

The Important Message Assad Visit Signals

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Report



“Record number of Syrian children need aid”

The United Nations has warned that more Syrian children are in need than at any time since a devastating war erupted against the country over a decade ago, but funding for them is “dwindling”.

“Syria’s children have suffered for far too long and should not suffer any longer,” the UN children’s agency said in a statement.

UNICEF spokesperson Juliette Touma told media outlets that a total of 9.3 million Syrian children are in need of aid both inside the country and in the wider region where they have fled.

Syria has natural resources including oil reserves in the country’s east near the Euphrates river.

However, Damascus accuses Washington of illegally occupying the region by stationing its military forces around Syrian oil reserves.

Under international law, the United States is not authorized to occupy an Arab country without permission from the government or a mandate from the United Nations.

The Pentagon has used the pretext of fighting Daesh for its military presence in Syria.

Officials in Syria and regional countries say the American occupation is not linked to battling the terrorist group and serves several other sinister purposes.

These include the theft of Syrian oil to prevent the government from using the revenue of the sales to help rebuild a country fractured by more than ten years of war by foreign-backed militants and numerous terrorist groups.

Critics accuse Washington of serving Israeli interests by obstructing Syria’s path to improve its economic outlook after the Syrian government backed by its allies liberated almost all of the provinces that were once occupied by terrorist groups. ► Page 5

Report



Persepolis held by Zob Ahan in Isfahan

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team were held to a 1-1 draw against Zob Ahan in

Saeid Bagherpasnad was on target for Zob Ahan with a header just two minutes into the match in Fooladshahr Stadium.

The hosts would rather defend their goal and Persepolis dominated possession and controlled the game.

Persepolis captain Jalal Hosseini could have equalized the match in the 30th minute but Zob Ahan goalkeeper Habib Farabbasi saved the ball.

Sherzod Temirov levelled the scored in the 56th minute.

Esteghlal lead the IPL table with 57 points. The Blues are going to win the title after nine years.

Tractor earned a late 3-2 win over Havadar in Tabriz.

Moein Abbasian and Mohammadjavad Mohammadi scored for the visiting team.

Mohammad Aghajanpour and Mohammad Abaszadeh (two goals) were on target for Tractor.

Fajr Sepasi and Naft Masjed Soleyman shared the spoils in a goalless draw in Shiraz.

The Persian Gulf Pro League, formerly known as the Iran Pro League, is the highest division of professional football in Iran.

It is the top-level football league in Iran since its foundation on Nov. 2, 2001.

Each year, its top team becomes the Iranian football champion, and the two lowest finishers are relegated to Azadegan League.



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Leader lauds workers in face of foes’ efforts to upset economy

TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei met with a number of workers.

He praised the laborers for their hard work in Iran’s fight against the foes’ conspiracies to upset the Iranian economy.

“Since the first days of the Islamic Revolution, the enemy has sought to halt production in the country. All the sanctions were aimed at halting production in Iran. Our workers have stood on the front lines and have not let that happen,” he said, adding that workers have made impressive achievements in military, economic, and political spheres, and

at least 14,000 laborers sacrificed their lives during Iraq’s war on Iran in the 1980s.

“Among the main policies of arrogant powers since the victory of the Islamic Revolution [in 1979] has been to grind the country’s production to a halt,” Ayatollah Khamenei said. ► Page 2

Annual exports to Poland rise 114%

TEHRAN - Spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) has said the country’s non-oil exports to Poland recorded 114 percent growth in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to Rouhollah Latifi, more than 22,664 tons of non-oil goods, valued at

\$53.198 million, were exchanged between Iran and Poland last year, showing a 79 and 28 percent growth in terms of weight and value respectively as compared to the preceding year.

As IRNA reported, the official made the remarks on Sunday when Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau arrived in Tehran to meet

with Iranian officials.

Iran exported more than 18,134 tons of products, valued at \$24,059,957 to Poland in the mentioned year, registering a 145 and 114 percent hike in terms of weight and value respectively, he said. ► Page 4

All immigrants to be vaccinated against polio, measles

TEHRAN – All foreign immigrants and refugees under the age of five will be vaccinated against polio and measles.

To eradicate polio, the oral vaccination plan will be implemented in two phases. The first phase started on May 7 and will continue until May 10, and the second phase will run from June 11 to 13, Mohammad Reza Sarbazi, director of the department of disease prevention and control of the Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, said.

Due to the transmission of poliovirus in Asia and Africa and the indigenous virus in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is necessary to carry out additional annual immunization operations to maintain polio-free, he explained.

In this large-scale operation, Iranian children under the age of five and foreign immigrants will be inoculated through door-to-door visits in high-risk areas across the country, he further stated. ► Page 7



Serbian academic delegation visits University of Tehran

Central Library of University of Tehran director Fatemeh Saqafi (1st L) briefs University of Belgrade rector Vladan Dokic (4th L) and his colleagues about some rare manuscripts being preserved at the library.

Faculty of Security Studies dean Vladimir Cvetkovic, Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering dean Nebojsa Bojovic, Faculty of Law dean Zoran Mirkovic and Faculty of Mechanical Engineering dean Vladimir Popovic are also accompanying Dokic on his visit to Iran.

Some \$213m allocated to boost tourism infrastructure nationwide

TEHRAN – The Iranian government has allocated a budget of 60 trillion rials (\$213 million) to boost tourism infrastructure all over the country, the deputy tourism minister has announced.

The money will be used to complete, restore, and equip accommodation centers, as well as strengthen tourism infrastructure

nationwide, ISNA quoted Ali-Asghar Shalbafian as saying on Monday.

Last year, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced that the national tourism sector was growing before the coronavirus outbreak, its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, nearing the average share of

tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent.

Iran was ranked as the second fastest-growing country in tourism based on data compiled by the World Tourism Organization.

As a wallet-friendly destination with hospitable people, Iran has long been ► Page 6

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Interview



Democrats are likely to lose the House in the fall elections: professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – An American professor believes that Democrats may lose the November congressional elections based on “all available data”.

“All available data indicate the Democrats are likely to lose the House in the fall elections,” Robert C. Smith, a professor of political science at San Francisco State University, tells the Tehran Times.

“The only question is the size of the loss. The Democrats have a chance to maintain control of the Senate, depending on who the Republicans nominate in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Georgia.”

During the midterm elections, all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 35 of the 100 seats in the Senate will be contested.

Professor Smith also sees no evidence that Biden’s mental health is impaired as claimed by Republicans, saying, “Given his age and fragility this is a concern of a significant part of the electorate but it is not likely to have an impact on the upcoming election.”

Republican senators have been promoting the idea that if they win control of Congress, they will consider passing a legislation requiring Biden to take a cognitive test each year he’s in office. ► Page 5

Asghar Farhadi scores first home win for “A Hero” at Iranian directors’ celebration

TEHRAN – After garnering dozens of honors at international events for “A Hero”, Asghar Farhadi scored his first domestic award for this acclaimed drama at the 1st Iran Screen Directors Celebration on Sunday.

The gala has been initiated by the Directors Guild of Iran to select the best directors of the year in cinema and home video network productions.

Due to his working on a new project abroad, Farhadi could not attend the celebration, however, he joined his colleagues via a live video link.

“I congratulate all friends whose films were judged at this celebration, and I send my grateful thanks to those people who make us interested in cinema; those people who laid the cornerstone of Iranian cinema,” Farhadi said.

Mohsen Tanabandeh, an “A Hero” star, received the award on the behalf of Farhadi. ► Page 8



In your head!

TEHRAN— Battling to provide minimum security for its citizens, the Israeli regime claims it has started the largest military drill in its fake history!

The irony of the sentence mentioned above has made every sensible expert laugh audibly, but the Israeli regime's officials are drowned in their own foolishness.

Coinciding with tensions in the Palestinian territories and the escalation of martyrdom operations, the Israeli regime on Sunday began the largest exercise – according to the regime's media outlets – in its history.

The exercise, called “Chariots of Fire,” was scheduled to take place last year but was delayed due to the Operation “Sword of Quds,” which caused a heavy blow to the Israelis.

According to the Walla news agency, the first phase of the exercise began with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and then, based on security facts and estimates, the scope of the exercise will be expanded to include all sections of the Israeli army.

The report goes on to say that the Israeli army has recommended that no new war be waged with Gaza for the time being and has begun its major maneuver. The regime's Channel 13 also announced that the drill would simulate the war with Hezbollah and Hamas.

In the drill, the Israeli army may trash Hezbollah, but in reality, it is the resistance which always emerges victorious.

Coinciding with the beginning of this exercise, the Palestinian resistance in the Gaza Strip has increased its readiness.

According to the Al-Mayadeen network, the resistance in Lebanon had previously announced that it would be highly prepared at the beginning of the regime's military exercises.

“When the Israeli exercises begin, we will be at the highest level and any stupidity or mistake will be responded to quickly and directly,” Hezbollah Secretary General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah warned in a speech on the occasion of International Quds Day.

It is stupid to think that a regime that has failed to provide security for its citizens would conduct a military drill to show off its power and make its citizens relax.

Israeli police have demanded those Israeli citizens that a member of their family have been killed to bury their bodies in the early hours of the day and restrict attendance to no more than 50 people at each funeral.

They also agreed there would be no inciting calls or banners and no processions, the Walla news site reported.

Conducting several operations in occupied Palestine in response to the Israeli regime's repeated aggressions has created horror in the occupied territories.

In a four-hour meeting on Sunday, the security forces of the Israeli regime reviewed the necessary decisions and measures to confront the Palestinian resistance operations.

According to the i24News news site, the Israeli media have announced that these security talks will continue with the aim of achieving a specific strategy in the shadow of the resistance operations.

In addition, there are calls for a response to the Palestinians in Gaza, as well as aggressive actions against the people of Jenin.

Hebrew-language sources reported that during the talks Israeli security officials faced two main issues and questions. The first issue discussed by the Israeli officials is increase in offensive operations in Jenin and neighboring cities.

According to these reports, the security officials of the regime have concluded that at this stage, almost all resistance operations begin from Jenin.

But the Israelis are well aware that the conflict in Jenin will lead to more operations and that the military will force Palestinians to attack other areas as well.

The second issue, which has confused the Tel Aviv authorities, was the (discuss) success of the measures and the correctness of the response to the resistance operations being carried out from Gaza and the West Bank.

The Israeli regime's Prime Minister, Naftali Bennett, also recently threatened to target those who encourage and support Palestinians' operations in the occupied territories.

Tel Aviv security officials, meanwhile, have blamed Hamas for carrying out resistance operations in the West Bank.

For this reason, reports by Hebrew sources indicate that the security officials of the Israel are hesitant to respond or not to respond to these operations, especially as the Israeli army is still fighting the Palestinians in the West Bank.

According to Israeli media, a decision on these issues will be made in the coming days, and another security meeting with members of the cabinet in Tel Aviv is expected soon.

In the face of Israeli threats and plans to escalate the conflict in the occupied territories, Palestinian resistance groups, led by Hamas, have warned Tel Aviv that they will target the Zionists if they commit the slightest mistake.

Israel has informed its allies that it is preparing to send assassination teams to assassinate Hamas leaders abroad in retaliation for operations against Israeli citizens in the past two months, sources have told The Times, a British publication.

Hamas is believed to have been warned of the impending hits by intelligence agencies in the West Asia and Europe.

At least 19 Israelis have been killed in random attacks by Palestinians since mid-March. Three people were killed and seven were injured in the most recent incident, on Thursday, when two men leapt from a car and started swinging axes at passersby in the predominantly ultra-Orthodox town of Elad. A manhunt ended on Saturday with the arrest of two Palestinians hiding in a forest.

Foreign Ministry: Vienna talks not at “stalemate”

TEHRAN— Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman believes that the Vienna talks is not at a “stalemate,” though he believes that the outcome of these talks lies on Washington's decision.

Speaking at his weekly press briefing on Monday, Saeed Khatibzadeh said that the negotiations between Iran, the P4+1, and the United States have not been paused, and are going on without interruption.

“Messages are being exchanged through the European Union coordinator, Mr. Mora,” he added.

Khatibzadeh said that messages are being constantly exchanged between Tehran and Washington through the European Union.

Mora plans to visit Iran on Tuesday to reenergize talks to revitalize the nuclear deal. Reportedly, he will stay in Tehran until Friday.

“Mr. Mora's presence shows that we have continued to pursue the talks in the direction that needs to be done,” he said.

He added that he hesitates to use the word “stalemate” for the Vienna talks, because the knots in the negotiations can be untied by Washington.

“A text has been agreed upon between Iran and P4+1. Washington is not to present a gift to Iran. It should give Iran's rights back. I won't use the word “stalemate” for the Vienna talks,” he noted.

The spokesman added that if the United States gives back what it has taken from Iran and accepts the lost rights of the Iranian people, Iran can return to Vienna the day after Mora's return to Vienna.

Khatibzadeh added that Mora's visit will put the Vienna talks on the right track.

He further said the United States

is not going to do anything beyond its obligations. “The United States has stolen the rights of the Iranian people and has taken things from the pockets of the Iranian people that must be returned. If that happens, we can say that an agreement is at hand.”

Commenting on Washington's role in reaching an agreement in Vienna, the spokesman reiterated that Washington's decision can easily make an agreement possible in Vienna.

In May 2018 former U.S. president Donald Trump quit the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, and returned sanctions under his “maximum pressure” strategy against Iran. His administration also introduced new ones under different pretexts to make a return to the pact difficult.

“Iran's rights under the JCPOA must be preserved, and we will not allow the elements of Trump's maximum pressure campaign to destroy the JCPOA and the opportunity for diplomacy to remain,” Khatibzadeh reiterated.

Responding to a question about the reluctance of the Biden administration to delist Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps from the Foreign Terrorist Organization list, Khatibzadeh said, “I cannot disclose the information about the Vienna Talks. The framework designed for talks has been adhered to by the negotiating team. Points of difference between Iran and the U.S. are more than one just issue. Oversimplification of differential points is incorrect.”

Iran won't wait for third parties to unfreeze its assets

Responding to a question about recent developments regarding unfreezing Iran's froze funds, Khatibzadeh clarified, “Ask the



Central Bank as well. We do not wait for any third party in releasing our resources. So far, the resources we have released have been released independently, and this path is still being pursued.”

No major developments in Iran-Saudi talks

Regarding the latest status of Iran's negotiations with Saudi Arabia, Khatibzadeh stated that one of the issues discussed with the Saudis is regional issues.

“There has been no significant change in the Iran-Saudi Arabia talks in Baghdad since the previous round, and if there is a change, information will be provided,” he added.

Iraqi parliament speaker's visit to Tehran was significant

Regarding the visit of Mohammad Al-Halbousi, speaker of the Iraqi Parliament to Tehran, the diplomat said that the situation of the Iraqi people and trade and economic relations with Iraq are very important for Iran.

“Iraq is one of our key trading partners. Solutions were found during this visit.... Mr. Halbousi's trip was significant, and projects that were delayed were discussed,” Khatibzadeh stated.

The spokesman added necessary explanations were given about the latest situation in Iraq during a meeting between the Iraqi parliament speaker and Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian.

He said Iran hopes to see the transfer of power in Iraq as soon as possible.

“It is the worst thing to politicize an issue like water”

Responding to a question by the Tehran Times correspondent about a recent report regarding Iran stalling response to Iraq about negotiating

common water issues, Khatibzadeh said, “Iran has a comprehensive view of shared waters and border waters, and we believe that no country in the region can manage shared waters alone. Whether Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan or Iraq. In the course of rivers, in some rivers Iran is upstream and in others Iraq or Turkey. We emphasize that we must work together on these common waters.”

He went on to criticize redirecting water flows by certain regional countries which have caused environmental problems, saying, “The situation of the people in this region is not good, and it proves that we have to work together, and the worst thing to do is to politicize an issue like water.”

We follow Afghanistan developments with concern

In response to a question about the escalation of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, Khatibzadeh stressed that the security of Iran's diplomatic premises and diplomats is of great importance.

“As soon as there was a sense of danger and initial reports reached us, Mr. Amir Abdollahian spoke with our consuls and ambassadors, and the necessary orders were given,” the spokesman said.

Noting that Iran is closely monitoring the situation in Afghanistan, he said that it is the direct responsibility of the governing body of Afghanistan to ensure security within its geographical borders.

He added that Iran is concerned about the situation of the Afghan people.

“Unfortunately, we are witnessing the growth of extremism and we were ready to help the current governing body of Afghanistan to fight terrorism,” he added.

Leader lauds workers in face of foes' efforts to upset economy

From page 1 ► “Workers stood at the forefront of the fight against the enemies' plots to disrupt the country's production and did not allow the conspiracies to materialize. Workers played the pivotal role in this regard,” Ayatollah Khamenei said.

He added that Islam's outlook toward workers is one of appreciation.

“It is an outlook based on valuing, an outlook that values work and workers. This viewpoint is different from that of the system of capitalism and the disintegrated system of communism,” the Leader asserted.

Ayatollah Khamenei went on to say that the capitalist systems look how exploit workers.

“Workers are viewed as a tool for gaining

wealth. That's how capitalism views workers, and they don't even hide it. Look at their books on economics and you will reach this same conclusion,” he noted.

Carefully observing the faults of the communism and capitalism, the Leader said, “Communism's view of workers was a slogan. They said they had a workers' system. For example, Russia under Stalin and Khrushchev was a so-called pro-workers system but the rulers lived like sultans. No trace of supporting workers existed, and pressure was on society and the working class.”

The Leader also stressed that laborers have aborted fiendish attempts to exploit their demands as a sign of popular protests

and have definitively proven their allegiance to the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic establishment.

Earlier this year, Ayatollah Khamenei stated that the enemies are waging a war against Iran's economy in order to bring it to collapse and pit the people against the establishment.

“The goal of the enemies in this war has been the collapse of the Iranian economy; that was their intention. Now, the collapse of the economy was, of course, a prelude in order to set the people against the Islamic Republic by destroying the Iranian economy and to carry out their malicious political intentions in this way,” the Leader said in an address to a group of entrepreneurs in Tehran on January 30.

Iranian president reprimands NATO expansionist policies

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has stated his country's categorical opposition to the U.S.-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization's expansionist policies in Europe.

Raisi made the statements during a meeting with visiting Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau on Sunday, during which the two sides discussed ways to strengthen bilateral ties.

“Just in the same way that the Islamic Republic of Iran is opposed to conflict and war, it is also firmly opposed to NATO expansionist policies,” the president noted, referring to the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia.

On February 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin proclaimed the start of a “special military operation” in Ukraine. The crisis has elicited a united response from Western nations, who have levied a slew of penalties on Moscow.

Russia states it would end the operation immediately if Kiev complies with Moscow's conditions, which include never asking to join NATO.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, speaking at a joint news conference with his Polish



counterpart earlier in the day, said the Islamic Republic is opposed to violence everywhere in the globe, emphasizing Tehran's policy that dialogue is the only way out of the Ukraine problem.

“We oppose war in Ukraine as we do in Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq or any other place in the world,” the top Iranian diplomat pointed out.

Raisi also criticized the low level of trade and economic cooperation between Iran and Poland, stating that the two countries have great potential, notably in the industrial and economic spheres, which must be tapped via collaborative efforts to improve bilateral relations.

“There are various capacities, including in the industrial and economic fields in the two countries, which we must realize through joint efforts in order to expand mutual interests,” President Raisi stated.

“The rich historical background and civilization of Iran and Poland can be a good platform for strengthening scientific and cultural interactions between the two countries,” said the Iranian president, referring to the Poles' appreciation of the Iranians' support for the country's refugees during WWII.

For his part, the Polish foreign minister underlined that the ties between Tehran and Warsaw extend back to the 16th century and that the two countries have been friends for over five centuries.

He also praised Iran's kindness in welcoming Polish refugees during World War II.

Rau underscored that his country wants to expand collaboration with Iran in sectors including commerce, economy, culture, and science.

On Saturday night, the Polish foreign minister visited Tehran at the head of a delegation to meet with Iranian authorities.

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The important message Assad visit signals

TEHRAN – Syrian President Bashar Assad's surprise visit to Tehran on Sunday has been hailed as a turning point in Iran-Syria relations in the wake of the recent Arab opening to Syria, which led to speculations over a possible torpor in the two countries' ties.

For the second time in a decade, Assad paid an unannounced visit to Iran and met with high-ranking Iranian officials. His last visit was in 2018 when he showed up in Tehran thanks to arrangements made by the late General Qassem Soleimani, the former commander of the Quds force.

Assad's visits took place at a time when fighting in Syria subsided to large extent. The 2018 visit took place after it became clear that the Syrian government was no longer at risk of being toppled. And the latest visit came as the Syrian government not only survived but is in the middle of a renewed drive to normalize relations between Damascus and other Arab capitals.

The Syrian government welcomed the normalization drive which culminated in a March visit by Assad to Abu Dhabi, where he met with the influential Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The visit marked warming in Syria's relations with some Arab states.



The Emirati media said at the time that the visit “stressed that Syria is a fundamental pillar of Arab security and that the UAE is keen to strengthen cooperation with it”

The visit to the UAE also came amid efforts to return Syria to the Arab League, which is yet to come to fruition due to opposition from key Arab states in the organization.

Thaw in Syria's relations with some Arab states sparked widespread speculations that the war-torn Arab country might be moving away from Iran to get closer to Iran's Arab rivals. Some statements from the Persian Gulf Arab countries on the need to return Syria to the Arab fold have only exacerbated these speculations. Yet, the Syrian leadership proved that it highly values relations with Tehran and that their bonds with

Iran are so strong that are unlikely to be loosened as a result of any normalization with other Arab states.

Iranian officials also highlighted the depth of the relations during the Assad visit. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei even took a jab at the Arab states that are trying to normalize ties with Syria and underlined the need to factor in their past behaviors toward Syria in any normalization of ties.

“The bond and the relationship between Iran and Syria are vital to both countries, and we should not let these relations weaken. Rather, we should strengthen them as much as possible,” Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized.

Referring to the recent expressions of friendship and kindness of some countries that were in the front against Syria in previous years, he said, “The path in the future should be based on past experiences.”

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh also highlighted the strong relations between Tehran and Damascus. Syria has entered a new phase and Iran is seeking to strengthen cooperation with it in various fields, he said in a presser on Monday.

“Assad's visit carries an important message that Syria has now entered a new phase after his visit to the region and the reopening of foreign embassies in Damascus. Iran is one of the most important countries that helped Syria thwart the terrorist plot, and it is natural for Iran to be a center for consultations,” Khatibzadeh remarked.

The Syrian presidency also underlined the importance of the Iran-Syria relationship in a statement on Facebook. It said Assad's meetings with Iranian officials “dealt with the historical relations that unite Syria and Iran, which are based on a long track of bilateral cooperation and mutual understanding on the issues and problems of the region and the challenges it faces.”

Assad visit carries important message: Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has said that the latest visit by Syrian President Bashar Assad to Tehran carries an important message.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday morning, Khatibzadeh said the visit was planned a while ago.

Syria has entered a new phase and that Iran is seeking to strengthen cooperation with it in various fields, the spokesman said in response to a question by Al Alam.

He said, “President Bashar al-Assad's visit was scheduled for a while, and conditions had to be created for it. Syria has emerged from the terrorist field and is in the process of reconstruction. Assad's visit carries an important message that Syria has now entered a new phase after his visit to the region and the reopening of foreign embassies in Damascus. Iran is one of the most important countries that helped Syria thwart the terrorist plot, and it is natural for Iran to be a center for consultations.”

Assad paid a surprise visit to Iran on Sunday and met with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, and Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi. It was Assad's second visit to Tehran since 2011 when Syria plunged into a devastating war. Assad's first visit to Iran came on December 18, 2018.

In his meeting with Assad, Ayatollah Khamenei said, “The Syrian people's and government's resistance and victory in an international war has increased Syria's credibility. Syria today isn't the same as before the war. Although this destruction didn't exist then, now everyone views this country as a power.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution considered

several factors to have influenced the resistance and victory of Syria in an international war.

He noted, “Various factors contributed to Syria's victory in the international war, one of the most important of which was your (Mr. Bashar Assad's) strong spirit. God willing, you can reconstruct the ruins caused by the war with that same spirit, because great tasks await you,” according to the khamenei.ir

Emphasizing that today the president and the people of Syria are truly honorable in the eyes of the nations of the region, Ayatollah Khamenei added, “The heads of some neighboring countries meet with the heads of the Zionist regime and have coffee with them. But the people of those same countries fill the streets on Quds Day to chant anti-Zionist slogans. This is the reality of the region today.”

Ayatollah Khamenei also paid tribute to the memory of General Qassem Soleimani and said, “Martyr Soleimani was particularly zealous about Syria and truly made sacrifices. His manner in Syria was no different from his manner during Iran's 8-year Sacred Defense.”

He added, “He (Soleimani) and other prominent members of the IRGC such as Martyr Hamedani viewed the issue of Syria as a duty and holy obligation.”

Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized, “The bond and the relationship between Iran and Syria are vital to both countries, and we should not let these relations weaken. Rather, we should strengthen them as much as possible.”

Referring to the recent expressions of friendship and kindness of some countries that were in the front against Syria in previous years, he said, “The path in the future should be based on past experiences.”

The Leader of the Revolution considered the morale

and enthusiasm of the president of Syria to be the foundation for being able to do great things.

“The president and government of the Islamic Republic of Iran are also truly enthusiastic and have a strong spirit and determination. They have a serious concern and are very motivated with regards to the issue of Syria. This opportunity should be used to further improve relations between the two countries,” the Leader remarked.

In the meeting, which was also attended by President Raisi, Assad thanked the Iranian nation and government for the stance they had taken and for their support. In addition, he commemorated the memory of Martyr Soleimani, and said, “Iran's resistance and firm stance over the past four decades on regional issues, especially concerning the issue of Palestine, showed all the people of the region that the path taken by Iran is a correct path based on principles.”

The Syrian president added, “The destruction caused by a war can be rebuilt, but if foundations and principles are destroyed, they cannot be rebuilt. The Iranian nation's resistance based on the foundations and principles laid down by Imam Khomeini, which has continued with your Excellency's efforts, pave the way for the great victories of the Iranian nation and the people of the region, especially the people of Palestine.”

Assad went on to say, “Some people think that Iran's support of the Resistance Front means supporting them with arms. However, the most important support and assistance provided by the Islamic Republic is breathing a spirit of resistance [into the region] and continuing to do so.”

IRAN IN FOCUS

MAY 10, 2022

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Iran's Shahdab complete signing of Donovan Dzavoronok

TEHRAN – Iranian volleyball club Shahdab completed the signing of Czech Republic outside hitter Donovan Dzavoronok.

The 24-year-old, who plays for Italian club Vero Volley Monza, has joined Shahdab for the 2022 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship.

Shahdab have already reached an agreement with Cuban middle blocker Robertlandy Simon Aties and Canadian outside hitter John Gordon “Gord” Perrin.

The Asian Club Volleyball Championship will be held in Tehran, Iran, from May 14 to 20.

Shahdab will start the campaign with a match against Iraqi team Al Bahri in Pool B on May 14.

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 Shahdab 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 to compete at U16 FIBA Asian Championship WABA qualification

TEHRAN – Iran U16 basketball team departed Tehran for Amman, capital of Jordan on Monday for the U16 FIBA Asian Championship West Asia Basketball Association (WABA) qualification.

The tournament will bring Jordan, Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq together in Amman.

Iran will start the campaign on May 11 with a match against Syria.

The Persians are scheduled to meet Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq respectively in the following days.

The West Asia Basketball Association (WABA) is a subzone of FIBA Asia, consisting of countries from West Asia. The WABA Champions Cup, a professional men's tournament, is a top level club competition run by the WABA.

Iran football team down Cameroon in Deaflympics

TEHRAN – Iran football team defeated Cameroon 6-0 to book a place in the quarterfinals round of the 24th edition of the Deaflympics.

Iman Mohebi, Reza Jodeiri (two goals), Esmaeil Arabloo, Shahin Fasihi and Mohsen Farzi were on target for the Iranian team.

Iran have already defeated Italy, the Netherlands and Brazil in the competition.

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

There are 209 events in 17 sports on the Deaflympics program.

Athletics, badminton, cycling, golf, judo, karate, orienteering, shooting, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, wrestling, basketball, football, handball and volleyball are the 17 sports.

The last summer Deaflympics took place in 2017 in the Turkish city of Samsun.

Sepahan crowned champions of Iran handball league

TEHRAN – Sepahan handball team claimed the title of the 2021/22 Iran's Handball League on Monday.

Sepahan defeated Shahid Shameli Kazeroon in two-legged final.

Sepahan were held to a 24-24 draw against Shameli but won the title due to 23-19 win in the first leg.

Sepahan will represent Iran at the 24th Asian Men's Club League Handball Championship in India.

The competition will be held in India from June 23 to July 4.

Saudi Arabia to kick off FIFA World Cup preparations with friendlies

TEHRAN – Following the euphoria of Saudi Arabia's qualification to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, head coach Herve Renard has scheduled preparations for the Finals with two preparatory camps in June and September.

With their place in Qatar 2022 already secured, the Green Falcons defeated Australia 1-0 to take top spot in Group B, finishing their qualification campaign on a winning note in front of a packed King Abdullah Sport City Stadium in Jeddah, the-afc.com reported.

Renard's men, who finished the group with 23 points from 10 games, one point ahead of Japan, will be put through a series of four friendlies ahead of the World Cup in November.

The Saudi national team's first friendly match will be against Colombia on June 5, before locking horns with Venezuela five days later at the Estadio Nueva Condomina in Murcia.

The West Asians will then face Ecuador next on September 23, with the identity of the fourth team to be decided.

Saudi Arabia were drawn in Group C alongside Argentina, Mexico and Poland with the three-time AFC Asian Cup champions opening their campaign against the 2021 Copa America champions on November 22.

Deaflympics Brazil 2022: Iran lands in fourth place

TEHRAN – The Iranian athletes have collected 25 medals to land in the fourth place on the seventh day of the 24th Summer Deaflympics underway in Caxias do Sul, Brazil.

Iran with 25 medals has ranked fourth (8 gold medals; 7 silvers;10 bronze medals) in the medal table at the end of the seventh day of the 24th Summer Deaflympics underway in Caxias do Sul, Brazil.

Ukraine, the United States, and Japan are the first to third with a total of 77, 34, and 24 medals, respectively so far, MNA reported.

However, the Iranian taekwondo team has ranked first after clinching 4 gold medals, 2 silver and 4 bronze medals in different categories.

Over 4,000 sportsmen and women are participating in the Brazil-hosted event which started on May 01, 2022, and will run through until Sunday, May 5, 2022.

Klopp: Liverpool can still win Premier League title

TEHRAN – Liverpool may be three points behind league leaders Manchester City in the Premier League with three games to go but manager Jurgen Klopp said on Monday he does not believe the title race is done and dusted.

A 1-1 home draw against Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday set Liverpool back after City beat Newcastle United on Sunday. Klopp was asked if he told his players the title race was over and he said: “I'm not sure I said that because I think it's obvious. It's clear it is not over, whatever happened.”

“We have three games to play and my concern is how we can win our three games and I have no say in how City can win theirs. We don't stop believing, that's what we do.

“As human beings it's really cool that we can decide for ourselves how we see it. There are facts but we are allowed to ignore them. I try to help the boys see [the situation] like me.”

Man City boss Pep Guardiola has said “everyone in the country” was supporting Liverpool in the title race but Klopp laughed it off as a manager saying things in the heat of the moment.

“I live in Liverpool. Here a lot of people want us to win the league that's for sure. But even here it's probably only 50%,” Klopp said. “As a manager I had this experience recently, we are obviously influenced by the game, the situation.

Iran urges nationals to leave Moldova as tensions soar

TEHRAN – The Iranian embassy in Ukraine has issued warning about the possible spillover of the war in Ukraine to neighboring Moldova and urged Iranian nationals residing in the country to leave.

The warning came after tensions soared in the breakaway region of Transnistria, Moldova, causing concerns about the widening of the conflict currently raging on in Ukraine.

In a statement released on Monday, the Islamic Republic's embassy in Ukraine and its accredited

embassy in Moldova asked all Iranian citizens in Moldova's Transnistria to leave that region immediately considering the continuation of war in Ukraine and the possibility of the spread of conflict to that region, Tasnim reported.

“Given the continuation of the war in Ukraine and the likelihood of a spillover of the war into Transnistria region in the Republic of Moldova, all Iranian citizens residing in the forgoing region are requested to leave that region at the earliest opportunity,” the embassy said.

“Those fellow (Iranian) citizens residing in the Republic of Moldova whose continued presence in that country is not necessary in the current circumstances are requested to leave the Moldovan territory,” the statement said.

The Moldovan authorities say they are sensitive to any sign of growing tensions in Transnistria, an unrecognized Moscow-backed sliver of land bordering southwestern Ukraine, especially since Russia attacked Ukraine on February 24.

Basic goods unloading in ports increases 11% in a month on year

TEHRAN- Basic commodities unloading in the ports of Iran rose 11 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 20), as compared to the first month of the past year, Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has announced.

As announced by the PMO, 2,175 million tons of basic commodities were unloaded in the ports in the first month of this year, while the figure was 1.968 million tons in the first month of the previous year.

Iran imported 30.9 million tons of basic goods in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) told ISNA.

Foroud Asgari, the deputy head of IRICA for customs affairs, said that the imported



goods were in 25 commodity groups.

Putting the value of the imported basic commodities at \$19.6 billion in the past year, the official said that the imports show a 60-percent rise in worth and 32-percent growth in weight, as compared to the Iranian calendar year 1399.

TEDPIX drops 12,900 points on Monday



TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) lost 12,901 points to 1.54 million on Monday.

As reported, over 10,651 billion securities worth 58.6 trillion rials (about \$210 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dropped 11,781 points, and the second market's index lost 18,766 points.

A capital market expert said that the Iranian economy is expected to experience significant growth in the next two years, adding: "This will be a good thing for the capital market and we will see a positive effect on the market as well."

In an interview with IRNA on April 25, Hamid Mir-Moeini pointed to the return of growth to the trend of stock exchange transactions and the factors affecting it, saying: "After the downward trend in the past [Iranian calendar] year (ended on March 20), the capital market finally returned to an uptrend in the last days of the year, paving the way for some optimism in the market for the current year."

"The resumption of growth in the stock exchange transactions over the last week of Esfand (last month of the Iranian calendar year) was due to the optimism that was influenced by the nuclear talks and this event affected the whole market," he added.

According to Mir-Moeini, in the new year, however, some of the optimism about the Vienna negotiations waned, and this resulted in a decline in market transactions, but the stock market index continued its upward trend due to the debate over the privatization of the country's automakers and offering

their shares in the market.

"There is still optimism about the nuclear negotiations, and this could be a major factor in removing sanctions and improving the activities of companies, which will greatly improve the capital market transactions," the market analyst stressed.

Noting that the capital market will react to real changes in macroeconomic indicators, he said: "Companies are experiencing good profitability under the influence of increasing access to international markets, and this indicates that economic growth is on the horizon for the country."

"In the next one or two years, we will experience good economic growth, which is in favor of the capital market and we will see its positive impacts in the market as well", Mir-Moeini added.

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

"The capital market index experienced a significant decline in [the Iranian calendar year] 1399 (ended on March 20, 2021) and the transactions at this market also undergone some correction in the previous year. Therefore, it seems that given the relative stability of macroeconomic variables, we will see a slight growth in the market index during the current year," Ali Teymouri said.

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

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

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



TCCIMA Deputy Head for International Affairs Hesameddin Hallaj and Head of Iran-Poland Joint Chamber of Commerce Rahim Banamolaei also delivered speeches and expressed TCCIMA's readiness to facilitate cooperation between Iranian and Polish companies.

Annual exports to Poland rise 114%

From page 1 ► The IRICA spokesman further pointed to the imports from the European country, saying that some 4,530 tons of goods valued at \$29,138,027 were also imported from Poland last year, recording 14 percent decline and four percent increase in terms of weight and value, respectively.

Chemicals, raisins, fruit juices, nuts, melamine, dates, fabrics, auto parts, mirrors and glass, food supplements, herbal extracts, fresh fruits and vegetables, flooring, iron bars, barberry, wire, etc. were among the main products exported from Iran to Poland in this period, Latifi added.

Tractors, mining machinery, beet



seeds, engine rims, antioxidants, electronic boards, food additives, metal wire, drilling machinery, paper, combines, medical and laboratory equipment, packaging machinery and auto parts were

also the major items that the Islamic Republic imported from Poland, according to Latifi.

Poland, being located in the center of Europe, is a suitable point for Iranian traders to enter European markets.

More than five hundred years of historical relations between the two countries and good memories of Poles from Iran considering the country's support for Poland's independence, as well as sheltering of more than 120,000 Poles during World War II in Iran, have provided a good cultural and political context for the development of relations with this country.

IMIDRO defines 30 investment packages for reviving idle mines this year



TEHRAN - Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Vajihollah Jafari said his organization, which is in charge of a program for reviving idle small mines across the country, has defined 30 investment packages for continuing the implementation of the program in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

Speaking in a meeting for reviewing the progress of the program in the previous year and planning for the current year, Jafari said after the complete monitoring of idle and semi-active mines throughout the country 850 mines

have been identified this year and 30 investment packages have been defined to be offered in 19 provinces in this regard.

As reported by the IMIDRO portal, Jafari noted that the priority for the allocation of the mentioned packages is to implement infrastructure projects that would help revive several mines together.

As such infrastructure projects progress, it is necessary to measure their effectiveness in reviving the country's idle mines, he added.

According to the official, some 453 idle mines were activated under the framework of the program for reviving small and medium-sized mines in the previous Iranian calendar year, which created 3,500 jobs.

Jafari further noted that since the beginning of the program in 2019, over 852 mines have been revived and 13,800 jobs have been created, which has led to a 33-million-ton increase in the country's mineral production.

The Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's program for reviving small mines across the

country was launched in late March 2019.

The most important goal of this program is to activate the country's mines, which will result in increased production and employment, especially in deprived areas.

Back in December 2021, Reza Azimi, who directs the ministry's program for reviving and developing small mines, had mentioned concluding 37 memorandums of understanding (MOU) for investment, and scientific-research cooperation with knowledge-based companies, as well as the introduction of 124 projects to Mining Investment Insurance Corporation for receiving facilities, and the support and coaching of knowledge-based companies and startups as other measures taken under the framework of the mentioned program.

Following the implementation of the mentioned program, so far various small-scale mines including chromite, manganese, hematite, dolomite, iron ore, copper, and construction stone mines have been surveyed by monitoring and diagnosing the problems of the mines and providing solutions for resolving their issues.

Copper cathode production expected to reach 1m tons in 4 years

TEHRAN - Head of Iran Copper Association Bahram Shakouri has said the country is going to increase its copper cathode production from the current 300,000 tons to one million tons by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts on March 21, 2025).

"Although less than 300,000 tons of copper cathodes is currently produced in the country, with the development of reserves and more exploration and extraction, the production of one million tons of the product is projected by 1404," Shakouri told IRIB on Sunday.

"For the 1404 horizon, production of 800,000 tons of copper is targeted, and if we develop mineral reserves and expand exploration operations while creating more processing plants, the production ceiling of one million tons of copper cathodes can be considered for the



mentioned year," he explained.

Referring to the global target for copper production in 2050, the official added: "According to forecasts, copper production in the world by 2050 should reach four times the current level which is over 1.8 million tons."

Being located on the Alpine-Himalayan orogenic belt, of which about 12.5 percent is located in Iran, the country should contribute greatly to the fourfold increase in the world's copper production by 2050, Shakouri said.

Stressing the need for planning to increase Iran's share in the world's copper production, he added: "To increase our share in the global copper production in the 2050 horizon, we must develop both exploration and extraction and discover new world-class reserves."

According to the official, Iran Copper Association is currently leading the country's copper exploration programs in collaboration with the private sector.

"New copper mines recently discovered in Sistan-Baluchestan Province have been the result of such efforts," he said.

Shakouri stressed that the mining sector, especially in the field of copper, has a bright future considering the elimination of

fossil fuels and the movement towards new technologies, saying: "If the country's mining capacities in the copper field are realized, given the rising global prices for the mentioned product, at least \$10 billion of revenues could be generated for the country, along with creating more employment and production which ensures the development of deprived regions."

The official noted that currently, most of the country's copper cathode production is exported due to the underdevelopment of downstream industries.

"The government should support downstream industries, including wire and cable production units, and provide incentives to other high-tech industries that use copper products," Shakouri stressed.

Nearly 1.3m tons of commodities traded at IME in a week

TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 1.291 million tons of commodities worth more than \$323 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1.181 tons of commodities valued at more than \$229 million.

On this floor, the IME's customers purchased 966,853 tons of cement, 161,048 tons of steel, 23,000 tons of sponge iron, 16,000 tons of iron ore, 9,900 tons of aluminum, 4,320 tons of copper, 450 tons of zinc, 150 tons of molybdenum concentrate and 24 tons of precious metals concentrate.

Furthermore, the IME saw trade of 103,235 tons of commodities on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor valued almost \$86 million.

The exchange's customers purchased on this floor 32,292 tons of polymeric products, 22,520 tons of chemicals, 18,300 tons of vacuum bottom, 16,500 tons of lube cut, 12,455 tons of bitumen, 1,597 tons of base oil, 570 tons of sulfur and 40 tons of argon.

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 6,983 tons of commodities traded on it.

The IME traded in its physical market 7.231 million tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$2.378 billion

during the past Iranian calendar month Farvardin (ended on April 20), the first month of Iranian calendar year.

The exchange sold on its oil and petrochemical trading floor 1.372 million tons of commodities valued at almost \$985 million.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 412,800 tons of vacuum bottom, 335,276 tons of bitumen, 312,673 tons of polymeric products, 141,990 tons of lube cut, 132,265 tons of chemicals, 20,695 tons of sulfur, 14,594 tons of oil, 330 tons of argon, 300 tons of insulation and 200 tons of slops wax.

Furthermore, the exchange saw trade of more than 5.748 million tons of commodities worth more than \$1.342 billion on its metals and minerals trading floor.

Items traded on this floor included 4,029,000 tons of cement, 1,024,000 tons of steel, 353,000 tons of iron ore, 260,500 tons of sponge iron, 55,400 tons of aluminum, 26,500 of zinc, 28,200 tons of copper, 450 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 450 tons of coke, 700 tons of lead, 48 tons of precious metals concentrate and 49 kg of gold bars.

Last was the IME's side market on which the exchange traded 110,781 tons commodities.

As previously reported, the value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange rose 102 percent, and the volume of trades at the exchange increased 128 percent in the past Iranian calendar year



1400 (ended on March 20), which was the highest level of growth in the history of the exchange since its establishment.

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

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

Iran, Poland's steel, metal industries explore ways of expanding ties

TEHRAN - Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) hosted a business forum with a Polish delegation from the country's Silesia Chamber of Commerce (SCC) on Monday, the TCCIMA portal reported.

In this meeting, which was attended by the representatives of companies active in the steel and metal industries, the two sides explored ways of expanding mutual cooperation.

During the gathering, the Polish side expressed willingness for supplying the country's metal and steel needs from Iran since due to the war between Russia and Ukraine, Polish companies are no longer able to import from Ukraine.

Martyr Qassem Soleimani and his role in Islamic awakening toward the Palestinian cause

“We don’t sleep for one night unless we think of eliminating our enemies. We will continue our endeavors for the victory of the Palestinian resistance day and night, for its victory, until the earth, sky, and sea become hell for the Zionists,” stresses Martyr Hajj Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, who believed in the cause of Al-Quds, sacrificed on its fronts, paid the tax of perseverance in its path, and suffered from the scourge of the siege and international brutal sanctions for its sake. Indeed, over the last four decades, Iran is still steadfast in its advocacy for Palestine as recommended by Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, and Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who always recommends defending Palestine as a legitimate and divine duty.

On International Quds Day, the Palestinians affirm that Hajj Qassem Soleimani was a pioneering devotee of Palestine, in word, deed, and sacrifices, dedicating his entire life for the sake of Palestine until its resistance has become strong and capable. Martyr Soleimani was a loyal and humble soldier, who loved Palestine, and his greatest concern was to support its steadfastness for his certainty that the Palestinians would preserve the cause and preserve their Arab and Islamic identity in the face of the Zionist colonial identity.

Staunch supporter of Palestinian harmony

Hajj Qassem was keen to receive the various Palestinian factions in Tehran, Beirut, and



Damascus, regardless of their political identity and organisational affiliation as he had a remarkable role in connecting them with the Arab and Islamic depth. He remained confident that all good is in the cohesion of all parties to the axis of resistance. Further, he personally bore criticisms that accused him of overconfidence, to the extent that Sayyed Khamenei appreciated his sincere efforts, his patience, and certainty as he was able to heal the rift and unite the ranks of the Palestinian resistance.

Hajj Qassem proved that Iran does not differentiate in its support for the resistance between Sunnis and Shiites. He prioritised the Palestinian resistance to many other Shiite forces in Lebanon or Iraq, and spared no efforts to extinguish the fire of sectarianism because he knew that the enemy was the one who ignites its flames to disperse the Muslims. In a speech in 2017, he says, “We do not help Palestine for the sake of the Shiites; we do

not work at all with anyone because of being Shiite. 99% of the Palestinian people are Sunnis and we defend them.”

Martyr Qassem Soleimani realised the strength of the patient Palestinian people, so he did not fail them nor did he hesitate to meet their needs with salaries and aid. Plus, he has always personally received the wounded in Iranian hospitals, contributed to their treatment, and followed up on their medical conditions.

As for the Palestinian detainees, they were at the forefront of his priorities, and he received their messages, listened to their complaints, and worked with the Palestinian resistance forces to liberate them, improve their living conditions, and expedite their release in conjunction with the resistance forces to exchange.

Relentless support for the resistance

Hajj Qassem provided the Palestinian resistance with Iranian missiles, as well as the technology of their manufacture and

development so that it would be able to be self-reliant, and manufacture the missiles it needs on its own, and benefit from the raw materials available to it for the next war, which the Steel Dome cannot deter despite all its anti-war systems.

In addition to the missiles that played a major role in changing deterrence equations, Hajj Qassem Soleimani had a major role in the offensive tunnels weapon, as the Palestinian resistance, through the network of infrastructure tunnels that it established under the Gaza Strip, reached the enemy's settlements to carry out advanced operations.

Despite this, Martyr Soleimani did not leave the Palestinians alone. In this regard, Ziyad Al-Nakhala, Secretary-General of the Islamic Jihad Movement, confirms that Hajj Qassem Soleimani personally took part in the Gaza wars and spent hours with the resistance fighters. He adds that he would “wake up with us for the dawn prayer and pray behind the Sunni Imam. His behavior seemed to us very natural as one’s own faith does not contradict their righteous struggle for Islam.”

Hajj Qassem Soleimani believed that unity among Muslims was the only way to confront the enemies of the Islamic nation. Hence, he took a practical step toward strengthening unity among the Muslim ummah and drawing their attention to the first issue of the Islamic world, which is Palestine, despite the United States’ arrogant measures against him. Thus, he has honourably and deservedly earned the name ‘Martyr of Al-Aqsa’.

Democrats are likely to lose the House in the fall elections: professor

From page 1 ► Following is the text of the interview:

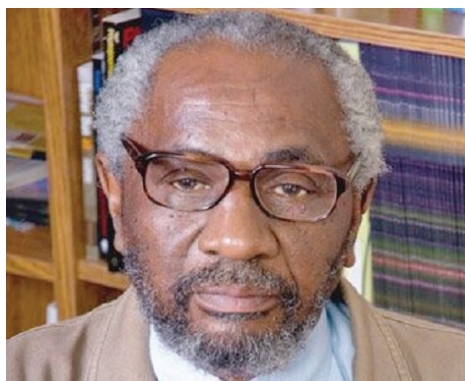
How do you see the status of Democrats and Republicans if we had an election just now?

All available data indicate the Democrats are likely to lose the House in the fall elections. The only question is the size of the loss. The Democrats have a chance to maintain control of the Senate, depending on who the Republicans nominate in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Georgia.

Biden’s critics accuse him of cognitive disability. To what extent can this affect the results of the upcoming elections?

I have seen no evidence that the President’s mental health is impaired. However, given his age and fragility, this is a concern of a significant part of the electorate but it is not likely to have an impact on the upcoming election.

Do you think Trump enjoys sufficient support among the public or his popularity is just limited to Republican masses?



“(A) reelection (of Trump) would reinforce his worst character deficits and would not bode well for the American democracy.”

Trump, according to the polls, has enough support among Republicans to make a credible run for the nomination in 2024. However, his support among independents and Democrats is no greater than in 2020. Yet his chances to be elected again depend on the state of the nation at the time and the Democratic nominee.

Could you visualize a situation in which Trump is elected president again?

As I write in my recent book “Questions of Character: The Presidency of Donald Trump”, Trump lacks the character to function as a competent president. His reelection would reinforce his worst character deficits and would not bode well for the American democracy.

What are the main factors that will shape Americans’ approach in upcoming presidential elections?

Usually, the main factor in U.S. presidential elections is the state of the economy but cultural and race issues can also be important, as well as a crisis in international politics.

West was “preparing for the invasion of our land”, Putin says in ‘Victory Day’ speech



President Vladimir Putin on Monday tried to defend Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in his annual “Victory Day” speech, urging his forces on to victory while evoking Russia’s triumph over Nazi Germany in World War II, according to cnbc.com.

Speaking ahead of a massive parade of troops, tanks and military hardware in Moscow, Putin said Russia’s invasion of Ukraine had been necessary because the West was “preparing for the inva-

sion of our land, including Crimea,” according to comments translated by Reuters.

The remarks came as Russia commemorates one of the most important events on its national calendar — Victory Day — marking the Soviet Union’s victory over Nazi Germany in World War II.

Evoking that triumph in his speech Monday, Putin urged the Russian army toward victory in Ukraine, saying there was a duty to remember those who defeat-

ed Nazism.

“Defending the Motherland when its fate is being decided has always been sacred,” he said. “Today you are fighting for our people in Donbas, for the security of Russia, our homeland.”

It was widely expected that Putin could use the speech to announce a victory in Ukraine or an all-out war on the country. Another possibility was even the mass mobilization of the Russian army and wider population, putting them on a wartime footing. Putin did not use the speech to announce any escalation.

Donbas focus

Putin referred to the Donbas numerous times throughout the speech, appearing to double down on Russia’s new strategy of focusing on the “liberation” of Donetsk and Luhansk.

The region has been home to some of the most intense fighting since Russia invaded Ukraine

on Feb. 24, such as the shelling of a theater in Mariupol, where civilians were sheltering, killing hundreds of people.

The southern port city of Mariupol is particularly important to Putin as it would enable a land bridge between Russia and Crimea to be created, via the Donbas region.

Fighting in the east appears to be ramping up, and this weekend Russia bombed a village school in eastern Ukraine where people were sheltering, killing about 60, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday during an address to the G-7 leaders.

Russia has not commented on the latest attack.

G-7 leaders vowed Sunday to further Russia’s economic isolation and decried the invasion, saying in a statement that Putin’s actions “bring shame on Russia and the historic sacrifices of its people,” referring to the Soviet Union’s role in defeating Nazi Germany.

“Record number of Syrian children need aid”

From page 1 ► The battle to liberate the provinces from terrorists by Syrian government forces backed by allies of Damascus was a tough one but ended in victory for the government perhaps quicker than the country’s enemies had anticipated.

Contrary to Western officials and mainstream Western media, Syrians of all faiths, ethnicities, and races had lived peacefully in coexistence without any discrimination by the government of Bashar al-Assad.

Christians, Sunnis, and Syrians from many different backgrounds hold high-ranking positions in governance, military, and other security apparatus.

Analysts argue there was no discrimination or persecution like other nations in the region that witnessed uprisings against their country’s leadership.

There was also no such level of hunger or record number of children displaced or living in poverty before the West and its regional allies pumped weapons that ended up in the hands of terrorists.

Something unique that differentiates Syria from other nations is Damascus’s solid and firm support for the resistance against the Israeli entity that is ethnically cleansing Palestinians in quite a brutal deadly manner.

Syrian officials also accuse the U.S. military of using its land and territory adjacent to the Syrian border in neighboring Iraq to try and bring back to life the Daesh terrorist group that, for years, wreaked havoc in both countries.

The cost of the U.S. presence and its theft of Syrian oil has been felt by the Arab nation’s households as the UN children’s agency has documented “more than 6.5 million children in Syria are in need of assistance, the highest number recorded since the beginning of the crisis, more than 11 years ago,” the agency statement said.

UNICEF spokesperson Touma notes the war on Syria has also forced many refugees to flee and in neighboring countries, 2.8 million Syrian refugee children depend on assistance.

Syria’s war is estimated to have killed nearly half a million people and displaced millions since it began with a rise in foreign-backed militants taking up arms in 2011.

Many anti-war advocates said at the time that the weapons being sent to the militants would later fall in the hands of dangerous terrorist groups.

This was the scenario that unfolded and the terrorists, not only Daesh but also al-Qaeda affiliated groups and others with similar ideologies didn’t just destroy Syria and Iraq. They killed hundreds of innocent civilians in Western countries as well.

The whole idea of arming, training, and funding militants backfired so spectacularly that until today, it remains difficult to apprehend if this was the plan of foreign intelligence agencies all along.

Sleeper cells are still operating and reports have resurfaced recently of the U.S. military transporting Daesh terrorists.

Meanwhile, Syria has been targeted by U.S. sanctions under the “Caesar Act”, that have further crippled the war-torn country’s economy by prohibiting foreign companies from trading with Damascus.

Critics argue the punitive U.S. measures

are aimed at further punishing the Syrian government after it’s successful gains against the foreign-backed militancy that brought security back to the country at the cost of Washington spending a lot of money, resources and time supporting the opposing side.

The war on Syria as UNICEF correctly points out escalated into a devastating and complex conflict that drew in numerous actors including terrorist groups and regional and international powers.

“Children’s needs, both inside Syria and in neighboring countries, are growing,” said Adele Khodr, UNICEF’s Middle East chief.

“Many families struggle to make ends meet. Prices of basic supplies including food are skyrocketing, partially as a result of the crisis in Ukraine.”

Children are among the most vulnerable and the UN warned they are bearing the brunt of the impact. UNICEF said the agency faced a severe cash shortfall to provide aid.

“Funding for humanitarian operations is meanwhile fast dwindling,” Khodr said. “UNICEF has received less than half of its funding requirements for this year.”

According to UNICEF, eleven years after the crisis in Syria, children continue to be the first and most to suffer.

“More than 6.5 million children in Syria are in need of assistance, the highest ever recorded since the beginning of the crisis, more than 11 years ago.

“In Syria’s neighboring countries, strained by political instability and fragility, nearly 5.8 million children depend on assistance, their lives riddled with poverty and hardship.

“Funding for humanitarian operations is meanwhile fast dwindling. Ahead of the sixth Brussels Conference on Syria and the region on 10 May, UNICEF has only received less than half of its funding requirements for this year. Of our requirements to reach children and families impacted by the crisis in Syria, we urgently need nearly US\$20 million for the cross-border operations, the only lifeline for nearly one million children in the northwest of Syria.”

Just recently, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) warned vulnerable Syrian families to need urgent financial support to survive the country’s debilitating economic crisis.

New findings released by NRC show how families across Syria are struggling to cope as their incomes rapidly lose value in the face of spiraling price inflation.

“Vulnerable Syrians face another decade of hardship, but the suffering can be stopped by international political will. While the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine continues to demand world attention, donors and governments meeting in Brussels must not forget about their commitment to Syria.”

The crisis in Ukraine is deepening an already-chronic food insecurity crisis, affecting displaced Syrians inside the country and in neighboring countries.

NRC has warned that Syria is falling down the priority list of international funding and diplomatic efforts.

The organization has also called on donors to increase funding for the restoration of public services and early recovery in Syria, such as in the water, health, agriculture, and education sectors.



Some \$213m allocated to boost tourism infrastructure nationwide

page 1 ► a desired destination for nature lovers, birdwatchers, powder chasers, culture devotees, pilgrims, museum-goers, foodies, adventurers, and medical travelers to name a few.

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

As the data suggests, neighboring countries have been the main source of tourism for the Islamic Republic. That is why the fair has invited travel insiders, tour operators, and exhibitors from neighboring states to reinforce the trend.



The 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. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Kenyan ambassador visits Kashan, appreciates its beauty



TEHRAN – On Sunday, Nairobi's ambassador to Tehran Joshua I. Gatimu visited several tourist attractions in the ancient city of Kashan, central Iran.

Gatimu, who was accompanied by some embassy staff, toured the Tapeh Sialk (Sialk Hill) and historical Bagh-e Fin (Fin Garden) among other sites, CHTN reported.

"Having been awestruck by the beauty of this city, I will encourage the people of my country to come and see it," the ambassador said.

"I am very happy to be able to represent Kenya in a country with such a rich cultural and historical heritage, and I am also extremely pleased to be in Kashan where I will be able to see the history I have already read about in history books," the news agency quoted the envoy as saying.

He also expressed his readiness to arrange everything needed for Iran and Kashan to be introduced to Kenya.

The history of Bagh-e Fin in its current shape dates back to the time of Shah Abbas I who was the 5th Safavid king of Iran and reigned from 1588 to 1629. However, some sources say the original premises date far back in time.

Because the oasis city of Kashan lies adjacent to the central Iranian desert, water is scarce, however, inside the garden, water superabundantly flows through a series of turquoise-colored pools and fountains.

Tourism ministry hosting exhibit of traditional locks

TEHRAN – A collection of traditional locks has been put on display at the headquarters of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in Tehran.

The five-day exhibition showcases a variety of bizarre-shaped locks made of iron and copper, CHTN reported.

According to organizers, these works of traditional Ghoftlazi (locksmithing) are completely original and one-of-a-kind as the artist uses the old patterns of locks.

Available evidence suggests that locks have been made in Iran since at least the second millennium BC. The most ancient lock, dating to the 13th century BC, was excavated at Tchogha Zanbil, a UNESCO World Heritage in southwest Iran. The lock consisted of a bolt and a tumbler and was probably used on a wooden door, according to Encyclopedia Iranica.

In addition to animals, many new shapes for locks made of steel were inspired by objects and vessels such as the cradle, kashkul (a bowl in which dervishes put the alms and food given to them), suitcase, and lantern, as well as all kinds of geometric shapes.

Throughout the Islamic period in Iran, locks were made in all shapes and sizes. In the first centuries after the introduction of Islam (7th-9th centuries) in Iran, locks followed the same style as those of the Sasanians.

According to the Encyclopedia, from the 10th

century onward, however, lock-making went through major changes. In addition to the previously mentioned shapes, figural locks in the form of animals and birds became popular. Nearly all animals, such as the horse, lion, goat, ram, camel, rabbit, and water buffalo, as well as fish and all kinds of birds, were fashioned in locks.

With the rise of the Safavids (1501-1722) to power, there was a major evolution in lock-making. The Safavids' love of steel arms and other steel implements encouraged locksmiths to use this metal for locks, which were previously made of bronze and brass.

In the course of history, numerous mechanisms are found in Iranian padlocks, including barbed spring, bent spring, helical spring, shackle spring, notched shackle, hook and revolving catch, and notched shackle with rotating discs, as well as combination and multiple mechanisms.

Until not long ago, every bazaar had a section for locksmiths (bazaar-e ghoflsazha), but the importation of machine-made locks from the West drove the locksmiths out of the city bazaars. Those in the villages, however, managed to survive until the 1970s.

The exhibition of traditional locks will be running through May 11.

2,700-year-old bricks to go on show at home

TEHRAN – A collection of recovered Mannaean bricks will go on show in the city of Bukan, western Iran, where they were originally unearthed by archaeologists in the 1970s.

"The 2700-year-old bricks are arranged to be transferred from the National Museum of Iran to a museum in Bukan for a one-month exhibition," the tourism chief of West Azarbaijan said on Sunday.

The collection is composed of 51 bricks bearing images of various sphinxes, animals, and other motifs.

Excavated from Tepe Qalaichi, a Mannaean settlement in Bukan, the bricks were looted and smuggled out

of Iran some four decades ago, Jalil Jabbari said.

Qalaichi's archaeological site was once part of the Mannaean capital.

"Tepe Qalaichi embraces a Mannaean cultural layer which has yielded several architectural structures so far."

One of the buildings is located in the center of the hill and has several rooms, each bearing drawings of geometric patterns, humans, and plantations, the official said.

The decorated bricks were returned home from Switzerland last year. According to The Art Newspaper, the artworks were recovered



from a warehouse in Switzerland.

In the 1970s, a farmer plowing at Qalaichi came across a decorated brick, probably from the columned hall of its citadel. This discovery led to extremely damaging illegal excavations, partly using a bulldozer.

Eventually, in 1985, there was an official rescue excavation, but this was quickly abandoned because of an intensification of the Iran-Iraq war. There were then 14 more years of illegal digging until 1999 when there was another official excavation. But by this time only small fragments of broken bricks were found.

Mannaian civilization flourished in northwestern Iran in the 1st millen-

nium BC. Mannaia, also spelled Manna, was an ancient country surrounded by three major powers of the time namely Assyria, Urartu, and Media.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the Mannaeans are first recorded in the annals of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (reigned 858–824 BC) and are last mentioned in Urartu by Rusa II (reigned 685–645 BC) and in Assyria by Esarhaddon (reigned 680–669 BC). With the intrusion of the Scythians and the rise of the Medes in the 7th century, the Mannaeans lost their identity and were subsumed under the term Medes.

Female entrepreneurs honored at gastronomy conference

TEHRAN – A selection of 20 travel insiders were honored at the second Congress of Women's Entrepreneurs in Food & Tourism Industry, which was held at Tehran's Milad Tower on Sunday.

The Congress honored 20 female entrepreneurs for distinguished contributions to developing gastronomy tourism on the national or international scales. ILNA quoted the secretary of the congress as saying on Monday.

"One of the goals of this conference is to introduce the capacity of women entrepreneurs in the food and tourism industry and to transfer experiences to other businesspersons," Donya Akhgari said.

Organized by Iran's UNESCO Food and Gastronomy Club, the event aims at familiarizing more people with the activities of female chefs and entrepreneurs in the food and tourism industry.

In 2020, Iran joined an online campaign launched



by the UNWTO to promote gastronomy as an essential part of tourism. Iranian cuisine, usually dominated by fragrant herbs, varies from region to region. It principally accentuates freshness, deliciousness, and colorfulness.

European group visits Takht-e Soleyman

TEHRAN – During a two-day tour of West Azarbaijan province, a group of foreign tourists visited Takht-e Soleyman ("Solomon's Throne"), a ruined sanctuary in northwest Iran, a local tourism official said on Monday.

The tourists, which were from Austria, Slovenia, and Germany, are the first group of foreign tourists visiting the region since the be-

ginning of the current Iranian year (started on March 21), IRNA quoted Amir Matlubi as saying.

The presence of foreign tourists not only introduces the culture and history of the region to the world but also facilitates economic development and job creation for the locals, the official added.

Besides, the local tourism directorate seeks to renew tourism infrastructure in parallel, he noted.

Takht-e Soleyman ("Solomon's Throne") bears testimony to various eras of the nation's history. It is situated in the southeastern highlands of West Azarbaijan province overlooking a lake with a backdrop of a snowcapped mountain range.

The historical ensemble was established in a geologically anomalous location as the base of the temple complex sits on an oval mound roughly 350 by 550 meters. Inspired by natural context, the rich harmonious composition draws local and foreign travelers who want even for minutes to revel in its peaceful atmosphere.

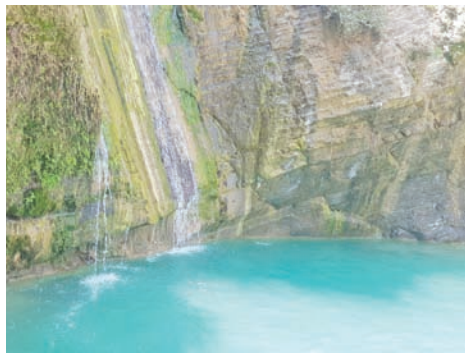
Nikshahr holds potential to become tourism hub

TEHRAN – Nikshahr, a lesser-known city in Sistan-Baluchestan, has considerable potential to become one of the tourism hubs of the southeastern province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

On Monday, Alireza Jalalzai added that the development of tourism infrastructure inside the city and its travel destinations is a prerequisite for such an evolution.

"There are many tourism and handicraft capacities there being neglected due to inadequacies in the development infrastructure and the lack of accurate and correct introduction of tourist attractions," the official added.

Boosting tourism infrastructure in this city will assist in balancing the distribution of tourists in



the province due to its proximity to the port of Chabahar and its location on the transit road, he noted.

Bazaar of Shahroud undergoes flooring restoration

TEHRAN – Another restoration project has commenced renovating paving stones at the historical bazaar of Shahroud in north-central Iran.

"So far, over 90 percent of the flooring has been paved with cobblestone since 1390 (2011-12) onwards," Shahroud tourism official said on Saturday.

The Qajar-era (1789-1925) bazaar embraces three caravanserais, two Timches (small arcaded courtyards

each dedicated to a single type of business), and a public bathhouse, Hamidreza Hassani said.

Furthermore, the bazaar is home to over 250 shops in an area of 2,500 square meters, the official added.

In the Iranian culture, bazaars have been traditional public spaces in the Iranian cities with great contributions to commercial activities in urban life meanwhile their extended activities can be traced to social, cul-

tural, political, and religious roles.

Most mazes and passages offer certain commodities such as carpets, metalwork, toys, clothing, jewelry, kitchen appliances, traditional spices, herbal remedies, and natural perfumes. One can also bump into colorful grocery stores, bookbinders, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, copper-smiths, tobacconists, tailors, flag sellers, broadcloth sellers, carpenters, shoemakers, and knife-makers.

Several divided carpet sections across the bazaar enable visitors to watch or buy hand-woven Persian carpets and rugs with different knot densities and other features. From another point of view, bazaars are also synonyms for foods, with their unmissable colorful stalls of vegetables, herbs, and spices. Yet, most of these ingredients might be mysterious to a foreign eye.

and bushes are applied in the center. In some cases, patterns are also printed with wooden blocks or painted on the fabric with pencils and carbon copy papers.

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IFRC praises Iran’s support for refugees amid sanctions

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has done its best in providing support to refugees despite U.S. sanctions and international pressures, Francesco Rocca, head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), said.

In a meeting in Tehran on Sunday, Rocca visited the Iranian first vice president Mohammad Mokhber and the director general of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Robert Mardini.

“We are well aware that the Government of the Islamic Republic, despite sanctions and political pressures, has never stopped supporting the Red Crescent Society and is one of the few governments that has always had the full support of the Society,” Rocca stated.

Expanding cooperation with the IRCS is one of the policies and priorities of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and today we proudly announce that Iran, as the educational hub of this international organization, is transferring its experiences to other countries and aid workers worldwide, he highlighted.

Mardini appreciating the actions of the Islamic Republic in helping the displaced and war victims in the region despite international sanctions and pressures stressed that “We will not allow sanctions to hinder the provision of services and cooperation between the IRCS and the ICRC, and we will announce complaint wherever necessary.”

A special ceremony was held in Tehran on Sunday attended by nearly 90 foreign participants on the occasion of IRCS 100th anniversary and World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day.

IRCS services

The IRCS, established in 1922, is one of the first and oldest members of the movement and is currently one of the top five societies in the world due to its significant activities in the national and international arenas.

In 2005, the IRCS received the Henry Davison Award for outstanding humanitarian services, and the IRCS initiative of volunteers was selected as the best project (out of 50 projects from 45 national societies), by the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

In addition to offering services to the victims of natural disasters in the country, it has taken numerous missions in international disasters and incidents helping the people of Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, South-east Asia, Lebanon, Gaza, Somalia, and Yemen.

In case of natural disasters or for provision of medical services to the deprived, it dispatches medical teams, which consist of doctors, paramedics, nurses, social workers, and health experts who are sent to provide free health care to disadvantaged areas and villages identified and assessed by other volunteer groups.

Moreover, the Iranian Red Crescent Society provides medical services to people in 13 Asian, African, and Latin American countries.

Currently, some 14 medical facilities are offering humanitarian, relief, and health services to the deprived people in 13 countries, including Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Bolivia, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Congo, Kenya, Lebanon, Mali, Niger, and Ecuador.

The IRCS polyclinic center includes various departments such as laboratory, pharmacy, radiology and physiotherapy, and general practitioners along with obstetricians, gynecologists, internal medicine, pediatrics, ophthalmologists, and dentists.

IFRC’s Rocca: We proudly announce that Iran, as the educational hub of this international organization, is transferring its experiences to other countries and aid workers worldwide.

Education Ministry adopts measures for “family and youth support”

TEHRAN – The Ministry of Education has taken steps in line with implementing the “Law on Family and Youth Support”, said Zahra Panahi-Rava, an advisor to the ministry for women and family affairs.

By a decree issued by President Ebrahim Raisi, the “Law on Family and Youth Support” approved by the Majlis (Iranian Parliament) was notified to the Ministry of Health and the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs.

The Guardian Council approved the law on November 17 last year to implement a population growth and family support plan for 7 years to change the declining trend of childbearing.

The plan stipulates health insurance for infertile couples, providing services and facilities to working women, providing health and nutrition support packages to mothers and children, educational opportunities for student mothers, providing livelihood support to families, and ongoing medical services to pregnant women.

Various tasks have been assigned to the executive bodies in this law, and in addition to some articles that have a general aspect, Articles 33 and 34 are specific to the Ministry of Education, Panahi-Rava noted.

“We have planned programs in various fields from health and physical education to education and literacy,” she said, expressing hope to take the first steps this year.

According to Article 33 of this law, the Ministry of Education is obliged to take measures in cooperation with the Islamic Propagation Organization and within the framework of the approvals of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, to implement the Fundamental



Reform Document of Education.

Training and education of skills related to the Islamic-Iranian lifestyle, personal and social personality development, individual skills, promoting the culture of marriage, family, childbearing, and responsibility for family formation and excellence are among these measures, she explained.

Article 34 also states that the ministries of education and science are obliged to create, expand and strengthen fields of study in all universities in the country in accordance with the status and role of family and women based on the Islamic-Iranian culture, such as home and family management.

Demographic issue

Today, the country’s fertility rate has reached about 1.6 children per woman, however, it was 6.5 children per woman, in 1986. The lowest fertility rate in the whole region of West Asia, North Africa, and the MENA region is recorded for Iran.

While 1,594,000 births were registered in the [Iranian calendar] year 1394 (March 2015–March 2016), the downward trend continued annually to the point that the number of births reached about

The plan stipulates offering health insurance for infertile couples, providing working women and their children with food packages.

one million in the [Iranian calendar] year 1399 (March 2020–March 2021).

In other words, the country lost more than 550,000 births in five years.

The fertility rate declined to 1.71 children in the [Iranian calendar] year 1399 (March 2020–March 2021), reaching below the replacement level, according to the report released by the Statistical Center of Iran.

Replacement level is the amount of fertility needed to keep the population the same from generation to generation. It refers to the total fertility rate that will result in a stable population without it increasing or decreasing.

Nicholas Eberstadt, the Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), wrote in an article in July 2020 that the fertility rate in Iran has dropped by 70 percent over the past 30 years, which has been the highest decline in human history.

Seyed Hamed Barakati, the former deputy health minister for family and school population, said in May 2021 that Iran’s population growth rate has decreased to less than one percent for the first time over the past four decades.

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COVID-19 lockdown moves most cities out of “red” zone

Strict COVID-19 restrictions which took effect on October 26 have caused 87 out of 89 infected cities to get out of the high-risk “red” zone.

The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control started strict restrictions in 43 cities that had the highest rate of infection in the country. Ten days later, decisions were made to set new limitations on highly-affected areas for another 10 days, through which 46 cities undergone restrictions.

The plan divided cities into three levels of alert, namely red, orange, and yellow.

All of the cities, except for two, are now out of the red condition and have turned orange or yellow so that the hospitalization rate has decreased, said Alireza Raeisi, the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control spokesman, expressing hope that the death toll will also drop within two to three weeks.

In some 160 cities and towns that were on the highest alert, the disease prevalence has begun to decrease in about 145 cities. And the remaining 15 cities will also experience a downward trend this week, he explained.

اعمال محدودیت ها اکثر شهرها را از وضعیت قرمز خارج کرد

علیرضا رئیسی، سخنگوی ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا گفت: از ۸۹ شهری که از پنج آبان محدودیت‌های کرونایی در آنها اعمال شده است، ۸۷ شهر از وضعیت قرمز خارج شده‌اند.

او با اشاره به محدودیت‌های کرونایی در ۸۹ شهری که (از ۱۵ آبان در ۴۳ شهر و از ۱۴ آبان در ۴۶ شهر) اعمال شده است، گفت: از این تعداد به جز دو شهر همه شهرها از حالت قرمز خارج و به نارنجی یا زرد تبدیل شده‌اند. با توجه به ورودی بیمارستان‌ها و اینکه میزان بستری هم کاهش یافته است امیدواریم روند فوتی‌ها هم تا حدود دو تا سه هفته دیگر آثار خود را نشان دهد و روند کاهش‌ی پیدا کند.

وی اعلام کرد: اکنون در ۱۶۰ شهر و شهرستان که قرمز رنگ بودند در حدود ۱۴۵ شهر روند کاهش بیماری آغاز شده است. در ۱۵ شهر باقی‌مانده هم در همین هفته این روند کاهش‌ی شروع خواهد شد.

All immigrants to be vaccinated against polio, measles

From page 1 ► In this plan, all children aged 5 years or younger in high-risk areas, regardless of previous immunization history, will receive two drops of oral vaccine and will repeat by four to six weeks.

Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious viral disease that largely affects children under 5 years of age. The virus is transmitted by person-to-person spread mainly through the fecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (e.g. contaminated water or food) and multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and cause paralysis.

Over the last decade, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) made steady progress on the path to eradication. Wild poliovirus types 2 and 3 (WPV2 and WPV3) were declared eradicated in 2015 and 2019, respectively; the World Health Organization (WHO) South-East Asia Region was declared free of poliovirus in 2014; and most recently, the WHO African Region was certified free of wild poliovirus (WPV) in August 2020. However, the final steps towards eradication have proven the most difficult.

Measles outbreak in neighboring countries

Concerns about the spread of measles in the country are growing as the Afghan population grows, Mohsen Zahraei, head of the department of preventable diseases with vaccines of the Ministry of Health, also said.

Measles mostly infects children under the age of 10, and all families need to get their children vaccinated between the ages of 12 to 18 months, he said, adding that vaccination will be free of charge.

The measles vaccination program in Iran started in 1984 when 34 percent of the population was vaccinated in the first year and 90 to 95 percent of the population after 6 years. Also in 2003, 33 million people were vaccinated with a national program to eradicate measles in the country.

“We managed to minimize the measles incidence rate in three years and increase vaccination coverage to 95 to 98 percent. In 2019, the World Health Organization approved the elimination of measles and rubella in Iran,” he noted.

According to him, in the Eastern Mediterranean region, among the 22 countries, only three countries of Bahrain, Oman, and Iran, have succeeded in receiving this approval, which is a sign of health indicators promotion that plays an important role in tourist arrivals and development process.

However, we are witnessing measles outbreaks in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq.

“We have stepped up our efforts to maintain the achievement of measles elimination by identifying 3,000 cases of suspected



measles in one month, and by early last week, 120 positive cases of measles had been recorded, which is also increasing.

Some 64 percent of the infected people are Afghans, 3 percent are Pakistanis and the rest are Iranians. The disease causes severe symptoms in people with malnutrition, including blindness, pneumonia, and brain infection.

The disease is much more contagious than coronavirus, and kills one to five percent of the patients,” he explained.

Measles is a highly contagious, serious disease caused by a virus. Before the introduction of the measles vaccine in 1963 and widespread vaccination, major epidemics occurred approximately every 2–3 years and measles caused an estimated 2.6 million deaths each year.

More than 140,000 people died from measles in 2018 – mostly children under the age of 5 years, despite the availability of a safe and effective vaccine.

Measles is caused by a virus in the paramyxovirus family and it is normally passed through direct contact and through the air. The virus infects the respiratory

tract, then spreads throughout the body. Measles is a human disease and is not known to occur in animals.

In light of the pandemic, all refugees, even those undocumented, benefited from access to free primary health services and free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like Iranian nationals.

World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Iran Jaffar Hussain has said it is a great achievement for Iran that the government is vaccinating every Afghan refugee going to the vaccination center even before receiving COVID vaccines from Humanitarian Buffer (COVAX).

Without any discrimination, Iran has provided various services to a large number of refugees and foreign immigrants in the fields of education, health, treatment, livelihood, vocational training, and employment, with minimal assistance from the international community.

The same happened for the vaccination when the country has generously considered refugees for vaccination against coronavirus.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON MAY 9

New cases	570
New deaths	12
Total cases	7,225,759
Total deaths	141,189
New hospitalized patients	91
Patients in critical condition	854
Total recovered patients	7,008,231
Diagnostic tests conducted	51,539,372
Doses of vaccine injected	149,198,213

