



From Inside

- UN special rapporteur to visit Iran **P2**
- It is now or never! **P2**
- No place for weapons of mass destruction in Islamic approach: IRGC chief **P3**
- New Pakistani PM underlines need to boost ties with Iran **P3**
- Oil production capacity planned to reach 5.7m bpd in 8 years **P4**
- Daily production from South Pars phase 11 to reach 14 mcm by Mar. 2023 **P4**
- Qazaq-Khaneh: a former military edifice in downtown Tehran **P6**
- "Iran" able to reproduce cheetahs for next 5 years **P7**
- "Adjustment" wins Grand Prix at Busan International Short Film Festival **P8**
- Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Louise Glück's "The Wild Iris" published in Persian **P8**

Interview

## Biden will be in hot water if this situation persists in 2024: political scientist

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - A professor at Princeton School of Public and International Affairs says that Joe Biden and Democrats may find it hard to defeat Trump if they fail to tame the inflation rate and reduce unemployment.

"If unemployment and inflation are high in 2024, Biden and the Democrats will be in big trouble," Charles M. Cameron tells the Tehran Times.

Cameron says the main issue in national elections in the United States is "almost always the economy, and to a lesser extent national security."

The professor adds, "If unemployment and inflation are low and Americans feel financially secure, the situation will be much more favorable for the Democrats and more difficult for Trump. In either case, Trump and the Republicans will stress general populist social issues, since many of their actual stands on specific issues are not very popular."

Following is the text of the interview;

**How do you see the state of Democrats and Republicans if we had an election just now?**

Biden's approval rating is fairly low (comparable to Trump's), and many Democrats are running in vulnerable districts. At the same time, enthusiasm among Democratic voters is low. If the mid-term election were held today, the Democrats **► Page 5**

## Paintings from Iran shine at Kanagawa Biennial World Children's Art Exhibition

TEHRAN - Paintings by 21 Iranian children have won awards at the Kanagawa Biennial World Children's Art Exhibition in Japan.

An untitled painting by 13-year-old Zahra Jamshidi received one of the eight prizes given by the president of the Japan Foundation, one of the supporters of the exhibition.

In her drawing, Jamshidi, a member of a branch office of the Institute of Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA-Kanoon) in Kermanshah, has illustrated a Yalda Night party.

Yalda Night falls on the last day of autumn, and the evening is celebrated by Iranians as an ancient tradition.

Other children, including Karen Qobadi, Nazanin-Zahra Kuhl, Saba Vadikeil, **► Page 8**

## Report UK PM braces for bruising local elections

Vote counting is about to end in the United Kingdom's local elections with early results shedding an interesting insight about the political future of Prime Minister Boris Johnson and how his closest opposition party leader Keir Starmer will fare in the upcoming race for Downing Street.

This is the first nationwide poll since the Premier's "Partygate" scandal and is being widely seen as a test of whether Johnson has become an electoral liability for the conservative party.

Thousands of local seats had been up for grabs across England, Scotland, and Wales while mayoral elections and Northern Ireland assembly votes took place as well.

That's more than 6,800 council seats, with every council seat in Wales, and Scotland as well as thousands more across England and all the seats in the capital London, where the ruling Tories suffered significant losses.

Also grabbing headlines in these elections is Northern Ireland where voters are electing all 90 members of the national assembly; with exit polls suggesting the nationalist Sinn Fein (once the political wing for the militant group, the Irish Republican Army, the IRA) will be the largest party for the first time in history.

If Sinn Fein does emerge victorious, it is expected to put forth a vote on reunification of Northern Ireland with Ireland, which would be another major headache for London and could see Britain shrink in territory.

Decades of fighting between the IRA and the British army along with violence did not achieve that goal but these elections could pave the way for that possibility. **► Page 5**

## 2022 Asian Games postponed

TEHRAN - The Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games have been postponed, the organizers said on Friday.

No reason was given for the delay, but China is racing to extinguish its largest outbreak of Covid-19 since the early days of the pandemic.

"The Olympic Council of Asia has announced that the 19th Asian Games, originally scheduled to be held in Hangzhou, China from Sept.10 to 25, 2022, will be postponed," said a statement on the official Games website.

The new dates for the sporting contest "will be announced at a later date", the statement added.

The postponement was confirmed after a meeting of the OCA Executive Board and followed detailed discussions with the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) and the Hangzhou 2022 Organizing Committee (HAGOC).

The Asian Youth Games, due to be held in the Chinese city of Shantou from Dec. 20 to 28 this year, have also been cancelled, the OCA has announced.

China is currently battling against a rise in COVID-19 cases with the ongoing situation cited as the chief reason for the decision to postpone Hangzhou 2022.

"HAGOC has been very well prepared to deliver the Games on time despite global challenges," a statement from the OCA read.

"However, the above decision was taken by all the stakeholders after carefully considering the pandemic situation and the size of the Games."



TEHRAN — In his Thursday remarks, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said that he heads a government that he never imagined in a thousand years would have this composition. His remarks were intended to praise his cabinet, but what did he really mean by these words?

"Everybody wants the good of the coun-

try," Bennett said during an event at Israeli President Isaac Herzog's house in Jerusalem. However, these remarks come at a time when the Israeli regime is declining from within.

Domestic disputes among the Israeli politicians have reached an all-time high, particularly when former Prime Minister Benjamin Netan-

yahu and Bennett have entered verbal quarrels about the management of the fake regime.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett also touted the disparate ruling coalition, stressing the theme of unity as Israelis marked the country's 74th Independence Day. **► Page 2**

STAY UPDATED #RememberPalestine

## Iran-Syria annual trade up 60% yr/yr

TEHRAN - The value of trade between Iran and Syria rose 60 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) as compared to the preceding year, the chairman of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce announced.

In an interview with IRNA, Keyvan Kashefi said the prospects for expanding econom-

ic relations between the two countries are more positive in the current year, given the improving conditions for transit through the Iraqi border, the increase in flights to Syria, and the two governments' trade agreements.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the current level of trade exchanges between the two countries, the official said: "Trade with Syria

is not in proportion with political and social relations with the county. Due to the extensive political and social relations, there is also a demand for the development of trade exchanges and economic relations."

He stressed the need for improving the infrastructure as a prerequisite for the expansion of mutual trade, saying: **► Page 4**

Report

## Desertification and how to deal with it

By Mehdi Garshasbi

Desertification comes majorly from over-exploitation of underground water resources and contamination of water through releasing industrial and agricultural waste into the environment.

Human activities are a primary cause of desertification. These activities include overgrazing of livestock, deforestation, over-cultivation of farmland, and poor irrigation practices.

Considering that Iran is located in an arid and semi-arid area, its vegetation is threatened by climate change and declining precipitation year by year.

Deserts are arid ecosystems that receive fewer than 150mm of precipitation a year.

The amount of evaporation in a desert often greatly exceeds the annual rainfall. **► Page 7**



## Tehran Symphony Orchestra performs with German conductor Wolfgang Wengenroth

German maestro Wolfgang Wengenroth conducts the Tehran Symphony Orchestra in a concert at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on May 5, 2022.

As a guest conductor, he also accompanied the orchestra on its Friday night performance held at the same hall.

Previously on April 25, Wengenroth held a masterclass on piano at Vahdat Hall.

## Over half a million visit Isfahan sites

TEHRAN - More than 500,000 people visited the historical sites and tourist attractions of Isfahan province, during the two-day Eid al-Fitr holidays, which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The travelers also made over 140,000 overnight stays in authorized accommodation centers during the mentioned time, Alireza Izadi explained on Friday.

Soaked in a rich history and culture, the capital city of Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. The ancient city is filled with many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in

beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The city has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million. **► Page 6**





**REMEMBER  
PALESTINE**  
by Tehran Times

## ‘Never in a thousand years had I thought I’d head this government’

From page 1 ▶ “I head a government that I never imagined in a thousand years would have this composition,” he said.

The current government was formed last June after Netanyahu and his allies again failed to secure a parliamentary majority following the fourth elections in two years. The conflicts are so high that even Bennett had to acknowledge them.

Acknowledging the government’s divides, Bennett insisted they were an advantage and not a detriment.

“A culture of disagreement is a blessing... If we have goodwill and don’t cast doubt on each other’s intentions, then we argue about the crux of the matter,” he said.

He then went on to say that nothing is happening in the country.

“Everything is calm, everything is going too smoothly.”

Aside from internal issues, Israel has been under scrutiny from the international world for inciting riots in Al-Aqsa Mosque.

On Friday, Israeli forces looked for those who conducted an axe and knife attack in Tel Aviv that killed three Israelis before fleeing in a vehicle, according to Al Jazeera.

Police said they were looking for two individuals, aged 19 and 20, from the occupied West Bank town of Jenin. Some behind the recent attacks have come from in or around Jenin, and Israeli soldiers have launched raids that have caused gun fights there.

“We will get our hands on the terrorists and their supportive environment, and they will pay the price,” said Mr. “Everything Is Calm”, otherwise known as Bennett after meeting senior officials late Thursday.

The stabbing on Thursday, which happened on the so-called Israel’s Independence Day, was the latest in a string of lethal retaliatory attacks inside the country in recent weeks.

Israeli assaults into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound have heightened the unrest in Quds.

The Palestinian resistance group Hamas praised Thursday’s retaliatory attack, saying it was in response to the violence at Jerusalem’s holy site.

“The storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque will not go unpunished,” declared Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem. “The valiant operation in Tel Aviv is a practical manifestation of what the resistance warned of.”

On Thursday, Israeli police invaded the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem, wounding at least 16 Palestinians and detaining scores.

According to the Sama al-Quds field medical center, 14 people were injured, including 14 with fractures from rubber-coated bullets and tear gas asphyxia.

According to the Red Crescent, two persons were beaten and transferred to a hospital for treatment.

Around 50 Palestinian individuals, including the elderly and children, were arrested and transported out of the Bab al-Silsila compound (Chain Gate).

Between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Thursday, at least 600 settlers stormed the compound through the Moroccan Gate.

Settler incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound under police protection resumed after a 10-day break during the final days of Ramadan, when tensions were high.

In a statement on Thursday, Hamas said settler incursions are “a serious escalation and direct provocation, threatening a comprehensive explosion, for which the occupation government bears full responsibility”.

Also on April 15, Israeli occupation forces invaded the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, leaving at least 158 Palestinians injured and hundreds imprisoned, according to doctors.

According to the Palestinian Red Crescent emergency agency, the majority of the injured were transferred to hospitals. The endowment said one of the guards at the location was wounded in the eye with a rubber-coated bullet.

According to the Palestinian Red Crescent, Israeli forces hampered the arrival of ambulances and paramedics to the mosque, while Palestinian media reported that dozens of injured worshippers were still stuck inside the property.

We cannot know for sure what is interpreted as “smooth” for Bennett, but surely the apartheid regime of Israel has not experienced such forms of intifada in the past years. Bennett’s far-right strategy in dealing with the Palestinians has backfired and mistrust among the Zionist settlers is increasing as they are worried about their security. Put these together with the fact that the Israeli economy is sinking, and we have got a new definition of “smooth” in the dictionary.

## MP: Iran’s drone capabilities non-negotiable



TEHRAN — An Iranian lawmaker says the United States is slapping restrictions on Iran’s drone industry in order to get additional concessions from Iranians in the Vienna talks.

Mohammad Hassan Asfari said the United States’ latest application of sanctions on Iran’s drone industry shows that the Islamic Republic is a regional power due to its armed forces’ skills, including drone strength.

The Iranian-made unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), known as drones, can fly very long distances, carry weapons, and take images and videos.

Asafari added the UAVs are very stealthy in the face of enemy radars.

He added the Islamic Republic is willing to share its knowledge of manufacturing UAVs with neighboring countries in order to improve regional security and military capabilities.

On April 29, the chief of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force 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.

MP Asafari said the stealth capability of Iran-made UAVs has alarmed the Zionists.

Iranian drones are capable of photographing U.S. military facilities in the Persian Gulf, but this does not convert into threatening any country until it endangers Iran’s national interests, he remarked.

Concerning the impact of U.S. sanctions on the talks in Vienna, Austria, intended to lift anti-Iran sanctions and resurrect the 2015 nuclear deal, the MP said Washington tries to instill fear of Iran in the region in order to extract more concessions in the nuclear negotiations, but regional states are aware that the Islamic Republic is not a threat to the region, but the Zionist regime and the U.S. are.

The House of Representatives of the United States ratified an anti-Iran bill to limit Iran’s defense power. With 424 votes in favor and 2 against, U.S. legislators approved the bill to counter Iran’s drone industry. The bill is called Stop Iranian Drones Act, known as SIDA.

TEHRAN — As the Vienna talks have reached a stalemate, the U.S. Senate passed a controversial motion that could jeopardize the—make or break—talks in Vienna.

A bipartisan substantial portion of senators voted late Wednesday to endorse a Republican-led measure stating that any nuclear agreement with Tehran must confront what they called Iran’s support for terrorism in the region, and that the U.S. should not lift sanctions on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

According to multiple people acquainted with classified Hill briefings on the subject, lawmakers from both parties said it was a preemptive strike to Biden’s negotiating team, who have all but admitted in private that an agreement that goes beyond restricting Iran’s nuclear program is no longer possible.

The vote was also a foreshadowing of the bipartisan censure that is expected to follow if the U.S. and Iran reach an agreement that does not tackle Iran’s non-nuclear programs and does not remove the IRGC’s terrorist classification — a “test vote,” as one senator put it.

“It is a strong expression of sentiment about where we are with Iran and the concern that members of the Senate have about Iran’s trajectory here as it relates to its march toward a nuclear weapon — and what we try to do to prevent it,” said Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair Bob Menendez (D-NJ), who was absent for Wednesday’s vote but would have reportedly supported the measure. Menendez voted against the 2015 nuclear deal negotiated by Barack Obama’s administration.

“At the end of the day, I think it’s

# It is now or never!



a pretty strong statement,” the senator added.

The decision on Wednesday was the first time legislators were obliged to speak publicly about the fundamental points of contention in the Biden administration’s year-long efforts to resurrect a nuclear deal with Iran. It said unequivocally that the majority of legislators are suspicious of the provisions of the accord and would only approve a more comprehensive agreement that addressed Tehran’s regional behavior.

Sen. Chris Murphy, who argued against the bill on the Senate floor, said it may undercut the Biden administration’s accomplishments and would be an endorsement of Donald Trump’s attitude to Iran.

“To deny this administration the ability to enter into a nuclear agreement isn’t just folly, it’s downright dangerous.... We should

not endorse four more years of this failed Iran policy,” Murphy added.

On Friday Iran’s IRGC chief Hossein Salami said, “Americans’ animosity toward the IRGC is quite natural and also an interminable issue. The decision of the U.S. Senate is not an important issue for us...”

He added as the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei has stated “weapons of mass destruction have no place in Islamic logic.”

Salami’s remarks were in response to the motion passed by the U.S. Senate.

Multiple U.S. officials have told Laura Rozen, American reporter, that the onus is on Iran, but is it really so?

The Biden administration has stated that it will not remove the IRGC from the list of Foreign

Terrorist Organizations (FTO) unless Iran agrees to some reciprocal non-nuclear measures, which the U.S. has apparently proposed.

Among the possibilities purportedly proposed by the U.S. are a mutual promise not to target each other’s officials or former officials, Iran lifting sanctions on U.S. Central Command, or agreeing to follow-up regional negotiations, according to Rozen.

However, as Iranian Foreign Ministry officials have repeatedly stated, Iran’s red lines in Vienna cannot be violated.

Retaliation against former U.S. officials deemed responsible for decisions like assassinating IRGC Quds Force Commander General Qassem Soleimani in January 2020 is one of Iran’s red lines in Vienna, and Iran’s Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on March 10 that issues related to national heroes are non-negotiable.

General Soleimani was a legendary commander in the fight against terrorist groups, including ISIS, also called Daesh in its Arabic acronyms.

In his phone call with European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, Amir Abdollahian reiterated that raising new demands by the U.S. has no logical justification and this is at odds with the country’s stance on swiftly reaching an agreement.

Amir Abdollahian also underscored that issues related to Iran’s national heroes are non-negotiable, Iran’s Foreign Ministry website reported.

If Biden is serious about resurrecting the JCPOA as he promised in his elections campaign, he’d better prepare the ground in the Senate.

## Raisi underscores unity in neighboring Iraq

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has noted that Tehran has always put great emphasis on national unity in Iraq, expressing optimism for formation of a powerful government in the neighboring country.

In a phone call with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi on Wednesday, Raisi expressed his optimism that Iraq’s political process, which began with parliamentary elections last year, will lead to the formation of a strong government as soon as possible.

For his part, Kadhimi congratulated Raisi on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr and praised Iran’s support for his nation.

Due to a lack of quorum in the parliament, Iraq has been unable to elect a new president, extending a painful standoff in Iraqi politics months after a general election dramatically altered the composition of the legislature.

### Iran urges U.S. to correct Trump’s illegal act, take political initiative to revive nuclear deal

TEHRAN— Iran’s Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on Tuesday urged the current U.S. administration to “correct the illegal behavior” of Donald Trump and take steps toward “political initiatives” in order to restore the 2015 nuclear deal.

Amir Abdollahian made the remarks in a telephone conversation with his Irish counterpart Simon Coveney.

The conversation took place as the Vienna talks to revitalize the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, have stalled.

Iran’s chief diplomat insisted Iran will continue the “path of diplomacy”

to reach a final agreement by observing its red lines.

“Now it is the turn of the American side to take a realistic approach, correct the illegal behavior of Trump and take steps toward political initiatives. And we also, by observing our red lines, continue the path of diplomacy to reach a final agreement,” Amir Abdollahian said, according to a press release by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Praising efforts by the Irish foreign minister to revitalize the JCPOA, Amir Abdollahian said Iran not only Iran has put forward political initiatives during the talks it has also shown the necessary will to reach a “good, strong and durable”

agreement in practice.

Former U.S. president Donald Trump quit the JCPOA in May 2018 in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and reimposed all sanctions on Iran lifted under the JCPOA and imposed new ones under different pretexts.

For his part, Coveney said it necessary to achieve a good nuclear agreement which would meet the demands of Iran and all other sides in the Vienna negotiations.

Foreign Minister Coveney also said his country will leave no stone unturned to reduce international tensions, especially efforts to resurrect the nuclear agreement.

The Irish foreign minister also

Raisi added.

Given the two nations’ unique strengths, he emphasized that Tehran and Jakarta may strengthen cooperation in various fields by working together to utilize their potential.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to promote its relations, with the priority of friendly countries, in regional and international fields,” Raisi pointed out.

For his part, Indonesia’s president Joko Widodo stated that his country is eager to expand bilateral, regional, and international collaboration with Iran, particularly in the domains of energy and health.

Iran and Indonesia share cultural affinities and take similar positions on regional and international problems, including their support for the Palestinian people’s values, Widodo stated.

said the intensification of tensions resulting from the Ukraine war is a source of worry.

Amir Abdollahian also said he has sent the message of the Ukrainian foreign minister to his Russian counterpart twice. “So far, two times I have carried the message of the Ukrainian foreign minister to my Russian counterpart.”

Iran’s foreign minister reiterated Tehran’s strong feeling against war and displacement of people in Ukraine, Yemen, Palestine, Afghanistan, and other parts of the world and said “we believe that steps must be taken toward realization of peace and durable stability through political solutions.”

## UN special rapporteur to visit Iran

TEHRAN — The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights will start a visit to Iran on Sunday, Secretary of Iran’s High Council for Human Rights Kazem Gharibabadi announced on Thursday.

The visit will provide an opportunity for Alena Douhan to become acquainted with the destructive effects of the sanctions on the Iranian people, Gharibabadi said.

Douhan’s visit will last for 11 days, according to Gharibabadi.

A Thursday report from the High Council for



Alena Douhan, UN special rapporteur

Human Rights Office in Tehran also approved the news.

According to Gharibabadi, the request to visit Iran was made by the Special Rapporteur herself and Iran agreed to it.

Her major purpose, he noted, is to assess the harmful impacts of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights in Iran.

Gharibabadi indicated that the Special Rapporteur will meet with government officials and leaders from the private sector.

He added that she will also tour several centers to present a comprehensive report.



# Will Biden be trapped by Iran hawks?

TEHRAN – In a blow to the Biden administration’s stated goal of returning to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, the U.S. Senate approved two motions drafted by Republican senators who vehemently oppose diplomacy with Iran.

On Thursday, the Senate approved two so-called Motions to Instruct Conferees put forward by Senator James Lankford (R-OK) and Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas).

The Lankford motion centers around a demand long sought by Iran hawks in Washington which is to urge the Biden administration to include non-nuclear issues such as Iran’s influence in the West Asia region and its ballistic missiles in any possible nuclear deal with Tehran. The motion also calls on the Biden administration to refrain from revoking the designation of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).

The Cruz motion highlighted the need to maintain the “necessary Iran terrorism sanctions” which have been at the heart of the demands pushed by Iran hawks ever since the talks in Vienna over reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), began in April of last year.

It called for keeping the sanctions imposed under terrorism-related authorities on the Central Bank of



Iran the continuation of which will almost certainly impede the revival of the JCPOA.

The motions included a weird language concerning Iran-China cooperation. The Cruz motions called on the U.S. government to limit “diplomatic, energy, infrastructure, banking, financial, military, and space cooperation” between Iran and China “through terrorism-related sanctions imposed on the Central Bank of Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.”

The motions are not binding to the Biden administration and they are unlikely to have a determining effect on the trajectory of talks in Vienna. But they do send a symbolic message that, at present, only benefits the opponents of the JCPOA in the U.S.

and the region. The hardliners in Washington want to send a message to the Biden administration that its efforts to return to the JCPOA not only lack Republican support but also will be opposed by fellow Democrats in Congress. This may be the reason why the word “bipartisan” was magnified more than the content of the motions.

Ted Cruz said after the vote, “Today’s vote represents an overwhelming and bipartisan rebuke of the administration’s policies that are ignoring and weakening sanctions against Iran. The Senate made absolutely clear that it will reject any attempt to dismantle terrorism sanctions on the CBI and the IRGC.”

Senator Lankford made clear that the aim of his motion is to prevent a

deal in Vienna. “The Senate sent a clear message tonight that we do not want the United States to make a nuclear deal with Iran that ignores their past behavior and their present intentions,” he said on Twitter after the vote.

Apart from the bickering in Washington over Iran policy, the motions seem to be designed to send a message to Iran itself that signing a deal with an administration lacking bipartisan support in its Iran policy is not worth the effort as the deal will be jettisoned when a Republican president returns to the White House which remains likely given the low approval ratings of Biden.

Of note, in the last round of talks, Iran demanded that the Biden administration delist the IRGC among other things. The U.S. refused the demand and the talks ground to a halt. The Biden administration did nothing to break the deadlock and kept kicking the can down the road. Biden officials even spoke of their readiness for a scenario where the talks fail, which seems to be an effort to propitiate the hawks. But the Biden administration could soon realize that it was trapped by self-imposed limits that would render the JCPOA a thing of the past. Therefore, Biden should make up his mind regarding the Vienna talks and show the courage of making political decisions needed to get the tattered nuclear deal back on track.

## SPORTS

### Star-studded Paykan ready for Asian Club Volleyball Championship

TEHRAN – Iranian volleyball club Paykan officially announced the signing of four volleyball starts for the 2022 Asian Men’s Club Volleyball Championship.

The Tehran based club have signed Modena Volley outside hitter Earvin N’Gapeth and opposite spiker Nimir Abdel-Aziz for the competition.

Paykan have also signed Fenerbahce HDI Sigorta setter Saeid Marouf and middle blocker Mohammad Mousavi.

The tournament will be held in Tehran, Iran, from May 14 to 20.

Al Rayyan of Qatar, Kazakhstan’s Taraz, Nakhon Ratchasima QminC from Thailand, Japanese Suntory Sunbirds, Iraqi team Al Bahri, Uzbek Telecom from Uzbekistan, and Iranian teams Paykan and Shahdabi will compete for the title.

The winners of the Asian Men’s Club Volleyball Championship will qualify for the FIVB Volleyball Men’s Club World Championship.

### Iran defeat Australia at 2022 IFCPF Men’s World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Australia in the Group C fixture at the International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football (IFCPF) Men’s World Cup on Thursday.

Yaser Rostami and Hossein Tizbor scored for the Iranian team in Salou, Spain.

Iran had been held 2-2 by the U.S. in their opening match.

The tournament will run through to May 16, with matches being held at the Futbol Salou Sports Complex in Salou, which is outside Barcelona.

The Women’s World Cup is planned to start on May 7.

### Mohammadi named executive director of Persepolis

TEHRAN – Former Persepolis goalkeeper Mohammad Mohammadi was appointed as executive director of the club.

He replaced Ebrahim Shakouri in the post.

Mohammadi stepped down from his post in Iran U-23 football team sporting director last week.

Mohammadi started his goalkeeping career in 1995 in Saipa and joined Persepolis in 2001.

He also played for another Iranian giant Esteghlal.

### Rezaei reappointed as Iran sitting volleyball head coach

TEHRAN – Hadi Rezaei was reappointed as head coach of Iran sitting volleyball team.

He parted company with the National Team in last year’s September after inspiring Iran to the seventh gold medal in the Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

The legendary coach will lead Iran at the 2022 Sitting Volleyball World Championships in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Rezaei was named as an Honorary Life Member of World Paravolley last week due to his significant contribution to the organization over the years.

### Shahrdari Gorgan win Iran basketball league

TEHRAN – Shahrdari Gorgan claimed the title of the 2021/22 Iranian Basketball Super League (IBSL) for the second time on Sunday.

The Gorgan based team won the title after beating Zob Ahan in best of five, in which they won the title 3-1.

Sunday night, Shahrdari seized the title with a 95-88 win over Zob Ahan in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium.

Shahrdari Gorgan point guard Perry Petty scored 41 points. The American threw a long ball to tie the match at 96-96 against Mahram just before the final whistle last season.

Shahrdari Gorgan won the match 110-103 in the five-minute overtime and claimed the title for the first time ever.

### Four archers to represent Iran at 2022 Asia Cup – Stage II

TEHRAN – Iran has sent four archers to the 2022 Asia Cup – Stage II in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq.

The competition will be held in the Iraqi city from May 6 to 11.

Reza Shabani, Nima Naderi, Mohammad Hossein Golshani and Mahta Abdollahi have traveled to Sulaymaniyah to take part in the recurve competition.

### IPL: Esteghlal held, Persepolis emerge victorious

TEHRAN – Iran Professional League (IPL) leaders Esteghlal were held against Sepahan on Wednesday.

In the match held in Isfahan’s Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium, Esteghlal defender Mohammad Daneshgar scored with a header just six minutes into the match.

Sepahan Georgian defender Giorgi Gvlesiani leveled the score from the penalty spot in the 14th minute.

In Tehran’s Azadi Stadium, 10-man Persepolis defeated Paykan 2-0.

Hamed Pakdel opened the scoring for the hosts in the 16th minute.

Persepolis midfielder Omid Alishah was sent off in the 32nd minute for violent conduct.

Ali Nemati made it 2-0 in the 49th minute.

Elsewhere, Shahr Khodro and Sanat Naft shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw, Havadar edged Zob Ahan 1-0 in Tehran, Foolad were held by Gol Gohar in Ahvaz and Aluminum played out a goalless draw against Nassaji.

With five weeks remaining, Esteghlal lead the table with 57 points, four points above Persepolis.

### Iran weighing up friendly with Canada

TEHRAN – Iran football federation is weighing up to arrange a friendly match with Canada football team.

Iran and Canada both qualified for the 2022 FIFA World Cup and will have to play warm-up matches as part of preparation for the prestigious event.

Iran are pitted against England, the U.S. and one of Ukraine, Scotland or Wales in Group B.

Canada are in Group F along with Belgium, Croatia, and Morocco.

Given the long-distance trip, the Iranian team would rather play more than one team.

Ecuador football team are also a candidate for the friendly.

### Iranian athletes win two golds at 2021 Deaflympics

TEHRAN – Iran’s Amirmohammad Daftari and Milad Sadeghzadeh claimed two gold medals at the Deaflympics underway in the Brazilian city of Caxias do Sul.

Daftari his Korean rival in the Men’s -73kg judo final. Karate athlete Milad Sadeghzadeh also claimed a gold medal after beating his Ukrainian rival 7-3 in the final match of the -60kg.

The Deaflympics had initially been scheduled to take place from December 5 to 21 in 2021, but was postponed due to COVID-19 complications.

The delayed Deaflympics is due to run until May 15.

## Iran highlights need to counter Islamophobia

TEHRAN – Iranian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi has urged the international community to accelerate efforts to counter the spread of Islamophobia in the world.

Takht Ravanchi noted how some Western anti-Islam media outlets and officials were contributing to creation of “an atmosphere of hatemongering” around Islam and Muslims around the world by fueling Islamophobia, according to Fars News.

The Iranian ambassador made the remarks at a session of a UN committee on information on Wednesday.

“The time has come for the international community to condemn this phenomenon and take the necessary measures that are aimed at fighting Islamophobia and violation of Muslims’ basic rights,” Takht Ravanchi said.

He said deployment of coercive economic measures are contrary to the principles of international law and the humanitarian law that have been specified in the UN Charter.

He, therefore, called on the UN to increase its efforts to broadcast the negative consequences that the unilateral bans have on the target nations.

Takht Ravanchi said that the sanctions had “both weakened [the trend of] economic growth in the target countries and come to prevent their access to basic medical equipment and materials by restricting access to overseas’ financial resources.”

Separately, the envoy denounced some countries’

## New Pakistani PM underlines need to boost ties with Iran

TEHRAN – Pakistan’s new Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed his country’s desire to strengthen ties with Iran.

“On this occasion, I declare my determination and commitment to further deepen and develop the close and brotherly relations between Iran and Pakistan,” he said, according to Fars News.

He made the remarks in a congratulatory message to Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr.

Sharif also wished the best of health and increasing success to the Iranian president, as well as more honor and well-being of the Iranian people.

Sharif had also last month called for the expansion mutual cooperation between Iran and Pakistan.

“I hope that Tehran and Islamabad could establish closer relations,” Sharif tweeted.

The Pakistani prime minister also invited Raisi to pay an official visit to Pakistan.

## No place for weapons of mass destruction in Islamic approach: IRGC chief

TEHRAN – Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps General Hossein Salami has said that weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) have no place in Islamic teachings.

He said that weapons of mass destruction, as the Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed out, do not have any place in the Islamic

approach, indicating that this is not a tactical decision, but a religious ruling.

General Salami made the remarks during the closing ceremony of the Holy Quran competitions of the Revolution Guards, which was held on Thursday in the Holy Razavi Shrine in the city of Mashhad.

The senior commander added

that nuclear weapons, as a type of weapons of mass destruction, do not have any status in the Islamic system, noting that the true religion does not support resorting to this approach in confronting the enemy, Al Alam reported.

He added that the Leader announced this position to confront the world

powers that possess nuclear weapons, and he decided, in the context of complying with the teachings of the Holy Quran, to ban the use of weapons of mass destruction.

“This approach is an indication that His Eminence grew up in the presence of the Holy Quran,” General Salami said of Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.



## Iran-Syria annual trade up 60% yr/yr

From page 1 ► “Every trader needs to get his goods to the destination as soon as possible, but due to the fact that Syria does not share a border with Iran, the shipping cost and delivery time increases.”

Kashefi further noted that since Syria is also sanctioned like Iran there are also financial and banking problems in the way of trade with this country.

The head of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce stated that important measures have been taken to expand economic relations between the two sides, saying: “Last year we saw a 60 percent growth in trade with this country, but there is still a gap with the planned horizon.”

Referring to Syria's restrictive regulations for foreign trade, Kashefi said: “The exchanges between the two countries should be subject to preferential tariffs and in some cases even zero tariffs, so that we can speed up exchanges by reducing costs.”

Referring to the recent visit of the industry, mining and trade minister along with representatives of the private sector to Syria,



the official noted that the Syrian side expressed great interest in the expansion of trade with the Iranian side.

“Establishing trade relations with Syria is a win-win game, and both countries will benefit from it,” he added.

Earlier in February, Kashefi had said that Iran and Syria plan to increase their trade turnover to \$500 million in 2022.

According to the official, currently, up to eight percent of all the products that are exported from Iran to Iraq end up in the Syrian market, not being recorded as imports from Iran.

## Quarterly trade between Iran, U.S. stands at \$15m

TEHRAN – The value of trade between Iran and the United States reached \$15 million in the first three months of 2022, to register a 55-percent rise year on year.

Based on the data released by the United States Census Bureau, the two countries traded \$9.7 million worth of goods in the first quarter of 2021, Tasnim news agency reported.

According to the mentioned data, Iran exported \$4.7 million worth of commodities to the U.S. during Q1 2022, registering a drastic increase of 4,700 percent.

The U.S. had imported only \$100,000 worth of goods from Iran in the first three months

of 2021.

The imports from the U.S. also increased by seven percent compared to the figure for the previous year's same period in which Iran imported only \$9.6 million worth of commodities from the U.S.

The Islamic Republic imported \$10.3 million worth of goods from the U.S. in Q1 2022.

The amount of trade between Iran and the United States is not significant compared to the two countries' total trade with the world. Iran ranks 175th among the U.S.'s top export destinations in the mentioned period while the country occupied the 161st among the U.S. sources of imports.

## Area under greenhouse cultivation tripled in Hormozgan in 6 years

TEHRAN- The area under greenhouse cultivation has tripled in Hormozgan province, in the south of Iran, over the past six years, and reached 760 hectares from 250 hectares, Tasnim news agency reported.

One of the development capacities of Hormozgan, which can generate a lot of income for the country depending on the activation of economic diplomacy and accurate market regulation, is the greenhouse development, and in this due adding 5,000 hectares of greenhouses is part of the province's vision, the report said.

Due to the climatic conditions of Hormozgan province, one of the necessities in the field of agriculture is to move toward new cultivation methods, and in this regard, development of greenhouse cultivation is very important because this type of cultivation is more productive than outdoor cultivation.

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

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

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

The program was approved in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (ended on March 20, 2017) under



the framework of the National Resilient Economy Plan.

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

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

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

Due to the growing need of the market for flowers and ornamental plants, as well as off-season vegetables and summer crops, greenhouse cultivation has become one of the most profitable agricultural sectors today.

Cultivation in the controlled

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

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

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

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

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

In greenhouse cultivation, due to accurate monitoring and control of

# Oil production capacity planned to reach 5.7m bpd in 8 years

TEHRAN – National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) plans to increase the country's crude oil production capacity to 5.7 million barrels per day (bpd) over the next eight years, Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr, the company's managing director, said.

Speaking on the sidelines of a visit to Kharg Island oil terminal, Khojasteh-Mehr said the increase in the country's production capacity requires an increase in the capacity of export facilities, Shana reported on Thursday.

The official noted that the capacity of Kharg oil terminal

can also be doubled in case of necessity.

Meanwhile, NIOC's Director of Corporate Planning Karim Zobeidi put the country's current oil production capacity at 3.8 million bpd on Friday.

Back in November 2021, the Iranian Oil Ministry had announced that plans were underway to boost the country's crude oil capacity to near four million bpd by March 2022, returning to levels not seen since before the U.S. withdrew from the nuclear deal and re-imposed sanctions on the country's crude sales in 2018.

## Daily production from South Pars phase 11 to reach 14 mcm by Mar. 2023

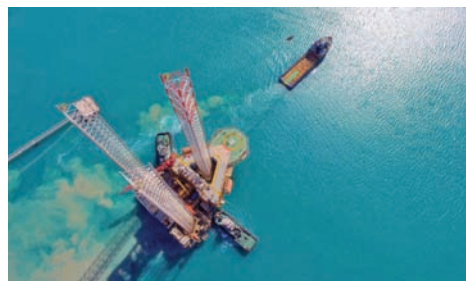
TEHRAN – Phase 11 of Iran's giant South Pars gas field development project is expected to produce 14 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas on a daily basis by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2023), an official with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) said.

Karim Zobeidi, NIOC's director of corporate planning, said one of the most important concerns of the Oil Ministry is the proper supply of gas during the cold season, IRNA reported.

Pointing out that by the end of the current Iranian calendar year the production from the first phase of South Azadegan oil field should also reach 220,000 barrels per day, Zobeidi added: “Increasing production from the joint oil fields of West Karun region is a priority for the thirteenth government.”

“In Phase 14 of South Pars, the remaining three trains of the phase's refinery will be commissioned this year,” he said.

Phases 22 to 24 of South Pars are also



going to go fully operational, according to the official.

Iran had previously awarded the development of the phase 11 project to a consortium comprised of France's Total, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), and Petropars which is a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), however Total and CNPCI pulled out of the project in 2019 due to the U.S. sanctions.

Currently, Petropars is developing the phase 11 project after its partners left the contract.

The drilling operation for the first well

## Annual non-oil export from Khorasan Razavi increases 6%

TEHRAN – The value of non-oil export from Khorasan Razavi province, in the northeast of Iran, rose six percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), from its preceding year, the acting head of the province's customs department announced.

Javad Jafari said that 2,607 million tons of commodities worth \$1.4 billion were exported from the province in the past year, indicating five percent fall in terms of weight year on year.

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

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

Greenhouse development in each of the provinces will be done based on climatic conditions and capacities, infrastructure for access to facilities, manpower status, proximity to the target consumer market and export markets, population, development history and investment in this field, he further explained.

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

Existence of rich and diverse water resources in the province has put West Azarbaijan in the first place among non-coastal provinces of the country in terms of fishery output in the previous year, the official further highlighted.

As stated by an official with Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO), production of 714,000 tons of fishery has been targeted for the current



In the budget bill for the current Iranian calendar year (starts on March 21), special attention has been paid to improving oil and gas production and developing energy infrastructure across the country in order to boost the oil output to 3.952 million bpd.

Considering the new resource allocations for the development of the oil industry in the budget bill for the current fiscal year, the country's crude oil and gas condensate production is expected to increase by 144,000 bpd, Tasnim News Agency reported in late January.

Based on OPEC's latest monthly report, Iran's crude oil production in March reached 2.546 million bpd to register a 7,000-barrel increase compared to the figure for February.

The country produced 2,539 million bpd of crude oil in February, the report said citing secondary sources.

The Islamic Republic's average crude output for the first quarter of 2022 stood at 2,528 million bpd indicating a 56,000-bpd increase compared to the figure for the fourth quarter of the previous year, the report indicated.

of mentioned phase was officially started in December 2020. In the early production stage, the output of this phase will reach 500 million cubic feet (equivalent to 14 million cubic meters) per day.

Back in January, the managing director of Petropars Company had announced the implementation of two new contracts as of December 22, 2021, to accelerate the development of the mentioned phase.

According to Hamid-Reza Masoudi, the mentioned deals were concerned with the construction of an off-shore pipeline as well as the installation of the phase's SDP11B platform.

South Pars is the world's largest gas field, covering an area of 3,700 square kilometers of Iran's territorial waters.

The giant field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate. The field is divided into 24 standard phases.

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 its 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.

## West Azarbaijan's annual fishery output stands at over 6,700 tons

TEHRAN- The fishery output of West Azarbaijan province, in the northwest of Iran, stood at 6,700 tons in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), a provincial official announced.

Mohammad-Baqer Qoreyshi, the director for fisheries and aquatic affairs in the province's Agriculture Department, said that the figure is expected to reach over 7,200 tons in the present year.

Existence of rich and diverse water resources in the province has put West Azarbaijan in the first place among non-coastal provinces of the country in terms of fishery output in the previous year, the official further highlighted.

As stated by an official with Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO), production of 714,000 tons of fishery has been targeted for the current

Iranian calendar year.

Morteza Afrasiabi, the acting head of the IFO's fishery development department, said that of the mentioned figure, 277,000 tons will be fishes bred in cages and 70,000 tons will be shrimps.

Achieving the targeted 714,000 tons of fishery requires infrastructure as well as credits and banking facilities, the official added.

Fishery production has increased noticeably in Iran in recent years.

Enjoying high quality, Iran's fishery products were sold easily in the export markets, and also some new export destinations welcomed these products in the past three years; as new markets including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations opened up for Iranian fishery products.



# Biden will be in hot water if this situation persists in 2024: political scientist



From page 1 ▶ would probably lose the lower house of Congress (the House of Representatives) and possibly the Senate as well. This is what I expect next November as well, barring major developments.

**Biden's critics accuse him of cognitive inability. To what extent can this affect the results of presidential elections?**

Some partisan Republicans like to suggest that Biden's mental acuity is low. There is little evidence for this, but he is a noticeably old and somewhat frail man. If he truly runs again in 2024, voters will think about his age. He continues to say he will run again, to avoid becoming a "lame duck,"

but that remains to be seen.

**Do you think Trump enjoys sufficient support among the public or his popularity is limited to Republicans?**

Trump remains very popular among hard-core Republicans, so much so that he is the front-runner to become the Republicans' presidential nominee in 2024. But his popularity among Independents (about one-third of voters) is much lower, and of course, he is thoroughly detested by Democrats. If something happens to Trump so that he does not run, the Republicans have some other strong candidates.

**Could you imagine a situation in which Trump is president again? How the country would look like in terms of democracy and international reputation?**

This is not an easy question to answer. It depends partly on what issues become central in the 2024 election, including unexpected events like a new pandemic or war. However, Trump is a very vindictive person with little regard for legality or the norms of American politics. So he will probably try to take revenge on

people he sees as his "enemies." He will likely return to anti-immigration as a major issue, and will again pursue his somewhat strange foreign policy. So, more favorable to Putin, very supportive of the right-wing in Israel and of the Saudis, strongly anti-Iranian, and a trade war with China.

**What factors will mainly shape Americans' behavior in the upcoming elections?**

The main issue in American national elections is almost always the economy and to a lesser extent national security. If unemployment and inflation are high in 2024, Biden and the Democrats will be in big trouble and Trump may well return to the White House. If unemployment and inflation are low and Americans feel financially secure, the situation will be much more favorable for the Democrats and more difficult for Trump. In either case, Trump and the Democrats will stress general populist social issues, since many of their actual stands on specific issues are not very popular.

Trump is a very vindictive person with little regard for legality or the norms of American politics.

Republicans will stress general populist social issues, since many of their actual stands on specific issues are not very popular.

## US intelligence helped Ukraine strike Russian flagship, officials say

The United States provided intelligence that helped Ukrainian forces locate and strike the flagship of Russia's Black Sea fleet last month, another sign that the administration is easing its self-imposed limitations on how far it will go in helping Ukraine fight Russia, U.S. officials said, according to the New York Times.

The targeting help, which contributed to the eventual sinking of the flagship, the Moskva, is part of a continuing classified effort by the Biden administration to provide real-time battlefield intelligence to Ukraine. That intelligence also includes sharing anticipated Russian troop movements, gleaned from a recent American assessment of Moscow's battle plan for the fighting in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, the officials said.

The administration has sought to keep much of the battlefield and maritime intelligence it is sharing with the Ukrainians secret out of fear it will be seen as an escalation and provoke President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia into a wider war. But in recent weeks, the United States has sped heavier weapons to Ukraine and requested an extraordinary \$33 billion in additional military, economic and humanitarian aid from Congress, demonstrating how quickly American restraints on support for Ukraine are shifting.

Two senior American officials said that Ukraine already had obtained the Moskva's targeting data on its own, and that the United States provided only confirmation. But other officials said the American intelligence was crucial to Ukraine's sinking of the ship.

The U.S. intelligence help to strike the Moskva was reported earlier by NBC News.

On April 13, Ukrainian forces on the ground fired two Neptune missiles, striking the Moskva and igniting a fire that eventually led to the sinking of the warship. Attention has also focused on whether the aging ship's radar systems were working properly. Ukrainian and U.S. officials said the Moskva was possibly distracted by Ukraine's deploying of a Turkish-made Bayraktar drone nearby.

Immediately after the strike, Biden administration officials were scrupulously silent, declining to confirm even that the Moskva had been struck. But in recent days, American officials confirmed that targeting data from American intelligence sources was provided to Ukraine in the hours before the Neptune missiles were launched.



The officials declined to elaborate on what specific information was passed along, but one official said the information went beyond simply a report on the ship's location in the Black Sea, 65 nautical miles south of Odesa.

The sinking of the ship was a major blow to Russia and the most significant loss for any navy in 40 years.

Russia has denied Ukrainian missiles played any role in the Moskva's demise, claiming instead that an onboard fire caused a munitions explosion that doomed the ship. Independent Russian news outlets based outside the country have reported that about 40 men died and an additional 100 were injured when the warship was damaged and sank.

Biden administration officials have declined to publicly confirm that American intelligence provided the targeting information that allowed Ukraine to hit the Moskva.

The Pentagon press secretary, John F. Kirby, asked about a report in The Times of London that a Navy P-8 spy plane from Sigonella air base in Italy was tracking the Moskva before it was hit by Ukraine, spoke of air policing missions in the Black Sea as part of a carefully worded response: "There was no provision of targeting information by any United States Navy P-8 flying in these air policing missions," he said.

An American official said the Ukrainians asked the Americans about a ship sailing in the Black Sea south of Odesa. The United States identified it as the Moskva, and confirmed its location. The Ukrainians then targeted the ship. The Ukrainians carried out the strike without the prior knowledge of the United States. The official said the United States provided confirmation to the Ukrainian military, but other officials said it was not certain Ukraine could have hit the ship without U.S. assistance.

After this article was published, Mr. Kirby added in a statement, "The Ukrainians have their own

intelligence capabilities to track and target Russian naval vessels, as they did in this case."

American officials have acknowledged publicly that actionable intelligence was provided to the Ukrainians in the run-up to Russia's invasion on Feb. 24, and that the practice has continued in the weeks since. But these officials have shied away from confirming American involvement in Ukrainian operations that have resulted in the deaths of Russian soldiers.

The U.S. assessment of Russia's war plan for the Donbas region allowed a senior Pentagon official to say last week that Russia appeared to be "several days behind" schedule in its offensive there because of stiff Ukrainian resistance and continuing supply line problems.

Russian forces can always deviate from their plans, but American officials said the intelligence allows Ukrainian forces to avoid attack in some locations and position themselves to strike Russians in others.

Although the administration remains wary of provoking Mr. Putin to the point that he further escalates his attacks — President Biden has said he will not send American troops to Ukraine or establish a "no-fly zone" there — current and former officials said the administration found some value in warning Russia that Ukraine had the weight of the United States and NATO behind it. Officials said Moscow had its own calculations to weigh, including whether it could handle a bigger war, particularly one that would allow NATO to invoke its mutual defense charter or enter the war more directly.

The New York Times reported on Wednesday that American intelligence about Russian movements provided to Ukraine has allowed Kyiv to target and kill a number of Russian generals. On Thursday, Mr. Kirby, the Pentagon spokesman, acknowledged intelligence sharing with the

Ukrainians but provided few details.

But Mr. Kirby said the Ukrainians have their own sources of intelligence, which they combine with others and choose what targets to strike. "They make their own decisions," Mr. Kirby said. "And they take their own actions."

In an interview on Thursday with CNN, Representative Adam B. Schiff, the California Democrat who leads the House Intelligence Committee, said the Biden administration had been loath to discuss intelligence sharing for fear of saying anything "that will escalate the conflict."

"We are providing real-time intelligence to Ukraine to help it defend itself," Mr. Schiff said. "I don't think the administration wants to go into specifics about just what kind of what circumstances, but we want to make sure that Ukraine is successful."

For decades, the Moskva, a potent embodiment of Russian naval power in the Black Sea, bristled with missiles and loomed ominously on the horizon, inspiring awe in those who saw it.

But American Navy officials who toured Russian cruisers when there was U.S.-Russian military cooperation in the late 1990s and early 2000s said the Moskva had problems. There was little visible damage control equipment aboard the warship for quickly putting out shipboard fires.

The officials said they could not see fire extinguishers or fire hoses in passageways throughout the ships. On American ships, such equipment is stored close at hand to allow the crew to rapidly extinguish fires, which is critical at sea.

Russian media reports have said a fire onboard ignited an ammunition magazine, seriously damaging the Moskva. American officials say the Neptune missiles most likely caused the fire, which the crew could not contain before the aging vessel ultimately sank while being towed to port.

"The Russian military had long debated whether to retire the Moskva," said Michael Kofman, the director of Russia studies at CNA, a research institute in Arlington County, Va. "It was an aging Soviet cruiser in dire need of modernization."

But with a shortage of cruisers and destroyers, Moscow ultimately decided to extend its service. It was the Moskva's guns, in fact, that fired on Ukraine's Snake Island in the first days of the war.

## UK PM braces for bruising local elections



From page 1 ▶ Experts had previously said if the ruling conservatives lose more than 350 seats it would indicate the party found itself facing a very tricky test to retain power in the upcoming general elections.

Early election results show Johnson's Conservatives suffering losses in the ballots with scores of council seats lost.

Prior to the elections, an increasing number of reports had emerged of conservative candidates, fearing they would lose their seats, doing their utmost to distance themselves from the Prime Minister; a sign of just how much damage Johnson has inflicted on the ruling party.

The Prime Minister broke his own coronavirus lockdown laws to attend parties and gatherings in his Downing Street office at a time when households across the country faced severe restrictions and financial punishments with regards to their movement, social contacts, and other restrictive rules the government imposed.

The former Tory minister Nick Boles, who once served as Johnson's chief of staff when the UK PM was serving as the mayor of London, declared he was voting Labour, while Johnson's former highest-ranking advisor in his prime ministerial role, Dominic Cummings, repeated his calls on polling day for "regime change".

In 2019, Johnson turned conventional British politics upside down by winning in both the traditional Conservative southern heartlands and more industrial areas in central and northern England.

The results this time around appear to be much more mixed and will not be to the UK Premier's liking.

One of the constituencies that has been under a lot of attention among the British public is the London borough of Wandsworth which has been under conservative party hands for 44 years.

Exit polls show Wandsworth has now been won by Labour, for the first time since 1974. Ravi Govindia, the local Conservative leader, believes voters had punished the party because of a cost-of-living crisis.

He blames his defeat on "a perfect storm of the cost of living crisis, 12 years of a Conservative government and redrawn boundaries".

"This is a warning shot from Conservative supporters - a fair number just stayed at home."

He also notes that he doesn't believe there has been "a huge conversion" to the Labour party.

The Conservative leader of the nearby Barnet Council Daniel Thomas acknowledged his party has also lost control of the constituency. Another historic defeat for the conservatives has also been announced in Westminster showing the Tories have lost their political muscle in the British capital with three major wins for the Labour opposition.

That's not to say Labour has done spectacularly well outside London as results slowly trickle in, the Lib Dems and the Greens have also managed to cause upsets across the country.

Analysts say the early exit polls show good results for Labour leader Starmer but not the kind of results that indicate a Labour majority at the next general election. However, Labour does not have to win a majority for Starmer to be Prime

Minister.

Nevertheless, as one conservative MP Stephen Hammond acknowledged; the "Partygate" scandal was a big influence on voting and that his local area in Wimbledon (London) saw a high turnout as "angry Tories" voted against his party.

"That ought to be a clarion bell ringing in Downing Street to make sure we are concentrating on the cost of living" he warned.

The Conservative Party co-chairman has also admitted "we have had some difficult election results."

Scotland and Wales are yet to start declaring results but Johnson's support has waned and the Prime Minister looks to be in trouble as the government grapples with a cost-of-living crisis and revelations about his conduct.

According to one YouGov poll, after Johnson was fined by the police, almost 80-percent thought he had lied about parties, while other surveys have shown the British public overwhelmingly think he should resign.

Now many Conservative members of parliament are mulling whether Johnson is an electoral liability, and a poor showing in the local elections for the conservatives may trigger a Tory leadership challenge.

After the polls had closed, the Liberal Democrats party leader Ed Davey, said: "I am optimistic that thanks to their hard work, the Liberal Democrats will gain ground in areas across the blue wall where voters are fed up of being taken for granted."

"After knocking on hundreds of doors this election, one thing is clear: people are sick of Boris Johnson's Conservatives. They have had enough of seeing their taxes hiked, sewage dumped in their rivers, and local health services run into the ground."

Despite people casting their ballots for local representatives who are mainly responsible for planning issues, housing, and rubbish collections, etc., the local elections gave voters their first chance to have their say on the broader national issues.

These include the soaring energy prices and rising inflation, the cost of food products, the war in Ukraine, and a stimulus test for the Prime Minister following his scandals, among other issues.

The elections come as The Bank of England has warned that inflation will hit ten percent by the end of the year.

It says the Russia-Ukraine conflict has sharply intensified the global inflationary pressures and has led to a "material deterioration in the outlook for the world and UK growth."

It also warned the Russia-Ukraine conflict may cause further supply chain disruptions.

Critics accuse the ruling conservative British government of playing a negative role in the conflict by pouring weapons into a warzone instead of backing the peace process.

Supporters of Johnson say the economic problems are not something limited to the UK but all Western countries, who took a financial blow from the COVID-19 pandemic while the results of the Ukraine war have hit already rising prices for food items, energy, and other services.



Over half a million visit Isfahan sites

From page1► Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its ‘life-giving river’, the Zayandehrud, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan’s Islamic buildings, and the city’s majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside.

This year’s Ramadan began on April 03, which falls in the spring season in Iran, and

Street lights to be installed across Babak fortress

TEHRAN – The tourism ministry has allocated a budget for providing electricity and installing street lights across a road that goes to the ancient Babak fortress in northwest Iran.

On Thursday, the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts assigned 20 billion rials (about \$71,000) for the electricity supply of Babak fortress and its surroundings, ISNA reported.

The ancient fort is named after Babak Khorramdin, an Iranian national hero, warlord, and revolutionary leader who fought against Arab invaders until he died in 838 CE.

Up to the moment, 80 billion rials has been spent on the project. It is estimated that 60 billion rials are needed for its completion. And today, 20 billion rials is allocated,” Ezzatollah Zarghami said on Thursday.

“Considering that Qarabag region and especially Kalibar county is one of the important tourist destinations in East Azarbaijan (province) due to its distinct location, strengthening its tourism infrastructure is necessary and is on the agenda for the ministry,” the tourism minister explained.

came to an end on Monday 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.

“When the project is accomplished, tourists can easily climb this historical fort at night,” Zarghami said.

The ruined fortress is nestled atop a sharp cliff. Thus, ascending the mount to set foot on the ancient fort may seem somewhat arduous for many visitors but in most cases proves to be a considerable and gratifying experience.

Occupying a cultural position somewhere between King Arthur and Robin Hood, the fortress can be reached via several access paths, though the normal route ascends stairs behind the seasonal Babak Hotel.

It consists of several stone towers and lodging areas stretched over a space of nearly ten thousand square meters and the origins of the monument are said to date from the Sassanid era (224–651).

Once at the top, onlookers are greatly rewarded with vistas of the encircling Arasbaran oak forests, jagged cliffs, and steep gorges.

Babak fortress is embraced with Arasbaran Protected Area, which is a candidate for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list for 2018.

Qazaq-Khaneh: a former military edifice in downtown Tehran

TEHRAN - In the vicinity of the grand bazaar in the heart of Tehran, stands the Qazaq-Khaneh (Cossack’s quarters), a centuries-old edifice that still shows off a minimal architecture.

The monument was originally a military fort in the Qajar era, serving as a base hosting Qazaqs (Cossacks), a special military force created under an agreement between Iran and Russia and led by Reza Shah and Colonel Vladimir Platonovitch Liakhov.

Qazaq-Khaneh was converted into the Ministry of War during the Pahlavi epoch. Now, it serves the University of Art for educational purposes.

The three-story structure has halls on the first floor as well as corridors with different rooms on the upper floors. Besides the main building, two other structures once served as dormitories for soldiers.

Its architecture is a mixture



of Iranian and European arts, reflected in various porches built with nice views. The porches were raised to serve as platforms for high-ranking figures to watch military ceremonies used to be held in the nearby areas.

In fact, The Qazaq-Khaneh building is the core of the Meydan-e Mashq, a military shooting range covering around 160,000 square meters.

However, in subsequent urban developments, this rifle range was turned into a garden and its well-known gate was built under Reza Shah’s command

The area formerly known as Mashq Square is a must-see where you can easily spend a day visiting its different museums and sites.

As mentioned by Lonely Planet, Tehran is so much more than a chaotic jumble of concrete

and crazy traffic blanketed by a miasma of air pollution.

Embracing the lower slopes of the splendid, snowcapped Alborz Mountains, the city is the nation’s dynamic beating heart and the place to get a handle on modern Iran and what its future will likely be.

Exploring this fascinating metropolis will transport you on a journey through more than 250 years of Iranian history – from the glittering Golestan Palace and the adjacent Grand Bazaar to the beautiful Azadi Tower and the notorious former U.S. embassy.

Then there are the city’s many excellent museums and serene gardens. In such places, as well as in contemporary cafes, traditional teahouses, and on the walking trails in the mountains, you can relax and enjoy all that’s good about Tehran.

Uramanat holds potential to become tourist hub

TEHRAN –The UNESCO-designated Uramanat region in western Iran has considerable potential to become a tourist hub, the director of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO has said.

By properly introducing this region and providing the necessary infrastructure, it will become a major tourist destination capable of attracting tourists from all over the world, CHTN quoted Hojjatollah Ayyubi as saying on Wednesday.

UNESCO added the region to its list of World Heritage sites because of its beauty, grandeur, glory, antiquity, and its people’s art and culture, the official added.

“As the region is now a World Heritage, people around the world can enjoy its beauty,” he noted.

Stretched on the slopes of Sarvabad county

at the heart of the Zagros Mountains, and shared between the provinces of Kordestan and Kermanshah in western Iran, the Uramanat cultural landscape embraces hundreds of villages, 106,000 hectares of land, and 303,000 hectares of surrounding properties.

It boasts dense and step-like rows of houses in a way that the roof of each house forms the yard of the upper one, a feature that adds to its charm and attractiveness.

Archaeological findings dating back about 40,000 years, caves and rock shelters, ancient paths and ways along the valleys, motifs and inscriptions, cemeteries, mounds, castles, settlements, and other historical evidence attest to the continuity of life in the Uramanat region from the Paleolithic to the present time.

According to the UN body, Uramanat is an

exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition of the semi-nomadic agropastoral way of life of the Hawrami people, a Kurdish tribe that has resided in the Zagros Mountains for millennia. This outstanding cultural tradition is manifested in the ancestral practices of transhumance, the mode of seasonal living in Havars, steep-slope terraced agriculture, soil and water management, and traditional knowledge for planning and constructing steeply terraced villages, and rich diversity of intangible heritage, all reflecting a harmonious co-existence with nature.

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

First Announcement



IN THE NAME OF GOD  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No: 1401/103-09/03

“Renewal”

**Tender Holder:**  
**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)**

**Subject of Tender :**  
Broadcasting the TV network of Hispan TV on Hispasat 30W satellite in accordance with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

**Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:**  
From **Sunday 08 May 2022 (1401/02/18) 09:00 a.m** until **Wednesday 11 May 2022 (1401/02/21) by 14:00 p.m** with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

**Place of receiving the tender document:**  
Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept. ,4<sup>th</sup> Floor of IRIB Administration Complex ,Hotel Esteghlal St. Vali –Assr Ave,Tehran, Iran

**The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it:**  
Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No.IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

**Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:**  
The amount of deposit for participating in tender is USD 37200 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 9300000000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

**- Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:**  
The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the qualification evaluation package/envelope separately packed , should be submitted no later than **09:00 a.m. on Saturday 18 June 2022 (1401/03/28)** at the address mentioned in 4<sup>th</sup> clause.

**Time and place of opening Qualification Evaluation envelopes:**  
The date of opening the Qualification Evaluation envelopes is on **Saturday 18 June 2022 (1401/03/28) at 10:00 a.m** in the office of International Purchasing Dept.

**Time and place of opening Envelopes:**  
The envelopes A of those eligible participants who meet the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial committee will be opened on **Sunday 19 June 2022 at 04:00 p.m (1401/03/29)** in the office of Financial Vice President .In case of complete content in the envelopes A the envelopes of B and C of eligible participants will be opened at the same time and place.  
The participant must be qualified by the competent authorities.  
Fore more information please see :  
www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and http://iets.mporg.ir/ Tel: 00982122167053

Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

First Announcement



IN THE NAME OF GOD  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No: 1400/103-84/03

**Tender Holder:**  
**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)**

**Subject of Tender :**  
Broadcasting the TV network of English iFILM on Paksat 1R@38°E satellite in accordance with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

**Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:**  
From **Sunday 08 May 2022 (1401/02/18) 09:00 a.m** until **Wednesday 11 May 2022 (1401/02/21) by 14:00 p.m** with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

**Place of receiving the tender document:**  
Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept. ,4<sup>th</sup> Floor of IRIB Administration Complex ,Hotel Esteghlal St. Vali –Assr Ave,Tehran, Iran

**The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it:**  
Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No.IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

**Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:**  
The amount of deposit for participating in tender is USD 27200 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 6953000000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

**Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:**  
The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the qualification evaluation package/envelope separately packed , should be submitted no later than **09:00 a.m. on Saturday 18 June 2022 (1401/03/28)** at the address mentioned in 4<sup>th</sup> clause.

**Time and place of opening Qualification Evaluation envelopes:**  
The date of opening the Qualification Evaluation envelopes is on **Saturday 18 June 2022 (1401/03/28) at 10:00 a.m** in the office of International Purchasing Dept.

**Time and place of opening Envelopes:**  
The envelopes A of those eligible participants who meet the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial committee will be opened on **Sunday 19 June 2022 at 04:00 p.m (1401/03/29)** in the office of Financial Vice President .In case of complete content in the envelopes A the envelopes of B and C of eligible participants will be opened at the same time and place.  
The participant must be qualified by the competent authorities.  
Fore more information please see :  
www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and http://iets.mporg.ir/ Tel: 00982122167053

Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB



# “Iran” able to reproduce cheetahs for next 5 years

TEHRAN – “Iran”, a fertile female Asiatic cheetah who lately gave birth to three cubs, has the ability to reproduce for at least the next 5 years, Ali Salajegeh, head of the Department of Environment (DOE), has stated.

The endangered female cheetah gave birth to three cubs in captivity, for the first time for the subspecies. The cubs were born at the Touran Wildlife Refuge in Semnan province, on May 1st, by cesarean section.

However, one of the cubs who were weaker than the others lost his life on Wednesday, as the mother refused to accept the cubs and they were fed by hand.

What matters the most is the captive breeding of cheetahs to preserve the genes of this species, Salajegeh further highlighted.

All scientific aspects and global experiences of this action should be carefully studied to publish the results and achievements in different languages, he noted.

Hassan Akbari, deputy head



of the Department of Environment (DOE), said in January that the Asiatic Cheetah was down to just 12, from an estimated 100 in 2010.

The cheetah habitat in the southern part of the country is stretching to over three million hectares but is hosting only a few cheetahs.

The DOE has long been trying to breed Asiatic cheetah in the wild and in captivity so that the species is protected from extinction, but none appeared successful.

Previously, artificial insemination has been conducted on a female cheetah called ‘Delbar’ several times, and all failed.

**Fastest mammal endangered**

Over the past 60 years, Iran is home to the last known population of Asiatic cheetah, which once roamed across vast ranges of the west and south Asian countries, from West Asia to India. Listed as critically endangered by the IUCN, the Asiatic cheetah is among the rarest cats in the world at the subspecies level,

with fewer than 50 believed to remain in Iran.

Cheetahs’ habitats in Iran are stretching over 12 million hectares of land area and over the past 16 years, only experts collaborating with the CACP project have strived to count 48 cheetahs using trap cameras and other technical methods.

Roads fragmenting cheetahs’ habitats are the main threats to the species, while guard dogs and stray dogs, drought spells, decreasing population of the prey species to support the cheetahs, and habitat loss are also other factors endangering the sparse population of the cheetahs in the country.

Listed as critically endangered by the IUCN, the Asiatic cheetah is among the rarest cats in the world at the subspecies level.

## Flooding hits over 70 cities across Iran

TEHRAN – Flood has stricken 73 cities in 17 provinces across the country over the past ten days, ISNA news agency reported on Friday.

During this period, 17 provinces of East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Ardabil, Isfahan, Ilam, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, North Khorasan, South Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, Zanjan, Semnan, Kerman, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, Lorestan, Yazd, and Tehran were inundated.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society aid workers, including 221 teams, provided relief and rescue services to 2,645 people in flood-affected areas, offering emergency accommodation to 316 flood victims, and relocating 115 to safe areas, Mehdi Valipour, head of the IRCs Relief and Rescue Organization, said.

Additionally, water was pumped out of 233 flooded houses, and food items were distributed among the flood victims, he added.

20% of areas at high risk of flood

Twenty percent of areas across Iran are highly

prone to flooding, Khosro Shahbazi, former head of the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization (FRWMO) said in January 2020.

“Precipitation in Iran is one-third of the world’s average, as the country is located in a dry and fragile region where we experience 11 millimeters decrease in precipitation every 10 years and an increase in evaporation of more than 50 millimeters every year,” he explained.

Rainfall fluctuations usually lead to flood and devastation, so comprehensive planning for watershed management and flood control is required, he noted.

Since most of the water supply is extracted from groundwater resources, the country is in a critical condition in terms of groundwater resources, he stated, highlighting that because intake is less than water withdrawal from the aquifers, the best way to store rainwater is through watershed and aquifer projects.

## Desertification and how to deal with it

From page 1 ► In all deserts, there is little water available for plants and other organisms.

Many countries are working to reduce the rates of desertification. Trees and other vegetation are being planted to break the force of the wind and to hold the soil.

Iran is home to about 3.8 percent of the world’s total desert areas. Some 61 percent of the country’s area is covered by arid and semi-arid lands, which is 31 times the global average. The Desert ecosystem accounts for 43.7 million hectares area of the country’s land.

Meanwhile, 20.2 million hectares area of the desert ecosystem is affected by wind erosion, of which 7.6 million hectares are in critical condition.

Overgrazing livestock compact the soil, preventing it from absorbing water and fertilizers. Agricultural production is devastated, and the economy of a region suffers.

Between 2015 and 2020, approximately 12,000 hectares of forests across the country have been wiped out annually, the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization has said, putting the country’s forests at 14.3 million hectares.

To deal with the problem, the Organization has launched two comprehensive plans to mitigate desertification.

These projects include watershed management, aquifer, flood control, desertification, forest development, rangeland rehabilitation, conservation, and support projects aimed at conserving water and soil, protecting vegetation, preventing erosion, and reducing drought and nutrition damage.

The national budget bill for the current Iranian calendar year 1401, which started on March 21, has allocated 16 trillion rials (about \$53 million) for watershed management, which is nearly fourfold the budget for the previous year.

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

Part 5

The Caspian forests, unique among the temperate forests of the world and in part a legacy of the Tertiary period, are disappearing with alarming rapidity. A survey conducted in 1975 showed an area of 1.84 million hectares of prime forest; according to forestry experts, more than three quarters of this area has been destroyed since the 1980s.

This is a staggering loss, apart from devastating damage to watersheds and the resultant soil erosion and floods. The Caspian rain forests, unlike the Zagros forests, are commercially valuable; timber valued at billions of dollars, which could have been a sustainable resource, has been lost.

During the 1980s more than 100,000 hectares were reforested at great expense, while several million hectares of natural forest were being eradicated. By 1991 the Ministry of Reconstruction, newly responsible for forests and rangelands, had begun a drive, supported by the media,

to halt the destruction of forests and rangeland.

Notwithstanding this, however, it has now become apparent that 300,000 ha of forest land were transferred to private ownership in the course of the first five-year plan (1989-94); another 300,000 ha of forest will be privatized in the course of the next five-year plan.

A similar program is being implemented with respect to rangeland, and it would appear that several million hectares of rangeland is being, and will be, privatized within the same period. The justification for this program appears to be an increase in agricultural production, but experts agree that, on the one hand, it will actually result in a net economic loss (i.e., reduced yield) and, on the other, that the ecological consequences will be irreversible damage to watersheds, accelerated erosion, and the destruction of valuable ecosystems.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON MAY 6

New cases	375
New deaths	12
Total cases	7,224,431
Total deaths	141,157
New hospitalized patients	76
Patients in critical condition	952
Total recovered patients	6,999,709
Diagnostic tests conducted	50,401,134
Doses of vaccine injected	149,057,825

## Nine countries attend RoboCup IranOpen competitions

TEHRAN – Over 100 teams from 9 countries participated in the 16th RoboCup IranOpen competitions (RoboCup 2022), which wrapped up on Friday.

The foreign teams that attended the competitions are from Turkey, Brazil, Malaysia, China, France, Germany, Afghanistan, Canada, and North America, Mohammad Norouzi, head of the ornithopter league, has said.

Emphasizing that these teams have participated in national competitions remotely and do not have a physical presence, explained that foreign teams competed in three of the simulation leagues online.

The 16th edition of RoboCup IranOpen brought together 135 teams, amounting to 800 participants, from across the country to compete in different fields of robotics and Artificial Intelli-

gence with a focus on soccer robots.

The three-day event kicked off on Wednesday, in Dr. Habibi Library and Documentation Center.

RoboCup (Originally called Robot World Cup Initiative) is an international research and education initiative. It is an attempt to foster AI and intelligent robotics research by providing a standard problem where a wide range of technologies can be integrated and examined, as well as being used for integrated project-oriented education.

The event was first launched in 1997 and was inspired by the victory of a computer chess player against the then world chess champion, Gary Kasparov.

Currently, over 7,000 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the do-



mestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency.

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in, leading to import reduction.

## Tehraners donate 56% more blood in Ramadan

TEHRAN – Over the holy month of Ramadan (started on April 3 this year), blood donation has increased by over 56 percent in Tehran compared to the same period last year, Mohammad Reza Mehdizadeh, head of the Tehran blood transfusion organization, has said.

In the aforesaid month, a total of 31,839 people donated blood across the capital, he further noted.

Referring to the 46 percent growth in blood donation of Tehran women, he noted that some 5,849 people joined the blood donors for the first time during the holy month of Ramadan.

**Over 2.1m Iranians donate blood per year**

Blood donation in Iran has long



been done voluntarily as over 2.1 million Iranians donate blood annually, Haji-Beigi said on June 14.

There are currently 178 blood donation centers in the country, with Fars, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan, Tehran, and Mazandaran provinces having the largest number of blood donation centers, he stated.

**Highest blood donation in Eastern Mediterranean**

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

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

Only 55 of 171 countries pro-

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

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

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

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

### ‘Only 15% of Tehran’s construction, demolition waste recycled’

While some 50,000 tons of construction and demolition waste is produced in Tehran daily, only 10 to 15 percent of which are recycled and the rest is dumped or disposed, Mohammad Hossein Bazgir, head of Tehran’s department of environment (DOE) has said.

Waste materials, generally termed as construction and demolition waste, are part of construction materials’ packaging, containers, and spent machinery and equipment parts that are no longer usable.

“A good portion of construction wastes can still be usable with proper planning and their usage can be a solution itself to the burgeoning waste issues that the communities and the construction industry face,” Bazgir said.

He further referred to a construction waste management unit opened in Abali in Damavand county last week, and stated that the unit is capable of recycling some 3,000 tons of construction waste, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

### تنها ۱۵ درصد نخاله های ساختمانی تولید شده در تهران بازیافت می شود

رئیس اداره محیط زیست شهر تهران با بیان اینکه در تهران روزانه ۵۰ هزار تن نخاله ساختمانی تولید می شود، گفت: متأسفانه تنها ۱۰ تا ۱۵ درصد این زباله ها بازیافت می شود و بیش از ۸۰ درصد آن دپو می شود.

محمد حسین بازگیر در گفت و گو با ایسنا، اظهار کرد: بازیافت پسماندهای ساختمانی بخشی از فرایند مدیریت پسماند است که سبب می شود این نوع زباله ها دوباره به چرخه مصرف بازگردانده و بسیاری از مشکلاتی که که مردم و صنعت ساخت و ساز با آن روبرو هستند، برطرف شود.

ظرفیت این واحد بازیافت حدود ۳۰۰۰ تن است و می تواند این مقدار نخاله و آوار ساختمانی را بازیافت کند.



