



**Felicitations  
on Eid-al Fitr**

**From Inside**

- Even with deal on the table nuclear talks freeze: analysis **P2**
- Iran's UN envoy: Unilateralism impedes development of countries **P2**
- Quds Day demonstrations symbolize solidarity of Islamic Ummah: Raisi **P3**
- Iran, Saudi Arabia to reach agreement soon: Iraqi PM **P3**
- Iran Oil Show 2022 to kick off on May 13 **P4**
- Economy Ministry unveils new policy package to reform banking system **P4**
- Housing price drops 2.4% in Tehran city **P4**
- Archaeologists probe 9,000-year-old hill in northwestern Iran **P6**
- 46 Iranian puppets win national status **P6**
- Wildlife genetic resources system to be launched **P7**
- Elderly, vulnerable people to get fourth dose of Covid vaccine **P7**
- Iranian movies line up for Grand River festival **P8**
- Kati Marton's biography of Angela Merkel comes to Iranian bookstores **P8**

**Interview**

## All nuclear arms are dangerous, no matter Russia owns them or U.S.: nuclear physicist

**By Mohammad Mazhari**

TEHRAN – Expressing his worries about expansion of the Ukraine war, a nuclear physicist says all nuclear weapons are dangerous for global peace.

“All nuclear weapons are dangerous, no matter who owns them. They will destroy us if we do not eliminate them,” Frank Von Hippel tells the Tehran Times.

Many political observers are worried about the expansion of the Ukraine war as it can push nuclear powers, especially Russia and the U.S., to confront directly.

“Both the United States and the Soviet Union/Russia almost launched nuclear attacks when their early warning systems provided false information that the other country had launched nuclear missiles against them. Both countries have been led by sociopaths with authority to launch nuclear weapons – most recently Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin,” notes Hippel who is also a professor of public and international affairs emeritus with Princeton's Program on Science & Global Security.

The risk of possible nuclear attack or using biological weapons highlights the questions about the failure of attempts to decrease mass-destructive weapons.

Here is the text of the interview with Frank von Hippel: **► Page 5**

## Sound of Zionists' bones shattering can be heard: top security official

TEHRAN— Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) secretary says International Quds Day marches set a milestone in weakening the already desperate Israeli regime, noting that the sound of Zionist regime's “bones” being shattered is being heard.

Writing on his Twitter account on Saturday, Ali Shamkhani said, “Great Khomeini's call for freedom and oppression has penetrated deeper than ever into the hearts of the lovers of Islamic Revolution and the sound of the bones of international Zionism being broken can be heard louder.”

Millions of Iranians from all walks of life marched the streets on the last Friday of Ramadan to mark “International Quds Day”. The massive rallies were intended to highlight the Palestinian cause as the Islamic world's number one priority. **► Page 2**

# Will Iran-Saudi Talks Result in Agreement?

**► Page 3**

**Report**

## Sayyed Nasrallah on Israeli war games

The Secretary-General of Lebanon's Hezbollah has warned Israel against the slightest mistake it may make during the regime's expected upcoming month-long military drills.

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah says last year, “[the Israeli regime] wanted to conduct large military drills across the entire occupied territories but canceled it because of the ‘sword of al-Quds’ battle and the victory of the Palestinians.”

Sayyed Nasrallah says whilst the regime has not announced the exact start date of the maneuvers, “it seems that this year [the regime] will go ahead with [large scale military drills],” which he noted will possibly begin in the first week of May.

This means the war games will later coincide with the Lebanese elections slated for May 15.

“The [regime's] navy forces, air forces, land forces, security apparatus, internal security forces, reserve forces” will all participate, Nasrallah noted, “and will last a month, the month of maneuvers.”

Addressing the Israeli regime, the Hezbollah Chief says “today, I want to tell the Zionists, firstly, this matter does not scare us but requires us to be careful.”

“We have to always take into consideration during these types of maneuvers and this sort of readiness level the Israelis might do something stupid.”

“[the Israelis may] hit a target, kill a person, bomb [Lebanese territory]” Sayyed Nasrallah explained, “and [the Israeli regime] assumes that because we are aware Israel is in a state of readiness and conducting large scale drills we will be afraid and step back.” **► Page 5**

## Iran's contingent departs for 2021 Deaflympics

TEHRAN – Iran's contingent departed Tehran on Saturday to compete at the 24th Summer Deaflympics in Caxias do Sul, Brazil.

In the Games scheduled from May 1 to May 15, the largest contingent ever from Iran in the Deaflympics will participate in athletics, beach volleyball, football, judo, karate, shooting, taekwondo and wrestling.

“Success in Silence” is Iran's official motto in the Games.

Originally, the latest edition of the Summer Deaflympics were scheduled to take place from December 5 to 21 last year but it was postponed to May 2022 in January 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 24th edition of the competition, which claims to be the world's oldest multi-sport event after the Olympic Games having first been held in Paris in 1924, is anticipated to involved 6,500 people, including teams, technical commissions, and deaf athletes from over 90 countries.

The Deaflympics also known as Deaflympiad (previously called World Games for the Deaf, and International Games for the Deaf) are a periodic series of multi-sport events sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at which Deaf athletes compete at an elite level.

Unlike the athletes in other IOC-sanctioned events (the Olympics, the Paralympics, and the Special Olympics), athletes cannot be guided by sounds (such as starting pistols, bullhorn commands or referee whistles).



TEHRAN— As we are moving from “stone intifada” to “missile intifada,” things are looking differently for the apartheid regime of Israel, which is on the verge of decline.

As the Israeli forces try to put more pressure on the Palestinian citizens residing in the West Bank, the righteous struggle for

freedom among Palestinian fighters have gone to a new level.

In this regard, the Israeli regime's army announced early on Saturday that a shooting had taken place near the Ariel settlement bloc in the north of the West Bank.

According to the regime's Channel 13, a security guard in the Ariel settlement was shot dead by two armed Palestinians.

The Israeli army radio dubbed the operation as a “security incident,” stating that it is not over and that the security forces of the regime were looking for the perpetrators. **► Page 2**

## Annual exports from mining sector up 91%

TEHRAN – Iran exported around \$10.532 billion of minerals and mining products in the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), registering an increase of 91 percent year on year, an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said.

According to Head of TPO's Minerals and Mining Industries Desk Elaheh Mokri, the ex-

ports amounted to 9.15 million tons in weight, showing a 12-percent rise compared to the year 1399.

Steel ingot with \$4.156 billion worth of exports was the top exported item in the previous year, followed by long steel products with \$1.621 billion, copper cathodes with \$1.357 billion, aluminum ingots with \$607

million, and flat-rolled steel products with \$494 million, zinc ingots with \$477 million, iron ore and concentrate with \$280 million and sponge iron with \$238 million worth of exports, she said.

The above-mentioned products with a total value of \$9.230 billion accounted for approximately 87.6 percent of the **► Page 4**

**Report**

## From oil slicks to trawling: Persian Gulf under pressure

**By Faranak Bakhtiari**

TEHRAN – The Persian Gulf has been affected by economic, political, and industrial goals over the past centuries and its ecosystem is at the knife-point of many environmental threats, the most important of which are oil spills and trawling.

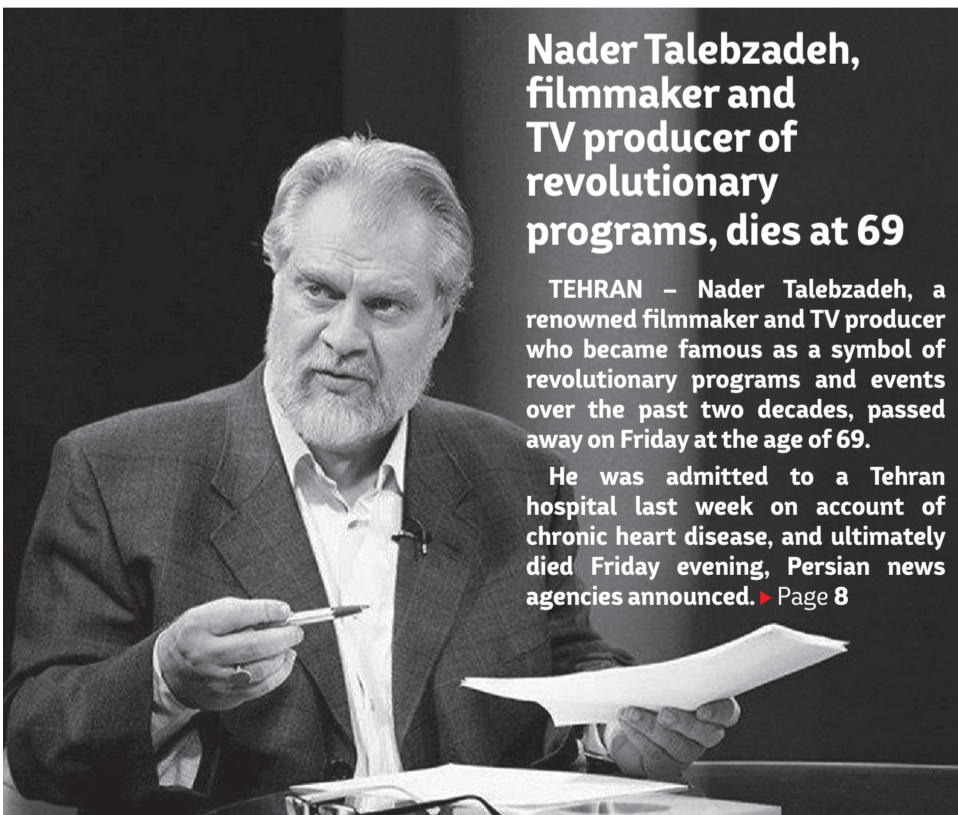
Iran has been known as one of the most strategic places in the world for thousands of years. Much of this strategic importance is due to the existence of one of the most important, richest, and most controversial water bodies in the world.

The “Persian Gulf”, which is commemorated annually on April 30, 2005, has an undeniable environmental, economic, social, and political value not only in Iran but also in the world. **► Page 7**

## Nader Talebzadeh, filmmaker and TV producer of revolutionary programs, dies at 69

TEHRAN – Nader Talebzadeh, a renowned filmmaker and TV producer who became famous as a symbol of revolutionary programs and events over the past two decades, passed away on Friday at the age of 69.

He was admitted to a Tehran hospital last week on account of chronic heart disease, and ultimately died Friday evening, Persian news agencies announced. **► Page 8**



## Tribal festival aims to lift Lorestan tourism

TEHRAN – Lorestan is getting ready to host its fifth edition of the tribal festival aimed to help develop tourism across the western Iranian province.

“The 5th festival of ethnic culture will be held at the historical complex of Falak-ol-Aflak from May 8 to 12,” CHTN quoted the provincial tourism chief as saying on Saturday.

“Considered as a great opportunity to tap (the

coronavirus-battered) tourism, the event will put the spotlight on traditional music and rituals, dishes, handicrafts, and souvenirs,” Seyyed Amin Qasemi explained.

The event has provided special booths and stalls for tourism insiders and tour operators as well, the official noted.

Qasemi said last August that Lorestan's tour-

ism had suffered a loss of some 5.3 trillion rials since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Many measures have been taken in the tourism sector to minimize the damage caused by the virus, including the postponement of the payment of taxes including income tax and VAT in several installments, Qasemi said. **► Page 6**



REMEMBER  
PALESTINE  
by Tehran Times

## Revolution in the West Bank: Israel unsafer than ever!

From page **1** ► The shooters apparently used improvised Carlo submachine guns.

Ariel and other settlements of the area issued a lockdown order over fears the Palestinian fighters may retaliate again.

A large number of Israeli occupation forces began to block off roads as police and the military launched a massive manhunt for the fighters. Confusion started to dominate as local security officials stated that they did not know where the vehicle headed after the attack.

The Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, known as Hamas, praised the operation in the heart of the West Bank, saying it was a “heroic operation” and a “natural response to the crimes of the occupation and its settlers.”

The Israeli army has stepped up its West Bank activities in an attempt to crack down on the Palestinian worshippers.

The subsequent strikes sparked by the Israeli troops left at least 25 Palestinians dead, including many innocent fasting civilians.

The correspondent of Al-Mayadeen News Network in the occupied Palestine reported that the occupation forces closed the entrance to the Salafist area after the incident.

The director of the Al-Mayadeen Network office in the occupied Palestine also said that the Ariel settlement was heavily guarded and that shots were fired at the town's security forces from a distance.

He added that the selection of this Zionist settlement bloc in the West Bank to carry out the operation was intended to present a great security challenge for the occupying Israeli forces.

The “security incident” comes as the Israeli army announced on Thursday morning that six battalions of reserve forces had been called in to replace normal forces along the retaining wall

and the West Bank contact line.

According to the Israeli military spokesman, this decision was taken after the assessment of Aviv Kochavi, the chief of the joint staff of the Israeli army, from the current situation, and the mentioned forces will be present in the said areas for at least three weeks.

With a reference to the start of the fiercest wave of Palestinian reprisals, Israeli paper Yedioth Ahronoth wrote that the Israeli sense of security has reached its lowest level since Operation Barrier Wall in 2002.

Haaretz, another Israeli media outlet, described the recent series of resistance operations in the occupied territories as a “strategic event,” writing that the Israeli regime's cabinet did not expect such operations from the Palestinian fighters.

According to Israel's Channel 14, 15 Israeli soldiers have been killed in just over the last 40 days.

The channel admitted that this is the most intense wave of Palestinian operations against Israeli forces in recent years.

A spokesman for Hamas said on Saturday morning that the operation in the Ariel settlement reiterates that the new wave of revolution is spreading throughout the West Bank.

“Operation Ariel emphasizes that the occupiers’ measures against the insistence of the Palestinian youth are counteracting,” he added.

To remember the struggle of the Palestinians to liberate their lands, the Tehran Times is hosting its first online event. The event, titled “Remember Palestine”, is to remind everyone of the long-driven struggle of the Palestinians for their most fundamental rights including their mother lands.

## Sound of Zionists’ bones shattering can be heard: top security official

From page **1** ► In view of the analysts the large rallies were synonymous with a referendum to put an end to the apartheid against the Palestinians by the regime of Israel.

This great show of support for Palestinians came as Israel's racist approach toward Palestinian worshippers has angered people

across the world.

The marches proved that people's heart regardless of where they live beat for the oppressed Palestinians. Moreover, the rallies showed that people shun occupation, suppression, and racism.

Also, this is a lesson from history that injustice cannot exist forever.

## Quds Force chief lauds triumphant flight of drones over occupied lands



TEHRAN- The chief of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force has hailed successful flights by two unidentified drones over the Israeli-occupied territory, which the Tel Aviv regime attempted to keep hidden.

Esmail Qaani broke the story while addressing Quds Day marchers on the last Friday of the fasting month of Ramadan in the northeastern city of Mashhad.

The successful operation, according to Brigadier General Qaani, took place a few months ago.

“Zionist entity sent 41 fighter jets and reconnaissance aircraft to intercept the two drones but they failed,” he stated.

The drones put Israel on “high alert,” but the Zionist regime “did not disclose the truth of what happened” and subsequently lied to its people by claiming to have performed surprise drills, the IRGC Quds Force commander stated.

“The regime was not man enough to tell the truth about the drone operation, where the drones came from, what they belonged to and what they were supposed to do,” Qaani said. “They lied to their own people; they said they were conducting

drills.”

Iran has made significant advances in its military sector over the last few decades. The Islamic Republic has succeeded in producing missiles, drones, planes, tanks, submarines, and other military hardware.

Israel's minister of military affairs confirmed Iran's drone capability in September 2021, asserting the Islamic Republic had “accurate” and “destructive” drones capable of crossing thousands of kilometers.

In his address on Friday, Qaani also said the splendid Quds Day rallies will continue and that the resistance front would become stronger day by day until the occupying regime was overthrown.

“It is better for the Zionists to return to their original homelands in Europe or any other place from which they came before it is too late. Israel is heading towards extinction,” General Qaani underlined.

Imam Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is respected as a spiritual leader by Muslims all over the globe, and International Quds Day is one of his legacies. Ayatollah Khomeini called the last Friday of Ramadan Quds Day in 1979, shortly after leading an Islamic Revolution that deposed the U.S.-backed regime of Shah in Iran.

Hundreds of thousands of people stage rallies every year in different corners of the world in support of the Palestinians in their struggle to liberate their lands occupied by the Zionist regime.

# Iran’s UN envoy: Unilateralism impedes development

TEHRAN- Majid Takht Ravanchi, the Iranian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has stated that unilateralism by some global powers has hindered efforts for economic development in underdeveloped countries, irangov.ir reported on Friday.

Speaking at the 2022 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development in New York, which ran from April 25 to 28, Takht Ravanchi

underscored that the international financial and trade system is experiencing more problems than ever before because of unilateralism.

Iran's envoy underlined that the widespread attack on multilateralism has created new obstacles for both “international trade” and the “international financial system.”

“Unfortunately, while the international community reaffirms its commitment to strengthening multilateral cooperation, there are still a few countries that have opted for the failed path of unilateralism, even during such a dangerous and unprecedented situation,” Takht Ravanchi noted.

“It is undeniable that COVID-19 and unilateralism have substantially added to the financial difficulties and burdens of developing countries,” he added.

“On the one hand, developing countries must devote much of their scarce development resources to address the repercussions of the pandemic. On the other hand, some countries, including my own, also have to deal with the grave consequence of illegal UCMs (unilateral coercive measures) and unilateral sanctions imposed



by those countries that claim to be the champions of human rights,” Iran's top diplomat to the UN pointed out.

Takht Ravanchi went on to say that strengthening support for poor nations and enhancing access to various resources has never been more critical in helping them to not only recover better and faster, but also to help them achieve their long-term development goals.

“The embargo policies by some major players cast doubt on the effectiveness of multilateral financing and trading systems. The international community should therefore ensure that the trade and financial system, as well as financing for development in no way, become hostage to illegal unilateral agendas,” he added.

Every sovereign state has the right to participate in an inclusive and non-discriminatory multilateral economic system, according to the Iranian envoy.

“The World Trade Organization, where the Islamic Republic of Iran has been denied membership for more than two decades, is now a target of harsh unilateral behavior which puts the whole international trading system at risk,” he underscored.

Knowledge transfer and capacity building are among the

top concerns for poor countries in achieving sustainable development, Takht Ravanchi said. Removing barriers to technology transfer is critical, he added.

“The international community should take all necessary measures to urge developed countries to lift artificial trade bans and remove restricted export measures on high-tech goods to developing countries,” he concluded.

Takht Ravanchi had previously stated in December that U.S. economic sanctions against his country and other countries obstruct the multilateralism required to combat the spread of coronavirus.

He asserted that the U.S. economic sanctions run contrary to the multilateralism needed to combat the coronavirus, and that the lack of strong international action to challenge such unlawful actions has left the subject of sustainable development “meaningless.”

“COVID-19 — as a wake-up call for the whole world — reminds us once again that the development, welfare and prosperity of all human beings are interconnected and interdependent. However, as the entire world continues to work together to contain the Covid-19, we witness that the U.S.

continues to impose unilateral coercive measures, including illegal economic sanctions, on a number of countries including those that are greatly suffering from the grave consequences of the pandemic,” Iran's UN envoy said.

“These illegal acts, on the one hand, and the lack of decisive action on the part of the international community to counter them, on the other, have turned the pivotal ideal of sustainable development, namely ‘no one should be left behind’, into a purely decorative and meaningless claim,” he regretted.

Takht Ravanchi emphasized that a global consensus is required for combating the COVID-19, saying, “International crises and challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and unilateralism, cannot be defeated without a genuine collective response and joint efforts of all countries under the auspices of multilateralism, cooperation and solidarity and in conformity with the spirit of international collective coordination.”

Since the onset of the devastating coronavirus pandemic, there have been mounting calls inside and outside the U.S. for Washington to suspend its unilateral sanctions against other countries, which have thrown a kink in global attempts to contain the virus.

The United Nations, the European Union, and human rights organizations, as well as a number of American senators and politicians, have pressed the Biden administration to lift sanctions against Iran, Venezuela, Syria, Cuba, and North Korea, among others.

## Even with deal on the table nuclear talks freeze: analysis

TEHRAN - Negotiations to restore the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have reached a complete standstill, Politico said in a commentary on April 28.

Despite having a roughly 27-page agreement virtually ready to go, diplomats are still hung up over one final sticking point between the U.S. and Iran: The status of a powerful branch of the Iranian military, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC).

The U.S. placed the group on its “Foreign Terrorist Organization” list in 2019, part of President Donald Trump’s “maximum pressure” campaign after pulling out of the nuclear deal, which limited Iran's nuclear program in exchange for terminating economic and financial sanctions.

Now the issue has been dragged into the final stages of long-running talks to revive the nuclear deal under President Joe Biden. The topic is of such immense political sensitivity in both Washington and Tehran that a compromise has proved impossible and now seems increasingly unrealistic.

“The U.S. position has been that unless Iran agrees to take certain steps to assuage security concerns beyond the JCPOA, Washington will not lift the terror designation, which itself is beyond the JCPOA,” a U.S. official familiar with the issue told POLITICO.

And that stance is not changing, the official added. The Biden administration is facing bipartisan political resistance at home to not strip the terrorist tag. Because of all these factors, the official said, “The Biden administration is highly unlikely at this point to drop the designation in the context of the JCPOA talks.”

The stalemate has made an Iran nuclear deal revival, seen as imminent only a few months back, a distant prospect. Talks also briefly ran aground recently over a demand from Russia — an original signatory on the agreement — that it receives sanctions protections for any future business with Iran.

Now, the terrorist label appears to be the tallest hurdle.

Washington initially offered to delist

the IRGC in exchange for Iran committing to eschew retaliation against former U.S. officials deemed responsible for decisions like killing IRGC commander General Qassem Soleimani in January 2020.

But Iran refused to make such reciprocal concessions.

Enrique Mora, the European Union official coordinating the indirect talks between the U.S. and Iran, has been transmitting proposals between the two sides over the past seven weeks in vain and even engaged in shuttle diplomacy between Tehran and Washington last month in an effort to achieve a resolution.

Still, the talks have come to an effective halt.

While Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell have discussed the possibility of another personal meeting in a recent phone call, no get-together has materialized.

The Iranian foreign minister has told Borrell that the “U.S. administration needs to have the courage to correct the past wrong policies of the White House. There is no doubt in the will of Iranian government to reach a good, strong durable agreement.”

In the meantime, the tide in Washington has been turning against taking the Iranian military group off the terrorist list, narrowing the window for the U.S. to resolve the issue.

A growing number of Republican senators, as well as some key senators from Biden's Democratic Party, are putting pressure on the White House to not budge.

Trump imposed the terrorist tag on the IRGC amid numerous other sanctions not related to the country's nuclear program.

Numerous foreign policy analysts argued the pile of non-nuclear sanctions was aimed at scuttling future attempts to return to the nuclear deal — a prediction that now appears prescient, with the odds growing higher the talks could fail. One potential option may be an agreement to discuss the delisting in a separate, follow-up negotiation after the nuclear deal is successfully revived.

Nonproliferation advocates are fretting about the negotiations permanently falling

apart.

“If prospects to restore the JCPOA collapse, the nuclear crisis will escalate and the risk of conflict dramatically increases,” said Kelsey Davenport, director of nonproliferation policy at the Washington-based Arms Control Association. “Restoring the nuclear deal is the only good option for staving off a nuclear crisis.”

Iran has always maintained that its nuclear program is peaceful and that it has no intention of producing an atomic bomb. Numerous reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations nuclear watchdog, have confirmed this.

Analysts and government officials have been warning that time is running out to restore the Iran nuclear deal. In an open letter dated April 26, over 40 former top European officials have urged the United States and Iran to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, warning that strategic implications of failure to do so “would be grave and profound.”

In response to illegal sanctions, Iran limited inspections by the IAEA.

“While talks remain stalled, Iran's nuclear program continues to grow unchecked,” Davenport claimed.

The draft agreement, forged in EU-mediated negotiations in the Austrian capital over the past year, contains all elements necessary for bringing the U.S. and Iran back into full compliance with the original 2015 deal. It rolls back sanctions on Iran in return for strict limits on its nuclear program.

Highly technical details have all been agreed on in painstaking talks between diplomats from Britain, France, Germany, Iran, Russia, China and the U.S.

“I can tell you that people who invested themselves heavily in this negotiation are frustrated because a very good agreement that benefits all the parties, as well as the non-proliferation architecture, is being taken hostage to bilateral questions that have nothing to do with the JCPOA or nuclear issues,” one senior Western official, who took part in the talks, told POLITICO.

# Will Iran-Saudi talks result in agreement?

TEHRAN – After more than a year of security talks, Iran and Saudi Arabia are moving closer to reaching an agreement on restoring diplomatic relations. But the Saudis' insistence on linking the talks to the Yemen war could delay the agreement.

Following the successful conclusion of the last round of talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the outlook for restoration of the diplomatic ties between Tehran and Riyadh looks brighter than a few weeks ago.

Two key officials from Iran and Iraq with direct knowledge of the talks have voiced optimism that the talks would result in a breakthrough in the future.

Iran's outgoing ambassador to Iraq, Iraj Masjedi, who will soon be replaced by Mohammad Kazem Al Sadeq, said that the fifth round of Iran-Saudi talks hosted by Baghdad on April 21 resulted in the two sides approving a roadmap for their future interactions.

"In the last round of negotiations, it was important that the two sides have an agreed framework for the future which came to fruition. And this is per se a positive point that will pave the future way for both sides," Masjedi said.

According to Masjedi, the Iranian and Saudi negotiators discussed during their last round of talks a number of issues such as "confidence-building" measures, bilateral cooperation and measures



such as Hajj pilgrimage and the reopening of embassies, and "regional and international matters."

It seems that the two sides have made progress toward resuming their ties as it is expected that the next round of talks would be held at a diplomatic and political level, not at a security level as it was in the past.

The Iraqi prime minister, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, who played a pivotal role in facilitating the talks, has said that he expects that the talks will end in an agreement soon.

"The brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic are dealing with the dialogue file with high responsibility and the requirements of the current situation in the region, and we are confident that the understanding will soon be reached, God willing,"

al-Kadhimi said in remarks to Iraq's Al-Sabah newspaper.

He added, "There is a real and wide breakthrough in the relations between all the countries of the region."

But the breakthrough in Iran-Saudi relations seems to be depending, in one way or another, on the war in Yemen, where Saudi Arabia accuses Iran of militarily supporting Ansarullah.

Saudi Arabia is asking that Iran put pressure on Ansarullah to reach a political solution to the Yemen war, according to Arab press reports.

The London-based Al-Arab newspaper cited Arab circles on Saturday as saying that "the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran requires Tehran to take practical steps to narrow the

confidence gap, and among these steps is to pressure" Ansarullah "to reach a realistic political settlement to the Yemeni crisis that erupted eight years ago."

The Yemen issue disrupted the talks for nine months in the third round of talks, according to Seyed Reza Sadr al-Hosseini, a leading Iranian expert on the West Asia region.

The expert told Jahan News website that in the third round of talks, Saudi Arabia presented "illogical demands about non-interference in the affairs of the Ansarullah movement." In reply to that demand, Iran gave a "clear and negative" response, he added.

As a result, Saudi Arabia delayed the talks for nine months, Sadr al-Hosseini said.

Iran has said it does not dictate any decisions on Yemen and respect the choice the Ansarullah movement makes. Iran considers Ansarullah as a "mature and respectable group which represents large swaths of the Yemeni people," according to the Iranian expert.

Therefore, if Saudi Arabia continues to refrain from recognizing Ansarullah as a Yemeni independent group and asks Iran to wield influence there, a deal in Baghdad would be unlikely. Because Iran is not likely to put pressure on the government in Sanaa. Iran has said that it supports a Yemeni-Yemeni settlement to the crisis.

## President receives families of Razavi shrine martyrs

TEHRAN – President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi met on Friday with the families of two clerics who were martyred in a terrorist stabbing attack in the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, Razavi province, earlier this month.

Clerics Mohammad Aslani and Sadeq Daraei were martyred on April 5 at the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) by a knife man.

While expressing satisfaction with this meeting on Quds Day and the holy month of Ramadan, Raisi said, "Our martyrs are all dear, and only the type of their martyrdom is different."

Raisi pointed out, "The manner of martyrdom of martyrs Aslani and Daraei was such that many people were jealous of these martyrs. They were martyred in a holy place, on a holy day and while they were of fast," according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

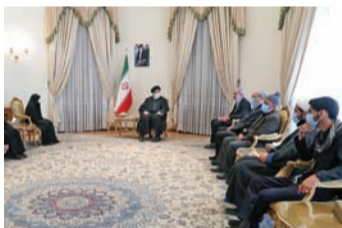
Emphasizing the need to introduce the personalities of Daraei and Aslani to the people, Raisi said, "The names and memories of these martyrs and their way of life must remain so that we can see how they grew up."

Ayatollah Raisi added, "According to what the Supreme Leader of the Revolution said, just as Martyr Soleimani is more influential than General Soleimani, these martyrs will be more influential than before."

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 judicial department of Khorasan Razavi province, announced that the perpetrator of the crime is the only accused in the file.

In a statement on April 10, 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 case, 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 case will be decided on urgently after being sent to the special room of the Revolutionary Court.

Iran's Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib highlighted the motives behind the knife attack, saying the terrorist attack was aimed to sow division among the Iranian people.

During his meeting with Ayatollah Kazem Noormofidi, representative of the Leader in Golestan Province and the Friday prayer's imam of Gorgan, 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."

solving its problems and zeroing out its crises."

He pointed out that Iraq has a direct interest in achieving understandings between the countries of the region and achieving regional stability.

"And because we have good relations with the two parties and with various regional and international parties, we were able to create a positive dialogue atmosphere on Iraqi soil, many of which were not announced," al-Kadhimi said.

## IRAN IN FOCUS

MAY 1, 2022

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

3

## SPORTS

### Iran futsal team to play Argentina, official says

TEHRAN – Iran national futsal team will play Argentina in a friendly match, Ehsan Osouli, member of football federation's board of directors, said.



The Iranian team prepare for the 2022 AFC Futsal Asian Cup which will start in Kuwait in September.

"We've negotiated with Argentina futsal committee and have reached an initial agreement with them," Osouli said.

"The futsal committee has also negotiated with Spain and Portugal futsal committees but the friendly matches have not been yet finalized," he added.

### Kuanysh win Asian Women's Club Volleyball C'ship, Barij come fourth

TEHRAN – Kazakhstan's Kuanysh claimed the title of the 2022 Asian Women's Club Volleyball Championship. Kuanysh defeated their compatriot Altay 3-2 (24-26, 21-25, 30-28, 25-23, 15-6) in the final match.

Barij Essence finished in fourth place after losing to Thailand's Diamond Food 3-1 (20-25, 25-15, 25-11, 25-21) in the bronze medal match.

The Iranian team suffered four losses and earned two wins in the tournament.

The tournament was held in Semey, Kazakhstan, from April 24 to 30.

Japanese volleyball team JT Marvelous withdrew from the tournament due to the COVID-19 infection among their team members.

### Saeid Marouf on Paykan's radar

TEHRAN – Iran setter Saeid Maroud has reached an agreement with volleyball club Paykan.

Marouf, who has recently extended his deal with Fenerbahce, will join the Iranian club for the 2022 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship.

The competition will be held in Tehran from May 15 to 20.

Iran middle blocker Mohammad Mousavi has previously reached an agreement to join the team.

Paykan Tehran holds the record for most victories, winning the competition seven times. Teams from Iran have won the tournament 15 times, the most for any nation. The current Asian champion is Iran's Foolad Sirjan, who defeated Qatar's Al Arabi 3-1 in the final of the 2021 event.

### Foolad to play Al Faisaly in 2022 ACL Round of 16

TEHRAN – Iranian football team Foolad will meet Saudi Arabia's Al Faisaly in the 2022 AFC Champions League Round of 16.

The match has been scheduled for February 3, 2023.

Qatari teams Al Duhail and Al Rayyan will lock horns in the stage.

Saudi Arabia's Al Shabab will face Uzbekistan's Nasaf Qarshi and Saudi giant Al Hilal play Shabab Al-Ahli of the UAE in the West Region.

### China replace Russia in 2022 VNL

TEHRAN – Instead of Russia, China will participate in the 2022 Volleyball Nations League (VNL).

Because the Russian men's and women's national teams aren't permitted to compete in international and continental events until further notice, the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) had to find their replacements.

All 16 participating teams have been confirmed for the prestigious event.

The FIVB has confirmed that the China men's national volleyball team will return to the Volleyball Nations League (VNL) 2022 line-up with the competition set to get underway this June.

China's return follows their absence from the men's VNL 2021 due to the logistics challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

China joins a world-class VNL line-up of 16 teams for an incredible celebration of volleyball in iconic locations around the world.

The VNL 2022 will kick off in just over one month with the men's matches in Ottawa, Canada and Brasilia, Brazil on 7 June.

China has also qualified for the upcoming FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship 2022.

### Iran football jersey awarded to President Raisi

TEHRAN – Iran national football team jersey was awarded to President Ebrahim Raisi Friday night.

In a ceremony attended by Iran sports officials, Mirshad Majedi, acting president of Iran football federation, awarded No. 8 shirt to the president.

Raisi said the government will provide the football federation financial aid to strengthen the National Team in the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Team Melli has been drawn in Group B along with England, the US, and one of Ukraine, Scotland or Wales.

### Dutch star Abdel-Aziz linked with Paykan

TEHRAN – The Netherlands volleyball team opposite spiker Nimir Abdel-Aziz has been linked with a move to Iranian volleyball club Paykan.

Paykan is going to strengthen for the 2022 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship.

The competition will be held in Tehran from May 15 to 20.

Paykan Tehran holds the record for most victories, winning the competition seven times. Teams from Iran have won the tournament 15 times, the most for any nation. The current Asian champion is Iran's Foolad Sirjan, who defeated Qatar's Al Arabi 3-1 in the final of the 2021 event.

Paykan volleyball club has been also linked with French outside hitter Earvin N'Gapeth.

Marcel Hug wins 2022 Laureus Award

Legendary wheelchair racer Marcel Hug topped a record-breaking year with his career's second Laureus World Sportsperson of the Year with Disability award.

The announcement was made on Sunday, 24 April during a digital ceremony broadcast from Seville, Spain. Hug received the award on his training track in Switzerland from road racing cyclist Fabian Cancellara.

"I'm absolutely speechless. I just want to say thank you so, so much for this award. It's a great honour," Hug said after being presented with the statuette.

"Especially I want to say thank you to the Laureus Academy who had chosen that I receive this award and I also want to say thank you to all the nominees. For me it was a great honour to be nominated together with all these athletes. I'm really happy, very proud."

Nicknamed the "Silver Bullet" for his trademark silver helmet and speed, Hug achieved a golden sweep in his four events at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games – 800m, 1500m, 5000m and the marathon in the competitive T54 wheelchair racing class.

## Quds Day demonstrations symbolize solidarity of Islamic Ummah: Raisi

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has said the demonstrations held on the occasion of World Quds Day symbolize the solidarity of the Islamic Ummah with Palestine.

President Raisi considered the liberation of Quds based on the promise of God and the Prophet of Islam (PBUH).

Raisi who attended a large demonstrations of World Quds Day on Friday morning said, "The message of this presence is that today it is the Palestinian young people and teenagers and the Resistance who have taken the initiative in the field of action and are determining the fate of the long resistance of the Palestinian people".

Noting that the future of the land of Palestine will be determined by these young warriors, the president said, "We consider the liberation of Al-Quds certain by the promise of God and the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH), and this great movement that we are witnessing today in the form of demonstrations is a symbol of the solidarity of the Islamic Ummah, which will lead to the destruction of the Zionist Regime".

Millions of Iranians from all walks of life marched the streets on the last Friday of Ramadan to mark World Quds Day. The massive rallies were intended to highlight the Palestinian cause as the Islamic world's number one priority.

Rallies were held in hundreds of cities in Iran, such as Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Tabriz.

Although the rallies were supposed to begin at 10: a.m. nationwide, people flooded the streets at 9: a.m.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei addressed the people on Friday in a live televised speech.

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to many developments inside and outside Palestine forcing Israel to hunker down and adopt a defensive position instead of an offensive one. "The 'unbreakable



will' in the Palestinian arena and throughout West Asia is replacing the so-called 'invincible army' of the Zionists. This criminal army was forced to switch its offensive line to the defensive one," he said.

The Leader noted, "In the political arena, we see the most important supporter of the usurping entity [Israel], I mean America, suffering successive defeats: a defeat in the war in Afghanistan, a defeat in exercising maximum pressure on Islamic Iran, a defeat in front of the Asian powers, a defeat in controlling the global economy, and a defeat in its internal management where there is the emergence of a deep rift in this administration."

The situation in Israel is also moving on a trajectory of decline, he said. "The usurping entity is floundering in the political and military arena within a complex web of problems," Ayatollah Khamenei asserted.

The Leader pointed to a significant change in the national mood of Palestinians inside and outside their territories. They now support a military confrontation with Israel, according to Ayatollah Khamenei.

"Polls indicate that nearly seventy percent of the Palestinians in the lands of forty-eight and sixty-seven, and in the diaspora camps, are calling on the leaders of Palestine for a military confrontation against the usurping entity. This is an important phenomenon, as it means the complete readiness of the Palestinians to confront the usurping entity. It also means the public is giving green light to the jihadist factions to exercise their role whenever they deem the time necessary," he stated.

He made the remarks in an interview with the Iraqi Al-Sabah newspaper.

The prime minister added, "There is a real and wide breakthrough in the relations between all the countries of the region, supported by a firm conviction and sound intentions that the future of the region depends on starting to view it as a system of converging and not intersecting interests and this system cannot devote itself to economic construction and catch up with global development without



## Annual exports from mining sector up 91%

From page 1 ► total exports of metals and minerals in the year 1400, the official said.

Having 81 different types of minerals, Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries across the globe. In this regard, the Iranian government has been seriously pursuing several programs for promoting the mining sector as a major contributor to the country's economic growth.

Iran's proven iron ore reserves are 2.7 billion tons, while the country's copper reserves are 2.6 billion tons. The country also has 11 million tons of zinc reserves.

The total proven reserves of Iran's mines are estimated at about 60 billion tons, which is expected to reach more than 100 billion tons with the implementation of the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's exploration programs over 500,000 square kilometers of new mineral zones.

Despite the country's huge potential in this area, due to some issues like the lack



of necessary machinery and equipment and the lack of access to financial resources and foreign investment because of the U.S. sanctions, the Iranian mining sector has been struggling to operate at its maximum capacity over the past few years.

So, the government programs for promoting this industry are mainly focused on relying on domestic sources for helping the mining sector overcome its current problems and hit its ideal targets.

## Iran Oil Show 2022 to kick off on May 13

TEHRAN – The 26th International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition of Iran (Iran Oil Show 2022) is scheduled to kick off on May 13 at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, Shana reported.

As reported, all Covid-19 related permits have been obtained from the National Headquarters to Combat Coronavirus Pandemic and the four-day exhibit will be held in full compliance with health protocols and standards.

Iran Oil Show is among the most significant

oil and gas events in the world in terms of the number of participants and its diversity.

The event covers a variety of oil industry areas, including upstream industries, universities and science centers, start-ups, and science and technology parks, petrochemicals and related industries, gas and related industries, pipes and tubes, valves, refining and distribution and related industries, rotary machines, as well as products exporters, and etc.

## East Azarbaijan's annual agricultural export stands at \$307m



TEHRAN- Agricultural products valued at \$307 million were exported from East Azarbaijan province, in the northwest of Iran, during the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), the head of the province's Agriculture Department announced.

Akbar Fathi said that agricultural products accounted for over 22 percent of the province's exports in the previous year.

He named Iraq, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Romania, Turkey, Serbia, and Russia as the major destinations of the agricultural

products exported from East Azarbaijan in the past year.

As previously announced by an official with the customs department of the province, the value of export from East Azarbaijan rose 16 percent in the past year from its preceding year.

Leili Orangi said that commodities worth \$1.654 billion were exported from the province in the previous year.

In terms of the weight, the exports indicate nine percent annual growth, she added.

The official named carpets and handicrafts, sweets and chocolates, glass and glass products, steel and cast iron, objects made of plastic materials, minerals and stones, nuts, petrochemical products, machinery and mechanical devices, components and parts, leather and shoes as the major exported items, and Turkey, Iraq, Armenia, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Georgia, Bulgaria, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Italy as the main export destinations.

# Economy Ministry unveils new policy package to reform banking system

TEHRAN – Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi unveiled a new policy package for managing the country's banking sector on Saturday, IRNA reported.

Following the motto of the new year which is "knowledge-based and job-creating production", the mentioned package includes policies and strategies that are mainly focused on directing the country's banks toward productive sectors including knowledge-based production.

Reforming the banking system, promoting financial discipline, diversification of financing methods, improving the quality of credit institutions' interactions

with the people, facilitating the access of production units to banking resources, and strengthening self-regulatory and supervisory structures in the banking network is also among the major goals of the said package.

All the country's government-owned banks have been notified by the ministry about the new policies and strategies for the banking sector.

Based on the mentioned package, banks are prohibited from investing in financial markets like foreign currencies, gold, coins, and real estate.

This means that the country's banking system shall refrain from any activities including



the purchase of land, and construction of commercial, office, residential, or shopping complexes in ways other than acquisitions with the aim of liquidating the facilities granted to the owners.

The package also emphasizes that in order to make optimal use of allocated resources and to manage resources and expenditures and direct bank facilities towards profitable and value-added activities, credit institutions are obliged to implement appropriate procedures in such a way that at the end of each year, the ratio of the balance of the granted facilities to the balance of the deposits (after deducting legal

deposits) should be at least 80 percent.

Unfortunately, banking regulations in Iran have not been amended since [Iranian calendar year] 1362 (March 1983-1984), therefore experts and those active in the economic sectors believe that there are currently some ambiguities in the banking system, so its reform and amendment is very vital and important.

Back in 2019, former Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjasand had announced that a plan for reforming the country's banking system was prepared by the ministry, however, the plan was not implemented properly.

## Exports from Isfahan's knowledge-based firms reach \$54m in a year

TEHRAN – Head of Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT) said knowledge-based companies based in Isfahan Province managed to export \$54 million worth of products and services in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to Jafar Qeysari, knowledge-based companies based in ISTT accounted for three percent of the province's total exports and 10 percent of its non-metallic exports, IRNA reported.

About 612 startups and knowledge-based companies are located in Isfahan Science and Technology Town, Qeysari said.

He noted that the export of products and services of Isfahan Province's knowledge-based companies has increased 10 times compared to the last three years.

Medical equipment, agricultural and livestock machinery, communication, and information technology services, software and equipment, and industrial machinery and components such as high-pressure tanks and compressors are the main items exported by the mentioned companies, the official said.



The value of export from Isfahan Province rose 56 percent in the past Iranian calendar year compared to the previous year, according to a provincial official.

Rasoul Kouhestani-Pajouh, the director-general of Isfahan Customs Department, announced that 2.151 million tons of products worth \$1.355 billion were exported from the province in the past year, indicating also 14 percent growth in terms of weight.

He named iron and steel, petrochemicals, carpets, and dairy products as the major items exported from the province, and Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Armenia as

the major export destinations in the previous year.

As previously announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran's Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 38 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400, as compared to its previous year.

Alireza Moqadasi put the country's non-oil trade at 162 million tons worth \$100 billion in the past year.

He said that Iran exported 122 million tons of non-oil products worth \$48 billion in the previous year, which was \$14 billion (41 percent) more than the figure for the preceding year.

The country's non-oil trade record in 1400 was reached while the toughest sanctions were imposed on Iran, but thanks to God and the efforts of entrepreneurs, producers, and the cooperation of foreign trade-related organizations, a historical record was achieved in the past year which was unprecedented in recent decades, the official underlined.

## Housing price drops 2.4% in Tehran city



TEHRAN- Average housing price fell 2.4 percent in the capital Tehran during the first Iranian calendar month Farvardin (ended on April 20), compared to its previous month, according to

a report by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

Based on the CBI data, the average price for one square meter of a residential unit in Tehran stood at 342.7 million

rials (about \$1,228) during the mentioned month.

The average housing price in the said month also increased 16.9 percent in comparison to the same month in the previous fiscal year.

As reported, the number of real estate deals stood at 3,400 in the capital city in the first month of this year, falling 49.9 percent from the previous month, while increasing 63.7 percent from the same month of the past year.

As previously reported by the CBI, the average housing price rose 16 percent in the capital

Tehran during the last month of the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), compared to the same month in the preceding year.

Based on the CBI data, the average price for one square meter of a residential unit in Tehran stood at 351.2 million rials (about \$1,377) during the last month of the past year, up 6.2 percent from its previous month, and 16 percent from the same month of the preceding year.

Housing prices in Iran have been constantly rising over the past three years due to various internal and external factors.

## TEDPIX rises 1,000 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 1,060 points on Saturday (the first day of Iranian calendar week).

The index closed at 1.522 million points, as over 8.934 billion securities worth 50.483 trillion rials (about \$180.9 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dropped 849 points, but the second market's index rose 7,169 points.

TEDPIX is expected to follow a mild upward trend in the current Iranian calendar year 1401 (started on March 21), a market analyst told IRNA on April 3.

"The capital market index experienced a significant decline in [the Iranian calendar year] 1399 (ended on March 21, 2021) and the transactions at this market also undergone some correction in the previous year. Therefore, it seems that given the relative stability of macroeconomic variables, we

will see a slight growth in the market index during the current year," Ali Teymouri said.

According to Teymouri, the main risks threatening the capital market in the current year are budget-related issues, as well as government and central bank exchange rate policies following a possible nuclear agreement.

Transparency in the economic policies of the new government, as well as the resolution of issues related to the nuclear deal, can create stable conditions for the country's economy, which can in return ensure a good outlook for the capital market, the analyst added.

In the last few months of last year, the capital market experienced some turbulence due to the ambiguities about the outcomes of the Vienna talks.

Former Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Karbasian believes that the stock market can provide the liquidity



required by the country's productive sectors to perform at full capacity, IRNA reported on April 10.

"All around the world, investor liquidity is a major source of capital for production units which is mostly provided by the banking system or the capital market, but in Iran, it [growing liquidity] is considered as an issue," Karbasian said.

Pointing to the important role of the capital market in removing barriers to production and creating the necessary

conditions for the realization of the slogan of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) which is named "Production: Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating" the official added: "There are several factors affecting the production process in the country, each of which should be considered separately."

He underlined investment as the first factor affecting production units in the country and said: "We must accept that the rate of investment in the whole country is very low and even close to zero, such a statistic indicates that investment planning has not been made at the macro level and no alternative has also been provided for this issue; Therefore, the existence of such margins has prevented the country from moving towards the development and productivity."

Considering the issues created by the U.S. sanctions in the way of attracting foreign investment, the capital market can help the development of production units in terms

of providing liquidity, and this market has a special place in this field, Karbasian added.

He pointed to the widespread presence of people in the capital market and said: "In recent years, people have become more willing to participate in the capital market and we have witnessed significant investments in this market."

"Despite the inconveniences created in the stock market over the last two years, it seems that this market has gained a special position among people compared to other investment markets, and considering the support provided by the government, we can see the strengthening of transactions in this market," the official said.

If the government continues to strengthen and support the capital market, it can help the production sectors by providing liquidity, which is the basis for creating economic transparency and helping to achieve the slogan of the year, he added.

# All nuclear arms are dangerous, no matter Russia owns them or U.S.: nuclear physicist

From page 1 ► **How do you evaluate U.S. and Russia's nuclear power in comparison to one another?**

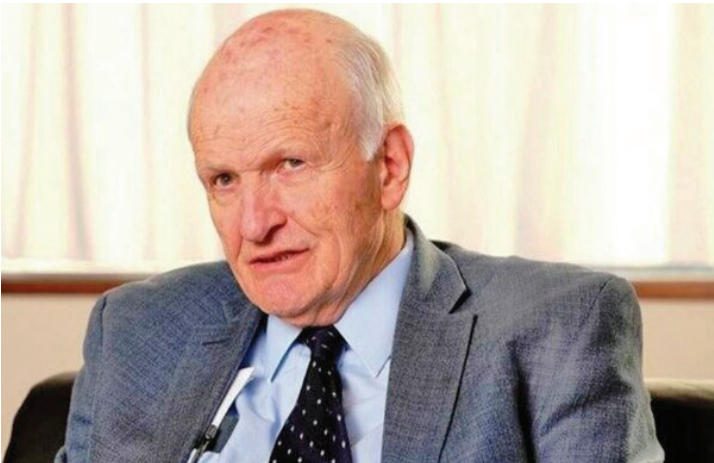
Each has enough destructive power to destroy civilization even after suffering a first strike. Reagan and Gorbachev were right when they said a “nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”

**Is it correct to say that Russia's nuclear arms are dangerous for global but U.S. or Britain's are safe?**

All nuclear weapons are dangerous, no matter who owns them. They will destroy us if we do not eliminate them. Both the United States and the Soviet Union/Russia almost launched nuclear attacks when their early warning systems provided false information that the other country had launched nuclear missiles against them. Both countries have been led by sociopaths with the authority to launch nuclear weapons – most recently Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. Britain has far fewer nuclear weapons and they are not in a launch-on-warning posture but they could destroy more than one hundred large cities.

**After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO pledged not to expand toward Russia. Don't you think the Western powers are threatening Russia's hegemony in its backyard?**

Hopefully, the world is in a transition period away from powerful countries claiming the right to control less powerful countries in their “backyards”. The United States has



had that attitude toward the entire Western Hemisphere, and we see that attitude still in U.S. sanctions on Cuba. Russia earned its paranoia historically through suffering many invasions, starting with the Mongols in the 1200s and most recently by the Germans in the 1940s. Russian leaders like Putin have therefore been obsessed with controlling Russia's “near-abroad.” But, in this case, Putin has created the threat he feared. Ukraine refused its domination and began to establish a democracy oriented toward Europe rather than Russia. Putin saw that as a threat. His less paranoid pre-

decessors, Gorbachev and Yeltsin, did not.

With regard to NATO expansion, I have mixed feelings. Historically, NATO was established as a defense alliance against the Soviet Union which, unlike the United States in Western Europe, refused to release its control of the East European countries that it had overrun at the end of the Second World War, including half of Germany. (Recall that the Soviet Union had to be pressured by the United States to leave northern Iran after World War II.) NATO's expansion into East Europe after Gorbachev refused

“The world is in a transition period away from powerful countries claiming the right to control less powerful countries in their ‘backyards.’”

to continue to control East Europe by force was in response to those newly freed East European countries fearing that someone like Putin would come into power in Russia and attempt to subjugate them again. Whether NATO expansion helped create the paranoia in Russia that helped Putin take power is worth debating.

**Antonio Guterres has said the Security Council failed to prevent or end the war in Ukraine. Do you think we are reaching a phase in which world powers cannot understand each other's language?**

Unfortunately, it appears that Putin did not hear Guterres' plea to create humanitarian corridors through which the civilians trapped in Mariupol could escape. I think that Putin has trapped himself and all of us as well. To stay in power in Russia, he must win in Ukraine. A strongman leader becomes vulnerable if he is defeated in war. We saw that in the collapse of the Argentinean military dictatorship after it lost its war with Britain over the Falklands Islands.

**Do you expect a third world war or expansion of the Ukraine war?**

I am very worried about what Putin might do if he fails to keep at least increased territory in Ukraine and fears being seen as a “loser” by another ambitious Russian would-be strongman who would like to take his place. At the same time, we must support the UN charter, which outlawed “acts of aggression” if we are not to return to a dog-eat-dog world. This puts us in a dangerous situation. Is Putin willing to destroy the world rather than lose power?

## Erdogan meets Saudi leaders in first visit since Khashoggi murder

**Meeting will be culmination of months of efforts to mend ties, as Turkey seeks to alleviate its economic woes**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with Saudi Arabia's crown prince on Thursday to “develop” relations in his first visit since the 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi drove a wedge between the two countries.

Saudi state news agency SPA published images of the Turkish leader embracing Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), the de facto ruler who U.S. intelligence officials determined approved the plot against Khashoggi – something Riyadh denies.

The warm embrace between Erdogan and MBS appears to signal that the previous cold relationship between the two countries is now over.

The pair “reviewed the Saudi-Turkish relations and ways to develop them in all fields,” SPA reported.

Pictures published by Turkish state media also showed a separate sit-down with King Salman, the crown prince's father.

Erdogan went on to visit Masjid al-Haram (the Great Mosque) in Mecca, where he conducted a religious pilgrimage.The trip came as Turkey, facing an economic crisis fueled by the collapse of its currency and soaring inflation, tries to drum up financial support from energy-rich Persian Gulf Arab countries.

Prior to flying from Istanbul to Saudi's second city Jeddah, where some roads were lined with Turkish and Saudi flags, Erdogan said he hoped “to launch a new era” in bilateral ties.

“We believe enhancing cooperation in areas including defence and finance is in our mutual interest,” Erdogan said.

Saudi agents killed and dismembered Khashoggi, an insider-turned critic, in the kingdom's Istanbul consulate in October 2018. His remains have never been found.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

The gruesome act risked isolating Saudi Arabia, and especially Prince Mohammed, while escalating Riyadh's regional rivalry with Ankara.

Turkey infuriated the Saudis by pressing ahead with an investigation into the murder of the Washington Post columnist, which Erdogan said was ordered at the “highest levels” of the Saudi government.

Saudi Arabia responded by unofficially putting

pressure on Turkey's economy through a boycott of key Turkish imports.

But trade between the two has been gradually improving, and in January Erdogan said he was planning a visit to Saudi Arabia.

Earlier this month, an Istanbul court halted the trial in absentia of 26 Saudi suspects linked to Khashoggi's death, transferring the case to Riyadh.

The Turkish decision infuriated human rights campaigners and Khashoggi's widow Hatice Cengiz, who vowed to appeal it in a higher court.

**‘Vindication’?**

Fallout from the Khashoggi killing continues to mar Saudi Arabia's image, especially in the United States.Erdogan's arrival was a win for Saudi officials keen to turn the page, said Saudi political analyst Ali Shihabi.

“Of course it is a vindication,” Shihabi said, before the Turkish president's arrival. “Erdogan was isolated and paid a high economic price in massive economic losses resulting from an economic and travel boycott, which is why he is the one coming to Saudi.”

Both countries stand to benefit, he added, as Erdogan “needs the trade and tourism flows from Saudi, and Saudi would prefer to have him ‘on side’ on a variety of regional issues — and may be open to buy arms from Turkey.”

Speaking to reporters before his departure from Turkey, Erdogan said he believed increasing cooperation on health, energy, food security, defence industry and finance would be mutually beneficial to both countries.

Economic interests are “a major, major driver” of Erdogan's visit, said Dina Esfandiari, senior Middle East adviser for the International Crisis Group.

“It looks like Turkey's forgotten about Khashoggi, and I'm sure the Saudis appreciate that,” Esfandiari said.“I'm sure we'll see a statement about how it's time for things to get better, maybe building economic ties and trade, a boost to the Turkish economy thanks to the Saudis,” she added.

Turkey has suffered an annual inflation rate topping 60 percent and a wave of winter street protests that have hurt Erdogan's popularity ahead of a general election next year.

Erdogan is now seeking backing from Persian Gulf countries with which he has been at odds in the decade since the Arab Spring revolts.



In February, he travelled to the United Arab Emirates for the first time in nearly a decade, where he called on wealthy business leaders to invest in Turkey.The last time Erdogan visited Saudi Arabia was in 2017, when he tried to mediate a dispute pitting the kingdom and other Persian Gulf Arab countries against Qatar.

**Rapprochement**

Turkey and Saudi Arabia have been working on a rapprochement for months, as part of a broader realignment that has seen regional rivals heal rifts and step back from conflicts since President Joe Biden took office in the United States.

The trip is part of a broader effort to mend relations after years of hostility fueled by Erdogan's support for Muslim Brotherhood-aligned groups during the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings.

Erdogan is looking to bolster trade and lure investment from oil exporters as Turkey's floundering economy costs him support ahead of elections taking place next year.His government hopes the rapprochement will help restore trade to previous levels and boost Saudi investments in Turkey.

A warming of relations with the United Arab Emirates last year has already unlocked billions of dollars' worth of potential business.

The UAE signed a \$4.9bn currency swap with Turkey in January, offering Turkey's beleaguered currency much-needed support. The UAE has outlined plans for a \$10bn fund to support investments as it seeks to at least double bilateral trade.

cated Afghans live in Iran.

Iran envoy also referred two-decade-long occupation of Afghanistan, asserting that the displacement of the noble, resilient people of this country has been caused by the occupiers.

Referring to the recent propagandas aimed at darkening Tehran-Kabul relations, Qomi said that today, Americans,

## Sayed Nasrallah on Israeli war games

From page 1 ► Nasrallah went on to tell the Israelis “in anticipation of your military drills, and here the Lebanese will be surprised, over the past weeks, when our political arm was working on the elections, our resistance forces were conducting their own secret maneuvers in silence.”

“I don't think many Lebanese even sensed this” he added.

“[Hezbollah conducted] maneuvers on all the scenarios” Nasrallah noted, “and all the hypotheses and all the weapons at our disposal.”

The Hezbollah Chief said “today, I announce that when the Israeli drills begin, if they start before or after the elections, nobody will realize this and this is one of the major characteristics of the resistance,” he pointed out, “we the resistance in Lebanon will be fully prepared and on our highest alert level.”

He says the members of Hezbollah will be at this state so they are not “taken by any surprises”

Sayed Nasrallah further warned the Israeli regime saying: “don't gamble on some tiredness here or there, some hunger and poverty, fear or hesitance”

He threatened the regime that if “any mistake, any stupidity, any act of aggression – minor or major – that the Israelis may take will be responded to immediately and directly” Nasrallah declared as chants erupted at the live televised speech inside the huge martyr's hall in southern Beirut.

The Hezbollah Secretary-General told the Israeli regime if it makes a mistake “you won't be hearing the words a response will come at the relevant time and place.”

“And don't think we are busy with the election,” Nasrallah added, “the elections will not affect our readiness nor will it affect our main and essential goal to defend Lebanon,” he added.

Nasrallah noted global developments have concerned the “Israeli enemy” and opened “new paths” for the Lebanese resistance.

Nasrallah pointed to the Americans fleeing Afghanistan which he said “[U.S. President Joe] Biden is trying to make the world forget about [the U.S. withdrawal], but in America, they keep reminding him.”

The Americans fleeing Afghanistan, according to Nasrallah, “alarmed the Israeli entity and America's allies in the region, today also, the Russia-Ukraine war the possible outcomes that may occur is also concerning for the [Israeli] entity.”

He pointed out that the international community is possibly facing “a new world order that will no longer see America [as it was before]” which Nasrallah said, “this also opens in front of us many new paths and a stronger future”.

Nasrallah also slammed some Arab states that have normalized ties with Israel saying “It is the most wicked of hypocrisy that is being said these days when some Arab countries stand up and say that relations with Israel are to serve the Palestinian people.”

“How many Palestinian lives have been saved, houses prevented from demolition, settlements stopped from expanding, the brutal aggression still ongoing and the besieged Gaza Strip still under blockade as a result of normalizing ties?” he asked.

Four Arab countries, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco, normalized relations with the regime under a U.S.-brokered agreement in 2020, under then U.S. President Donald Trump.

The Secretary-General of Hezbollah pointed out that “the path of normalization must be decisively confronted in Iraq, and that the Iraqi authorities are living up to this historic responsibility.”

Also during Nasrallah's speech which was



part of the celebrations on the anniversary of International Quds Day, the Hezbollah leader paid a salute to the tens of thousands who gathered for Friday prayers at the al-Aqsa Mosque, and to “everyone who participated in the commemoration of this day. We salute the millions and hundreds of thousands.”

Paying tribute to the Palestinians protecting the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque, he said that “the sacrifices of the Palestinian people should address the human conscience, and the conscience of every Muslim and free person in this world,” noting that “this is an occasion to highlight the high patience and readiness for sacrifice and legendary steadfastness, and the amazing operations that the Palestinians are carrying out.”

Sayed Nasrallah pointed out that “America, the leaders of the West, the Zionist movement and all those who dealt with them worked to consolidate the entity and try to strengthen it in this region,” adding that “they bet on time for the Palestinians to forget their land, and for the Arabs to forget the issue, but today we confirm that this path has collapsed.”

He stressed that “all the bullets, guns and blood of the martyrs tells the world that the plots of the Zionists have failed.”

He also emphasized that “the question of Palestine is part of our religion, our faith, and our dignity, and we are a [Muslim] nation that cannot give up its faith and belief or its dignity,”

Sayed Nasrallah stressed that “the latest Palestinian military resistance has proven that Israel is conquered, with no destiny, and is not the absolute superior force anymore, and we have inflicted one defeat on it after the other,” adding that “from a year ago until today, the paths of the resistance and resistance movements that the enemy fears and is working to dismantle have instead developed.”

The Secretary-General of Hezbollah added that “the course of resistance operations inside the territories occupied in 1948 and in the [occupied] West Bank recently, especially unilateral [lone wolf] operations, caused a violent shock to the entity,” adding that “the unilateral operations represent a very qualitative escalation in the course of the resistance in Palestine.”

Nasrallah pointed out that these operations “represent a very dangerous development for the occupation, because they do not require operation rooms, nor enormous capabilities,” explaining that they “revealed the fragile and weak level of security for the entity, and the inability of the Israeli security services to discover the resistance members.”

He stressed that the operations “strongly shook the confidence of the Israelis including their army and governance, and this has very big repercussions.”

Tensions have been mounting during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan as the regime again put severe restrictions on workshopped accessing the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Israeli regime's regular brutal attacks on protesters in the Mosque compounds and across the occupied territories over the past weeks has led to mounting condemnation.

## Inclusive government key to ‘lasting security’ in Afghanistan: special envoy

TEHRAN– Stressing that the key to lasting security in Afghanistan is an inclusive government, Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan said that the more Tehran-Kabul cooperation develops, it will be in the interest of the two countries.

Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the Imposed War, Iran has been hosting about 6 to 7 million immigrants

from Afghanistan and Iraq, Hassan Kazemi Qomi said in an exclusive interview with Mehr News Agency.

In spite of all the difficult conditions, including military threats, war, and economic sanctions, these immigrants enjoy the same situation as Iranian citizens, Qomi said.

Saying that Iran is home to 4 million Afghan immigrants, he added that today most edu-

whose policies have failed in the region, seek to tarnish relations between Iran and Afghanistan.

However, what is important is that the will of Iran to help Afghans is to make their country flourish, Qomi said.

The more Afghanistan flourishes and the more Iran-Afghanistan cooperation develops, it will be in the interest of the two coun-

tries, he stressed.

If security is restored in Afghanistan, the migration flood will also decrease, he argued, saying that Afghanistan will fight against terrorism and occupier strongly.

He said that forming an inclusive government is the key to stability and lasting security in Afghanistan.

(Source: Mehr News Agency)

Archaeologists probe 9,000-year-old hill in northwestern Iran



TEHRAN – A team of archaeologists has commenced fresh work on Tepe Ahranjan, which according to previous excavations is home to a 9,000-year-old human settlement in Salmas county, West Azarbaijan province, northwestern Iran.

“A team of experts led by archaeologist Afrasyab Geravand is carving trenches in and around the Ahranjan hill, which is one of the oldest settlements in northwestern Iran,” IRIB quoted the provincial tourism chief as saying on Saturday.

“The trenches are hoped to give clues about further cultural layers and human settlements in order to help archaeologists develop a relative and absolute chronology of the hill,” Jalil Jabbari stated.

“Ahranjan is one of the most characteristic Neolithic sites in northwestern Iran, from which the materials and cultural remains obtained indicate the existence of a farming and livestock community in the Salmas plain in prehistoric times.”

Ahranjan area was once assuming a strategic position in terms of trade, cultural exchanges, and being on a communication path, the official said.

“Ahranjan is linked on the one hand with the southern Caucasus and eastern Anatolia and on the other hand with the central (Iranians) plateau and south of Lake Urmia.”

In fact, one of the most primitive human communities was initially formed in this area... that achieved progress due to ongoing inventions and innovations in terms of agriculture, animal breeding, making tools, and trade with neighboring regions.

In 2020, Geravand concluded that farming and animal breeding was practiced some 9,000 years ago around the historical Tepe Ahranjan. The discovery was made during

46 Iranian puppets win national status

TEHRAN –A selection of 46 Iranian puppets has recently been added to the national heritage list, ISNA reported on Saturday.

The collection, which is being kept at the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) National Museum of Children’s Art and Literature in Tehran, dates back to the late Qajar (1789-1925) and early Pahlavi (1925-1979) eras.

Originally owned by an Iranian master and veteran marionettist, Luti Hossein, the collection was acquired by the IIDCYA and moved to the museum.

a demarcation project aimed to protect the ruined archaeological site.

Evidence suggests that Ahranjan hill and its surroundings were one of the first and most important human settlements in the 7th millennium BC in northwestern Iran, Geravand said.

The region has long been a suitable place for settlement since ancient times due to the presence of permanent rivers, springs, animal and plant resources, fertile land, and pastures, he explained.

Experts say the presence of “mother rocks” and obsidian tools in seven different colors, sabers, mortars, and stone utensils are among objects found in the region.

The history of agriculture is the story of humankind’s development and cultivation of processes for producing food, feed, fiber, fuel, and other goods by the systematic raising of plants and animals. Before the development of plant cultivation, human beings were hunters and gatherers. The knowledge and skill of learning to care for the soil and growth of plants advanced the development of human society, allowing clans and tribes to stay in one location generation after generation. Archaeological evidence indicates that such developments occurred 10,000 or more years ago.

Experts say that by 7000 BC, sowing and harvesting reached Mesopotamia, and there, in the super fertile soil just north of the Persian Gulf, Sumerian ingenuity systematized it and scaled it up. By 6000 BC farming was entrenched on the banks of the Nile River. About this time, agriculture was developed independently in the Far East, probably in China, with rice rather than wheat as the primary crop.

Because of agriculture, cities, as well as trade relations between different regions and groups of people, developed, further enabling the advancement of human societies and cultures. Agriculture has been an important aspect of economics throughout the centuries before and after the Industrial Revolution. Sustainable development of world food supplies impacts the long-term survival of the species, so care must be taken to ensure that agricultural methods remain in harmony with the environment.

The historical background of the Iranian puppet show, known as kheimeh shab-bazi is obscure, however, it dates back hundreds of years.

Kheimeh shab-bazi is performed in a small chamber by a musical performer and a person called a morshed (mentor). The dialogue takes place between the morshed and the puppets, specifically the traditional Iranian puppet Mobarak.

Kheimeh means castello or booth; shab is night, the time when a show is normally performed; and bazi means play; therefore a literal translation is evening performance in a puppet booth.

Tribal festival aims to lift Lorestan tourism

From page 1 ► Home to various nomads and tribal communities, Lorestan 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 (Lorestan) Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

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

Nomads and tribal tourism

Tribe tourism, also known as the ethno-tourism or ethnic tourism, provides the ground for potential sightseers to feel like indigenous people by living with a nomad or rural family or enjoying an independent stay. However, as the name implies, it’s a trip for recreational purposes rather than being an expedition for anthropological research.

Experts say this branch of tourism has gained a lot of support and attention in the country over the past couple of years. Many tour operators believe that tribal regions could be deemed as the legacy of

human authenticity in their novel cultural and human aspects.

Iran has a culturally-diverse society dominated by a wide range of interethnic relations. Native speakers of Persian (Farsi language) are considered as the predominant ethnic generally of mixed ancestry, and the country has important Turkic, Kurd, Arab elements in addition to the Lurs, Baloch, Bakhtiari, and other smaller minorities such as Armenians, Assyrians, and Jews.

Persians, Kurds, and speakers of other Indo-European languages in Iran are descendants of the Aryan tribes who began migrating from Central Asia into what is now Iran in the second millennium BC.

Apart from modern roads, highways, and bridges that are ubiquitous in modern Iran, there are still arduous paths, flattened by the feet of nomads and the hooves of their livestock in the ever-repeating movement of migration for millennia.

Migration is a way of life for nomads because herding cattle is their main source of income. In spring they with all their belongings head for the cooler pastures usually on mountain hillsides where the grass is abundant for their flocks of sheep and goats. And in autumn they



return to previous tropic plains as their well-fed livestock get stronger to bear the winter.

Accompanying nomads during their migration, even for a day or two, may be a lifetime experience. As a traveler, one has the chance to visit, live, eat, and sleep in a nomadic camp with a real nomad family. Colorful dresses, vast black tents, colored-eyed children with rosy cheeks, modest lifestyle, scenic landscape, and local dishes are probably among the delights of such visits.

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

Data compiled by the Nomads Affairs Organization of Iran, the nomadic inhabitants of the country have been decreased from 38.6 percent of the whole Iranian population in the Iranian year 1245 (1866) to 9.6 percent in the year 1345 (1966) and around one percent currently. And nomads and tribes are be found in all Iranian provinces except Kordestan.

The statistics suggest that Iran’s nomads are somehow fading away over time. A brief

answer might be that modern life lures the newest generations to big cities for a more relaxed lifestyle and even higher education. Many younger people have left behind struggles with backbreaking works of the nomadic life which is sometimes mingled with drought and dust storms.

Nowadays traces of modern life is undeniable in the lives of the remaining ones across the ancient land. However, many Iranian nomads have long resisted modernity through isolation, which was the result of their lifestyle, deep traditions, and patriarchy.

The majority of the Iranian nomads use mobile internet, cell phones, etc as they still set up their tents on the flanks of the snow-capped mountains. And these days cars and rented trucks, rather than domestic animals, bring them, their flocks to pastures high up on the highlands and vice versa.

Many nomads surprise visitors with the dignity in their rough and overworked hands and integrity in their compassionate eyes at first sight. In popular Iranian culture, literature, and public opinion, nomads have always been a proud part of the nation.

Khusf historical core to undergo restoration

TEHRAN – The historical texture of Khusf, which was once situated on the ancient Silk Road, is scheduled to undergo some rehabilitation works, a local tourism official has said.

The historical texture of Khusf is enriched with climatic values, indigenous architecture, as well as unique cultural and historical traits, CHTN quoted Parisa Jamshidi as saying on Saturday.

The restoration project involves repairing damaged parts, flooring, constructing rest areas for the visitors, and setting up green spaces, the official added.

A budget of 10 billion rials (about \$36,000) has been allocated to the project, she noted.

The historical texture of Khusf in South Khorasan province has been added to the national heritage list.

Last May, an official with the tourism ministry announced that the historical texture of Khusf is capable of becoming a UNESCO World Heritage site.

“We should assist such historical houses to be revived in this historical texture, as these restorations would help develop both the local economy and the realms of culture and



tourism,” the official said.

South Khorasan is an explorer’s delight – lots to discover yet barely another visitor to be found, even at the most important sights (despite a decent infrastructure of recently paved roads).

The region intersperses arid mountains and semi-deserts and is famed for saffron and barberries. But there’s also a wealth of old mud villages that seem to have been left almost complete as though to tempt archaeologists.

Currently, there are over 40 countries alongside the historic land and maritime routes, which are collectively named the Silk Road, (or Silk Roads). This vast network

carried more than just merchandise and precious commodities, however: the constant movement and mixing of populations also brought about the transmission of knowledge, ideas, cultures, and beliefs, which had a profound impact on the history and civilizations of the Eurasian peoples.

Experts say that travelers along the Silk Road were attracted not only by trade but also by the intellectual and cultural exchange that was taking place in cities along the Silk Road, many of which developed into hubs of culture and learning. Science, arts, and literature, as well as crafts and technologies, were thus shared and disseminated into societies along the lengths of these routes, and in this way, languages, religions, and cultures developed and influenced each other.

For thousands of years, the ancient Silk Road passed through many different empires, kingdoms, reigns, and societies. According to UNESCO, the Silk Road enriched the countries it passed through, transporting cultures, religions, languages, and of course material goods into societies across Europe, Asia, and Africa, and uniting them all with a common thread of cultural heritage and plural identities.

Cultural elements in Hamedan made national heritage

TEHRAN – Five cultural elements long practiced across Iran’s Hamedan province have recently been added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts on Saturday announced the inscriptions in a letter it submitted to the governor-general of the west-central province, CHTN reported.

Local games of Tanur Kolbeh and Atolma Qoreish as well as the skill of making Halva Maghzi were among the elements added to the prestigious list.

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

Hamedan has had many names: it was

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

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

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

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

Tehran offers free tours to mark Eid al-Fitr

TEHRAN – Tehran province is offering free tours during the two-day Eid al-Fitr holidays, which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

The tours will be held in the Iranian capital and the cities of Rey, Varamin, and Damavand, the provincial tourism chief has said.

“The tour itineraries include cultural heritage museums, rural areas, natural sights, and the historical core of Tehran,” Parham Janfeshan explained on Saturday.

Hugging the lower slopes of the magnificent, snowcapped Alborz

Mountains, Tehran is much more than a chaotic jumble of concrete and crazy traffic blanketed by a miasma of air pollution. This is the nation’s dynamic beating heart and the place to get a handle on modern Iran and what its future will likely be.

The metropolis has many to offer its visitors including Golestan Palace, Grand Bazaar, Treasury of National Jewels, National Museum of Iran, Glass & Ceramic Museum, Masoudieh Palace, Sarkis Cathedral, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Carpet Museum of Iran, to name a few.

The first time Tehran is mentioned



in historical accounts is in an 11th-century chronicle in which it is described as a small village north of Ray. It became the capital city of the Seljuk Empire in the 11th century but later declined with factional strife between different neighborhoods and the Mongol invasion of 1220.

This year’s Ramadan began on

April 03, which falls in the spring season in Iran and it is estimated to end on Sunday evening. Because of the nature of the lunar calendar system, the dates of Ramadan vary each year and there is always a sort of disagreement among scholars as to when Ramadan precisely start or come to an end.

By tradition, the new moon crescent which is sighted by the naked eye marks the beginning of a new lunar month but these days Muslims prefer to lean towards astronomical calculations to avoid such confusion.

UNWTO initiative seeks to recover tourism

TEHRAN – The World Tourism Organization has called on start-ups to join its initiative named “Awake Tourism Challenge” aimed to help recover the global tourism sector.

Its global flagship competition is aimed to identify innovators who are advancing solutions to six different

challenges, as well as contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashviki has said: “The return of tourism is a chance to awaken its potential to transform lives. UNWTO is calling on startups everywhere to put forward their ideas for

meeting the biggest challenges our sector is facing and for making tourism a champion of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

According to the UN body, applications are now open and will close on 31 June. The winning startups will be announced in October.

# Wildlife genetic resources system to be launched

TEHRAN – A system of wildlife genetic resources will soon be set up to properly exploit these valuable resources, Mohammad Medadi, head of the National Museum of Natural History and Genetic Resources, said.

With the development of new methods, biological research is carried out through genetic studies, and biobanks are used to store specimens for review in research projects, which reduces the sampling from alive species and nature, he explained.

The most complete collection of wildlife genetics includes 45,000 scientific samples and 3,000 biological samples belonging to the National Museum of Natural History affiliated with the Department of Environment (DOE), which has been set up in Tehran and 6 provinces and has biological samples including tissue, blood and etc.

According to Medadi, DNA extraction from natural species is used in biological studies; These samples are stored from different types of wildlife in the country, most of which are related to species damaged in incidents.

By launching a genetic storage system, researchers can easily use this information, he said.

According to the Law on Management, Conservation, and Use of Genetic Resources, adopted in 2017, the DOE is responsible for identifying, protecting, and monitoring the exploitation, access, and man-



agement of wildlife genetic resources.

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

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

Worldwide, conservation outside the habitat is a very important issue. Currently, the national wildlife biobanks are active in the National Museum of Natural History in Tehran and several other provinces, he noted.

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

About 1,300 species of vertebrates, including mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish, as well as 30,000 species of invertebrates, and 8,000 species of plants have been identified in the country.

The diversity of plants, animals, and microorganisms in each country is a rich source in the field of food. Proper utilization of these valuable resources,

identification, maintenance, and protection of them in suitable habitats and even outside standard habitats is an important aspect of food security, he also explained.

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

## Persian species in danger

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

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

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

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

## From oil slicks to trawling: Persian Gulf under pressure

From page 1 ► The day marks the anniversary of forcing out the Portuguese navy of the Strait of Hormuz in the Capture of Ormuz (1622).

The Persian Gulf has an area of about 241,000 square kilometers. Its length is some 990 km, and its width varies from a maximum of about 340 km to a minimum of 55 km in the Strait of Hormuz.

It has its own environmental characteristics, as it is a semi-closed sea, aging 15,000 years, with an average depth of 35 meters, while being high salty with severe heat fluctuations, and an annual evaporation rate of 140 cm.

There are 2 species of dolphin and whale in the area, in addition to 1,100 species of fish and 5 species of turtle, the Persian Gulf is also hosting the second largest population of manatees, 232 seaweed species, and 4 million migratory birds annually, but today 240 important species and many habitats are under threat.

Until the discovery of oil in Iran in 1908, the Persian Gulf area was important mainly for fishing, pearling, sailcloth making, camel breeding, and date growing.

Since World War II the Persian Gulf and the surrounding countries have come to account for a significant proportion of the world's oil production. In addition, the area has approximately two-thirds of the world's estimated proven oil reserves and one-third of the world's estimated proven natural gas reserves. The region thus has acquired considerable strategic significance for the world's industrialized countries.

### Challenges threatening the water body

Many habitats in the Persian Gulf have been destroyed due to fishing activities. Oil extraction in the Persian Gulf, its transportation, the pipes of the oil transfer route, etc., transmit pollutants to the sea and ultimately endanger the marine and coastal ecosystem.

Over 50 percent of the Persian Gulf pollution is related to oil extraction, which is one of the factors that has caused all five species of sea turtles in the country to become endangered.

Pollutants that threaten the life of marine mammals can be caused by petroleum products or chemicals that enter the sea through factory and sewage effluents. In addition, plastics and other wastes dumped in the sea suffocate marine organisms and, over time, break them down into small pieces, leaving toxic and oily substances and contaminating the food resources of marine mammals.

Algal blooms are another threat to marine mammals. Algal blooms occur when nitrate and phosphate in seawater increase for a variety of reasons, including the entry of sewage into the sea; it is a type of algae that is actually a type of "phytoplankton" that grows rapidly and covers the water surface and prevents sunlight from entering the sea, causes suffocation of aquatic animals, and ultimately affect the food of marine mammals.

On the other hand, the Persian Gulf ecosystem is polluted by the entry of urban and industrial waste. The development of unsustainable tourism activities also destroys habitats and biodiversity of the Persian Gulf.

Another factor that not only the Persian Gulf but the whole world is inevitably struggling with is climate change. The Persian Gulf is a semi-closed sea and this causes the water flow in the Persian Gulf to be low and the water temperature to rise. So, it has a negative impact on the habitats.

Prompt action to clean up any oil spills with the cooperation of the Ports and Maritime Organization is one of the effective measures to help the Persian Gulf survive, in addition to identifying the source of contaminants or fingerprinting of petroleum products.

## Efforts to protect natural resources, wildlife, and ecosystems in Iran

Part 4

### Destruction and protection of forests, rangelands, and wildlife

Situated in the Palearctic faunal region, tangential to the Oriental and within the influence of the Ethiopian region, Iran also comprises four phytogeographical regions: Irano-Turanian, Euro-Siberian, Saharo-Arabian, and Sudanian. Iran is one of the large speciation centers of the Holarctic desert and mountain flora, and its great variety of fauna and flora is thus not surprising.

Scientists have recorded 149 species of mammals; 501 species of birds, and about 150 species of freshwater fish. The number of plant species is variously estimated at between eight and ten thousand.

Despite Art. 50 of the new Constitution making the protection of the environment a public duty and prohibiting pollution and despoliation, there was little sign of environmental awareness within the public sector until the late 1980s.

Of greatest concern is the destruction of

ecosystems. Earlier, the alteration of a specific plant community might have required centuries, but the rampant population growth and the abusive utilization of technology have provoked radical transformations in a mere decade.

From the steppic pistachio and almond forests of the southeast to the oak forests of the Zagros range and the humid rain forests of the Caspian, the forests of Iran reflect its great ecological and climatic variations. The immense economic, environmental, and aesthetical value of these forests in an arid country like Iran has often been either ignored or misunderstood.

Although the destruction of the Persian forests began thousands of years ago, the recent acceleration of this trend has been devastating. In 1942 the area of the Zagros forests was estimated at 10 million hectares; in 1961, 5 million; in 1970, 3.5 million; and in 1991, according to all indications from forestry personnel, less than one million hectares remains of what can barely be described as forest.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

## Elderly, vulnerable people to get fourth dose of Covid vaccine

TEHRAN – People aged 70 years and above and people with underlying diseases or immunodeficiency will receive the fourth dose of the coronavirus vaccine, according to the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control.

In the last meeting, the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control approved that in order to strengthen the safety level of at-risk groups, all people over 70 years of age and people with underlying diseases or immunodeficiency are asked to inject the vaccine in addition to the previous doses, Abbas Shiravjen, the Headquarters spokesman tweeted on Saturday.

So far, 64,321,868 people have received the first dose, 57,535,805 people the second dose, and 27,14,796 people the third dose of the vaccine. So far, 148,872,469 doses have been injected across the country.

On April 5, Hamid Souri, an epidemiologist warned the seventh wave of Covid-19 may hit the country in mid-May.

Given the genetic changes that have taken

place in BA.2 omicron, a more contagious variant; vulnerable people in the community are still at risk, and there is no evidence that the epidemic is disappearing, he further noted.

An epidemic is eliminated when the incidence of the virus in the community is limited and enters the eradication phase, he also added.

### no cities in high-risk red zones

According to the latest announcement, no cities are at high risk of Covid infection.

The highest category on Iran's coronavirus risk scale is the red zone, which reaches lower risk areas by orange, yellow, and blue zones.

Some 33 towns are in the orange zones, 321 in the yellow category, 94 cities are in blue zones, and no cities are red.

Iran is the sixth country in the world and the first country in West Asia to gain the ability to produce the Coronavirus vaccine.

Considering that five coronavirus vaccines



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

A total of 21 knowledge-based companies are operating to produce 50 million doses of vaccine monthly and 600 million doses annually, IRNA quoted Bahram Daraei as saying on March 9.

Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has said the country is currently exporting domestically-made vaccines for coronavirus to ten African countries.

## ENGLISH IN USE

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## Iranian students snatch 4 medals at IOI 2018

Iranian students secured 4 colorful medals at the 30th International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI 2018) which was held in Tsukuba, Japan, on September 1 to 8.

Iran's team finished in eleventh place claiming one gold medal, two silver medals, and one bronze medal, Mehdi Safarnejad, head of the Iranian delegation said.

This year, 341 students from 87 countries participated in the event. Mohammad Mahdavi grabbed the gold medal, Keivan Rezaei and Mehrdad Saberi were the silver medal winners, and Seyed Mahdi Sadeq Shobeiri claimed the bronze medal, Fars reported on Saturday.

Iran first participated the IOI in 1992, and have claimed some 22 gold medals, 54 silver medals and 25 bronze medals, over the past 26 years.

## کسب ۴ مدال توسط تیم دانش‌آموزی ایران در المپیاد جهانی کامپیوتر

تیم چهار نفره دانش‌آموزان ایران موفق به کسب چهار مدال رنگارنگ در سی‌امین المپیاد جهانی کامپیوتر در ژاپن شد. مهدی صفرزاد سرپرست تیم اعزامی دانش‌آموزان المپیاد کشورمان به ژاپن، با اعلام این مطلب، افزود: تیم ایران از نظر کسب مدال، رتبه یازدهم این دوره از المپیاد را با کسب یک مدال طلا، ۲ نقره و یک برنز، تصاحب کرد.

در این مسابقات که از دهم شهریور ماه با حضور ۳۴۱ شرکت کننده از ۸۷ کشور در شهر سوکوبای ژاپن برگزار شد، محمدمهدوی به مدال طلا، کیوان رضایی نقره، مهرداد صابری نقره و سیدمهدی صادق شبیری به مدال برنز این مسابقات دست یافتند.

به گزارش فارس، تاریخچه حضور ایران در این مسابقات به سال ۱۹۹۲ بر می‌گردد و طی سال‌های گذشته در مجموع، ۲۲ مدال طلا، ۵۴ مدال نقره و ۲۵ مدال برنز حاصل تلاش کاروان ایران بوده است؛ ایران امسال برای بیست و پنجمین بار در این مسابقات حضور یافت.

