the human body. Through an intimate and ambiguous exploration, it demonstrates how close pleasure and pain could be. Tactile, dreamlike and contemplative, the film stages the author’s distinctive artistic style in terms of the visual aesthetics and sound design.”

The Golden Horsemen of the Audience International Competition and the prize money of €3,000 went to “Mily Tati” (“LOVE, Dad”), a Czech-Slovakia co-production by Diana Cam Van Nguyen.

“Techno, Mama” by Saulius Baradinskas from Lithuania was picked as best in the youth international competition.

Front cover of the Persian edition of Milan Kundera’s novel “The Joke”.

government of Czechoslovakia, his books were banned from his native country, and that remained the case until the downfall of this government in the Velvet Revolution of 1989.

## When will you grow up?

**By Fateme Razavi Alavi**  
The book “Cardamom Candy,” written by Mehrdad Sedighi and published by Soore Mehr, is about an eleven-year-old boy named Mohsen from Bojnurd province who wants to prove to his family that he has matured and grown up.

This comic novel has a nostalgic atmosphere from the 1980s in Iran, with all of its challenges. This book is more than just a comic novel; it’s like Mohsen’s diary, and he tells the story himself, which is both sweet and funny.

If you’re curious about why the book’s title is “Cardamom Candy,” look through the pages of the book; maybe there’s a reason, maybe not! But first, answer this question so that the purpose of the book’s title becomes clearer to you: “Do you believe it is better to drink tea with sugar or candy?!” If candy is your answer, you should know that reading this book is as enjoyable as drinking tea with fresh cardamom candy.

Also, one of the book’s best elements that makes it very appealing, is the usage of accents and idioms of people in Mashhad, the meaning of which is mentioned in detail at the end of the book.