

Iran, Russia Upgrade Ties

►Page 3

Opinion

Serious questions on how renting prices would be tamed

By M.A. Saki

The president, Parliament speaker and Judiciary chief on Sunday backed a government plan which set limits for increase in rental prices. It set a 25 percent increase in the capital Tehran and 20 percent in other cities.

The parliament (Majlis) also approved the general outlines of the plan on Wednesday and specialized parliamentary committees are going to study the pros and cons of the plan.

However, there is a serious doubt about how this plan, once finalized, is going to be implemented. Experience shows the people have serious doubts about such plans.

In the Rouhani administration it was announced that landlords are allowed to increase rental prices by only 15-25 percent. However, the order failed badly. Only a very small percentage of houseowners increased the price by that amount. They just acted based on their own conscience.

The plan failed just because there was no organization or institution to enforce or monitor it. Now, there is a great fear that the new plan may also find the same fate.

Rental prices have started going up dramatically from three years ago. However, increase in the current Iranian calendar year 1401 (which began on March 21, 2022) are more shocking than the years 1400 and 1400. Some landlords have incredibly increased prices by 100 percent. ►Page 2

Interview

Youth beach handball coach Ghashghaei happy with Iran's performance

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - Mehdi Ghashghaei Rad, head coach of the Iran youth beach handball team, says that he believes Iran deserved to win the 2022 IHF Youth Beach Handball World Championship but did not get what they deserved.

Iranian youth players wrote their name into the history by winning the bronze medal of the World Championship in the Greek port city of Heraklion.

"We won the first international medal in the Iranian handball history, but the bronze was the least we deserved in this competition," Ghashghaei said in his interview with Tehran Times.

More than two years ago, the current head coach of Iran U18 and his staff, along with the Iranian Handball Federation, started a project to develop Iranian beach handball. The project has worked successfully, and Iran's youth team is among the best in the world.

"Our players lacked the international experience, making the job difficult for us. However, we gradually progressed in the tournament and performed better game by game.

"Iran performed the most beautiful games in this competition. Against Brazil, in the semifinals, we lost on penalties while we had beaten them before 2-0 in the tournament.

"Penalty shootout always and in all sports depends entirely on luck, and we were unlucky against Brazil," Ghashghaei added. ►Page 3



Iran stands by friendly Afghan nation as quake leaves 1000 dead

TEHRAN — A strong earthquake with a magnitude of 6.1 on the Richter scale hit the southeastern Afghan province of Paktika in the early hours of Wednesday.

According to authorities, the quake killed more than 1000 people and wounded at least 1,500.

The shocks hit at 1:24 a.m. local time on Wednesday (4:54 p.m. ET on Tuesday).

The disaster comes at a difficult time as Afghans are in the throes of hunger and economic crises following the takeover of the conflict-hit country by the Taliban last summer.

ban last summer.

The tremor happened around 44 kilometers (27 miles) from the city of Khost, which lies close to the country's border with Pakistan, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). ►Page 2

Quarterly non-oil exports increase 21% yr/yr

TEHRAN - The value of Iran's non-oil exports reached \$13.69 billion in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), up 21 percent compared to the last year's same period, according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Alireza Moghadasi said Iran exported 27.7 million tons of non-oil commodities in the mentioned three months, Tasnim news agency reported on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, some 8.154 million tons of goods valued at \$12.464 billion were imported into the country in the said period to

register an 18-percent rise in terms of value compared to the last year's same quarter.

In total, the Islamic Republic traded about 36 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$25.5 billion with its trade partners in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year, up 19.5 percent in terms of value, Moghadasi said. ►Page 4

Iran exports COVID-19 vaccines to Nicaragua

TEHRAN - Nicaragua received 200,000 doses of vaccines against COVID-19 from Iran on Tuesday.

"Thank God, COVIRAN vaccines arrive from the Islamic Republic of Iran this afternoon. We are deeply grateful to continue vaccinating 200,000 people and protecting ourselves," Nicaraguan Vice President Rosario Murillo said.

With these vaccines, the Nicaraguan authorities hope to increase the population vaccinated against covid-19, which until this morning constituted "almost 93 percent" with a single dose and 85 percent with the full schedule.

The signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding for sending the COVIRAN vaccine to Nicaragua was held on March 17, in the presence of the directors of the Barakat Pharmaceutical Group, the Nicaraguan Ambassador to Iran Isaac Lenin Bravo Jaen, and representatives of the Ministry of Health and Foreign Affairs. ►Page 7



Iran children's theater festival kicks off in Hamedan

Children clad in costumes of Haji Firuz, the harbinger of Noruz, perform during the opening ceremony of the 27th International Theater Festival for Children and Young Adults in Imam Khomeini Square in Hamedan on June 22, 2022.

Troupes from Italy, Greece, Turkey, Armenia and Iraq have been invited to perform their latest productions at the festival, which will be running until June 27.

Tourism can guarantee peace and security between nations, expert says

TEHRAN - It is possible to guarantee peace and security between nations by promoting tourism, a tourism expert has said.

"Tourism has shown to be an industry that promotes peace and security as well as international friendship," IRNA quoted Hormatollah Rafiei as saying on Wednesday.

It is imperative that tourism diplomacy, along with cultural, public, and economic diplomacy, be a focal point of negotiations and interactions be-

tween a country's representatives and diplomats in an international arena, due to the interconnectedness of different ethnicities and nationalities, he explained.

During three difficult years with the coronavirus outbreak, the tourism industry not only did not expand the pandemic but with maximum cooperation and full compliance with global health protocols, was an important player in containing and ending this crisis, he added.

Although Iran's tourism industry has suffered a loss of some 400 trillion rials (\$1.4 billion), the loss of life in tourism facilities was almost zero, he noted.

Having moved into the post-corona era, tourism can now be a center of economic recovery by utilizing local and international capacities, such as the attraction of tourists from neighboring countries and common areas in the ECO and Eurasia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the expert said. ►Page 6

From Inside

- Iran's foreign policy centers on neighborly diplomacy; government **P2**
- Iranian diplomat issues cautionary statement on growing Islamophobia **P2**
- Iran-Israel conflict can't be solved through diplomacy; advisor **P3**
- Khatibzadeh condemns deadly terror attacks in Mali **P3**
- Daily production from South Pars phase 11 to reach 670m CF by late Sep **P4**
- Iraq calls for preparing roadmap to develop energy ties with Iran **P4**
- Annual manufacturing of 18m home appliance sets on agenda **P4**
- Gereh-chini works on show at tourism ministry **P6**
- Tens of Sassanid coins recovered in central Iran **P6**
- UNDP pledges support for Iran to address environmental challenges **P7**
- Finland seeks to rehabilitate Anzali Wetland **P7**
- IRCS, Spanish Red Cross sign MOU **P7**
- Karlovy Vary film festival picks "Zalava", "Like a Fish on the Moon" **P8**
- Persian publisher brings "The Accidental Tourist" to Iranian bookstores **P8**

Report

France in political limbo after Macron suffers setback

French President Emmanuel Macron has held meetings with opposition party leaders in a desperate attempt to form a parliamentary majority after losing control of the National Assembly and the power he enjoyed during his first term to implement his own policies so easily.

Macron's Ensemble alliance won just 245 seats in the second-round vote on Sunday, far short of the 289 needed for an absolute majority.

Some experts say Macron has himself to blame after spending more time trying to lead Europe on Ukraine, while other parties focused on the cost of living crisis back at home.

Other analysts say the Ukraine crisis which has exacerbated the rising cost of energy in Europe is an early sign for what other leaders on the continent can expect to lose, as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which is being supported by NATO, drags on.

While other parties spent time on the campaign trail, Macron was in Kyiv pledging to intensify the delivery of weapons; a trip he made after being criticized for saying Russia should not be "humiliated".

If the French leader had achieved a path to peace in the Ukraine conflict; there may have been some praise back home, not only for those suffering from the fighting but also for the easing of energy prices in France. ►Page 5

Azerbaijani, Iranian culture ministers meet in Tehran

TEHRAN - Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaili, and Azerbaijani Culture Minister Anar Karimov met in Tehran on Monday.

The expansion of relations on films, visual arts, literature and other cultural issues were discussed in the meeting.

"Ties between Iran and Azerbaijan are beyond the relationship between two countries or two neighbors; we are close relatives," Esmaili said in a press conference held following the meeting.

"Therefore, any obstacle on the road to develop the relations between the two countries must be removed, because there are cultural affinities and common luminaries between the countries, which can help strengthen their relationship," he added.

Esmaili called Karimov's visit to Iran a new beginning for the expansion of cultural relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, and said, "All the issues discussed in our meeting will be mentioned in an agreement, and we will do our best to enhance the level of our relations in the near future." ►Page 8

Iran's foreign policy centers on neighborly diplomacy: government



TEHRAN- Iran's government spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi said on Monday that Tehran's foreign policy is concentrated on neighborly diplomacy, expressing optimism that this will assist improve connections between Iranians and their neighbors.

Bahadori Jahromi said he expected that the approach will assist boost relationship between citizens in Iran and those countries, as well as between Iranian and foreign elites.

The official made the comments during a meeting with a group of foreign businesspersons, experts, and elites in Iran.

The conference was held on World Refugee Day in Tehran, Iran's capital.

Bahadori Jahromi believes that foreign intellectuals residing in Iran may assist overcome the Islamic Republic's foes' Iranophobia ploy by portraying the nation in its real light.

He also addressed concerns that foreign residents in Iran may face, stating that the administration is working diligently to overcome them.

Some of the challenges, he continued, are connected to legal norms and administrative processes, while others are tied to international relations.

Foreign elites present at the meeting were from Syria, Afghanistan, Turkey, Spain, and France among others.

Serious questions on how renting prices would be tamed

From page 1 ► For example, in the early autumn of last year, a tenant could rent a 65-70-meter apartment in the Afsarieh region in southeast Tehran by a monthly payment of 3 million tomans (nearly 100 dollars) plus a 100 million tomans in deposit money (about 3,500 dollars). However, such an apartment is now being marketed or rented twice that amount.

Such sharp increases have caused anxiety and depression among the tenants, especially families with low income. Some families have been forced to leave cities, especially big ones, and rent a house in outskirts.

Now the key question is which inspection body will monitor the so-called the 20-25 percent increase in rent price, which has been put on the agenda of the government and Majlis?

Surely, the Majlis will ratify the details of the plan, but if its implementation is not effectively enforced by an inspection body it will prove a big failure and will intensify the public distrust of the responsible bodies.

In studying the plan, it is also necessary that the Majlis close all possible loopholes that may emerge in the implementation process.

Final days of spring up until the end of summer is known as the "season of movement". Most landlords are fishing in the troubled waters. They propose prices which are much higher than the inflation rate. Also, most real estate agents fan the flames of higher rent prices because they get their own commission. For them, the higher the better.

Up until this moment, there has been no formula or criterion for setting rental prices. It is landlords who decide about prices. This is while that according to certain reports and remarks by some officials about 70 percent of tenants' income goes up for renting.

It is true that supply and demand is very important in rental market, like any other market, but in such a situation in which the inflation rate is too high it is necessary that the government intervene in the rental market. Just asking landlords not to increase rents more than 20 to 25 percent will not work at all.

Being aware of the heavy burden on tenants and skyrocketing home prices, the Raisi administration has promised to build four million houses in four years of his presidency. Whether this goal will be realized or not, or is too ambitious, is a question that experts must answer. However, the performance of his administration in 10 months of his presidency is not promising. So far, the government is far behind its plan called National Housing Movement.

During these ten months, the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development has not even finished the remaining Mehr housing units, which some figures have put their numbers at 80,000. Reportedly, these housing units, which started more than a decade ago, are being abandoned and the customers are repeatedly being given unfulfilled promises. They are being said that they will be finished

this year, another six months, three months later, and so forth. These unfinished houses are mostly in new cities in the provinces of Tehran and Alborz, which together house about 20 percent of the Iranian population.

Obviously, incompetence, corruption, repeated increases in prices of construction materials, and illegal sanctions are the main culprits for delays in finishing the remaining units, which are mostly of low quality.

Maybe one of the reasons for such repeated delays is that the current administration is mostly focusing on its own housing plan.

According to statistics given by a former official at the Ministry of Transport and Development in the early summer of 1400, about 8.5 families were tenants. MP Alborz Hosseini, who sits on the Parliament Development Committee, also said on Wednesday that 32 million out of 85 million Iranian population are tenants.

Naturally, the number of tenants is increasing as families cannot afford to buy a house.

However, both the Rouhani and Raisi administrations as well as the sitting and previous parliaments have been either ignorant or reluctant to make use of the experience of other countries in taming the wild housing and renting markets. There is a mechanism in economics called "taxation". The executive officials and parliamentarians could have levied heavy taxes on the sale of houses in the form of value-added tax (VAT) to bring prices down. Or the parliament could and still can approve a legislation that would limit the number of houses that a person or family can have in his possession.

Moreover, some experts believe that the ratio between the population and houses is not that much that is causing so much anxiety for the tenants. They say the main reason is that certain people own tens or probably hundreds of houses, especially in the capital Tehran. Additionally, MP Ali Khezrian, talking in the parliament on Wednesday, announced that 3 million apartments are now empty and the owners refuse to sell them. Some have put this figure higher and claim there are four million such houses.

These people, who do not need professionalism or expertise, act like a mafia and hold the key for house prices.

Traditionally and truly there have been and still there is a view among the people that investing in real estate is the best and safest option. House is subject to a meager taxation and it is widely considered as a capital asset rather than a consumer good and this has been proven in the country.

To tame this wild horse and reduce the concerns of tenants and control house prices, probably the first urgent move is to ban the possession of more than two or three houses by a person for family. If officials' interest really doesn't lie in keeping more houses in the possession of a small percentage of landlords, they can adopt effective measures by using the experiences of successful countries in this regard.

Iranian diplomat issues cautionary statement on growing Islamophobia



TEHRAN- Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has warned against spreading Islamophobia throughout the world.

Speaking at a United Nations meeting on Monday to commemorate International Day Countering Hate Speech, Takht Ravanchi stated that the rising tide of provocation against individuals based on their religious beliefs poses a severe threat to international coexistence and tolerance.

Below is the full text of the statement delivered by Iran's envoy:

"I would like to express my appreciation to you for convening this High-level Meeting to commemorate the International Day for Countering Hate Speech.

We value the proclamation of this international day to highlight the commitments to the purposes and principles

of the United Nations, and to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue, dialogue among civilizations, as well as tolerance and reconciliation in matters relating to peaceful coexistence among cultures and religions.

In our increasingly interconnected world, we need to rely on diverse cultures to enrich our ability to confront multitude of challenges facing human beings.

We should recognize the potentials of this diversity and create a new sense of togetherness and closeness.

Today, such phenomenon as hate speech, xenophobia and Islamophobia, as well as incitement to hatred based on religion, have seriously challenged the essentials of tolerance among nations.

Notably, proliferating hate speech, discrimination and violence, has caused great suffering toward Muslim

communities around the world.

The growing trend of Islamophobia has been fueled by the lack of resolve on the part of certain governments to confront hate speech and acts of hate against Muslims, anti-Muslim media outlets, as well as civic groups promoting a hostile and abusive environment against Muslims in the West. It is unfortunate to witness that the politicization and restriction of the Hijab, the burning of the Holy Qur'an, and the desecration of Islamic symbols and holy sites are being pursued in certain countries. In this regard, we would like to recall Article 20 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

In addressing this growing phenomenon, we may also

refer to the gender aspects, as Muslim girls and women are frequently targeted because of the way they dress.

Such Islamophobic tendencies have created an environment conducive to violence and violent extremism which poses serious threats to the social cohesion as well as security and well-being of all societies.

The designation of 15 March as International Day to Combat Islamophobia by the General Assembly was a milestone in our collective efforts to combat this menace.

We just heard outrageous allegations made by the representative of the Zionist regime against my country.

We reject these allegations which are made to deflect attention from Israeli crimes and atrocities in our region. The Zionist regime is well known for its racist policies and spread of hate speech and its propaganda cannot hide this very fact."

Iran stands by friendly Afghan nation as quake leaves 1000 dead

TEHRAN — A strong earthquake with a magnitude of 6.1 on the Richter scale hit the southeastern Afghan province of Paktika in the early hours of Wednesday.

According to authorities, the quake killed more than 1000 people and wounded at least 1,500.

The shocks hit at 1:24 a.m. local time on Wednesday (4:54 p.m. ET on Tuesday).

The disaster comes at a difficult time as Afghans are in the throes of hunger and economic crises following the takeover of the conflict-hit country by the Taliban last summer.

The tremor happened around 44 kilometers (27 miles) from the city of Khost, which lies close to the country's border with Pakistan, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

The quake registered at a depth of 10 kilometers (6.2 miles), according to USGS, CNN reported.

According to the European Mediterranean Seismological Centre (EMSC), roughly 119 million people in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India felt the shaking over a 500-kilometer radius.



Hassan Kazemi Qomi

Media in Pakistan claimed a mild-intensity earthquake shook Islamabad and other parts of the nation.

"Rescue operations are likely to be hindered because many international humanitarian organizations departed Afghanistan after the Taliban took over the country last year," according to The Associated Press.

The Taliban government's deputy spokesman, Bilal Karimi, requested "all assistance groups to send teams to the area promptly to prevent more calamity."

Following the devastating earthquake,

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh extended the government and people of Iran's heartfelt regret and grief to Afghanistan, a friendly and brotherly nation.

The spokesman prayed for God's mercy on those who died in the awful natural disaster and conveyed condolences to the grieving families and wished recovery for the injured.

Khatibzadeh further stated that Iran is ready to provide whatever support is required to the earthquake victims.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi, the special aide to the Iranian president on Afghanistan, also said Iran stands by its friend in this upsetting time.

"The sad news of the earthquake in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan and the death and injury of hundreds of people caused grief and sorrow. I ask God for forgiveness for the lost and patience for the survivors. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as always, stands by the people of Afghanistan and is ready to help the injured," he wrote on his Twitter page.

Meanwhile, the Iranian embassy in Kabul also expressed condolences, announcing that two Iranian planes containing emergency aid have landed in Kabul.

What was the point of this Brutality?

2003, U.S. President George W. Bush said on Iraqi television:



"Your nation will soon be free." After more than 18 years,

There have been between 184,382 and 207,156 Iraqi civilians killed by direct violence since the U.S. invasion by American troops



The actual number of civilians killed by direct and indirect war violence is unknown but likely much higher.



Life-threatening damage to Iraqi health care and other infrastructure has not been repaired: civilians are still dying in significant numbers.



Also, the US created terrorist groups such as ISIS and make the situation even worse than before

some estimates suggest that 1 million Iraqis have lost their lives as a result of the US lead operation in Iraq.



The U.S. war in Iraq has cost \$1.7 trillion

Defeating ISIS only cost Iraqi infrastructure \$ 45.7 billion.

Opposition to the war has continued to increase over the past few years;

Leaving everyone puzzled: What was the point in all this brutality?

Iran, Russia upgrade ties

TEHRAN – Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrived in Iran late on Wednesday amid a flurry of diplomatic visits to Tehran by countries facing Western sanctions.

Russian state news agency TASS said Lavrov will meet Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian during his two-day visit.

Lavrov is expected to discuss with Iranian officials a full range of issues spanning economic cooperation, and political consultations on bilateral and international issues.

The visit is noteworthy for two major reasons: First, it is Lavrov's first visit to Tehran since Ayatollah Raisi assumed the presidency in August 2021. Second, the visit comes amid growing economic sanctions by the West against Russia over the Ukraine war and uncertainties over the talks in Vienna over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

During Lavrov's visit, "issues around the signing of a long-term cooperation agreement and work to expand bilateral economic contacts amid the West's tightening sanctions will be discussed. Cooperation in regional security, concerning Syria and Afghanistan, will also be key," according to TASS.

Russia is facing blanket Western sanctions over the Ukraine war and



it has overtaken Iran as the most sanctioned nation in the world, according to press reports. Exploring avenues for cooperation against sanctions is on the agenda of the visit, according to Al Araby Al Jadeed. Citing Iranian sources, the Qatari-owned newspaper said Lavrov and Iranian officials will discuss "the intensification of Iranian-Russian cooperation in the face of U.S. sanctions."

The newspaper pointed out that Russian officials visited Iran secretly and publicly in recent months to "benefit from its experience in facing sanctions."

Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak paid a visit to Iran on May 25. The Russian official met Iranian Petroleum Minister Javad Owji and First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber in Tehran. Earlier in January, President

Raisi visited Russia and met with President Vladimir Putin. This exchange of visits is part of President Raisi's foreign policy agenda of fostering relations with neighboring countries and major non-Western powers. The policy, known as the Neighborhood Policy, saw Iran strengthening its relations with central Asian countries, China, Russia, and some Arab states.

A major part of this policy is to boost ties with countries under Western sanctions such as Venezuela, Syria, and Russia in what came to be known as the club of sanctioned countries. To this end, Iran signed long-term cooperation documents with China and Venezuela. It is in the process of signing another one with Russia.

Officials and experts of the sanctioned countries have voiced support for this kind of cooperation. Marco Fernandes,

a researcher at Tricontinental Institute for Social Research, has said that the BRICS group of nations needs to focus on creating an alternative to the U.S. dollar's hegemony in global transactions, which gives Washington leverage over its opponents, according to TASS.

Fernandes added, "After reserves and assets worth tens of billions of dollars were confiscated from countries like Venezuela, Iran, and Afghanistan, the U.S. and EU decision to freeze Russian reserves worth over \$300 billion raised alarms all over the world, underscoring the need to find an alternative to the dollar's dominance." Overcoming the dominance of the U.S. dollar over bilateral trade between the sanctioned countries is a major goal of the efforts to found the club of sanctioned countries.

Venezuelan Minister of Communication and Information Freddy Alfred Nazareth has said Iran and Venezuela, two sanctioned countries, are building an "economic axis." In an interview with state news IRNA, the Venezuelan minister said, "Iran and Venezuela will build an axis that will be a priority for the world's economies, and the 20-year comprehensive document, drawing on the experience of previous years, will pursue very clear goals for the emerging world."

Iran-Israel conflict can't be solved through diplomacy: advisor

TEHRAN – Ali Larijani, an advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has said that the conflict between Iran and Israel cannot be resolved through diplomacy.

Larijani, the former Iranian parliament speaker, made the remarks while attending a book unveiling ceremony held at The National Library and Archives of Iran on Wednesday morning.

The ceremony for unveiling the Persian translation of Israeli author Ronen Bergman's "The Secret War with Iran: The 30-Year Clandestine Struggle Against the World's Most Dangerous Terrorist Power" was also attended by former culture ministers Hossein Safar Harandi and Seyed Abbas Salehi.

The book is translated by Iranian political analyst Abbas Salimi Namin who also appended a review to the book whose Persian version appeared in 850 pages. The Persian version and its review are titled "The Secret War against Iran and the Half a Century of Failure."

"This book is one of the most important and significant works in understanding the history of Iran before and after the Revolution, especially the scholarly review of Mr. Salimi Namin, which has been written under the title of 'half a century of failure,'" Larijani said, according to state news agency IRNA.

He added, "Mr. Bergman is a well-known military and security analyst who writes in Israeli newspapers and is considered a senior military and security expert, but in the book under review, he has shown another face that may be very harmful to a seasoned researcher."

Larijani said, "First of all, there is a lot of undocumented material in this book, and for

someone who wants to make a claim about the events of the Revolution, his citations should be very clear, while we did not see citations in this book and we mostly witnessed storytelling."

The former speaker of parliament said Bergman's book included a lot of insults, expletives and false claims. "This book relies heavily on Mossad data, while intelligence services are slanted," Larijani said.

He added, "The first thing we notice in this book is the status of the Islamic Revolution. Bergman has a clear opposition to the Revolution, but acknowledges the status of the Islamic Revolution."

Larijani said Israel's conflict Iran is a strategic issue and Bergman points to this issue. "As a result, this issue cannot be resolved through diplomacy. The Imam [Khomeini] and the Islamic Revolution really changed the map of the Middle East, and Bergman's argument is that the Islamic Revolution is a major obstacle to the realization of the demands of the United States and Israel in the region," he continued.

Larijani said he believes that Israel has now learned who to confront the Islamic Revolution. "In my opinion, today they have learned how to confront the Revolution, which is why it is necessary for the military and political officials of the country to pay more attention."

Over the last few weeks, Israel has launched an all-out media campaign against Iran that included bizarre claims of Iranian threats against ordinary tourists in neighboring Turkey.

Israeli media and officials first issued warnings of imminent alleged threats from Iran to Israeli tourists in Turkey and then claimed that "several" attacks were foiled as a result of Turkish-Israeli

security cooperation. "The operational efforts with the Turkish security forces have borne fruit," Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett claimed. "In recent days, in a joint Israeli-Turkish effort, we thwarted a number of attacks and a number of terrorists were arrested on Turkish soil."

Neither Bennett nor other Israeli officials have offered any kind of evidence to support their claims.

The string of warnings began on Friday when several Israeli officials alleged that there were "concrete" threats that Iran was allegedly trying to target Israelis in Istanbul over the weekend, and urged all Israeli citizens to leave Turkey immediately.

Iran has officially responded to Israeli hyperboles. Iran believes that Israel is openly spreading lies unworthy of a response. Nour News, a news outlet close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said Iran is determined to avenge the assassination of Colonel Sayad Khodaei but it'll not target innocent people.

"Given the past experiences, the Zionist regime [Israel] is well aware of the certainty of Iran's response to this regime's mischief and terrorist moves such as the martyrdom of Sayad Khodaei," Nour News said, adding, "The officials of this regime also know that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not punish innocent individuals when taking vengeance on the Zionist government's crimes."

The outlet said the leaders of Israel know that only the perpetrators and those who issued orders will be punished. This is why Israeli officials seek to mobilize the public with unfounded claims to increase the cost of Iran's revenge, according to Nour News.

Khatibzadeh condemns deadly terror attacks in Mali

TEHRAN – The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman on Tuesday expressed deep regret over the death of a number of Mali's nationals and civilians in terrorist raids in the city of Diassassagou, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said.

Khatibzadeh condemned the act of terrorism and sympathized with the government and people of Mali as well as the families who lost their loved ones in the terrorist acts.

The government of the Republic of Mali in West Africa confirmed on Monday that as many as 132 civilians have been killed in recent attacks by terrorists in the country, according to opindia.com.

According to authorities, the killings occurred when numerous villages in the Bankass area in Mali's central Mopti region were attacked on Saturday and Sunday. The attacks were carried out by terrorists

belonging to the Katiba Macina armed group affiliated with the dreaded terrorist group Al-Qaeda.

Earlier, Khatibzadeh also expressed condolences over another terror attack in Ethiopia.

He expressed his deep condolences and regret over the death of a number of Ethiopians in an attack by armed insurgents in the Oromia region.

He strongly condemned the terrorist

attack and expressed sympathy with the Ethiopian government, people and survivors.

It should be noted that at least 260 people were killed and hundreds more were injured in the attack by armed groups in the Oromia region in western Ethiopia. The massacre marked one of the bloodiest days in Ethiopia. Residents who survived the attack reported that the assailants massacred people and buried their bodies in mass graves.

in Syria as a safe and legal method."

Takht Ravanchi said, "We commend the recent declaration of amnesty for all Syrian nationals convicted of crimes committed before April 30, 2022. This decision, which covers all Syrians both at home and abroad, demonstrates the constructive approach of the Syrian government. We salute the Working Group on Detainees/Abductees Release, Body Handover, and Missing Persons Identification for the successful and effective operation of the mutual release of detainees on June 13th. With the support of the Astana guarantors, the Syrian sides demonstrated their determination to build mutual confidence."

He pointed out, "We highlight the significant role of the Constitutional Committee in facilitating the political settlement of the Syrian conflict. In this light, we applaud the Special Envoys' efforts in facilitating the 8th round of the Syrian Constitutional Committee, and the announcement that the next session will be held on July 25–29."

IRAN IN FOCUS

JUNE 23, 2022

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Youth beach handball coach Ghashghaei happy with Iran's performance in world championship

Frome Page 1 ► Iran defeated the U.S. 2-0, Qatar 2-0, Brazil and France 2-0 (two times) and lost to Sweden 2-0, Croatia 2-1, and Brazil (2-1) in the competition held in Greece.

The head coach spoke about the secrets behind the Iran youth team's success: "Fortunately, in the Iranian Beach Handball Association, there is coordination and unity among all members. The association's members suggested my presence in the youth team as the coach as I was working in the senior squad.

"The unity of the members and the support from the handball federation led to the development of a strong generation in beach handball, which will certainly bring great successes for Iranian handball in the next years," he concluded.

Iran's Ali Heidarian, meanwhile, finished the tournament with an individual recognition as he was named the best player in the pivot position, being picked up for the All-Star Team.

Iran beat Egypt at IHF Beach Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Egypt 2-1 (20-12, 16-22, 6-4) in Group C of the 2022 International Handball Federation (IHF) Men's Beach Handball Championship on Wednesday.

Iran advanced to the next stage as the third team after two losses against Denmark and Norway.

The 16 teams are split into four groups of four teams each with the top three in each group qualifying through to two main round groups of six teams each.

The top four in each main round group then progress through to the quarter-finals, followed by semi-finals and then medal matches.

The ninth edition of the 2022 Men's Beach Handball World Championships is being held from 21 to 26 June 2022 at Crete, Greece under the aegis of International Handball Federation (IHF).

Iran share spoils with Guinea at IHF Women's Junior Handball World Championship

TEHRAN – Iran shared the spoils in a 19-19 draw with Guinea in the opening match of the 23rd IHF Women's Junior (U20) Handball World Championship on Wednesday.

Iran will play Sweden in Group B on Thursday.

The 32 teams are divided into eight group of four teams.

The top two sides in each group will qualify for the main round, with pairings of two joining each other in the alphabetical order from the preliminary round groups (i.e., the Group A teams will face the Group B teams, Group C will play Group D, etc). Subsequently, the top two teams in each main round group will progress to the quarter-finals, as the other two sides will play the placement matches.

The Championship will take place in three Slovenian cities Celje, Laško and Velenje from June 22 to July 3.

Asian Track Cycling: Ganjkanlou secures bronze at scratch event

TEHRAN – Mohammad Ganjkanlou of Iran won a bronze medal in the scratch race of the Asian Cycling Championships on Wednesday.

Japanese rider Eiya Hashimoto won the gold medal in the event and silver medal went to Indonesian Terry yudha Kusuma.

He had already secured a bronze medal in omnium in the competition.

The 2022 Asian Track Cycling Championships are being held at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, New Delhi and will run till June 22.

Iran basketball to play friendlies with KK FMP Belgrade

TEHRAN – Iran national basketball team will play two friendly matches with Serbian club KK FMP Belgrade.

The matches will be held as part of preparation for the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 Asian Qualifiers.

Iran are scheduled to play Kazakhstan and Syria on July 1 and 4, respectively in Group D.

Team Melli left Tehran early Wednesday for Belgrade.

Iran are leading by newly-appointed coach Saeid Armaghani in the Serbian training camp.

Mahdavikia never forgets goal against the U.S.

TEHRAN – Ex-Iran football team winger Mehdi Mahdavikia will never forget his decisive goal against the U.S. in the 1998 FIFA World Cup.

Iran won the match 2-1 at Lyon's Stade Gerland in Group F.

Hamid Estili opened the scoring for Iran in the 40th minute and Mahdavikia doubled the lead six minutes from time.

Brian McBride pulled a goal back with a header three minutes later.

It was the first international meeting between two nations that had been at loggerheads since the 1979 Iranian revolution.

"Iran versus the United States was the match of the century," the 44-year-old former SV Hamburg wing back told Reuters.

"That goal was one of the biggest, most memorable and remarkable times in my life. I will never, ever forget that moment. I was young, it was a very important match in the World Cup, it was Iran against the U.S., it was the first win for Iran at the World Cup and so the whole recipe was there to make that a memorable cake for the rest of my life," Iran U23 football coach said.

"That win was an important win from any angle you look at it. From a sports perspective it was an historical moment because we made the first win in Iranian football history at the World Cup.

"For the country it became a huge celebration, so it was also historic. And even politically it became an important moment, so we never forget that one. It was a special day," he added.

Iran have won only one World Cup match since - against Morocco in Russia in 2018 - and Mahdavikia is expecting another major test for Team Melli when they meet the Americans in November in Group B of the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

"The U.S. have some young players who are playing in Europe so overall I believe they are much stronger than they were in 1998 and I'm sure they will be much more difficult in Qatar," he stated.

"It might still be affected by the political environment, this match might be somehow under that shadow. But I'm sure those players are professional, they are experienced and they can stay focused on the sport and the match itself regardless of what is going on in the politics.

"I hope that it's a good game and I wish that Iran can win again," Mahdavikia concluded.

Iran sports minister Sajadi arrives in Baku

TEHRAN - Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs Hamid Sajadi arrived in Baku, Azerbaijan on Wednesday.

Sajadi has traveled to Azerbaijan to attend in the Permanent Ministerial Council on Youth and Sports (PMCYs).

Sajadi will have the meetings with the sports officials of the Islamic countries, especially the Republic of Azerbaijan's officials in his three-day visit.

The next PMCYs will be held in Saudi Arabia.

Quarterly non-oil exports increase 21% yr/yr



From page 1 ► According to the official, the country's trade balance was \$605 million positive in the mentioned time span.

Iran's top export destination during this period was China with \$4.214 billion worth of imports from the Islamic Republic, followed by Iraq with \$1.824 billion, Turkey with \$1.737 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$1.645 billion, and India with \$424 million.

Meanwhile, the country's top five sources of imports during these three months were the UAE with \$3.426 billion, China with \$3.131 billion, Turkey with \$1.273 billion, India with \$512 million, and Germany with \$456 million

TCCIMA board of representatives hold 34th meeting

TEHRAN - The 34th meeting of the Board of Representatives of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) was held on Tuesday in which the attendees addressed some of the country's recent economic issues.

The meeting was attended by TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari, members of the chamber's board, and Deputy Economy Minister Mohammad-Hadi Sobhanian, the TCCIMA portal reported.

Speaking at the meeting, Khansari praised the government's decision for eliminating the allocation of foreign currency with subsidized rates for the imports of some basic goods and stressed the need for supporting the

worth of imports.

As previously announced by the IRICA head, the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 38 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), as compared to its previous year.

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

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

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

less privileged classes of the society against the aftershocks of the said decision.

"This [the elimination of subsidized currency rates] has been the request of the private sector and the TCCIMA for the last four years, and we have been constantly pursuing it to happen, and although this reform took place a little late but ultimately a very good step has been taken," Khansari said.

In this meeting, some of the challenges of the business environment and the country's economy were also raised to be discussed with Sobhanian, and finally, some of the problems of the poultry industry were also reviewed.

Daily production from South Pars phase 11 to reach 670m CF by late Sep.

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji has said phase 11 of the South Pars gas field development project is going to go operational as of the seventh Iranian calendar month of Mehr (begins on September 21), producing 670 million cubic feet (CF) of natural gas on a daily basis.

"We made the implementation of the phase 11 development project a priority, and with the measures and initiatives taken by our colleagues in the Oil Ministry, I promise you that production will start in the phase 11 development plan as of Mehr this year," Oji said.

The minister noted that the development of the mentioned phase has been completely carried out by domestic companies, Shana reported on Wednesday.

Iran had previously awarded the development of the phase 11 project to a consortium



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

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

contract.

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

Back in January, the managing director of Petropars

Company had announced the implementation of two new contracts as of December 22, 2021, to accelerate the development of the mentioned phase.

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

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

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

Annual manufacturing of 18m home appliance sets on agenda

TEHRAN – Manufacturing of home appliances in Iran is expected to reach 18 million sets in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2023), an official with Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry said.

According to Mohsen Shokrollahi, the director-general of the home appliances office at the ministry, there are currently 220 active home appliance manufacturing units in the country that managed to produce 16.5 million sets of products in the previous year, IRIB reported.

Considering the previous year's data, the manufacturing of the said products is expected to increase by 1.5 million sets (about 10 percent) in the current year.

Shokrollahi put the country's total value of home appliances exports in the previous Iranian calendar year at \$300 million, saying: "With the new approach, we will increase last year's exports and provide strong support to the home appliance industry by reducing raw material tariffs."

The official mentioned some of his ministry's programs for supporting the domestic

production of home appliances in the country and increasing the self-sufficiency rate in this industry, saying: "This year, we are pursuing an increase in both quantity and quality of home appliance production; in this regard, new plans have been set by our office, so that the domestic production in this sector is increasing and new investments have been made."

He further mentioned the significant role of the home appliances industry in creating job opportunities in the country and noted that there are currently 300,000 people working in this industry.

Shokrollahi also referred to the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's roadmap for the development of the country's home appliances industry and said: "The roadmap for this industry is been formulated in collaboration with the country's top think tanks and knowledge-based companies."

Manufacturing of home appliances in Iran increased 7.56 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), from its previous year, according to the



Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry data.

Over the past few years, the Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has been one of the pioneers in this regard and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past four years.

Iran's export to Germany rises 16% in 4 months on year

TEHRAN – The value of Iran's export to Germany rose 16 percent in the first four months of 2022, as compared to the first four months of 2021, according to the data released by the European Union's statistics office Eurostat.

The Eurostat's data show that Iran has exported commodities worth €109 million to Germany in the four-month period of this year, while the figure was €94 million in the same period of time in the past year.

Germany's export to Iran also increased nine percent to €531 million from €489 million.

As reported, Iran-Germany trade rose 10 percent to stand at €640 million in the first four months of 2022, while the figure was €583 million in the first four months of 2021.

Germany was Iran's top trade partner among the other member states of European Union in the first four months of this year.

Iraq calls for preparing roadmap to develop energy ties with Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Ministry hosted a meeting of an Iran-Iraq oil cooperation working group on Wednesday in which the Iraqi side called for the formation of a comprehensive roadmap to define the goals and perspective of the two countries' future cooperation, Shana reported.

During the meeting, which was attended by Head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Mohsen Khojasteh Mehr and Iraq's Deputy Oil Minister and Director General of the Iraqi Drilling Company Bassim Mohammed Khudair, the Iraqi side also expressed willingness to use Iran's experience, technology and expertise in the oil and gas industry.

Holding training courses and exporting technical and engineering services to Iraq were also among the demands of the Iraqi party.

Tehran to host Iran's 1st SCOCOEX in mid-Oct.

TEHRAN- Iran's first SCOCOEX International Conference and Exhibition (SCOCOEX 2022) with the subject of cooperation opportunities ahead for the member countries of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will be held at the place of Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds during October 19-22.

After Iran's official membership in the SCO, the country will hold an exhibition of investment opportunities and trade exchanges with the SCO members to be participated by the Iranian producers and merchants.

This international event, which will be held by the collaboration and participation of Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, and Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), intends to provide a suitable arena for identifying domestic production and industrial capacities with attitude to the markets of SCO member countries to facilitate the export and import of raw materials, develop trade interactions, and expand the establishment of new financial markets between these countries.

In mid-March, following consultations between authorized representatives of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Iran, a signing ceremony was arranged for Iran's membership protocol in Tashkent.

The document approved the draft memorandum of obligations of the

Iranian side in order to obtain the status of a SCO member state.

The event was attended by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Vladimir Norov, heads of the permanent bodies of the SCO, national coordinators of the member states, as well as heads and representatives of the diplomatic missions of China and Iran in Tashkent.

The signing of the protocol was a practical step towards the implementation of the decision taken last year by the leaders of eight states at the Dushanbe SCO summit to start the procedure for admitting Iran to the permanent membership of the organization.

The document testifies to the readiness of the Iranian side after acquiring membership to comply with the goals and principles of the SCO Charter, international treaties and documents adopted within the organization, to contribute to the development of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation with member states, to increase the authority of the SCO in international and regional affairs.

The next stage of this process will be the signing of the memorandum of commitments on the sidelines of the forthcoming SCO summit in Samarkand in September this year and the fulfillment of these obligations. After that, the heads of member states will



consider granting Iran the status of a SCO member state.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Vladimir Norov in his speech drew attention to the fact that since 2005 Iran, as an observer state, has been actively participating in the activities of the SCO.

Norov said Iran regularly participates in meetings of the main bodies and consultations on regional security issues. In particular, he said, the competent structures of "the Islamic Republic of Iran have established and maintain working contacts with the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the SCO."

"The entry of such a state as Iran expands the zone of 'geographical responsibility' of the SCO, opens up new prospects for the development of regional cooperation. Our organization is confidently moving towards broad transcontinental cooperation in the vast Eurasian space. This, undoubtedly, will allow us to take a fresh look at topical issues of the regional and global

agenda," said Norov.

SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming, who participated in the conference through videoconference, expressed gratitude to the Uzbek side presiding over the SCO for organizing this event and to all parties for the well-coordinated work on agreeing documents aimed at admitting Iran to the SCO.

The delegations speaking at the consultations positively noted the efforts made by the Uzbek side within the framework of the chairmanship in the SCO, including in terms of further strengthening the international role and authority of the organization.

On September 17, 2021, it was announced that Iran would become a full member of the SCO.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who addressed the summit virtually, confirmed that from September 17, Iran will become a permanent member of the SCO.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted Iran's full membership.

Addressing the SCO summit on the same day, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said, "Strengthening bilateral cooperation, especially in the field of economy is an important factor in improving the strategic role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in global economy."

Raisi called the SCO summit "one of

the few" opportunities for dialogue to ensure real peace and cooperation at the regional level.

In another part of his speech, Raisi noted that his government's foreign policy orientation will focus on "economic multilateralism" and strengthening "neighborhood policy" in its broadest sense, and strengthening its presence in regional organizations.

He also mentioned Iran's vast potential in terms of geopolitics, population, energy, transportation, human resources, and most importantly spirituality, culture and civilization.

Raisi called Iran the connecting link between South and North Eurasia through the North-South Corridor, connecting Central Asia and Russia to India.

The president also noted that Iran's foreign policy has always been based on active participation in international organizations, multilateralism and opposition to unilateralism based on justice, cooperation, mutual respect and the need to play a constructive role in facing international and regional challenges.

In this regard, Leonid Ivashov, director of the Russian Center for Geopolitical Studies, also said, "Iran is a reliable partner for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and its membership is important and effective in increasing regional security."

TEDPIX loses 6,200 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 6,233 points on Wednesday.

As reported, the index closed at 1,533 million points.

Over 8.577 billion securities worth 50.555 trillion rials (about \$174.32 million) were traded at the TSE on Tuesday.

The first market's index lost 4,306 points, and the second market's index dropped 13,356 points.

TSE is on the four Iranian stock exchanges, the other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).





From page 1 ► French media described Macron's significant losses as a "crushing defeat" and an "earthquake".

Many have pointed to the low voter turnout: 46.23 percent in Sunday's crucial second-round legislative election as just one sign of Macron's failure.

As it stands those who abstained from the vote were the biggest winner as some analysts have suggested, but the factor behind the abstention is a lack of vision among the contenders to address the French people's urgent needs amid rising inflation.

One notable and unexpected result was Nupes, an alliance of leftwing and Green parties led by Jean Luc Melenchon that won the second largest number of seats.

Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne said the "unprecedented" situation "is a risk to our country faced with challenges at the national level as well as at the international scale."

Borne herself was only appointed in May by Macron in the aftermath of his presidential win and has been under heavy pressure to step down.

Melenchon has called on the French PM to submit to a vote of confidence telling reporters "that woman has no legitimacy. None. We're wasting our time until she leaves,"

On Tuesday, Borne succumbed to the growing calls and offered her resignation. However, she appears to be safe for now after receiving the backing of her party MPs and intervention by Macron, mainly because she retained her seat in the legislative vote.

Macron had insisted before

the election that all ministers who lost their seats would have to stand down. Nevertheless, the decision to keep the Prime Minister in power has been strongly criticized.

The political impasse has left the French President holding back-to-back meetings with leaders of opposition parties in an attempt to break the political deadlock; or as the Elysee Palace put it for "possible constructive solutions" to the deadlock.

Experts says Macron may try and form a majority by joining hands with smaller parties but whether that approach will work remains to be seen.

His most important meeting was with Christian Jacob, leader of the mainstream right Les Republicains party, which came fourth in the parliamentary election winning 64 seats.

"We have never been in such a situation," he said. "The responsibility for it lies with the president of the Republique. He has had a five-year term for nothing," Jacob told reporters.

Earlier, Jacob accused Macron of "using the extremes" for his own purposes. "He has put the country in this situation," he said.

Macron's losses paved the way for the far-right and leftist parties to prosper and essentially play a key role in the country's political landscape for the next five years.

After meeting Macron, Jacob said, "I told the president that it was out of the question to enter into a coalition deal, that would be a betrayal of our voters." Earlier Jacob had called the President "arrogant".

Macron's also sat down at the Elysee with Olivier Faure, head of

France in political limbo after Macron suffers setback

the Parti Socialiste, one of four parties in Melenchon's alliance.

Faure told journalists before the meeting that "Emmanuel Macron was legitimately re-elected, but he has not been given a clear mandate,"

Earlier Faure told French media he would tell the president "the country is not well, it is angry, but it is not blocked and there are policies that are possible."

There has been no indication so far as to whether Macron will meet Melenchon.

He did, however, go all the way to meeting his longtime fierce rival, Marine Le Pen, head of the radical left La France Insoumise,

After her meeting with Macron, Le Pen said she told him her party's MPs will be part of the opposition but don't want to do "systematic obstruction."

"If measures are being proposed that go in the right direction... we will vote for them. If they go in the wrong direction, we will amend them. If they are not amended as we want, then we will oppose them," she added.

Macron may resort to running a minority government and will have to compromise with MPs on passing legislation, something that threatens to paralyze parliament.

According to Fabien Roussel of the French Communist Party, who met Macron on Tuesday evening, the president asked him "if we were ready to work in a government of national unity", and if such an initiative was the right solution or whether support should be sought "on a case-by-case basis".

The French economy minister Bruno Le Maire has admitted

"we will have to show a lot of imagination" to govern. The leftists, the far-right, and the green bloc will most likely stand in the way and oppose Macron's policies. The first session of the new National Assembly is scheduled for next Tuesday.

Le Pen's far-right party, for example, had just eight seats in the previous parliament, her bloc has significantly expanded that this time round to 89 seats that giving the party unprecedented power.

Former Prime Minister Edouard Philippe has urged the creation of a "grand coalition", considering a "compromise", even if it meant "finding new profiles" to take the lead.

But Macron will travel to Brussels for a European summit scheduled on Thursday and Friday. He will then head to a G-7 meeting in Germany next week, followed by a NATO summit in Spain and a brief visit to Portugal.

Again critics say his constant traveling and lack of attention to domestic affairs has left the French President out of touch with important domestic affairs.

Will this be the start of a new trend in Europe, where Presidents, Prime ministers, and Chancellors suffer losses for putting the affairs of the European Union and NATO above their mandate to deliver on domestic affairs?

Time will tell, but if the voter reaction to Macron is anything to go by, it reveals a lot about other European nations, whose nationals are suffering from a cost of living crisis and abstaining from the ballot boxes in protest.

Afghan earthquake: 1,000 people killed and 1,500 wounded, official says



Many of the areas' traditional houses are made of mud and other natural materials, making them vulnerable to damage.

Pictures show landslides and ruined mud-built homes in eastern Paktika province, where rescuers have been scrambling to treat the injured.

Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada said hundreds of houses were destroyed and the death toll was likely to rise.

It is the deadliest earthquake to strike Afghanistan in two decades.

The head of information for Paktika province, Mohammad Amin Hazifi, told the BBC that 1,000 people had died and 1,500 are injured.

Rescue teams are still searching for others buried under the ground, he added.

The earthquake struck about 44km (27 miles) from the south-eastern city of Khost shortly after 01:30 local time (21:00 Tuesday GMT), when many people were asleep at home.

"Every street you go, you hear people mourning the deaths of their beloved ones. Houses are ruined," a local journalist in badly-hit Paktika province said to the BBC.

Earthquakes tend to cause significant damage in Afghanistan, where dwellings in many rural areas are unstable or poorly built.

Local farmer Alem Wafa cried as he told the BBC that official rescue teams are yet to reach the remote village of Gyan - one of the worst hit.

"There are no official aid workers, but people from neighbouring cities and villages came here to rescue people. I arrived this morning, and I - myself - found 40 dead bodies."

He continued: "Most of them are young, very young children. There is a hospital here. But it can't deal with this disaster. It doesn't have the capacity."

Taliban officials called for aid agencies to rush to the affected areas in the nation's east.

Decades of conflict have made it difficult for the impoverished country to improve its protections against earthquakes and other natural disasters - despite efforts by aid agencies to reinforce some buildings over the years.

Even before the Taliban takeover, Afghanistan's emergency services were stretched to deal with natural disasters - with few aircraft and helicopters available to rescuers.

Communication following the quake is difficult because of damage to mobile phone towers and the death toll could rise further still, another local journalist in the area said.

"Many people are not aware of the well-being of their relatives because their phones are not working," he said. "My brother and his family died, and I just learned it after many hours. Many villages have been destroyed."

In remote areas, helicopters have been ferrying victims to hospitals.

A doctor from one of the worst hit districts in Paktika province said medical workers were among the victims.

"We didn't have enough people and facilities before the earthquake, and now the earthquake has ruined the little we had," they said. "I don't know how many of our colleagues are still alive."

Speaking to Reuters news agency, locals described horrific scenes of death and destruction in the aftermath of the late-night earthquake.

"The kids and I screamed. One of our rooms was destroyed. Our neighbours screamed and we saw everyone's rooms," said Fatima.

"It destroyed the houses of our neighbours," local resident Faisal said. "When we arrived there were many dead and wounded. They sent us to the hospital. I also saw many dead bodies."

Most of the casualties so far have been in the Gayan and Barmal districts in Paktika, a local doctor said. Local media site Etilaat-e Roz reported a whole village in Gayan had been destroyed.

The earthquake was magnitude 6.1 at a depth of some 51km, according to seismologists.

Tremors were felt across more than 500km of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Witnesses reported feeling the quake in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, as well as Pakistan's capital, Islamabad.

However, there have been no immediate reports of casualties or significant damage in Pakistan.

Afghanistan is prone to quakes, as it's located in a tectonically active region, over a number of fault lines including the Chaman fault, the Hari Rud fault, the Central Badakhshan fault and the Darvaz fault.

Over the past decade more than 7,000 people have been killed in earthquakes in the country, the UN's Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports. There are an average of 560 deaths a year from earthquakes.

Most recently, back-to-back earthquakes in the country's west in January killed more than 20 people and destroyed hundreds of houses.

India to resist anti-U.S. messaging at BRICS summit with Xi, Putin

India is expected to push back against an anticipated effort by Chinese President Xi Jinping to use this year's BRICS summit as a platform to highlight his efforts to build an alternative to the U.S.-led global order, according to Indian officials with knowledge of the matter.

The virtual event, which Beijing is hosting this week, is set to bring together Xi, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro.

Indian negotiators will look to ensure any joint statement out of the summit is neutral and prevent attempts by China and Russia to use the summit to score a propaganda victory against the U.S. and its allies, the officials said. Modi's government will also seek to delay China's effort to expand the BRICS grouping by pushing the organization to decide on criteria for adding new members, they said.

"BRICS has become a platform for

discussing and deliberating on issues of common concern for all developing countries," India's Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement on Tuesday. The heads of state will discuss "intra-BRICS cooperation in areas such as counter-terrorism, trade, health, traditional medicine, environment," combating the pandemic and reform of multilateral institutions among others, it said.

The summit will offer Xi and Putin a vehicle to expand their vision of a global order after the two leaders declared a "no-limits friendship" just weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine. China has provided crucial diplomatic support for Russia, as it more broadly pushes back against U.S. sanctions and seeks to redefine terms like democracy and human rights.

Xi set the tone for the summit with a speech on Wednesday, a day before the leaders set to gather. The Chinese leader will also host an online dialogue on Friday



that will include leaders from BRICS countries and some from other emerging markets, the Foreign Ministry in Beijing said last week.

Brazil, Russia, India and China formed the bloc in 2009, and South Africa joined in 2010. This week's summit will be held in virtual format under the theme of "Foster High-Quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development."

(Source: Bloomberg)

Assange case reflects hypocrisy of UK, U.S. on press freedom, says China



The Chinese government has blasted UK and U.S. handling of the Julian Assange case, saying that the WikiLeaks founder's case reflects the hypocrisy of London and Washington, which are justifying their actions under the guise of press freedom.

Speaking during a news conference in Beijing on Tuesday, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin depicted the case as a "mirror" which "reflects the hypocrisy of the U.S. and the UK on press freedom."

"People are free to expose other

countries but subject to severe punishment if they expose the U.S.," said Wang.

He was responding to a question on Assange, whose extradition order to the U.S. was signed last Friday by British Home Secretary Priti Patel, following a series of failed legal battles in the UK courts.

Wang hit out at the Western standards on press freedom, saying "People are treated either as heroes if they expose other countries or as criminals if they expose the U.S."

Assange, 50, has been praised as

an anti-establishment hero who has exposed U.S. wrongdoings. He faces trial in the U.S. over the publication of secret files that exposed the U.S. military's war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"In other countries, holding the media accountable amounts to 'political persecution' while in the U.S., clamping down on media is to 'act in accordance with the law,'" said Wang.

"Some Western countries led by the U.S. have long exported war and turmoil, interfered in other countries' internal affairs, and

created humanitarian disasters. It is them that generated the issue of refugees in the first place," he said.

"All eyes are on the Assange case. Hope and believe that fairness and justice will prevail, and that hegemony and abuse of might will not last forever," he added.

Assange has 14 days to appeal the UK government's decision, after which he will be extradited within 28 days if an appeal is refused. His lawyers had previously said that he could face a possible penalty of up to 175 years in prison if convicted in the U.S.

(Source: Press TV)

Historical relics discovered in ancient Iranian port being documented



TEHRAN – A team of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts have commenced a project to study and document the historical relics discovered in Siraf, southwestern Bushehr province.

All historical pottery pieces, as well as stone utensils and glass and gypsum relics, are being organized, studied, and documented, CHTN quoted Mehdi Azarian, the director of Siraf national heritage site, as saying on Wednesday.

Last week, the official announced that archaeological excavations in the Sassanid-Islamic port of Siraf have uncovered some torpedo-tip jars, which were used to transport liquids from the Persian Gulf to other parts of the world.

“Specimens of the jars have previously been found in ports of India and Sri Lanka,” the official said.

“Moreover, similar jars, which bear inscriptions in Sassanid’s Pahlavi language, have been discovered in Thailand.”

Back in May, an archaeological team commenced a field survey to shed new light on the maritime heritage of the Sassanids across Siraf located on the north shore of the Persian Gulf.

The majority of excavations have been carried out in the historical core of the port city near its Jameh mosque and ruined fortresses, Azarian said.

Situated in Bushehr province, Siraf was Iran’s most important port from the Sassanid period to the 4th century AH. It bears plentiful evidence of Persian mastership and genius in seafaring, international relations, and interaction with other near and far cultures and civilizations.

Between 1966 and 1973, the British Institute of Persian Studies conducted seven seasons of excavation and survey at Siraf, which was a major city on the Iranian shore of the Persian Gulf that played a leading role in the network of maritime trade that supplied Western Asia with the products of India, the Far East, and Eastern Africa between 800 CE and 1050.

The ancient port had a population of about 300,000 during the early Islamic era and this fact shows that it was a large city. However, today, just about 7,000 people live in Siraf in a small area.

Bushehr is home to several ancient ports including Siraf, which Iran seeks to register on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Moreover, Bushehr is one of the most significant historical regions along the Persian Gulf, embracing significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras.

Mosques, mansions, towers, fortresses, castles, and gardens are amongst the ancient gems of Bushehr, which is also home to various archaeological mounds including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion.

Excavation sheds new light on Achaemenid water structure

TEHRAN – A team of Iranian archaeologists has recently finished an archaeological season on an Achaemenid period (c. 550 – 330 BC) water structure, CHTN reported on Wednesday.

The recent archaeological excavation of the Didegan dam, also known as Bostan Khani dam, leads to the discovery of more waterway canals as well as the dam’s water distribution, Iranian archaeologist Hamidreza Karami said.

This canal, whose walls and floor are completely stone, has a width of 70 centimeters and a height of 125 centimeters, and besides transferring water from the reservoir to the diffuser, also deposited sediment in the reservoir, he noted.

This structure, which measures 70 meters in length, served the lower plains of the dam up to the Pasargadae plain and Sivand and Persepolis for 200 years during the Achaemenid period, he added.

Back in March, the archaeologist announced that seasons of archaeological excavations on the Didegan dam uncovered valuable secrets and information concerning dam engineering and water control management which were practiced

in Iran during the Achaemenid era.

“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 dam-related architectural structures in that period,” he explained.

“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.”

Karami has previously described the Bostan Khani Dam in southern Iran, as a “masterpiece” of architecture and water management in Achaemenid-era Iran. “So far [valuable evidence of the] architectural structure has been obtained to recognize and realize the structure of the dam and its construction method.

The expert considered Bostan Khani Dam as the largest of its kind in the Achaemenid period that has been identified so far.

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

Seasons of archaeological excavations on the Didegan dam uncovered valuable secrets and information concerning dam engineering and water control management.

Tourism can guarantee peace and security between nations, expert says

From page 1 ▶ Aside from Iran’s historical and civilizational status, its geopolitical and geoeconomic position as an economic, cultural, and historical crossroads provides an exceptional opportunity for tourism development, he noted. “Developing and strengthening tourism, however, will be achieved when governments place tourism at the center of their economic and cultural diplomacy.”

It is possible for tourism to once again reorganize the world’s collapsed economy if governments seize opportunities for international cooperation, and give tourism a central place in regional diplomacy, he concluded.

Some experts believe Iran is still somehow “unknown” to



many potential travelers due to the Western “media war”. Several estimates have been released so far on the extent of the tourism-related losses incurred by the pandemic.

According to the data compiled by the tourism ministry, the tourism of the country was

growing before the corona outbreak, its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, nearing the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent. Some 8.7 million foreign nationals visited Iran during the Iranian year (1398) and Iran was ranked as the

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

Experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after the coronavirus is contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Tens of Sassanid coins recovered in central Iran



TEHRAN – Iranian authorities have recently confiscated some 350 ancient coins, which were illegally kept in a place in the central province of Markazi, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The coins, which are made of silver, are estimated to date from the Sassanid era (224 CE–651), Mostafa Marzban explained on

Wednesday.

The historical coins have been given to the province’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department for further investigation and better preservation, the official added.

In about 220 CE the Sasanian dynasty of Iran introduced the concept of thin flan coins, issues that were struck in relief on both sides. In order not to produce intolerable stresses in the dies, since the thinner the material the more force necessary to make it flow into the recesses of the die’s design, the depth of relief on such coins was of necessity much shallower than with earlier currency.

Such techniques spread by way of Byzantium to northern Europe, where the emperor Charlemagne struck thin flan deniers (small silver coins), or pennies, which became

characteristic of both his own and neighboring kingdoms.

In many ways, Iran under the Sassanian rule witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance during Sassanid rule.

In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

Markazi province is considered the industrial capital of the country. It is rich in natural, historical, cultural, and religious attractions.

Hand-woven carpets and kilims, made in its cities including Farahan, Sarugh, Lilivan, Senejan, and Vafs are known internationally.

No harm to Hormozgan historical sites by quake

TEHRAN – A medium-sized 5.3 magnitude earthquake that struck Bandar-e-Mogham in Hormozgan on Wednesday caused no damage to historical structures and sites across the southern Iranian province.

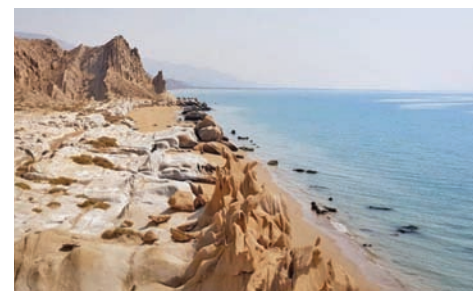
Based on field visits by experts of the province’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, no damage to historical relics and monuments has been reported so far, the provincial tourism chief has said.

However, due to a continuous flow of aftershocks, experts are on standby to inspect the possible harm to historical sites of the province, Sohrab Banavand explained on Wednesday.

Bordering the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman on the south and bounded by Bushehr and Fars provinces on the west and northwest, Kerman on the east and northeast, and Sistan-Baluchestan on the southeast, Hormozgan is widely renowned for having incredible culture and heritage, stunning sceneries, and above all its warm and hospitable people.

It embraces arrays of islands among which Kish, Hormuz, Hengam, and Qeshm are the most popular ones and top tourist destinations in the southernmost parts of the country.

Over the past couple of decades, the coral Kish Island has become a beach resort where visitors can swim, shop, and sample a laid-



back and relatively liberated local lifestyle. It is home to free-trade-zone status, with ever-growing hotels, shopping centers, apartment blocks, and retail complexes.

Hormuz, which is mostly barren and hilly, is situated some eight kilometers off the coast of the Strait of Hormuz, which attracts many tourists by its colorful mountains, silver sand shores, and great local people.

Hengam Island has scenery rocky shores, serene sunset, and kind natives, which can attract travelers who enjoy a relaxing trip by spending time on this tranquil island.

Qeshm Island is a heaven for eco-tourists as it embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines. The island also features geologically eye-catching canyons, hills, caves, and valleys, most of which are protected as part of the UNESCO-tagged Qeshm Island Geopark, itself a haven for nature-lovers.

Gereh-chini works on show at tourism ministry

TEHRAN – A collection of handmade Gereh-chini works has been put on show during a solo exhibition at the headquarters of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in Tehran.

A total of 21 artworks by the Iranian crafter Abbas Yazdipour have been selected for the exhibit, which will come to an end on Thursday, CHTN reported on Tuesday.

The works include mirrors, photos and window frames, the report added.

The art of “Gereh-chini”, literally meaning to arrange the knots, is one of the traditional decorative and useful handicrafts of Iran. It relies on the art of laying finely cut pieces of wood on a surface according to a design.

Gereh is composed of geometric knots that are repeated beautifully and rhythmically. Isfahan is its birthplace, and the Seljuk dynasty is known to be the first

time Gereh-chini was used. However, the exact date of the craft’s origin cannot be determined. The art flourished during the Safavid era.

In Gereh-chini, wood pieces are used in their natural color and no paint is applied to them. Gereh is made best from plane trees, according to masters of the art.

Wood from other trees such as walnut, beech, morus, almond, silverberry, zelkova, pear, and jujube is also used to make shrine doors, pulpits, doors, frames, and decorative dividing panels, etc.

Tond, Kond, Shol, Kond o Shol, Pili, and Doroodgari are the seven types of knots or Gereh, and each of these has its own background and design. Three main categories can be distinguished among Gereh Chini: 1. All wood 2. Moshabbak (lattice trelliswork) and 3. Orosi or Sash window.



Orosi is a type of window made by Gereh and colored glass. They are beautiful and were most frequently used during the Zand and Qajar dynasties. In terms of artistic value, Orosi is very significant.

In Gereh-chini, a Gereh or knot is, in fact, a combination of pieces of wood that are locked together in order to create delicate designs. The finer the pieces of wood, the more valuable the product.

Gereh-chini pieces are made to endure in

different climates of Iran with tongue and groove joints. Because of this, Gereh-chini artworks can be found in many historical buildings.

There are several examples still standing, including Chehel Sotoon, Hasht Behesht Palace, and historic houses like Alam and Sheikh ol-Islam in Isfahan. There is also the House of Tabatabai in Kashan, Abbasian, Boroujerdi, Golestan Palace, and other such buildings in Yazd and Tehran. There are still Gereh-chini workshops in Tehran where this craft is still practiced.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next. For instance, Shiraz is named a “world city of [diverse] handicrafts”; Malayer is a global

hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture, while Zanjan has gained the title of a “world city of filigree”.

In addition, the ancient city of Shiraz has been chosen to host the 39th General Assembly of the World Crafts Council-Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR) in May 2023. Shiraz has a remarkable amount of handicraft pioneers. With an average age of 70, some of these pioneers are still active at their workshops. The occupational records of about 100 pioneers are collected and are annually praised by the custodians of the WCC General Office.

Available data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts suggests the value of Iran’s handicrafts exports stood at \$120 million during the first eleven months of the Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – February

18, 2021), Mehr reported. The country’s handicrafts exports slumped during the mentioned months in comparison to the same period last a year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society and the Spanish Red Cross signed a memorandum of cooperation on the sidelines of the 23rd session of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies General Assembly in Geneva.

IRCS head Pir-Hossein Kolivand met with Spanish Red Cross head Javier Senent Garcia, discussing joint cooperation and sharing experiences of the two National Societies.

Emphasizing on performing joint relief exercises, exchanging experiences and cooperation in the fields of youth and volunteers, Kolivand said that the establishment of Red Crescent Houses with the aim of raising resilience and empowering communities in the face of disasters and natural crises is one of the valuable achievements that can make changes in services of the Societies.

For his part, Garcia described the Iranian Red Crescent as a strong Society which has valuable experience, expressing interest in expanding ties with the Iranian



Red Crescent Society.

After signing the MOU, it was decided that representatives of both Societies communicate to implement the provisions of the document so that the fields of bilateral cooperation can be evaluated in a more specialized way and the necessary steps can be taken to imple-

ment the memorandum.

IRCS services

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

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

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

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

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

Iran exports COVID-19 vaccines to Nicaragua

From page 1 ► Made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, COVIRAN Barkat was unveiled on December 29, 2020, and received the license for public use on June 14, 2021.

According to a study, the effectiveness of the Iranian-made COVIRAN vaccine in fighting the coronavirus has been more than foreign rivals, namely Sinopharm, AstraZeneca, and Sputnik.

The study was performed on 1.8 million people in Fars province from the beginning of the vaccination process till October 2021, which considered four vaccines of Sino-

pharm, AstraZeneca, COVIRAN, and Sputnik, Younes Panahi, the deputy minister of health for research and technology, said in March.

COVIRAN vaccine was 87 percent effective in protecting against coronavirus infection and 86 percent effective against Covid-related hospitalization, compared with 84 percent and 82 percent, respectively for AstraZeneca. Sinopharm came in third with 80 percent and 72 percent, respectively.

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

Birds In Iran

Part 7

Ornithological investigations in Iran

Prior to the mid-1960s our knowledge of the avifauna of Iran was very sketchy and based to a large extent on the work of a handful of naturalist-explorers who traveled widely through Iran in the second half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century.

The first major account of the birds of Iran to appear in the literature was that of Blanford and the Persian Boundary Commission of 1870-72 (Blanford), which summarized all information obtained till then.

The Russian ornithologist N. A. Zarudny traveled widely in Iran between 1884 and 1904 and published a number of papers in Russian and German on the results of his studies. He summarized many of these in tabular form in a paper which appeared in the Journal für Ornithologie in 1911.

From 1935 to 1945, Walter Koelz made extensive collections throughout Iran and Afghanistan. His material was studied in depth by Charles Vaurie and the information incorporated in a series of over thirty papers which appeared in American Museum Novitates between 1949 and 1961 (listed in Burgess, Mokhtarzadeh, and Cornwallis and in Erard and Etchécopar).

Other important contributions were made by Buxton, Stresemann, Heinrich, Paludan (1940), Trott, Meiklejohn, Norton, and Passburg in north and west Iran; by Missone and Schuz (1959) in the south Caspian region; by Witherby, Capito, and Paludan (1938) in the Zagros and southwest Iran; and by Sharpe, Cumming, Ticehurst, Cox and Cheesman, and Ticehurst in the Persian Gulf, Sistan and Baluchestan.

In 1958, S. H. Jervis Read produced a provisional check-list of the birds of Iran (1958) and, shortly after, Vaurie's important work "The Birds of the Palearctic Fauna" (1959 and 1965) included a concise summary of range, habitat, and geographical variation of all species of birds occurring in Iran.

A general account of the birds of Iran appeared in The Cambridge History of Iran I, and a comprehensive bibliography of the early work was produced by Burgess, Mokhtarza-

deh, and Cornwallis at the same time.

In the mid-1960s the newly created Iranian Department of the Environment (or Game and Fish Department as it was then called) set up an ornithological section in its research division and since that time has pursued a variety of research programs on Iranian avifauna.

Eskandar Firouz's booklet "Environment Iran," published in Tehran in 1974, gives an excellent summary of the activities and programs of the Department of the Environment. Earlier summaries appeared in Firouz, Hassinger, and Ferguson (1970) and Firouz (1971a).

Initially, the ornithology unit of the Department of the Environment focused its attention on birds of economic importance, notably the migratory wildfowl and some of the game-birds. However, in the early 1970s studies were expanded to include a variety of rare, vulnerable, and endangered species, and a nationwide atlassing project was initiated.

At the same time the universities in Iran began to take an increased interest in the birds of Iran, the universities of Tehran and Shiraz being particularly active in this field.

The Department of the Environment's major ornithological programs have included the following:

Bird banding (ringing) program A national banding scheme was established by the department in 1966. Emphasis was initially given to migratory wildfowl wintering in the south Caspian region, but by the mid-1970s the program had been expanded to include banding studies of white pelicans Pelecanus onocrotalus, greater flamingos Phoenicopterus ruber, herons and egrets Ardeidae, common cranes Grus grus, and shorebirds Charadriidae and Scolopacidae.

By the end of 1976 a total of 22,064 birds of 239 species had been banded in Iran, including 797 white pelicans, 8,766 greater flamingos, and 2,385 ducks. Banding activities and all recoveries reported up to the end of 1975 are discussed in Cornwallis and Ferguson, Argyle (1975 and 1976).

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Finland seeks to rehabilitate Anzali Wetland



TEHRAN – Ambassador of the Republic of Finland to Tehran Kari Kahiluoto has made suggestions for the restoration of Anzali International Wetland and its twinning with Finland's natural resources.

During a meeting with Gilan province's department of environment chief Reza Zamani, Kahiluoto said that the North-South International Corridor which connects East Europe to the Indian Ocean through Iran will provide joint cooperation opportunity among Finland and Iran.

He proposed a sisterhood partnership between Anzali Wetland and a wetland in Finland and asked for technological cooperation on forest management to preserve Hyrcanian forests.

He further expressed readiness to cooperate with Iran's Gilan Province on waste sorting and water management, as it is an advanced country in the field with zero waste being disposed of in nature.

UNDP pledges support for Iran to address environmental challenges

TEHRAN – Iranian Department of Environment Chief Ali Salajegheh in a meeting with UNDP Representative in Iran Claudio Providas emphasized the need for cooperation to address environmental challenges.

Iran is a very influential and active country in the United Nations and has responsibilities and privileges, he said.

Criticizing the U.S. sanctions, Providas announced readiness for tackling environmental issues in Iran through the support of the United Nations Development Program.

"We strive to raise funds to strengthen support, and the second issue is to move from environmental protection to existing opportunities for investment

and a knowledge-based economy, and we must focus on energy, environment, and agriculture, which play an important role in development," he further stated.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he expressed readiness to cooperate in dealing with sand and dust storms, suggesting negotiations with Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan.

Salajegheh, for his part, said that the environment is affected by a variety of factors, including the oppressive sanctions.

He further called on the international forums and organizations to play their part well and to support the transfer of technology to solve environmental issues.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

97% of Iran affected by long-term drought: expert

Based on the data collected over the past decade approximately 97 percent of the country is affected by long-term drought, director of the national drought warning and monitoring center, Sadeq Ziaeian, has said.

Some 12.7 percent of the country is hit by extremely severe drought, 53.6 percent of the country is affected by severe drought while 24.8 percent of the country is facing moderate drought and 5.9 percent of the country is withstanding mild drought, ISNA news agency quoted Ziaeian as saying on Wednesday.

He went on to say that extremely severe long-term drought has had negative effects on 14.2 percent of the country's total population, severe long-term drought has hit 47 percent of the country's population, 30.7 percent of the country's population is affected by moderate long-term drought and 5.1 percent of the population is stricken with mild drought.

۹۷ درصد مساحت ایران تحت تاثیر خشکسالی است

صادق ضیائی‌ان رئیس مرکز ملی خشکسالی و مدیریت بحران سازمان هواشناسی اعلام کرد: بررسی داده‌های ۱۰ ساله خشکسالی بیانگر آن است که ۹۷ درصد مساحت ایران تحت تأثیر خشکسالی بلندمدت است.

ضیائی‌ان در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا گفت: از این مقدار ۵۳.۶ درصد مساحت کشور با خشکسالی شدید، ۱۲.۷ درصد با خشکسالی بسیار شدید، ۲۴.۸ درصد مساحت با خشکسالی متوسط و ۵.۹ درصد مساحت با خشکسالی خفیف مواجه هستند.

وی ادامه داد: ۲ درصد جمعیت ایران با خشکسالی بسیار شدید بلندمدت است همچنین ۴۷ درصد جمعیت کشور با خشکسالی شدید، ۳۰.۷ درصد جمعیت با خشکسالی متوسط و ۵.۱ درصد جمعیت با خشکسالی خفیف دست و پنجه نرم می‌کنند.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON JUNE 22

New cases	251
New deaths	3
Total cases	7,235,440
Total deaths	141,373
New hospitalized patients	67
Patients in critical condition	251
Total recovered patients	7,060,989
Diagnostic tests conducted	52,537,461
Doses of vaccine injected	150,273,151

