

What to Expect from Mora Visit to Tehran?

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Report

Macron: Humiliating Russia won't bring peace

French President Emmanuel Macron has warned against humiliating Russia for its military offensive in Ukraine, if and when any peace deal is agreed upon.

Speaking to reporters in the French city of Strasbourg, Macron says that once the war ends, Moscow and Kyiv will eventually have to sit down and negotiate peace terms, so any further tensions will only serve to the detriment of the situation.

"We will have a peace to build tomorrow, let us never forget that," Macron said "I mentioned this earlier. We will have to do this with Ukraine and Russia around the table. The end of the discussion and the negotiation will be set by Ukraine and Russia."

However, Macron says this will "not be done in denial, nor in exclusion of each other, nor even in humiliation."

In what may come as a blow to the government in Kyiv, Macron also said it would take "decades" for Ukraine to join the European Union.

"I am saying this in all honesty; honesty that we owe to the Ukrainians," Macron said, "we can have an accelerated process... to accept candidate status for Ukraine but we know that given our standards and the criteria, it would probably take decades for Ukraine to really join the European Union."

Ukraine had been seeking a quick route to EU membership and Macron's remarks will come as another setback for Kyiv, which has also been refused membership in NATO.

The French leader laid out his vision of a broader club of European nations that would allow for deeper cooperation between non-EU countries. ► Page 5

Op-ed

A challenge called ISIS to the Taliban government

By Said Maisam Moosavi

During Ramadan a powerful blast struck a mosque in western Kabul, killing at least 10 people and wounding 20, officials said. The incident happened amid a spate of attacks on Afghan places of worship and civilian targets.

The Afghan interior ministry confirmed the blast struck the western Kabul mosque at about 2:00 p.m. local time (10:00 a.m. GMT).

Mohammad Nafi Takor, the Taliban spokesman for the interior ministry, could not provide more details, and Taliban security men cordoned off the area. The source of the explosion was not immediately known, and no one claimed responsibility for the blast.

One man, who was inside the mosque, told Reuters a huge explosion tore through the building during prayers, burning his feet and hands. Mohammad Sabir, a resident in the area, said he had seen people being loaded into ambulances after the explosion.

However, the recent blasts have been claimed by ISIS.

Afghanistan's Taliban rulers have said that they have secured the country since taking power last August and essentially eliminated the ISIS's local offshoot. However, international officials and analysts said the risk of a resurgence in attacks remains. ► Page 5



© File photo

TEHRAN— Kylie Moore-Gilbert, an Israeli spy of Australian origin who was mercifully released before serving her sentence in Iran in November 2020, has remained in contact with Western intelligence establishments and is continuing her troubling destructive anti-Iran operations in Australia.

Being a researcher and visiting conferences and universities to develop relationships with scholars from targeted countries is an old spy-craft used by intelligence organizations.

Moreover, many publications in Western media outlets have narrated the story of espionage while posing as a scholar. In a 2017

editorial by Daniel Golden in the age-old British daily newspaper, The Guardian, for example, exposed how espionage organizations frequently deploy spies to academic conferences in order to persuade nuclear scientists from nations such as Iran to leak information or be recruited. ► Page 2

Venezuela starts shipping in Iran's heavy crude oil for refining

TEHRAN - Venezuela has begun shipping in heavy crude oil from Iran to use as feedstock in domestic refineries, Reuters reported on Monday citing documents from Venezuela's state-run oil company PDVSA.

The import of Iranian heavy crude is going to expand the two country's energy cooperation as the two U.S.-sanctioned nations have

already agreed on swapping Iran's gas condensate for Venezuela's crude oil.

The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) last year reached a deal with PDVSA to swap Venezuelan crude for Iranian condensate, which PDVSA would also use as a diluent and mix it with the tar-like crudes from the Orinoco oil belt for transportation and export.

Iran's heavy crude, which is similar in quality to Venezuela's Mesa 30 crude, is set to augment domestic oil fed to PDVSA's refineries, according to the documents.

As part of the cooperation pacts, Venezuela in recent years has received Iranian equipment to revamp its refineries. The 146,000-barrel-per-day ► Page 4

Charity builds 150 schools nationwide

TEHRAN – Barekat Charity Foundation, affiliated with the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, inaugurated 150 schools across the country on Tuesday, IRIB reported.

"We have so far built 1,800 schools for the deprived, and some 150 with 665 classrooms began operation today," Mohammad Torkamaneh, the CEO of Barekat Foundation said.

The foundation is committed to building 2,700 schools with 14,000 classrooms.

Some 3,750 villages across the country are covered by the Barekat Foundation's school-building activities, he added.

According to Torkamaneh, there are currently 250,000 students in Barekat schools.

The actions of the executive staff of the Foundation in the field of economy and employment have led to 200,000 economic projects and 600,000 job opportunities, and deprived areas have grown. ► Page 7



© ISNA / Amir Obeidawi

Wheat production less than forecast

Little precipitation in the southwestern Khuzestan province has decreased the volume of wheat crop which is being harvested in Hamidieh county.

Wheat yield in Hamidieh county is expected to stand at 85,000 tons this year.

ECO ministers, envoys inaugurate "Sari 2022" in northern Iran

TEHRAN – On Tuesday, tourism ministers and representatives from the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) came together in Sari to officially name the northern Iranian city as the tourism capital of ECO member countries in 2022.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by officials and diplomats from Pakistan, Af-

ghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, The Young Journalists Club reported.

Addressing the ceremony, Iranian tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami urged the need for the development of tourism between member states, saying a proposal is to pro-

mote cheap overland travel.

"A way to promote tourism between ECO member countries is to encourage cheap overland travel," Zarghami said.

Sari, the capital of Mazandaran province, was selected as the tourism capital of ECO during the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, preceded by the 5th ► Page 6

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Interview

Swimming coach Hazrati not happy with Asian Games' postponement

By Farrok Hesabi

TEHRAN – Head coach of Iran men's national swimming team, Khashayar Hazrati, says that the postponement of the 2022 Asian Games has massively changed the planning and the goals of the team.

The 2022 Asian Games, scheduled to take place in the Chinese city of Hangzhou in September, have been postponed until 2023 because of the Covid-19 situation in the host country.

"After the final phase of the Iranian swimming league, the national swimmers rested for a while and then we started training camps to prepare for the 2022 Asian Games," Hazrati said in his interview with Tehran Times.

"We also have the FINA World Championships in Budapest next month and two swimmers will be sent to this tournament.

"Our main plans were for the 2022 Islamic Solidarity Games and the 2022 Asian Games. However, with the postponement of the Hangzhou Games, we have to change our plans a little and make the Islamic Solidarity Games the final target for the current year.

"I hope we will not face the cancellation and postponement of the Islamic Solidarity Games again this year so that we can plan for the competitions. Athletes should have enough motivation to practice and continue progress in their training process," he added. ► Page 3

President Raisi kicks off 33rd Tehran International Book Fair

TEHRAN – On Tuesday evening President Ebrahim Raisi inaugurated the first in-person edition of the Tehran International Book Fair after two years of lockdowns caused by the outbreak of COVID-19.

"With Reading, We Feel Healthy" is the motto of the 33rd edition of the book fair, which will be running through May 21 at Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

In addition, a virtual edition of the event can be found on ketab.ir.

170 publishers from 32 countries, including Switzerland, India, Hong Kong, Germany, USA, Italy, China and Russia, are participating in the book fair, which is hosting Qatar as its special guest.

"Due to its close cultural relationship with Iran, Qatar was selected as the fair's special guest, and this exhibition will be a promising beginning of closer cultural collaborations with the country in the future," Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaili, said. ► Page 8

No Country for Spies - Part Four

from page 1 ► Gilbert was gathering information about Bahraini Shiites in Iran in 2018 on behalf of an Israeli regime intelligence entity under the guise of operating a scholar initiative. She was arrested in September 2018 at Tehran airport after being noticed by Iranian counterintelligence. Gilbert was arrested while she was leaving the country after attending numerous conferences and university meetings as a scholar.

The Australian-British spy served two years of her ten-year sentence before being exchanged for three Iranian businesspeople jailed abroad. The posture of U.S. officials at the time, such as David Hale in the Department of State, in the swap process, according to a source, was “totally neutral.”

“Many efforts were made to urge the U.S. to take a stand on the Gilbert’s exchange issue, but the U.S. officials in authority showed no support,” the source elaborated.

Aside from undertaking espionage activities, Tel Aviv has attempted to establish security relationships with various agencies and join numerous security agreements in recent decades to cover up its military-security gaps.

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid of the Israeli regime has opened the door to further security connections with Australia and the Five Eyes spying network. In an interview with The Sydney Morning Herald, Lapid stated that the Israel already had extensive ties with Five Eyes nations, including an “incredibly close intelligence-sharing and security partnership with our closest ally, the United States,” but that it would seek to deepen those relationships.

“We’re focused on deepening these ties under their existing frameworks and accords, and we’d evaluate any other alternatives for increasing these ties if they presented themselves,” he said during the interview.

The Five Eyes (FVEY) is an intelligence partnership made up of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Israeli regime has long been a prospective member of the Five Eyes and has participated with the alliance, while not being a formal member.

UN official probing detrimental effects of sanctions in Iran

TEHRAN- Kazem Gharibabadi, Secretary of the Judiciary’s Human Rights Council and Deputy Judiciary Chief for International Affairs, has stated that the mission of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, Alena Douhan, is simply to investigate the effects of sanctions on Iran and she has no mission to investigate other issues.

Gharibabadi already explained the UN Special Rapporteur’s visit to Iran, saying, “The Special Rapporteur’s visit is an opportunity to get acquainted with the destructive impacts of sanctions on the Iranian people.”

“Countries under sanctions should use all available capacities to hold accountable the perpetrators of unilateral sanctions,” he pointed out.

The human rights chief went on to say that the UN Special Rapporteur will focus on unilateral anti-Iran sanctions and their impact during her tour, which began on May 7 and will run for more than a week.

He clarified that Douhan is not in charge of any other investigation.

According to an informed source, Kylie Gilbert, now 35, has kept its prior contacts and has been activating some new routes to resume her profession as a spy this time by gathering information on Iranian descents in Australia.

“This time, Dr. Kylie Moore-Gilbert is looking at Melbourne University’s history of working with Iranians, notably the Engineering Department, to uncover suitable figures,” an insider told the Tehran Times.

Gilbert is also believed to be attempting to contact various politicians in order to get more so-called “scholar initiatives”. She has also conducted other unrelated research projects in which she has no experience, such as writing on general issues and doing business in African countries.

Concerning her financial issues and maintaining herself in the spotlight, Gilbert published a novel titled “Uncaged Sky” to construct an exaggerated gloomy story of its unfinished days in Iran’s prison, as well as to cover up her illegal activities in many locations throughout Iran.

The Tehran Times has learned that a lecturer at the University of Melbourne was arranged to have her work published by a publisher other than Ultimo Press. It was agreed that the author’s revenue would be traditionally 10% of the recommended retail price, and that the author’s income from a commercial TV interview would range between \$20,000 and \$150,000. Furthermore, it was projected that the book would sell roughly 75,000 copies; so, it is clear that producing a so-called memoir would be a very profitable career. In particular, as a rejected insolvent individual.

Finally, the brevity of this array of concerns surrounding the story of this spy, as well as other incidents, draws attention to the fact that Iran’s adversaries do not always win their battles, but they do not give up fighting. Dr. Kylie Moore-Gilbert, a young Australian-British woman, is no exception. Rumi, the famed Islamic philosopher and poet, has a brilliant Persian adage that states, “You are what you are seeking for.”

The visit of Douhan to Iran has been approved by the top decision-making bodies of the establishment, according to Gharibabadi.

“The High Council for Human Rights is not limited to one branch of the government and its main members are from all three branches. The council has been tasked with coordinating the visit,” Gharibabadi explained.

Reportedly, the rapporteur is meeting with officials from state institutions, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations to assess the impact of anti-Iran sanctions.

Some media outlets have questioned the rationality of her visit, claiming that Douhan’s reports on the impact of sanctions on Venezuela and Syria have failed to yield meaningful outcomes.

The Special Rapporteur’s method for investigating the detrimental effects of unilateral coercive measures on individual enjoyment of human rights was endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in a resolution in 2014. Every year, Western countries vote against this resolution.

two peoples, rooted in the region’s ancient history and culture.”

Pointing out that cultural and civilizational commonalities, and common national and religious traditions are huge assets that form the basis of mutual relations, Raisi stated that during thirty years of diplomatic relations, Iran has made serious efforts to develop relations between the two countries.

“The relations between the two countries and the two nations cover a wide range of issues, the result of

which is the signing of more than 120 cooperation documents at different levels of the country, province, inter-institutional, and public and private sectors,” he stated.

Also, in his congratulatory message to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the people of Uzbekistan, the Iranian president stated that the country’s independence and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992 provided an opportunity to re-establish and expand long-standing ties.

FM criticizes Turkey, Afghanistan over water rights

Iran’s water rights from Helmand River one of the key elements in recognizing Taliban, Amir Abdollahian says



has not yet pursued the issue of Turkish dam construction through international bodies, the top diplomat said if the Turkish government was a party to the 1997 New York Convention, Iran could have complained against the Turkish government in various international organizations.

“Because Turkey is not a party to this convention, we have to pursue the issue through dialogue and bilateral negotiations,” Amir Abdollahian explained.

Referring to the visit of a delegation from the Foreign Ministry and experts from the Energy Ministry to Turkey in the form of a joint water border committee, Amir Abdollahian said fruitful talks took place during the visit and a delegation from Turkey will visit Iran soon.

“The necessary political and diplomatic steps have been taken between Iran and Turkey on this issue, and I thank you and the representatives for paying attention to this issue,” the top diplomat noted.

Amir Abdollahian highlights dissatisfaction with interim Taliban governing body

Elsewhere in his remarks at the open session of the parliament, Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian responded to the query of the Zabol MP regarding Iran’s water rights from the Helmand River.

“We are not satisfied with the interim governing body of Afghanistan on the

issue of Helmand River water rights, but the positive part that happened is that we were able to institutionalize this issue in diplomatic negotiations through negotiations and agreements we had with officials and the head of the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We institutionalized the fact that they must respect the right of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the issue of Helmand River,” the foreign minister said.

The foreign minister stated that the positive point is that with the efforts made part of the body of water in Kamal Khan Dam was released and many efforts were made in this regard.

“Of course, stonewalling was carried out in this regard in Afghanistan, but at the end they have agreed that they should give our water rights,” Amir Abdollahian added.

He added that when the Kamal Khan Dam was full of water, Iran asked the Taliban governing body to open the valves and release the water.

“Afghanistan said that if we open the gates, the water would be reversed and our turbines would have problems due to the lack of dredging. We said that we were ready to assist them technically for dredging, and even the government instructed the relevant departments in the Ministry of Energy to provide them with our facilities for dredging as soon as possible and to act. Nevertheless, the Afghan side said that we need \$3 million, and if you give it to us, we

have companies that are dredging this route,” he said, adding that eventually, with much follow-up and pressure on the interim Afghan governing body part of this dam was opened, although Iran did not receive much.

The foreign minister stated that one of the criteria and prerequisites for Iran to recognize the interim governing body in Afghanistan is whether they will act honestly in the matter of Helmand River water rights in accordance with the 1973 agreement or not. This is one of the indicators of how to interact with this interim governing body in the future.

“Now one of the seasons of the water year is coming to an end, but we hope that with the efforts that are being made, we will not face any problems in the rest of the water year. Two weeks ago, in a phone call with the acting foreign minister Afghanistan, I said that our experts are going to visit the river upstream of the Kajaki Dam to see what the water reduction index is in the upstream parts of the dam. So far, the interim Afghan government has not provided any practical assistance, but the acting Afghan foreign minister has promised to allow the visit in less than a few weeks,” he added, criticizing the interim Taliban governing body.

The foreign minister stated that therefore he hopes that the Afghan side understands the sensitivities, concerns and seriousness of the Islamic Republic of Iran in this concerning time and acts seriously and show commitment to what it has accepted based on the 1973 agreement and other existing agreements.

“The subject of the Helmand Agreement and the 1973 Agreement is an internationally registered international agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan, and we are pleased that the interim governing body of Afghanistan has a clear understanding of this issue. One of our main issues with the Afghan side in the field of national interests is water. The issue of Iran’s water rights is one of the examples of how Iran interacts with the interim governing body of Afghanistan, which will play a decisive role in strategic policies on this issue,” he cautioned.

Iran, Qatar hold joint political committee session

TEHRAN — Iran and Qatar held their first meeting of the joint political committee in Tehran on Tuesday.

Iran’s ambassador to Doha announced the holding of the meeting on Monday.

Writing on his Twitter page, Hamidreza Dehghani stated, “After the signing of a joint political cooperation document between the foreign ministries of Iran and Qatar during the Iranian president’s recent visit to Doha, tomorrow the first meeting of the joint political committee chaired by Dr. Ali Bagheri, Political Deputy of the Foreign



Minister and Dr. Ahmad Hassan al-Hamaadi, Secretary General of the Qatari Foreign Ministry will be held in Tehran.”

According to recent reports, the Emir of Qatar is

FM says Iran to continue backing Syria in terror fight

minister wrote on his Twitter post.

“Tehran and Damascus are determined to enhance our bilateral relationship with triumph of Syria’s resistance,” he added.

“We’ll continue to stand with Syria in fight against terrorism and extremism,” Amir Abdollahian pointed out.

On Sunday morning, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi met separately with President Assad in Tehran.

Following the meetings, the Syrian president left the country.

This was Assad’s second trip to Iran since the Arab country became embroiled in a conflict with terrorist

groups in 2011. He last visited the country in February 2019, after the terrorist Takfiri groups were defeated and relative normalcy was restored.

President Assad was joined on his earlier trip to Iran by martyr General Qassem Soleimani, who oversaw Iran’s advisory military involvement in Syria focused at combating terrorist organizations.

Raisi felicitates 30th year of diplomatic ties with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan

TEHRAN — In separate messages to the respective presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan issued on Tuesday, Iran’s President Ebrahim Raisi felicitated the 30th year of establishing diplomatic relations between Iran and the Republics of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

In his congratulatory message to Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov, Raisi wrote, “The declaration of independence of the Kyrgyz Republic has ushered in a new phase in the long-standing relations between the

two peoples, rooted in the region’s ancient history and culture.”

Pointing out that cultural and civilizational commonalities, and common national and religious traditions are huge assets that form the basis of mutual relations, Raisi stated that during thirty years of diplomatic relations, Iran has made serious efforts to develop relations between the two countries.

“The relations between the two countries and the two nations cover a wide range of issues, the result of

which is the signing of more than 120 cooperation documents at different levels of the country, province, inter-institutional, and public and private sectors,” he stated.

Also, in his congratulatory message to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the people of Uzbekistan, the Iranian president stated that the country’s independence and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992 provided an opportunity to re-establish and expand long-standing ties.

“Fortunately, since the establishment of relations between the two countries, the efforts of the two sides have led to political exchanges at the highest levels, the expansion of trade and economic relations, and the strengthening of human and cultural ties between the two friendly and brotherly countries,” he wrote.

Raisi continued, “I believe that the two countries should try to remove the obstacles in the relations between the two countries, especially in the fields of trade, economy and

tourism, with a result-oriented view, while providing the necessary legal infrastructure and structures.”

The president said holding regular joint economic, cultural, scientific and technological cooperation committees, holding special exhibitions, drafting trade cooperation agreements, revoking visa system and easy travel of citizens based on the interests and welfare of the two nations are ways to cement relations between the two countries.



What to expect from Mora visit to Tehran?

TEHRAN – The European Union's coordinator for the Vienna talks arrived in Tehran on Tuesday for talks over how to proceed with the Vienna negotiations after a two-month break raised alarm bells about the possible failure of the stalled talks.

Enrique Mora's visit comes as the EU foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, is pushing for resuming the Vienna talks over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as soon as possible.

He said the current stalemate cannot continue. "We cannot continue like this forever," he said.

In a bid to get the talks going again, the EU foreign policy chief said he was dispatching Mora to Tehran in what he described as a "last bullet" push. In remarks to the Financial Times, Borrell said he is pushing for a "middle way" on the U.S. designation of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a foreign terrorist organization.

In the last round of the Vienna talks which was concluded nearly two months ago, Iran demanded that the United States remove the IRGC from its terrorist list, among other things. The U.S. refused the Iranian demands and the talks ground to a halt.

Borrell said the EU is going to strive for a middle ground on the IRGC designation. Borrell is considering a scenario whereby the designation on the guards is lifted, but kept in place



on other parts of the organization, according to the Financial Times.

In Tehran, Mora is expected to present a new initiative to break the deadlock over the IRGC issue. Qatari newspaper Al-Araby Al-Jadeed has said Mora was about to visit Tehran a few weeks ago, but the latter did not show enough desire to complete the visit, "because it did not bring anything new in response to Iranian demands regarding the remaining issues."

Citing Iranian sources, the paper added that the approval of Mora's visit "came after a European talk about the existence of what could be considered a U.S.-European initiative to push the negotiations towards resolving the remaining issues."

According to Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, Iran is seeking to push the negotiations forward and move the stagnant waters to reach a strong agreement, and it has agreed to the visit with this motive.

They said that the EU coordinator will stay in Tehran until Friday, and during the days of the visit, he will engage in intensive rounds of negotiations with the chief Iranian negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, in addition to other meetings with Iranian officials including Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said on Tuesday that Iran is moving ahead with the Vienna talks to remove "the cruel sanctions" and Mora's visit is in line with that objective.

Nour News, a media outlet close to the SNSC, has said that the visit can be a step forward, noting that reaching a deal is still possible. "Reaching a strong, lasting, and reliable agreement is possible but requires realism on the part of Washington and learning lessons from the mistakes that created today's complicated

circumstances," it said.

But the success of the Mora visit will be determined to a large extent by what he bring forward during his stint in Tehran. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said this week that Mora's main task will be to convey messages between Iran and other negotiating partners.

One message would almost certainly be the offer Borrell has made on the IRGC. But this offer, which seems short of fully meeting Iran's demand, is unlikely to lead to a breakthrough in the talks. Khatibzadeh implied that in his recent presser.

Underlining Iran's commitment to concluding the talks, the spokesman said, "If America gives back to us what it took from us and accepts the Iranian nation's trampled rights, we can sign the deal the day after Mora returns to Vienna. Mora's visit will bring these talks back on the right track."

Whether Mora would succeed in his efforts to break the ice remains an open question. Over the last two months, he has been in close contact with Iranian chief nuclear negotiator Bagheri Kani. Therefore, there must have been something important that required him to travel to Tehran in person. Mora's schedule includes a meeting with Bagheri Kani. But he also requested meetings with officials outside the foreign ministry, possibly Shamkhani. As of this writing, it's not clear yet if Mora would meet officials other than Bagheri Kani.

Iran president to visit Oman, UAE: report

TEHRAN – A Qatari-owned newspaper has reported that Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi is planning to visit Oman soon and the United Arab Emirates at a proper time.

The report came after Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said Monday that President Raisi will pay a visit to a Persian Gulf Arab state without naming it.

Citing Iranian sources familiar with the matter, Al Araby Al Jadeed said the Iranian president has two Persian Gulf visits on his agenda. The visits include Oman and the United Arab Emirates, according to the sources.

The sources added that Raisi's visit to Muscat will take place "soon" in response to a previous invitation by Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said. Regarding the visit to the UAE, the Iranian sources said that Raisi has received invitations to visit Abu Dhabi, but the completion of this visit is not on the table at the present time, and it will take place "at an appropriate time."

After a visit by Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi to Doha last February, the Emir of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, is scheduled to visit Tehran soon, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman.

Khatibzadeh didn't disclose the date of the visit but the Qatari newspaper said the visit will take place on Thursday.

Last December, the President of the UAE, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, sent an official invitation to President Raisi to visit the UAE, which was conveyed by the Emirati National Security

Adviser, Tahnoun bin Zayed, to the Iranian President during his visit to Tehran in the same month.

The Iranian sources told Al Araby Al Jadeed that the Emirati side repeated the invitation in other meetings, some of which were secret between the two parties. However, these sources confirmed that the completion of the visit is on the Iranian president's agenda "at the appropriate time."

The sources noted, "the Iranian side is not very enthusiastic to meet them at the present time because of the strange Emirati scramble for rapprochement with the Zionist entity."

The sources, who preferred not to be identified, explained that Iran, "through special channels, not recently sent warnings to Abu Dhabi about its unusual moves to strengthen relations with the Israeli entity and the dangers of this to the region's security and stability." They expressed regret that "the UAE, for considerations that do not serve the security of the region and its issues, is taking hasty and alarming steps towards rapprochement with this entity."

In earlier December, the bespectacled UAE National Security Adviser Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al-Nahyan visited Tehran after weeks of speculation about the date of the visit. He first met with Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and then Ayatollah Raisi.

The visit came against a backdrop of Emirati push to patch up ties with one-time rivals such as Qatar, Turkey, and Iran.

Emphasis on the need to develop economic ties stood out in Sheikh Tahnoun's meeting

with Shamkhani. "Warm and friendly relations with neighbors and the exchange of economic, trade, and investment capacities are the main priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of foreign policy," the top Iranian security official told his Emirati counterpart.

Shamkhani added, "The countries of the Persian Gulf, if they cooperate and work together, can play an important role in the regional and global economy while creating development and prosperity for their nations as an energy hub."

Sheikh Tahnoun, for his part, welcomed the proposal to strengthen economic ties with Iran. He described the economic potential of the two countries in the fields of transit, energy, transportation, health, and investment as very broad. He added, "It is necessary to identify and eliminate the obstacles ahead by forming specialized working groups while accurately enumerating the areas of joint cooperation in various economic fields."

During Sheikh Tahnoun's meeting with Ayatollah Raisi, the Iranian president appeared to warn about the "sinister goals" of Israel affecting ties between Iran and the UAE. "The Zionists in the region are pursuing their sinister goals and wherever they can find a foothold, they will turn it into a tool for expansionism; therefore, regional countries should be careful," Raisi said.

Ayatollah Raisi added, "The security of the countries of the region is intertwined and Iran supports the security of the Persian Gulf littoral states."

has always underlined the need to give assistance to those countries, send them relief aid and rebuild them.

Mardini noted that such aid should not be disrupted under the influence of political issues.

The ICRC chief also pointed to the presence of the organization's office in Syria and its provision of services in the country. Mardini announced readiness to expand cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran within the Astana format and on a bilateral basis to provide the people of Syria and Yemen with relief aid.

in recent years in North Sinai, where the Egyptian security forces are cracking down on militants linked to the Daesh group. For years, Egypt has been facing an escalation in the activities of extremist groups in North and Central Sinai.

Since February 2018, the Egyptian forces have launched a wide campaign against armed and extremist groups in the region, and in other parts of the country.

IRAN IN FOCUS

MAY 11, 2022

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Swimming coach Hazrati not happy with Asian Games' postponement

From Page 1 ► When asked about the financial situation of the Iranian swimming federation, Hazrati said: "In terms of financial condition, we are not in good situation at the moment. We were due to travel to Greece for a training camp, which was canceled for financial problems."

Speaking about the general condition of swimming in Iran, Hazrati expressed some positive points.

"In the last year, many records were set in different styles, which proved that a good movement and program has started since many years ago in Iranian swimming and it continues.

"I hope that the financial problems will be solved. Apart from the national team players, the athletes of the junior categories must also be able to have better facilities to get better results, and the progress of Iranian swimming must be faster than before," he concluded.

Persepolis midfielder Vahid Amiri to undergo back surgery

TEHRAN – Iran and Persepolis football team midfielder Vahid Amiri will undergo back surgery.

He suffered the injury on club duty on Monday.

Amiri is expected to need 3-to-4 months to make a full recovery on back surgery.

He will be a key player of Iran national football team in this year's World Cup, where Iran's first round opponents include England, the U.S and one of Ukraine, Wales or Scotland.

Iran into 2022 IFCPF Men's World Cup semis

TEHRAN – Iran defeated England 3-1 on Monday to book a place at the International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football (IFCPF) Men's World Cup semifinals.

Mehdi Bakhshi and Ehsan Masoumzadeh (two goals) scored for Iran in the match while Sam Dewhirst scored England's sole goal.

Iran started the campaign with a 2-2 draw against the U.S. and defeated 2-0 in Group C.

The Iranian team will meet powerhouse Brazil on Thursday.

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

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

Shahnaz Yari named Iraq's women futsal coach

TEHRAN – Ex-Iran futsal coach Shahnaz Yari has been named new head coach of Iraq's women futsal coach.

She will travel to Baghdad along with her assistants to finalize her deal.

Former Iran's men coach Mohammad Nazemosharia has been previously named head coach of Iraq's men team.

Yari will lead Iraqi team in the West Asian Championship in Saudi Arabia.

The U.S. defender Robinson likely to miss World Cup

TEHRAN – The U.S. football team defender Miles Robinson could miss 2022 FIFA World Cup.

He has suffered a ruptured Achilles on club duty at the weekend.

Robinson, who appeared 13 times for the U.S. in their 14-game CONCACAF final qualifying campaign, suffered the injury on Saturday while playing for Atlanta in the 4-1 win over Chicago.

Atlanta confirmed the injury in a statement, adding that Robinson will undergo surgery.

The 25-year-old has been a regular starter for US coach Gregg Berhalter since his elevation to the senior squad, and was expected to start during this year's World Cup alongside regular partner Walker Zimmerman.

Robinson's chances of now being fit for Qatar, where the USA's first round opponents include England and Iran, are now in jeopardy.

Persepolis forward Alekasir undergoes surgery

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team striker Issa Alekasir underwent knee surgery on Tuesday.

The 33-year-old forward suffered the injury in January and the MRI revealed the injury included a torn ACL.

Alekasir was supposed to undergo surgery in Doha, Qatar but changed his mind and underwent surgery in a hospital in Tehran, capital of Iran.

Persepolis sits second in Iran Professional League (IPL), six points behind Esteghlal.

Jamali comes 4th in IWF Junior World Championships

TEHRAN – Yekta Jamali of Iran finished in fourth place at the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Junior World Championships in Heraklion, Greece.

She was fourth with a personal best of 100-121-221, and she took silver in the snatch to complete a good year.

Jamali has won medals in all her three appearances at World Youth and Junior Championships in the past year, an impressive performance.

The gold medal went to Uzbekistan's Tursunoy Jabbarova with a total of 238kg.

Elizabeth Reyes finished second on 99-127-226 and Avery Owens of the US was third on 99-123-222.

Ramezani gives Esteghlal late win over Shahr Khodro: IPL

TEHRAN – Arman Ramezani netted an 88th-minute winner to give Esteghlal 1-0 victory over struggling Shahr Khodro in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Monday.

Ramezani came out the bench in the 75th minute and scored the winner with two minutes remaining in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Tractor earned a late 3-2 win over Havadar in Tabriz, Fajr Sepasi and Naft Masjed Soleyman shared the spoils in a goalless draw in Shiraz, Gol Gohar defeated Aluminum 2-0 in Sirjan, Nassaji lost to Mes 2-0 in Mashhad, Sepahan edged past Paykan 1-0 in Tehran, Foolad defeated Sanat Naft 1-0 in Khuzestan derby and Persepolis were held to a 1-1 draw against Zob Ahan.

With four weeks remaining, Esteghlal lead the table with 60 points, six points above Persepolis.

Iran denounces 'terrorist attack' on Egypt military

TEHRAN – Iranian has reacted to a recent deadly attack on the Egyptian military in the Sinai Peninsula that resulted in the death of more than ten Egyptian troops.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has condemned the recent terrorist attack on the Egyptian army in the Sinai that killed and wounded a number of military personnel, the Iranian foreign ministry said in a statement.

Khatibzadeh underlined that fighting the evil phenomenon of terrorism which has unfortunately expanded in the Muslim countries with help from some outside quarters calls for close cooperation among regional countries.

On Saturday, an Egyptian army officer and 10 soldiers were killed in a terrorist attack claimed by the Daesh terrorist group, the most remarkable attack in years. It was is one of the most violent attacks

humanitarian situation of the Yemen people. Khaji said now given that a countrywide truce is holding in Yemen, the ground has been paved for the removal of the siege of Yemenis, giving them aid, transferring patients to foreign countries via the Sana'a Airport and exchanging prisoners.

He added that it is appropriate that the ICRC and other international organizations pioneer in this regard.

In the meeting, the ICRC's director general also said, despite the sanctions against the people of Yemen and Syria, the organization

foreign minister underlined that the political and security situation in Syria has improved compared to the past but the pressure of sanctions and economic problems continues to afflict people.

Khaji added that for this reason, the international bodies, particularly the ICRC, should pioneer in removing the sanctions and implementing UN Security Council resolution 2585 on the reconstruction of Syria's infrastructure and they should step up their efforts to this end.

He also spoke about the complicated

Monthly export from Golestan province increases 53% yr/yr

TEHRAN- The value of export from Golestan province, in the northeast of Iran, rose 53 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21- April 20), as compared to the same month in the previous year, a provincial official announced.

Ebrahim Hosseini, the head of the province's customs department, said that over 35,565 tons of commodities worth \$17,636 million were exported from the province in the first month.

He named iodine, cheese, polystyrene, cement, ceramics and tiles, as well as iron products as the main exported items, and Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Iraq, and Afghanistan as the major export destinations.

Hosseini further announced that about 1,254 tons of products worth \$1,448 million were imported to the province through Incheboron customs in the first month.

He said that raw materials, fabrics and soybean oil were the main goods imported to Golestan in the first month of this year, and Turkey, Turkmenistan, China, India and Kazakhstan were the major sources of imports.

As previously announced by the official, the value of export from Golestan province rose 63 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), from its preceding year.

New greenhouse estates to be set up in Gilan province



TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, five new greenhouse estates will be established in 180 hectares of land in Gilan province, in the north of Iran.

Mokhtar Mehdizadeh, the director of the province's Greenhouse Estates, said that the new greenhouse estates will be set up in Siahkal, Masal, Shaft, Rezvanshahr, and Anzali counties.

In these estates, different types of vegetables, ornamental flowers, apartment flowers and cut branches of flowers, medicinal plants and special shaped fruits will be cultivated, he said.

He further announced that 14 investors have signed contracts in this due in the mentioned counties, adding that the infrastructures are currently being set up to build the greenhouses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Due to the growing need of the market for

Hosseini said that over 402,000 tons of commodities worth \$183.6 million were exported from the province in the previous year, indicating also 51 percent growth in terms of weight.

He named polystyrene, dairy products, dates, pistachios, cement, ceramic and tiles, and tomato paste as the major exported products, and Kazakhstan, Iraq, Turkmenistan, Bulgaria, Afghanistan and Romania as the main export destinations.

The deputy head of Islamic Republic of Iran's Customs Administration (IRICA) has announced that the value of Iran's export of non-oil products has increased 25 percent in the first month of the current year, as compared to the same month of the past year.

Foroud Asgari also said that the country's non-oil trade with other countries registered a \$875-million positive balance in the first month.

Iran exported 7,324 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$3,699 billion in the said month, with 10 percent drop in weight as compared to the first moth of the previous year, the official stated.

The country's monthly non-oil import stood at 2,252 million tons worth \$2,824 billion, with one percent rise in value and 10 percent growth in weight year on year, he added.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Petchem revenues expected to increase 17% by Mar. 2023

TEHRAN - National Petrochemical Company (NPC)'s Director of Planning and Development Hassan Abbaszadeh said the annual revenues of the country's petrochemical sector is expected to increase 17 percent to reach \$27 billion in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2023), Shana reported.

Speaking in a meeting of the managing directors of the country's major petrochemical holdings on Tuesday, Abbaszadeh put the country's current petrochemical production capacity at 90 million tons, saying that Iran accounts for about 30 percent of the West Asia's total installed petrochemical capacity and three percent of the world's total output.

According to the official, the total capacity of Iran's petrochemical industry will double by the end of the country's eighth National Development Plan (2026-2030).

Abasszadeh mentioned the NPC's long-term programs for



the development of the industry, saying: "We have a strategic plan for the next 10 years based on which in the seventh National Development Plan (2022-2026), 68 projects with a total investment of \$35 billion and a capacity of 50 million tons will be implemented."

The official put the average

progress of the mentioned 68 projects at 30 percent and said: "Nine billion dollars have been spent so far and the sources for the rest of the required investment are also determined."

"In the eighth [national development] plan, we have defined 37 projects that require \$40 billion in investment and

58 million tons will be added to the country's petrochemical production capacity," he added.

The capacity of the country's petrochemical production will reach 200 million tons by the Iranian calendar year 1411 (begins in March 2031), the official noted.

Emphasizing that in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), about 48 million tons of feed equivalent to one million barrels of crude oil per day were received by the country's petrochemical plants, from which 65 million tons of products were produced.

The petrochemical industry plays a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, as the petrochemical export is the second-largest source of revenue for the country after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already constitute nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

Venezuela starts shipping in Iran's heavy crude oil for refining



From page 1 ► El Palito refinery is restarting a crude distillation unit this week after extensive repairs and upgrading that relied on equipment imported from Iran.

Iran's Oil Minister Javad Oji traveled to

Venezuela last week to meet President Nicolas Maduro and discuss trade agreements with his counterpart, Tareck El Aissami.

At least 200,000 barrels of Iranian heavy crude were delivered in mid-April to the 310,000-bpd Cardon refinery, Venezuela's second largest. Another 400,000-barrels of Iranian oil, which arrived on the very large crude carrier (VLCC) Dino I, is discharging this week at the country's Jose port, the PDVSA documents showed.

The Dino I is scheduled to set sail later this month carrying Venezuela fuel oil for NIOC unit Naftiran Intertrade Co, according to one of the documents.

The Islamic Republi also continues supplying PDVSA with condensate. Venezuela-owned tanker Maximo Gorki is set to discharge some two million barrels of condensate at Jose, and Iran-flagged Derya is in Venezuelan waters waiting to deliver its cargo, service TankerTrackers.com said.

As its oil output becomes heavier, Venezuela struggles to source medium and light grades for its refineries, contributing to limited production and intermittent scarcity of motor fuels.

The South American country also increasingly needs lighter crudes or refined products to turn its extra heavy oil output into exportable grades.

Iran eyes increasing exports to Lebanon



TEHRAN - Iranian Deputy Labor, Cooperatives and Social Welfare Minister for International Affairs Hamed Forouzan has said his ministry is ready to promote trade relations with Lebanon and boost exports to the country.

Forouzan made the remarks on Monday in a meeting with Director-General of Lebanon's Ministry of Social Affairs Abdallah Ahmad and a representative of Jihad al-Bana development foundation Mohammad Al-Hajj, IRIB reported.

During the meeting, Forouzan pointed to the longstanding history of relations between Iran and Lebanon and the high level of economic and political cooperation

between the two countries and voiced his ministry's readiness to develop any kind of trade cooperation with neighboring Lebanon.

Underlining the high capacities and potentials of the Iranian Labor Ministry and the country's economic centers, he said that his ministry is ready to transfer technical know-how and experience to the Lebanese government in the fields of welfare, technical and vocational, insurance, and services to retirees,

as well as export of digital services of knowledge-based companies.

Setting up a joint business center in Beirut is also being seriously pursued by the Iranian Ministry of Labor, Cooperatives and Social Welfare, the official emphasized.

Ahmed, for his part, stated that Iran's brilliant experiences in various areas can help Lebanon boost its economy as well as the removal of social challenges facing the country.

10-fold exports to Sri Lanka on the agenda

TEHRAN - Chairman of the Iran-Sri Lanka Joint Trade Committee has said that plans are underway for the 10-time increase of the Islamic Republic's trade with Sri Lanka, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

"Following a detailed plan, a 10-fold expansion of trade with Sri Lanka will be on the committee's agenda," Mehrzad Limouchi said in the first meeting of the Iran-Sri Lanka Joint Trade Committee held at the place of ICCIMA on Monday.

As reported, the meeting was attended by ICCIMA board members as well as the members of the Iran-Sri Lanka Joint Trade Committee.

Speaking in the gathering, Farzad Mehrani, the acting head of the ICCIMA international affairs office mentioned facilitating trade

and pursuing the removal of trade barriers as the most important goals of forming the above-mentioned committee.

The official noted that the ICCIMA has great capacities to help businessmen, and the Iran-Sri Lanka Joint Trade Committee, as an advisory network, is part of those capacities, and the private sector can use it to solve their business problems.

Iran's annual non-oil exports to Sri Lanka stood at about \$50 Million in 2018 before the U.S. re-imposed sanctions on Tehran, according to the United Nations COMTRADE database on international trade.

Iran's major exports to Sri Lanka include crude oil, iron and steel bars, bitumen, white cement, metallic products, and many petrochemical items, while Sri Lanka's major exports to Iran include tea, can tops, dried and fresh coconuts, cacao and various types



of paper and cardboard stickers.

Back in December 2021, Iran and Sri Lanka signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) based on which Sri Lanka would settle \$251 million in oil import dues owed to Iran by bartering tea.

The agreement was inked by Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman Pak and Sri Lanka Minister of Plantation Ramesh Pathirana in Colombo.

220 fish farms active in Ilam province



TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 220 fish farms are active in Ilam province, in the west of Iran.

Reza Soleymani, the director-

general of the province's Fisheries Department, said that these farms breed over 10,000 tons of cold-water and warm-water fishes.

Some noticeable part of the produced fishery is consumed inside the province, and nearly 4,000 tons, which is surplus, is exported to Iraq, he added.

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

the current Iranian calendar year 1400 (started on March 21).

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

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

Fishery production has increased noticeably in Iran in recent years.

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

A challenge called ISIS to the Taliban government

From page 1 ► Many of the attacks have targeted the Shia religious minority. Sunni mosques have also been attacked.

Bombs exploded on two passenger vans carrying Shia Muslims in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif on April 28, killing at least nine people. On April 22, a blast tore through a Sunni mosque during Friday prayers in Kunduz, killing 33 people.

Afghanistan's people have expressed concerns that the country will not find peace anytime soon due to repeated attacks by ISIS.

The ISIS group has been threatening and attacking Afghan people and the newly established Taliban government to destabilize it.

Several strategies are being used to destabilize and discredit the Taliban government.

By carrying out terrorist attacks, ISIS intends to demonstrate that its methods and principles differ from the Taliban's. In its role as a force outside of Afghanistan, ISIS has attempted to recruit members from the Taliban, who appear dissatisfied with the Taliban's current policies. ISIS accuses Taliban leaders of collaborating and colluding with the United States, claiming that Taliban leaders have rejected their invitation to establish a global caliphate.

Security experts believe that by carrying out suicide and bombing operations among civilians, ISIS intends to discredit the Taliban's rule in any way possible. ISIS leaders call the Taliban dirty nationalists who always try to portray the Taliban leaders as weak.



According to the Taliban, ISIS is one of the two internal challenges of their new government. The other is the National Resistance Front.

Since U.S. forces and its European allies left Afghanistan, ISIS's weekly magazine (Al-Naba) has written extensively to ridicule the Taliban victory. In their writings, they claim that the Taliban have deviated from the path of jihad.

"If the Taliban do not show more engagement with Afghan society, ISIS will also have more opportunities to propagate against the Taliban, leading to more movement by the group against the Taliban," said Riccardo Vale, a researcher on extremist Islamism in Afghanistan.

According to media reports, those Taliban fighters who are skeptical of the peaceful decisions of the group's leaders are planning to achieve the main goals set by al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and Taliban founder Mullah Omar joined this group. They believe the Taliban leaders are puppets of Pa-

kistan and the United States in Afghanistan.

According to the report, most Afghan and non-Afghan elites believe that the newly formed Taliban government's efforts to cooperate with the international community, especially the United States, have provoked strong reactions among the group's fighters, leading to disgruntled members of the rival group to join ISIS.

Now that the Taliban have taken complete control in Afghanistan after twenty years, the group has gone from being an offensive actor to a defending one. They must take serious and effective counter-terrorism measures to protect metropolises such as Kabul from the threats of ISIS. However, the critical question is whether they can do so or not. Will the Americans resume their drone strikes against ISIS?

Taliban leaders have recently stated that the Americans do not have the right to send drones into Afghanistan from airspace under the pretext of terrorism; otherwise, they will react. How-

ever, as the situation worsens, will it be possible to ask for help, or will the Taliban themselves will nullify terrorist threats by rival groups?

If the answer is no, who will be able to prevent ISIS attacks in the future? Because the Taliban have neither the power of airstrike nor do they have aircraft.

Another issue is that if the Taliban can provide security and a new level of cooperation between the United States and their government, this could create new ranks of disaffected Taliban forces in ISIS. The Pentagon has previously said it had provided intelligence and intelligence assistance to the Taliban to fight ISIS.

This will be an essential issue for the newly established Taliban government. According to the Washington Post, other jihadist groups, including al-Qaeda, have reportedly examined the Taliban's way of governing. The group's leaders monitor the Taliban's way of governing to see if the Taliban have backed down from its principles and norms. The Taliban leaders are waiting to see if their position towards minorities, especially the Shiite community, has changed!

The issues raised above could empty the ranks of the Taliban of its supporters and, this time, end in favor of ISIS.

The question remains for the elites and the people of Afghanistan whether this group can save Afghanistan from terrorism or, this time, they will fall victim to terrorism!

** Said Maisam Moosavi is an Afghan political expert and PhD candidate in regional studies at Tehran University.*

Sri Lanka gives emergency powers to army, police after violence

The government authorizes military and police to arrest people without warrants a day after the deadly violence and the PM's resignation.

Sri Lanka has granted its military and police emergency powers to arrest people without warrants after a day of violence that killed seven people and injured more than 200 and resulted in the resignation of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, the older brother of sitting President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

As the Indian Ocean nation battles its worst economic crisis in history, thousands of protesters defied an islandwide curfew until 7am on Wednesday to continue protesting.

Shortages of fuel, food and medicine brought thousands onto the streets in more than a month of protests that had been mostly peaceful until this week.

Some reports surfaced of angry protesters attacking politicians associated with the government late on Monday, setting fire to homes, shops and businesses they own.

The situation had largely calmed by Tuesday, barring reports of sporadic unrest, said police spokesman Nihal Thalduwa, adding that some 200 people had been injured on Monday.

Reporting from Colombo on Tuesday, Al Jazeera's Minelle Fernandez said: "There is a heavy military presence. On our way, we were stopped at multiple checkpoints manned by the air force, some by the army and the navy."

According to the latest decision, the military can detain people for up to 24 hours before handing them to the police, while any private property can be searched by forces,



the government said in a gazette notification on Tuesday.

"Any person arrested by a police officer shall be taken to the nearest police station," it said, fixing a 24-hour deadline for the armed forces to do the same.

'Who can monitor' possible abuses?

Some analysts expressed concern over the potential for abuse of the measures in a country that has already been under a state of emergency since Friday, announced by the president as protests escalated.

"In a situation where there is both a state of emergency and curfew, who can monitor to ensure these regulations are not abused?" said Bhavani Fonseka of the Centre for Policy Alternatives think-tank based in Colombo.

The violence on Monday that led to Mahinda Rajapaksa's resignation had happened in spite of the state of emergency

He spoke to hundreds of gathered supporters on Monday after initial, unconfirmed reports that he was considering stepping down.

After his remarks, many of them, armed with

iron bars, stormed a camp of anti-government protesters, beating them and setting fire to their tents.

Police used water cannon and tear gas to disperse the skirmishes, after having initially done little to hold back the government supporters, witnesses told the Reuters news agency.

No light at the end of the tunnel

Thousands streamed into the streets in celebration after Rajapaksa's resignation, but the mood quickly became tense.

Protesters attempted to tear down the gates of Temple Trees, his residence in the centre of Colombo, where broken glass and discarded footwear littered the surrounding streets on Tuesday, after some of the night's worst clashes.

Military personnel patrolled the area, where eight torched vehicles lay partially submerged in a lake. Discarded files and smashed equipment littered the ransacked offices of government officials.

Sri Lanka's unprecedented economic crisis follows the COVID pandemic, which hit key tourism earnings and left the government grappling with rising oil prices and the effects of populist tax cuts.

It has sought assistance from multilateral lenders such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as Asian giants India and China.

Former Finance Minister Ali Sabry, who resigned on Monday along with the rest of Rajapaksa's cabinet, has said useable foreign reserves stand at as little as \$50m.

crude.

Neftochim Burgas refinery, owned by Russia's LUKOIL, is the dominant fuel provider in the Balkan country, the poorest in the 27-member bloc. At present, half of the oil it processes comes from Russia.

Lack of an exemption would either pose serious environmental risks to the region of Burgas or force the oil refinery to decrease processing, which would create a deficit and further increase fuel prices, he said.

(Source: Reuters)

Bulgaria says will veto EU oil sanctions on Russia if it does not get derogation

Bulgaria will not support European Union's new set of sanctions against Russia if the Balkan country does not get a derogation from the proposed ban on buying Russian oil, Deputy Prime Minister Assen Vassilev said late on Sunday.

European Union governments moved closer on Sunday to agreeing to tough sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, but scheduled more talks for Monday to work out how to ensure countries most dependent on Russian energy can cope.

"The talks will continue to-

morrow, on Tuesday too, a meeting of the leaders may be needed to conclude them. Our position is very clear. If there be a derogation for some of the countries, we want to get a derogation too," Vassilev told national BNT television.

"If not, we will not support the sanctions. But I do not expect to get to that, based on the talks at the moment," he said.

Landlocked Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which all depend heavily on Russian crude delivered via Soviet-era pipelines face a challenge to secure alternative sources and

have asked for a derogation from the ban. Bulgaria has also requested a derogation.

The European Commission proposed changes on Friday to its initial planned embargo on Russian oil to give the three countries more time to shift their energy supplies, while Bulgaria was not offered concessions, EU sources said.

Vassilev said Bulgaria also needs to get a derogation, as its only refinery at the Black Sea port of Burgas needed time to upgrade its de-sulphurization facilities necessary to switch to processing only non-Russian

Macron: Humiliating Russia won't bring peace

From page 1 ► Under this new wider "political community", nations like Ukraine and even the United Kingdom could be included, Macron explained.

The French President whose country currently holds the EU's presidency says a new organization would try and achieve objectives beyond the scope of the EU.

"The European Union, given the level of its integration and ambition, cannot be in the short term the only means of structuring the European continent," he pointed out.

The initiative was immediately supported by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who was standing alongside the French President.

Vladimir Medinsky, the Russian chief negotiator says that peace talks with Ukraine had not stopped and were being held remotely.

Moscow has accused Kyiv of stalling the talks and using reports of atrocities committed by Russian troops in Ukraine to undermine the negotiations. Russia denies targeting civilians in what it calls its "special military operation".

Asked when-in-person talks might be held with Ukrainian negotiators, Medinsky said "we need more specifics on hand in order to meet in person."

Since March 29, Ukraine and Russia have not held face-to-face peace talks, but have been meeting via video conferences.

Last month, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned that there was a risk the peace process could collapse.

Russian President Vladimir Putin calls Moscow's actions a "special military operation" in the face of NATO's eastward expansion on Russian borders. Putin has also previously claimed the "special military operation" is designed to disarm Ukraine, defend Russian speakers from persecution and prevent the United States and its allies from using the country to threaten Russian security.

Ukraine dismisses Moscow's claims of persecution and denies any threat to Russia from Ukraine or Western countries.

Meanwhile, during his address at the Victory Day parade in Moscow's Red Square to mark Russia's victory over Germany in the Second World War, Putin said Russia's military operation in Ukraine was a preemptive move against future aggression.

Putin praised the achievement of the Soviet people during World War II and further addressed the Kremlin's reasons for the ongoing conflict between Moscow and Kyiv.

Putin insisted Russia had to act because of a security threat in the eastern Donbass region and added "we saw the military infrastructure unfolding [in Ukraine]; hundreds of foreign advisers starting their work; there were regular deliveries of the most modern weapons from NATO countries. The danger grew every day," the president explained.

"Russia gave a preemptive rebuff to aggression – this was a forced, timely, and the only right decision by a sovereign, strong and independent country," he added, referring to the launch of the military operation.

"Despite all the disagreements in international relations, Russia has always advocated the creation of a system of equal and indivisible security," Putin continued.

The Russian leader highlighted Moscow's attempts to engage in dialogue on security guarantees with Washington late last year, which the latter failed to address.

Experts say providing those guarantees could have, in essence, prevented a war, had the White House responded to reassure Russia and address its security concerns.

"NATO countries didn't want to hear us, which means that, in fact, they harbored completely different plans, and we saw it," Putin added.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Joe Biden has resurrected a World War II act to accelerate weapons shipments to Ukraine for its battle against Russian forces.

Weapons sent under this act are separate from the nearly \$4 billion in military aid that the U.S. has already sent to Ukraine since the start of Russia's military operation in February, and from the \$33 billion worth of military aid that the president recently asked Congress to approve.

He also signaled that he is ready to make a political concession in Congress to win quick approval of a request for another \$33 billion in funds to send more weapons to Ukraine.

Biden said he is ready to drop funding for the Covid-19 pandemic for Americans and just get the money for weapons to Ukraine through.

Some Democrats have expressed disappointment the COVID-19 aid would be considered separately.

Senior Senate Democrat Dick Durbin told reporters "It would have been so much better for us to protect the United States as well as worked to protect Ukraine."

Asked if separating Ukraine aid hurts prospects for COVID-19 aid, Durbin said, "It doesn't help. Putting those two together would have been positive."

The act, which passed Congress last month with 417-10 votes in the House and flew with flying colors in the Senate, suspends limitations on the number of weapons and other military supplies Biden can send to Ukraine or "other Eastern European countries".

However, it does stipulate that Kyiv must subsequently pay for whatever it receives. Kyiv's ability to later repay the U.S. has been under the spotlight, considering Zelensky had recently asked the U.S. and the EU for \$7 billion per month to keep the country's economy afloat.

Critics have accused the U.S. and its NATO allies of prolonging the war and suffering of Ukrainians by sending weapons, instead of backing the peace process to end the war.

Even the unprecedented sanctions imposed against Russia have been questioned as the measures have failed to end the conflict.

Experts argue Washington triggered the war and is trying to ensure the fighting stays at an impasse in a bit to confront Russia's rising economy and military strength as well as its growing ties with other EU nations.

Meanwhile, White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters that Biden was not happy with leaks to American news outlets in which U.S. intelligence took credit for helping Ukraine target a Russian ship and Russian generals in Ukraine.

"The president was displeased with the leaks... and he did not feel they were constructive," she said.

The American news reports do not indicate how many Russian generals had been killed in Ukraine using U.S. intelligence to locate their whereabouts.



ECO ministers, envoys inaugurate “Sari 2022” in northern Iran

page 1 ► High-Level Experts Group (HLEG) on tourism, which was held on October 3-4, 2019, in Khujand, Tajikistan.

“The main priority of Mazandaran is to attract international investors into the province,” Mazandaran’s Governor-General Seyyed Mahmoud Hosseinpour said on Tuesday.

“Sari 2022” is considered the best opportunity for cooperation between Iran and ECO member states and, given this opportunity, all potential can be used for the prosperity and branding in the field of tourism and economy.

Local officials believe Mazandaran, which is a top destination for domestic travelers, can be turned into a destination for foreign travelers as well through careful planning.

Sandwiched between the towering Alborz mountain range and the Caspian Sea, Mazandaran has a rich yet turbulent history. An early civilization flourished at the beginning of the first millennium BC in Mazandaran (Tabarestan).

Its insecure eastern and southeastern borders were crossed by Mongol invaders in the 13th and 14th centuries. Cossacks attacked the region in 1668 but were repulsed. It was ceded to the Russian Empire by a treaty in 1723, but the Russians were never secure in their occupation. The area was restored to Iran under the Qajar



dynasty.

The northern section of the region consists of lowland alongside the Caspian and upland along the northern slopes of the Alborz Mountains. Marshy backlands dominate the coastal plain, and extensive gravel fans fringe the mountains. The climate is permanently subtropical and humid, with very hot summers.

ECO is an intergovernmental regional organization encompassing countries from Europe, Caucuses and Central and West Asia, and South Asia with more than 460 million inhabitants and over 8 million square kilometers connecting Russia to the Persian Gulf and China to Europe. According to the organization, its overall objective is to materialize the sustainable economic development of its member states and the region as a whole.

Tehran’s Sacred Defense Museum to offer free admission for days



TEHRAN – Entry will be free to Tehran’s Sacred Defense Museum from May 18 to 24 to commemorate the anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

Situated on a landscaped site of 21 hectares, it is a gigantic war memorial showcasing numerous collections concentrated heavily on the Iraqi-imposed war.

Sacred Defense Museum is equipped with a state-of-the-art visual system including projections and video walls, while audio recordings relevant to each period contribute to its charm.

Re-creation of the liberation of the city of Khorramshahr by the means of virtual exhibits and video projections is among the main features of the museum where stands a replica of the Khorramshahr mosque adorned with creamy and turquoise patterned tiles.

A total of seven halls lead through the history of the sacred defense in forensic detail. The Hall of Butterflies greets visitors on arrival, the place is dedicated to martyrs and victims of the war and filled with personal belongings found on the various battlefields.

Outside, a patchwork of domestically-

Foreign rock climbers visit oasis town for competition

TEHRAN – Tens of international rock climbers have arrived in Ardakan, an oasis city in Yazd province, for sightseeing and to take part in a competition.

The rock-climbing competition is held in the historical site of Chakchak on the outskirts of Ardakan, Ahmad Akhundi said on Tuesday.

The competition is attended by some 300 Iranian rock climbers as well as 35 foreign climbers from France, Turkey, Iraq, Germany, and Croatia, the provincial tourism chief stated.

Such events are effective in introducing the tourism capabilities of Ardakan city, particularly in the sports tourism field, and highlighting the Chakchak site, as a world-class tourist destination, the official explained.

The winners will be announced during a

ceremony on Friday, he noted.

Ardakan lies on the margins of the central Iranian desert in Yazd province. Historical suction such as qanats (underground aqueducts), windmills, badgirs (wind towers), caravanserais, mosques, and mansions constitute parts of its attractions.

Sports events of various kinds and sizes attract tourists as participants or spectators and destinations try to add local flavors to them to distinguish themselves and provide authentic local experiences. Mega sports events such as the Olympics and World Cups can be a catalyst for tourism development if successfully leveraged in terms of destination branding, infrastructure development, and other economic and social benefits.

Archaeologist underlines safeguarding ‘masterpiece’ of water management in southern Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian archaeologist Hamidreza Karami has emphasized the need for the proper protection of what he called a “masterpiece” of water management in southern Iran.

Currently, a team of experts led by archaeologist Karami conducts excavations across the dam remnants and surroundings hoping to unravel the enigma of Achaemenid dams and water management strategies.

Situated near the two UNESCO sites of Persepolis and Pasargadae, the embankment dam, locally named “Band-e Bostan Khani” or “Sad-e [the dam of] Didegan”, is said to still be a source of inspiration for modern architects and engineers. The dam dates from the Achaemenid era (c.550-330 CE).

The embankment dam, which is an “ancient masterpiece” of water management, is planned to undergo restoration with the help of the World Heritage site of Pasargadae, CHTN quoted Karami as saying on Tuesday.

“Considering the extent of damage to this historical embankment dam, the assistance and participation of the Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism, and the Ministry of Energy is vital for its restoration,” the archaeologist said.

According to Karami, his archaeological team seeks to find out more about the secrets, methods, and techniques of dam construction in the times of Achaemenians.

“Considering pivotal needs of the Achaemenid government in supplying water to various sectors of agriculture, horticulture, public and residential uses, as well as water supply in Pasargadae gardens, several dams, and water supply canals were created to supply water, which according to the results of [our] excavations, the most water supply projects were implemented in Pasargadae and its surroundings.”

Last year, the archaeologists discovered treasured data on dam construction engineering and water resources management relevant to the Achaemenid era. “Seasons of archaeological excavations on Didegan dam uncovered valuable secrets and information concerning dam engineering and water control management which were practiced in Iran during the Achaemenid era,” Karami said last December.

“Although much of this appreciated structure has been destroyed by floods and human



plunder, we have been able to increase our knowledge of know-how and technology adopted to build dams related architectural structures in that period,” the archaeologist explained.

He made the remarks at the 19th Annual Symposium on the Iranian Archaeology which was held online from February 26 to 28. Co-organized by the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research (ICAR); Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry; and the National Museum of Iran, the annual event turned the spotlight on countrywide excavations held during the past couple of months.

“Moreover, we carefully determined the location and specs of our archaeological trenches in order to gain the most information possible.”

Referring to the characteristics and architecture of the dam, he noted “The style of architecture and stone carving reflects the architectural traditions of the early Achaemenid period, especially the period of the Achaemenid King Darius [the Great].”

According to the archaeologist, the embankment dam is still a source of inspiration for modern architects and engineers.

“Achaemenid-era embankment dams were built with such knowledge, extent, and durability that after 25 centuries, [modern] earthen dams are still built per the Achaemenid engineering model.”

The expert considered Bostan Khani Dam as the largest of its kind in the Achaemenid period that has been identified so far, saying it measures a crown height of 21 meters, a length of 170 meters, and a width of 70 meters.

Karami explained that waterways and water transmission networks are another part of their water management engineering, which is designed to bring water to the

farthest possible areas of the region.

“Excavations and surveys on Bostan Khani Dam can increase our knowledge and understanding of the methods and techniques of dam construction and architectural structure that is currently being practiced.”

Late in January, a cultural heritage protection team discovered a stone-arched tunnel near an Achaemenid embankment dam in Marvdasht plain of Fars province.

The embankment dam has been registered on the National Heritage list.

The Achaemenid [Persian] Empire was the largest and most durable empire of its time. The empire stretched from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), to Central Asia, and India.

Building activity was extensive during the height of the empire, and of the several Achaemenian capitals, the ruins at Pasargadae and Persepolis are probably the most outstanding. Achaemenian sculptured reliefs and a great number of smaller art objects present a remarkably unified style for the period. Metalwork, especially in gold, was highly developed, and a variety of carefully executed examples survive.

The plains of Pasargadae, Morqab, Khorrambid, and Kamin embrace the greatest number of water structures being constructed during the Achaemenid era, the archaeologist said.

“Tapping into the water capacities of the Polvar River, controlling seasonal floods, preventing river floods, and storing water for consumption in hot and dry months [of the year], were among goals being pursued at that time.”

Karami explained that waterways and water transmission networks are another part of their water

management engineering, which is designed to bring water to the farthest possible areas of the region, adding “This way, a very large volume of satellite hills have been harvested... different parts of the rocks have been cut in the mountainous paths and excavated in the flatlands to a large extent so that the result of this great work is what the designers and implementers of this system thought, that is, all areas related to the Achaemenid capital of Pasargadae being benefited from water.”

Located on a branch of the Polvar River, the dam was built during the reign of Cyrus the Great. According to sources, archaeologists believe that this unique work was designed to contain floods and store large amounts of water for public use as well as use in agriculture and horticulture.

The Achaemenid [Persian] Empire was the largest and most durable empire of its time. The empire stretched from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), to Central Asia, and India.

The royal city of Persepolis ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art. Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy) is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars province.

The city was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as revenge on the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier. The city’s immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire’s king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall (“Hundred-Column Hall”).

This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world’s greatest archaeological sites. Persepolis was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showplace and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire.

Historical properties in Hamedan demarcated

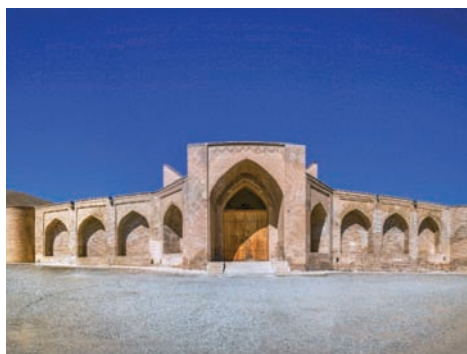
TEHRAN – New boundaries have been defined for 10 historical properties scattered across the west-central province of Hamedan, CHTN reported on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism has announced the exact legal boundaries of the properties in separate letters to the governor-general of the province, the report added.

The demarcation projects are aimed at preventing further destruction and damage as well as preserving and protecting historical sites.

Shariati High School, Ebadi Mansion, and Dolatabad Hill are among those demarcated recently.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world’s greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from



antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

Hamedan has had many names: it was possibly the Bit Daiukki of the Assyrians, Hangmatana, or Agbatana, to the Medes, and

Ecbatana to the Greeks. One of the Median capitals, under Cyrus II (the Great; died 529 BC) and later Achaemenian rulers, it was the site of a royal summer palace.

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

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

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

Relics donated to Meshkinshahr museum

Tehran Times Heritage Desk

TEHRAN – A total of 25 historical relics have recently been donated to the Meshkinshahr museum by an individual, the city’s tourism chief has said.

The objects date back to the different historical eras including the Parthian, Seljuk, and Islamic periods, Iman-Ali Imani explained on Tuesday.

The objects have been donated so that the identity and history of the people of this region may be protected, the official added.

Following expertise, preparation of the identity cards, and numbering of the properties, the objects will be displayed in the museum with the name of their donor, he mentioned.

Meshkinshahr embraces several historical sites including Qale

Khohneh (“Old Castle”), the ancient site of Shahr-e Yeri, and Qahqaheh castle.

Being near the high Mount Sabalan, Meshkinshahr enjoys a moderate mountainous climate and the Sabalan summit can be seen in the south of the city with an eye-catching scenery.

The antiquity of the city dates back to the early centuries of

Islam but in the Safavid era, it was thriving even more. The city is well known for its rugs and its mineral springs.

Meshkinshahr suspension bridge measuring 345 meters long, three meters wide, and 80 meters high, which was inaugurated in 2015 and is said to be the largest of its kind in West Asia, is also one of the top tourist destinations of the city.

Iran, India to boost fight against narcotics

TEHRAN – Majid Karimi, the chief of the Iranian anti-narcotics police, and Satya Narayan Pradhan, the director-general of the Indian Narcotics Control Bureau, discussed further counter-narcotics cooperation.

In a meeting on Tuesday in Tehran, Narayan Pradhan welcomed the development of cooperation with the Iranian anti-narcotics police and call for a memorandum of cooperation, as well as exchanging information in the field of counter-narcotics.

The growing narcotics production and its numerous problems due to the shared border with Afghanistan and Pakistan further clarify the need for constructive interaction between the two countries.

Karimi for his part said that the geographical location of Iran on the Balkan route, linking Afghanistan to Iran, then passing through Turkey, represents the shortest distance and most direct land route to European countries, has always caused Iran to deal with drug trafficking.

Iran has achieved good results in narcotics seizure, as discovered 1,100 tons of drugs in 2021 and 230 tons in the first four months of 2022, he stated.

If the Islamic Republic closes its eyes to the transit of drugs for a moment, the drug tsunami will undoubtedly affect the whole world, especially the Western countries, he highlighted.

According to figures released by the United Nations in 2000, Afghanistan produced about 200 tons of narcotics, but in 2018, it has grown to 9,500 tons.

In other words, the production



of narcotics has increased fifty times, which has doubled the need for prevention efforts, he highlighted.

Holding training courses, forming specialized committees, exchanging knowledge and technology related to counter-narcotics equipment, identifying and discovering drugs, as well as transferring experiences related to training trainers for search dogs, can lead to the root and main causes of drug trafficking, he said.

Iran holds the world record for narcotics confiscation

Iran holds the record for nar-

cotics confiscation in the world, Eskandar Momeni, the director of anti-narcotics police headquarters said in December 2021.

However, great achievements in the field of countermeasures have been gained, and the United Nations has officially announced that 90 percent of opium, 70 percent of morphine, and 20 percent of world heroin have been discovered by Iran.

In the Iranian calendar year ended in March 2021, about 1,200 tons of drugs were discovered, which was the highest rate of discovery in the world," he explained.

According to figures released by the United Nations in 2000, Afghanistan produced about 200 tons of narcotics, but in 2018, it has grown to 9,500 tons.

In other words, the production of narcotics has increased fifty times, which has doubled the need for prevention efforts, he highlighted.

Despite the conditions caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the imposition of harsh sanctions against the country, fortunately, with the efforts of anti-narcotics police in 2020, drug detection increased by 41 percent.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), 3,800 were martyred, and 12,000 were wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking.

The UNODC has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in drug-control campaigns.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.

Charity builds 150 schools nationwide

From page 1 ► Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam was founded in 1989. In the Iranian calendar year, 1386 (March 2017-March 2018) Barekat Charity Foundation- the social arm of the organization- with the aim of promoting social justice was established.

Socio-economic empowerment of communities by encouraging entrepreneurship prioritizing breadwinner women, developing infrastructures such as water supply and power grids, building roads, constructing schools and increasing educational spaces, promoting health for all, and granting non-repayable loans and insurance, especially in less developed areas and regions most affected by 1980s war and natural disasters are of the priorities of the charity foundation.

School building benefactors have allotted a

total of 34 trillion rials (nearly \$130 million) to construct educational spaces across the country over the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2021-March 2022), ISNA reported.

Due to the promotion of the culture of participation in school construction, school-building donors allotted trillion rials (nearly \$130 million) last year, which was 170 billion rials (around \$650) in 1998 when the Association of School-Building Donors was established, Education Minister Yousef Nouri said on Sunday.

According to Nasser Ghofli, the director of the Association, 400 school-building charities have been registered in the country so far.

Iran has many school-building benefactors amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON MAY 10

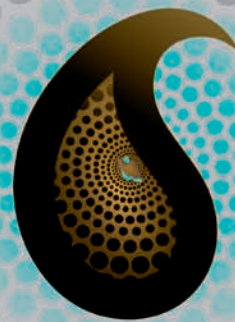
New cases	460
New deaths	3
Total cases	7,226,219
Total deaths	141,192
New hospitalized patients	82
Patients in critical condition	836
Total recovered patients	7,010,698
Diagnostic tests conducted	51,582,635
Doses of vaccine injected	149,263,275



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Supporting Domestic Products
Production and delivery of more than 800 sets of pens / equipment from the construction site of ten commodity groups, including well equipment, in-well supplementary field, SRP well pumps and drilling rigs worth 4,290 billion rials and preventing the outflow of currency from the country.
100% realization of localization and construction inside well and in-well equipment
86% of well equipment items 34% of Ron Chahi supplementary course items
13% of well pump items 34% cpr pipe and 5% drilling items

Upgrading Technology and Supporting Knowledge-based Companies
Financial support to 70 knowledge-based and technology companies in the project of rehabilitating inactive and low-efficiency wells with valuable contract capacity \$ 750 million

Environmental Protection
Signing a contract with 8 burner gas collection projects worth 470 million Euros with Iranian companies in order to implement the improvement plan and construction of East Karun burner gas collection facilities

Social Responsibilities and Deprivation
Completion of 385 public benefit projects related to social responsibilities with a total credit of 556 billion Tomans and their delivery to the beneficiary operating agencies in the provinces Approval of more than 7000 billion Tomans by the esteemed board of directors of the National Iranian Oil Company related to the provincial trips of the esteemed President

Improving the Situation of Human resources and Increasing Employee satisfaction
Changing the status of 3,000 self-sacrificing forces Revival of organizational positions and support of temporary and contract forces for 15,000 people

International field, Energy Diplomacy and Sale of crude oil and Petroleum Products

increase in oil exports 40%
increase in gas exports 350%
increase in condensate exports 300%
increase in revenues from exports of crude oil, gas condensate, natural gas, petroleum products and petrochemical products 300%

Increasing the Production Capacity and Development of oil and Gas fields: oil Sector

Restore crude oil production capacity to 3,838,000 barrels per day before the sanctions began By carrying out jihadi actions from the beginning of October 1400

Increasing the Production Capacity and Development of oil and gas fields: Gas Sector

Record daily production of 705,000,000 cubic meters of gas from the South Pars joint field for the first time and increase daily gas production by 1,036,000,000 cubic meters and stable gas supply in the winter of 1400

Strategic Actions and Plans in the field of Production

Development of a comprehensive 8-year plan for oil and gas production from 1401 to 1408 and an investment outlook of \$ 160,000,000,000

Concluding investment Contracts and Memoranda

Concluding Contracts and Investment Agreements Worth \$ 9,500,000,000

