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Dynamic Diplomacy: From SCO to BRICS

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Report

Refugee deaths spark outrage in U.S.

Campaigners have slammed U.S. politicians following the grisly discovery of 51 dead asylum seekers and at least a dozen others who required hospital treatment after being found inside an abandoned trailer on a remote road in San Antonio, Texas on Monday.

The deceased include 39 men and 12 women while four minors were among those needing hospital treatment for heat stroke and exhaustion.

At least 27 Mexicans, three Guatemalans, and four Hondurans are believed to be among the dead, according to politicians from all three countries.

Officials from both sides of the border are working to identify the nationalities of the remaining refugees that were found dead.

According to local and federal officials briefed on an investigation, the truck may have been carrying around 100 asylum seekers, but the exact number remains unclear. The vehicle had been left parked beside railroad tracks as temperatures soared to as high as 40 degrees celsius.

Reports have cited San Antonio's police chief as saying an individual working in a nearby building went outside to check after hearing a cry for help, found the trailer door partially open, and saw bodies inside.

Speaking to reporters, fire chief Charles Hood said those transferred to the hospital were hot to touch and dehydrated while there was no water or air conditioning system found in the trailer. "We're not supposed to open up a truck and see stacks of bodies in there," Hood said. "None of us come to work imagining that." ▶ Page 5

Opinion

Iran champions Esteghlal yet to drop bombshell

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN – Iran football champion Esteghlal have not yet signed a big star in the summer windows and it worries the popular team's fans.

The Blues have hired a new Portuguese head coach as a replacement for Farhad Majidi.

The team's official say that the situation is under control and there is no need to worry for the upcoming season.

Esteghlal are preparing to reclaim the title for the second successive year under leadership of Ricardo Sa Pinto and it's while their archrivals Persepolis have dropped several bombshells in the summer transfer so far.

Esteghlal have signed Sepahan forward Sajad Shahbazzadeh as Rudy Gestede's replacement and also they are going to sign former Charleroi forward Kaveh Rezaei.

The team's officials say that they take very seriously and doing everything they can to start the new season in a splendid way but the fans are not yet convinced due to Persepolis's signings in the transfer window.

Esteghlal have parted ways with defenders Mohammad Daneshgar and Vouria Ghafouri and that's what have made them extra concerned.

Also, Esteghlal will have to represent Iran in the 2022/23 AFC Champions League and need to be further strengthened for the prestigious competition.

Legacy of Hossein Taeb



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TEHRAN – In a regular intelligence reshuffle, the Islamic Republic of Iran appointed new heads and commanders for a number of intelligence and security agencies. Despite the fact that the new appointments were made in line with regular procedures, Israel

and Western media launched an extensive propaganda campaign against the motives behind them.

Among the new decisions, the end of Hossein Taeb's tenure as the director of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Intelligence

Organization (IRGC-IO) drew special attention and coverage from Western and Israeli media. They sought to portray Taeb's tenure at the IRGC-IO as a move driven by Iranian suspicion over alleged Israeli infiltration in the intelligence organization. ▶ Page 3

ICCIMA hosts Iran-Poland business forum

TEHRAN – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) hosted an Iran-Poland business forum on Wednesday, the ICCIMA portal reported.

The event was attended by ICCIMA Deputy Head Hossein Selahvarzi, Head of Iran-Poland Joint Chamber of Commerce Rahim Ba-

na-Molaei, and Deputy Head of Polish Chamber of Commerce for Importers, Exporters, and Cooperation Andrzej Pilat as well as the representatives of some companies from the two countries.

Speaking at the gathering, Selahvarzi referred to the historical background and good

relations between Iran and Poland and expressed hope that trade exchanges between the two countries will continue vigorously.

He mentioned the exchange of numerous trade delegations and the signing of several memoranda of understanding between the two countries in the past, saying: ▶ Page 4



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University entrance exam begins nationwide

TEHRAN – The Iranian University Entrance Exam, simply known as Konkur, started on Wednesday for the 52nd year across the country.

The exam will be attended by 1,489,220 candidates, which shows an increase of 121,166 (an increase of 9.2 percent) compared to last year. ▶ Page 7

Jordan backs down from regional NATO idea, says all Arabs want good ties with Iran

TEHRAN – The Jordanian foreign minister has stressed that there has been no discussion of forming a military alliance in the region with the presence of the Israeli regime, saying this was not also on the agenda of the U.S. president's visit to the region in mid-July.

According to Al-Jazeera, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman al-Safadi stressed on Wednesday that no talks had been held on the formation of an Arab alliance with Israel.

He added that what was mentioned in the interview of the Jordan King's interview with the CNBC was that the King stressed his support for the formation of an Arab defense pact.

It was natural for Jordan to "defend any joint Arab institutionalized action, whether security, defense or economy," al-Safadi said.

Through his remarks the Jordanian chief diplomat dismissed as baseless reports by Western and Israeli media outlets about Tel

Aviv's attempt to establish a military alliance with several Arab countries against Iran with the help of the United States.

On the other hand, al-Safadi announced, several Arab countries are conducting joint coordination prior to the U.S. president's visit to the region. He also said he was visiting Doha in the same direction to convey a message from the King of Jordan to the Emir of Qatar. ▶ Page 2

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Interview

Doha talks will provide good opportunity for Iran and U.S.: professor

By M.A. Saki

TEHRAN – Farhang Jahanpour, a former Senior Fulbright Research Scholar at Harvard, has a positive view toward the new format and venue of the talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal.

Negotiators from Iran and the U.S. resumed indirect talks with the mediation of the European Union in Doha, Qatar, on Tuesday in new push to revive the nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Jahanpour tells the Tehran Times that the talks in Doha "will provide a good opportunity for talks between the two main sides, namely Iran and the United States."

The professor, who also taught for many years at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, believes "negotiations could be speeded up if the two sides agree to have direct talks, because ultimately the JCPOA is an agreement between Iran and the United States."

This is the text of the interview:

It has been announced that, instead of continuing the nuclear talks in Vienna as usual, Qatar will host the next round of indirect talks between Iran and the United States. What is your view about the venue and format of the nuclear talks intended to revive the JCPOA?

It is believed that the main outlines of an agreement for the resumption of the nuclear deal (officially known as the JCPOA or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) ▶ Page 2

Overseas publishers acquire copyrights to books by Persian writers

TEHRAN – Pol Literary and Translation Agency said on Tuesday that publishers from Georgia and Egypt have purchased the copyrights to the Georgian and Arabic translations of two books by Persian writers.

Based on an agreement signed with Pol, a Tehran-based institution that translates Iranian books and presents Persian-language publications around the world, "Church Bells Ringing" and "Mrs. Poet and Mr. Beethoven" will be translated and published in Georgian and Arabic.

The Academic Press of Georgia (APG) will publish the Georgian editions of the two books by the end of 2022.

The APG is an independent Georgian press focusing on publishing monographs, revised dissertations, primary source material and other books including, fiction and non-fiction literature, and children's books with educational content. ▶ Page 8

Report

Significant increase in refugee literacy

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – The literacy rate among refugees has increased significantly in recent decades. So that the literacy rate of Afghan immigrants in Iran is higher than the number of literate people in Afghanistan, according to a report published in June by the research center of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis).

According to the Population and Housing Census of the National Statistics Center in 2016, the population of refugees officially residing in Iran was 1.654, of which Afghan, Iraqi and Pakistani immigrants constitute the majority of international immigrants. In fact, 95 percent of the immigrants in Iran are "Afghan", 2 percent are "Iraqi" and about 1 percent are "Pakistani".

The research center of the Iranian Parliament, in a report published in June, ▶ Page 7

Doha talks will provide good opportunity for Iran and U.S.: professor

“Main disagreements between Iran and the U.S. are political”

From page 1 ▶ that President Trump withdrew from, had been reached under President Rouhani's government, but the talks were halted as the result of the elections in Iran.

The talks resumed in April 2021 in Vienna after President Raisi's new nuclear team had been appointed. However, during the early phases of the talks, both Iran and the United States made some extra demands that went beyond the original provisions of the JCPOA. As the two sides failed to reach agreement, the talks broke up on March 11.

Meanwhile, the IAEA Board of Governors passed a censure resolution, calling on Iran to return to the talks. Following that censure resolution, Iran switched off 27 IAEA cameras, but claimed that more than 80% of the Agency's cameras at Iran's nuclear sites had remained operational. Also, according to IAEA reports, Iran had said that it would install two additional cascades of IR-6 centrifuges, which were up to eight times more effective than the older IR-1 model that is mainly in operation

Apart from some regional countries and some right-wing U.S. officials, all the members of the JCPOA, including Iran and the United States, are in favour of renewing the deal. As the talks remained stalled and the nuclear deal was on the verge of collapse, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell travelled to Iran on June 25 and held talks with Iranian officials. In a joint press conference with the Iranian Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian, it was announced that the talks would resume soon, not in Vienna but in Qatar. The format of the talks will also be different and they will concentrate on indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States. The U.S. lead negotiator Robert Malley will travel to Qatar and indirect talks will be held between him and the Iranian side.

I believe that following the failure of the Vienna talks, this is a good format that will provide a good opportunity for talks between the two main sides, namely Iran and the United States. The negotiations could be speeded up if the two sides agree to have direct talks, because ultimately the JCPOA is an agreement between Iran and the United States, with other sides involved in order to give it more authority and guarantee its implementation.

Can the talks in Qatar carry a positive message for regional security as well?

I believe that the talks in Qatar can convey a positive message for regional security because most of the other disputes in the region and between Iran and other leading regional countries revolve round the JCPOA. If the deal is renewed to the satisfaction of both sides it can lead to a new era of cooperation not only between Iran and the West, but also between Iran and regional countries.

Even some senators in the Democratic party oppose the restoration of the JCPOA. They also don't present an alternative. However, what is their ulterior motive?

In the United States, as in many other Western countries, there are some powerful lobbies that try

to influence the politicians in favour of their causes. Some of these lobbies are organised and funded by foreign countries in order to advance their interests. Some senators are opposed to the JCPOA either due to personal conviction or are influenced by those lobbies. The best way to change their minds is to show in practice that Iran is prepared to reach some mutually advantageous agreements and to abide by them, as she did in the case of the JCPOA. If Iran wishes to have some binding agreements that cannot be violated by a future president those agreements must be approved by Congress, and the only way to achieve that is to win the trust of those Congressmen who for whatever reason are opposed to Iran.

“The best way to achieve Iran's cooperation is through rapprochement and reaching deals such as the JCPOA, because the alternative would be disastrous for both sides and for the world.”

Both Tehran and Washington have asked each other to take political decisions to break the impasse to save the nuclear deal. Do you think that the sides have somehow softened their stances that they have finally agreed to resume talks after a months-long pause?

I believe that the main disagreements between Iran and the United States are political and have little to do with the technical aspects of the JCPOA. As far as Iran is concerned, Iranian officials have emphatically stressed that they are not after nuclear weapons. Therefore, there is no proliferation issue involved. Their major problem concerns some regional countries that are opposed to Iran's growing influence and what they see as Iran's interference in the affairs of the neighbouring countries. A solid agreement with the United States can reassure those countries about Iran's intentions and can result in better relations between them, especially as serious talks are underway between Iran and Saudi Arabia, mediated by Iraq.

After his shuttle diplomacy and visits to Tehran and Riyadh, the Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi described his discussions with Iranian and Saudi officials as constructive, adding that “both sides showed maximum positivity.” Iran and Saudi Arabia need to resolve their differences through negotiations, because as two neighbours they have no option but to live in peace together.

“As far as the United States is concerned, they should have realised that the former U.S. president's policy of ‘maximum pressure’ and imposing illegal sanctions on Iran had failed.”

As far as the United States is concerned, they should have realised that the former U.S. president's policy of “maximum pressure” and imposing illegal sanctions on Iran had failed. The best way to achieve Iran's cooperation is through rapprochement and reaching deals such as the JCPOA, because the alternative would be disastrous for both sides and for the world. At a time when the world is facing multiple problems, including the war in Ukraine, high prices of petrol and energy, high inflation and growing instability in many countries, Iran and the United States must cooperate with each other to reduce tension in the region and resolve their differences through negotiations. This is why I hope that initial indirect talks in Doha will result in direct, constructive and honest negotiations between Iran and the United States. The Middle East has suffered enough from wars and instability and a period of peace and cooperation is in everyone's interest.

TEHRAN — The tree of Iran's balanced foreign policy approach is on the verge of being a one-year-old child. Stronger than before, Iran is pursuing dynamic diplomacy in a variety of cities such as Doha, Ashgabat, and other capitals. Baghdad will also join the list soon.

While Iran's top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani is engaged in intensive negotiations in Qatar with the United States through the European Union delegation, Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and his oil and foreign ministers are in Ashgabat pursuing transit diplomacy as well as the legal regime of the Caspian Sea with the littoral states.

Prior to his departure for Ashgabat on Wednesday, Raisi spoke to reporters about the purpose of his visit to Turkmenistan.

“This visit is taking place at the invitation of the esteemed president of the brotherly and friendly country of Turkmenistan in order to attend the Caspian Sea littoral states summit,” he remarked.

The President called the Caspian Sea a common heritage and capital for the littoral states with more than 270 million people.

“We have good relations with the littoral states of the Caspian Sea, but in addition to reviewing the legal regime of the Caspian Sea and peaceful use of the sea

Dynamic diplomacy: From SCO to BRICS



for the purpose of improving security at the sea, what will be discussed at the sixth summit of the Caspian Sea littoral states is cooperation between countries in the fields of transport, transit, trade, management of marine living resources, environment, as well as preventing the presence of outsiders in the sea, which is also agreed upon by all coastal countries.”

Prior to the beginning of the summit, Raisi met Serdar Berdimuhamedow, Turkmenistan's

President, as well as Chairman of the People's Council of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow.

During the meeting with the President of Turkmenistan, Raisi pointed out that the implementation of the memoranda of understanding and cooperation documents signed by the two countries during Berdimuhamedow's recent visit to Tehran will accelerate promotion of cooperation between the two countries.

Later, Raisi met with the Azerbaijani President, Ilham Aliyev.

During the meeting, Raisi reminded Aliyev that the presence of the Israeli regime in any part of the world undermines security there.

The president also had a brief meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the summit.

There's little doubt that Tehran has not put all its eggs into the basket of the JCPOA revival, as it actively seeks to establish trade relations with the neighbors. It's short-sighted thinking to assume that Iran has to wait for the United States to return to the JCPOA, while it can enjoy the benefits of regional alliances such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), or BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

On Monday, Iran's former Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh, who was holding his last presser, told the Tehran Times correspondent that Tehran has submitted a membership request to the BRICS secretariat via Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

While dynamically trailing balanced and active diplomacy with the neighbors, Tehran is awaiting Washington's serious political decisions to return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Jordan backs down from regional NATO idea, says all Arabs want good ties with Iran

From page 1 ▶ Elsewhere in the interview, al-Safadi called the issue of Palestine a fundamental issue.

He went on to call the Syrian crisis and the security of the Arab countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf “very important issues.” The chief diplomat added, “We all want mechanisms that will ensure our security through dialogue and resolving concerns.”

He also described the issue of energy and food security as important challenges that require the cooperation of Arab states.

All these issues will be discussed with the American president during his visit to the region.

Concluding his interview, the Jordanian foreign minister highlighted that all Arab countries seek to establish good relations with Iran, and “to reach this stage, we must eliminate the causes of tension through dialogue.”

In an interview with CNBC on Friday, King Abdullah II of Jordan said he would support the formation of a Middle East military alliance similar to NATO, and that it can be done with countries that are like-minded.

Iran slams G7 anti-Iran statement as unfounded and biased

TEHRAN- Late on Tuesday, Tehran strongly criticized the Group of Seven industrialized states' anti-Iran statement as baseless, one-sided, and unfair.

The statement was released during a gathering of the group's seven members on Tuesday in Germany. The group includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The group criticized Iran's “ballistic missile activity,” advocated “limitation of Iran's nuclear program,” and charged Iran with “human rights breaches.”

Later in the day, Nasser Kanani, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, stated that the Islamic Republic strongly opposes



the issuance of such a statement.

The statement, he said, “deliberately ignores” the United States' withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran and other pacts, as well as Washington's subsequent re-imposition of unlawful sanctions against the Iranian people.

The Foreign Ministry official chastised the countries that had

“I'd like to see more countries in the area come into that mix,” he said.

“I would be one of the first people that would endorse a Middle East NATO,” Abdullah said.

He added, “The mission statement has to be very, very clear. Otherwise, it confuses everybody.”

The Jordanian king noted, “I'm hoping what you're seeing in 2022 is this new vibe, I guess, in the region to say, ‘how can we connect with each other and work with each other.’”

While Iran has been vocal in expressing its objection to the concept of “regional NATO”.

Earlier, a report by Al-Araby-Al-Jadeed said that Cairo has sent assuring messages to Tehran that it will not be part of any military alliance that acts against Iran.

The website quoted high-ranking Egyptian sources as saying that several high-ranking Egyptian army commanders had strongly voiced their opposition to any confrontation with Iran in a meeting held at the Egyptian Armed Forces headquarters.

The sources added that the same position has been reiterated at the Egyptian National Security

Council meeting.

The sources pointed out that the talks took place after the proposal has been made to form a regional military alliance like NATO with the inclusion of Egypt to counter Iran.

According to sources, one of the main purposes of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's visit to Oman is to send a message of confidence to Iran through Muscat about Egypt's refusal to participate in any confrontation against Iran.

The message will also be conveyed ahead of a meeting of Arab leaders with Joe Biden in Jeddah in mid-July.

Informed Egyptian sources have also said the Egyptian security entities as well as the army strongly oppose Egypt's participation in any military coalition against Iran, Al-Araby-Al-Jadeed reported on Tuesday.

The website quoted high-ranking Egyptian sources as saying that several high-ranking Egyptian army commanders had strongly voiced their opposition to any confrontation with Iran in a meeting held at the Egyptian Armed Forces headquarters.

made the statement for their complicity in the imposition of sanctions by the U.S. and their failure to resist the coercive economic measures.

Additionally, he rejected any criticism of Iran's peaceful nuclear energy program, saying the statement “deliberately” ignores the Islamic Republic's ban on all nuclear weapons.

Kanani emphasized that the G7 countries were making “factitious accusations” against Iran while having the world's “biggest nuclear arsenal.”

The spokesperson denounced the statement for attempting to cast doubt on Iran's extensive collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

He went on to deny any allegations against Iran's “legitimate and defensive missile program,” reiterating that the country's missile development will never be open to compromise.

“It is necessary that the parties that have issued the statement rather be accountable for their sales of billions of dollars of advanced weapons, which is one of the most important factors of instability in our region,” Kanani remarked.

In response to the claims made on human rights in the statement, the official said that the nations making the accusations were the very same ones that had turned a blind eye to the “flagrant violation” of the rights of the Iranian people as a result of the sanctions.

Certain UNSC members abuse authority to advance political agenda: envoy

TEHRAN- Majid Takht Ravanchi, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iran to the UN, has denounced the use of the UN Security Council's powers and duties by certain member states.

“A candid review of the Security Council's practices reveals that the Council's authority and powers have been repeatedly abused by certain States,” Takht Ravanchi said on Tuesday.

The ambassador made the remarks while addressing an open debate on “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council”.

The following is the full text of speech by Iran's ambassador:

“I thank you for organizing this open debate. I also thank the briefers for their informative briefings.

Increasing the Security Council's efficiency and effectiveness must always be viewed as a work in progress, because the nature and scope of challenges related to international peace and security are constantly evolving. This requires the Security Council to commit to continually improving the effectiveness and transparency of its work, as well as its interaction and communication with non-Council members. To that end, reforming and evolving the Council into a fully transparent, rule-based, and, above all, accountable body is the most efficient method to ensure its transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness. That is the reason why the Council's “working methods” are among the five primary topics under consideration in the ongoing Security Council reform discussions.

We commend the significant efforts and

measures that have been made in recent years to improve the Council's working methods; nonetheless, these efforts have fallen short of what the UN members had expected because they have been few and slow. Therefore, in accordance with discussions on the subject within the “Intergovernmental Negotiations”, efforts to advance in this field must be increased, especially within the Council itself.

Against this backdrop, I would like to address the following points.

1-The Security Council must adhere to the purposes and principles of the United Nations in all of its decision-making procedures. Full compliance with the UN Charter will enable the Council to refrain from adopting ultra-vires decisions that contravene the UN Charter, or considering circumstances that do not pose a

threat to international peace and security as well as issues pertaining to the domestic affairs of States. This will assist the Council to avoid abuse or overuse of its Chapter VII functions and instead carry out its obligations hereunder, appropriately, and responsibly.

2-The Security Council must assess the effectiveness of sanctions and their humanitarian repercussions at various stages of conflict and suspend or lift them as needed. Sanctions, as is well acknowledged, have serious humanitarian consequences as we have all witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic, putting civilian populations' health and lives in grave jeopardy. Furthermore, working in an environment where sanctions are prevalent is often difficult for humanitarian actors.

3-The United Nations System is built on

multilateralism. In the face of serious and increasingly complex global challenges, the Council must practice and uphold true multilateralism, which necessitates resolving international issues through collaboration. A candid review of the Security Council's practices reveals that the Council's authority and powers have been repeatedly abused by certain States, who, in pursuit of their short-sighted political objectives, particularly against developing countries, regard this body as their preferred tool to exert pressure on other countries. Such conduct not only breaches the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law, but also demonstrates disrespect for the Council's authority and powers, jeopardizing its integrity and efficiency.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran voices support for UN program to combat illegal arms trade

TEHRAN – The Iranian Permanent Mission to the United Nations has expressed support for a United Nations program that aims to galvanize nations in combating illegal arms trade.

In a statement by Heidar Ali Balouji, First Counselor of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations at the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA), Iran expressed hope that nations "will draft an outcome document that is in line with the mandate and competence of the BMS [Biennial Meeting of States] that can both reach consensus and stay clear of any controversial issues including secondary topics or synergies in the context of the PoA."

Under the PoA, governments agreed to improve national small arms laws, import/export controls, and stockpile management – and to engage in cooperation and assistance.

In 2005 they also adopted the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), which requires States to ensure that weapons are properly marked and that records are kept. Moreover, it provides a framework for cooperation in weapons tracing – fulfilling one of the commitments governments made in the Programme of Action.



Improving weapons tracing is now part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

"We fully support the POA; its effective, complete and non-discriminatory implementation as a political and voluntary instrument, can contribute to combating illicit trade in SALWs [small arms and light weapons]," Balouji said in the statement. "Therefore, we have taken several key steps, including through adopting six acts and laws by the Iranian council of ministers as well as the Parliament."

He added, "In order to enforce those regulations, we have taken concrete measures regarding manufacturing, marking and exporting SALWs. Therefore, systematic marking on SALWs is an integral part of the production process. Furthermore, some of those measures include long-

term record-keeping of SALWs production and assignment, complete destruction of collected or confiscated SALWs, regular visits to stockpiles, manufacturing under government control and, receiving a mandatory end-user certificate from the importing States. We have an Action Plan to collect illicit SALWs and stop their trafficking as well as security and disciplinary procedures related to SALWs. Additionally, we convene programs aimed towards education and raising awareness on the dangers and detrimental impacts of the illicit trade in SALWs."

He noted, "In addition to the implementation of action plans to counter terrorist elements, identifying and combatting arms trafficking gangs along with the intensification of border controls to counter terrorism as well as

the illicit trade and trafficking of SALWs have all contributed to the detection and seizure of more than 40,000 illicit weapons in 2020-21."

The Iranian official said, "Since 2017, we have organized four joint meetings on the security of SALWs and concluded a number of security cooperation agreements with and neighboring as well as regional countries. The Ministry of Defense is the National Point of Contact on SALWs. A national committee on SALW was also created for policy-making, examining related issues, coordinating national measures and preparing national biennial reports."

He stated, "A number of Iranian officials have participated in Interpol meetings and training courses, and we are cooperating with Interpol to detect and arrest SALWs traffickers. All of our activities have been explained in our national report that we have submitted already. Finally, while emphasizing on the effective, complete and comprehensive implementation of POA, we would like to underline the importance of exchanging information and experience; preventing the production and trade in replica guns capable of transforming to lethal weapons; and facilitating the transfer of technology and equipment necessary to combat illicit trade in SALWs to developing countries without discrimination, such as x-ray machines, full-body scanners, advanced radars to control borders, etc."

Legacy of Hossein Taeb

From Page 1 ► In parallel, they went so far as to claim that Taeb was under arrest after his alleged "ouster." But Taeb, appearing at a handover ceremony for the new head of the IRGC-IO, debunked all the bizarre stories propagated by Israeli media that he is under house arrest. On the contrary, Taeb was appointed as an advisor to the commander of the IRGC.

During the last 20 years, Taeb's name has been frightening for many dissidents and corrupt figures, as well as for the enemy's agents and intelligence services all around the world. He was emblematic of the existence of a great obstacle in the way of infiltration into the Iranian government. Among his numerous worthy actions, the following can be mentioned:

He facilitated the prosecution of hundreds of economic heavyweights implicated in corruption and took back the nation's billions of



tomans in assets from them.

- He identified and arrested dozens of spies and enemy's moles in the country and restored a significant part of Iran's blocked assets abroad.

- He also led the fight against political corruption and corrupt figures including the brothers of the former president and his vice president who were brought to trial. Also, he

chased and arrested counter-revolutionary elements such as Ruhollah Zam who was brought to justice.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, it has been proven that with the replacement of managers and commanders, there will be no change in strategic policies and red lines and Taeb's departure from the IRGC intelligence organization can't be pleasure because he has created an offensive structure that will result in the annihilation of Zionist regime and the restriction of the internal and external opposition to the Islamic Republic.

All in all, Taeb left the IRGC-IO but his legacy will live on. After more than a decade of being at the service of the Islamic Republic, he naturally left his job and will continue to serve the Islamic Republic in his new capacity as advisor to the commander of the IRGC.

Countries should study origins of Ukraine crisis: Iran defense minister

TEHRAN – The Iranian Minister of Defense said on Tuesday that countries should vigilantly study the roots of the Ukraine crisis and confront it.

Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani made the remarks in a meeting with the Chairman of Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Nadim Reza.

Ashtiani also referred to the important and influential position of Iran and Pakistan in regional developments and the Islamic world, Al Alam reported.

He also stressed the need to develop relations with the brotherly and friendly country of Pakistan in all areas.

"There is no doubt that cooperation between Iran and Pakistan in various defense fields in the current complex regional and global conditions would contribute significantly to improving the security situation in the West Asia region," the defense minister remarked.

He pointed out that the two countries should not allow other countries to interfere or influence the pace of development and consolidation of bilateral cooperation.

"The priority of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to develop and boost relations and cooperation with neighboring countries and the region," the minister added.

General Ashtiani expressed the Islamic Republic's satisfaction with the good steps taken in recent years to transform the border crossings between the two countries into safe zones for economic exchanges.

He added, "We are still far from the required situation, and there is no doubt that cooperation between Iran and Pakistan in various defense fields in tense circumstances would contribute significantly to improving the security situation in West Asia."

During the meeting, the Iranian Defense Minister also criticized the destructive role of America and the West for their unilateral and totalitarian approaches.

Pointing to the war in Ukraine, he said, "The principled policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been to oppose war, the killing of innocent civilians, and destruction of state infrastructure anywhere in the world. But countries must vigilantly study the roots of the crisis and confront it."

General Ashtiani also drew attention to the pain and suffering of the oppressed Afghan people, saying after 20 years of occupation and looting by the U.S. the only way for Afghanistan to get out of the current dilemma is to form an inclusive government with the participation of all ethnic groups.

He said, "We believe that the way to solve regional crises is

through the participation of all countries in the region, as well as by relying on the internal capabilities of countries."

General Ashtiani also described the mutual visits between defense and military officials of Iran and Pakistan as important. He enumerated the very good opportunities available to both sides in the field of producing military and defense equipment and in the economic and industrial fields, calling for sharing these opportunities for mutual cooperation and implementation of the agreements of the two sides.

For his part, General Nadim Reza pointed to the importance of the meetings between defense officials of Pakistan and Iran, saying, "We are looking for more areas of cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran."

He also praised the defense achievements of Iran, declaring Islamabad's readiness for any defense, technical and security cooperation with the aim of establishing stability and security in the region.

General Nadim Reza indicated that it is necessary to develop comprehensive cooperation between the two countries, inviting the Iranian Minister of Defense to pay an official visit to Pakistan.

The Pakistani general also

met with President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi on Tuesday, according to the official website of the Iranian presidency. Speaking in the meeting with General Nadim Reza, Raisi thanked the Pakistani government and army for their cooperation in improving the security situation in the border between the two countries. "Good relations between the armed forces of the two countries have created relatively good security conditions on the border between the two countries."

He went on to say that the presence of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan for two decades had no result other than killing and destruction.

The Pakistani military official added, "It is imperative that the Taliban form a comprehensive government in Afghanistan in a way that all ethnic groups participate in it in order to bring peace and development to the country."

In the meeting, General Nadim Reza also said, "As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Pakistan Army, I have always believed that Iran is a close friend of Pakistan."

He added, "The numerous diplomatic visits of Pakistani authorities to Iran in the past month is the proof of our interest to deepen relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran."

SPORTS

Komei Ghasemi finally grabs his 2012 Olympics gold

TEHRAN – Iranian freestyle wrestler Komeil Ghasemi has finally seized the gold medal of the 2012 Olympic Games.

He was awarded the gold medal two years ago in the 120kg after Artur Taymazov was caught up in the IOC's re-tests and stripped of gold medal at Beijing 2008 and London 2012 for doping. The Uzbek wrestler tested positive for the prohibited substance dehydrochloromethyltestosterone (oral turinabol).

Ghasemi and Russia's Bilyal Makhov had initially both been awarded gold in the weight class at London 2012 by the IOC but United World Wrestling confirmed Ghasemi as the sole gold medalist.

Makhov – himself provisionally suspended following a positive drugs test – received the silver.

Uzbekistan's Davit Modzmanashvili has been banned for six years after he was stripped of his Olympic wrestling silver medal for doping following the re-analysis of his sample from London 2012.

The Georgian, who switched allegiance to Uzbekistan in 2017 and won a bronze medal for the country at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta and Palembang, was beaten in the 120kg final at London 2012 by Taymazov.

Reza Salehi Amiri, Iran's National Olympic Committee (NOC) president, met IOC President Thomas Bach in IOC headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland last week and the medal was given to him.

The IOC Disciplinary Commission (DC) rendered its decision against Taymazov who failed a reanalysis of his anti-doping test at the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

The Uzbek wrestler had earned a gold medal in freestyle wrestling at 120kg and his removal will re-shuffle the order of medalists at the 2012 London Games. Ghasemi became the new gold medalist, Makhov remains silver, and Tervel Dlagnev (USA) and Daulet Shabanbay (KAZ) became the newest bronze medalists.

Iran futsal goalkeeper Samimi hangs up his gloves

TEHRAN – Iran national futsal team goalkeeper Alireza Samimi has announced his retirement from national duty on Wednesday.

The 35-year-old custodian represented Iran in three editions of the FIFA Futsal World Cup.

Samimi helped Iran win their first-ever bronze medal in the competition in the 2016 edition.

He has already won two AFC Futsal Championship in 2016 and 2018 as well as two AFC Futsal Club Championships with the Iranian clubs.

Samimi was a member of Iran national futsal team since 2008 and made 130 appearances for Iran.

He was among the top ten goalkeepers in the world in 2018, 2017 and 2016, according to the list published by the Futsal Planet website.

Iran come fifth in 2022 FIBA U16 Women's Asian Championship Division B

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Kazakhstan 57-36 on Wednesday to finish fifth in Division B of the 2022 FIBA U16 Women's Asian Championship.

Iran's Hadiseh Ghesmati tried to carry Iran with 11 points, 26 rebounds, and four assists, and Kazakhstan's Anastassiya Knaub led her team in scoring 12 points.

Iran had lost to Kazakhstan 56-46 in preliminary round.

The competition was held in Amman, Jordan from June 24 to 29.

Iranian defender Hakhamaneshi joins Chennaiyin

TEHRAN – Indian Super League (ISL) side Chennaiyin FC on Wednesday signed tall Iranian defender Vafa Hakhamaneshi for the upcoming season.

The 6'6" tall player's latest stint was with Thai club, Ratchaburi Mittr Phol FC, where he made three appearances in the AFC Champions League.

Hakhamaneshi has turned out for several clubs in the Persian Gulf Pro League which is the first tier league in Iran. He made 59 appearances, turning out for clubs such as Naft Tehran, Tractor FC and Sanat Naft. The Iranian even won the Persian Gulf Pro League with Foolad FC in 2013-14.

"Vafa Hakhamaneshi is a towering addition to our squad. Having played in the Iranian first tier league and the AFC Champions League, he will be aware of the challenges that lie ahead of us," said Chennaiyin FC co-owner, Vita Dani.

The centre back has also played 60 games in the Iranian second tier for Khooneh Be Khooneh and Fajr Sepasi.

"I feel proud to join the team to represent Chennai. I will fight with all my might for the pride of the city and the people," Hakhamaneshi said after joining Chennaiyin FC.

Reza Parkas named Sanat Naft head coach

TEHRAN – Reza Parkas was named as new head coach of Sanat Naft football team on Wednesday.

The Iranian-German coach has most recently worked at Tajikistan's Istaravshan.

Parkas started his coaching career in German side Buderich and has also worked in Omani and Emirati clubs.

He replaced Alireza Mansourian who parted ways with Sanat Naft this week.

Sanat Naft finished 10th in the 2021-22 Iran Professional League season.

Milad Ebadipour joins Power Volley Milano

TEHRAN – Iranian volleyball outside hitter Milad Ebadipour has joined Italian volleyball club Power Volley Milano.

The 28-year-old player joined PGE Skra Be'chatow in 2017 and won the Polish championship with the club in 2018. He also won the Polish Super Cup twice.

Ebadipour has penned a one-year deal with the Italian team.

"Milad is a player I found after a few years, but he still has the same enthusiasm and determination that impressed me in PlusLiga. He undoubtedly is a charismatic player. He proved himself in the Polish league, and above all in the Iranian national team," said Roberto Piazza.

"In the new club he will have many athletes who will want to shine. I believe that Milad will also be a volleyball player who will significantly contribute to raising the level of our team," emphasized the coach of Power Volley Milano.

Power Volley Milano finished in sixth place in the regular season of Serie A under leadership of the coach.

Power Volley Milano are an Italian professional volleyball club based in Milan, Lombardy, Italy. They currently compete in the SuperLega, where they have been since the 2014-15 season. In the 2021/22 season, the club is named Allianz Milano.

ICCIMA hosts Iran-Poland business forum

From page 1 ▶ “Unfortunately, since 2017, the volume of trade between Iran and Poland has decreased significantly, mainly due to the sanctions. We hope that there is enough will between the private sectors of the two countries to increase the mutual trade up to the previous levels.”

The official stressed the need for establishing financial channels and banking relations between the two countries as a prerequisite for the expansion of trade ties, saying: “The level of cooperation will expand if the monetary exchanges between Iran and Poland are improved by creating a special financial channel between the two countries and the two sides can also agree on the establishment of preferential tariffs between the two countries.”

Selahvarzi further underlined the advantages and common fields for cooperation between Iran and Poland, and said: “There are good grounds for cooperation



in the agriculture and agricultural machinery industries, rail transport and locomotive manufacturing, considering Poland's capabilities.”

Maritime transport is also very important in Iran, and due to the existence of northern and southern ports, we are interested in using the experience of Poland in this field, the ICCIMA deputy head added.

He also pointed to the mining sector as a great area for mutual cooperation considering Poland's experiences in manufacturing mining machinery and equipment.

Goal-oriented planning, main reason for rising non-oil exports: TPO head



TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman-Pak has said comprehensive planning and focus on neighboring countries have been the main reasons for the significant increase in the country's non-oil exports in the past nine months.

“One of the main issues that should be considered in export development is being program-oriented and having a strategy,” Peyman-Pak told the national TV.

As reported by the TPO portal, the official noted that the government has set a goal for increasing the country's non-oil exports to \$75 billion by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025), adding: “We have set the minimum increase in exports at \$75 billion.”

He mentioned the prioritization of export destinations based on the country's resources and said: “In recent years, the markets of Southeast Asia and Africa have been neglected considering all available opportunities, and now by prioritizing Africa,

we have been able to increase the exports to this continent by 100 percent, but the number is still low.”

Peyman-Pak further noted that one of the government's policies to promote exports is to dispatch trade delegations along with officials on their visits to other countries, saying: “During the current government administration all ministers and officials that have visited other countries have been accompanied by trade delegations.”

We recently dispatched a trade delegation to Russia which was the largest delegation exchange in the history of the two countries' relations, he added.

Referring to the \$605-million positive trade balance of the country in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), the TPO head said: “This happened in a situation when we had economic reforms, the Ukraine war, and the Shanghai quarantine, and we were able to increase the trade balance.”

He also stated that the exports to Turkey have increased by 100 percent.

Peyman-Pak also mentioned the reason for the recent decrease in exports to Iraq, saying that the main reason for the decline in exports to Iraq was the increase in the prices of Iranian goods due to the elimination of the subsidized currency allocations for some goods.

Modern irrigation systems established in 72,000 ha of Markazi farmlands

TEHRAN- As stated by the head of Agriculture Department of Markazi province, in the center of Iran, 72,000 hectares of farmlands are equipped with the modern irrigations systems in this province.

Saying that establishment of modern irrigation systems in the province is in line with the optimal water consumption, Ali Safari also stated that these systems can be established in 170,000 hectares of farmlands in Markazi.

As stated by the project manager of the Agriculture Ministry's smart irrigation systems development program, so far 2.6 million hectares of the country's farmlands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems.

Fariborz Abbasi has said that completing semi-finished agriculture projects is the priority of his ministry in the current Iranian calendar year, and expanding the modern irrigation network across the country is of significant importance in this regard.

The deputy agriculture minister noted that the project for implementing irrigation networks in the west and northwest of the country is about 70 percent completed and the ministry is pursuing to get the necessary funding for the remaining 30 percent.

The official expressed hope that considering the budget allocation for the provinces at the beginning of the current Iranian year, the

ministry would be able to develop the project in terms of both quantity and quality.

The purpose of implementing the plan of modern irrigation systems is to increase the productivity and sustainability of water and soil resources in the country to ensure the sustainable production of agricultural products.

“Over the past three years, each year, an average of 150,000 hectares of farmlands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems, and we have witnessed a 300 percent jump”, the official said.

Agriculture Ministry is also taking the necessary measures for supporting the domestic manufacturing of equipment used in these systems, he added.

Back in September 2021, Abbasi had said that 95 percent of the equipment used in such systems is manufactured inside the country.

The official said the ministry has comprehensive plans for indigenizing the knowledge for the production of the other five percent as well.

He pointed to the filters and drippers in modern irrigation systems as the equipment whose domestic production is on the agenda and predicted: “In a two- or three-year plan, part of the imported equipment and supplies will be produced by domestic manufacturers.”

Abbasi mentioned the quality improvement of modern irrigation systems as one of

Knowledge-based firms to collaborate in developing 750 oil fields

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Ministry is going to use the capabilities of the country's knowledge-based companies to implement a program for improving the recovery factor of 750 oil fields across the country.

In this regard, the ministry will be collaborating with Iran National Innovation Fund (INIF) as the government body in charge of supporting knowledge-based companies, Shana reported.

To brief the companies and investors about the details of the mentioned program, INIF is going to host a meeting in which the project will be presented by the officials of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) to financial institutions, traders active in



money and capital markets and other investors.

In this meeting, while introducing the generalities of the project, investment

opportunities in this field will be explained to investors and they will also be introduced to the representatives of the knowledge-based companies

that are going to work on the project.

Over the past two decades, the Iranian Oil Ministry has become more and more determined to collaborate with knowledge-based and research-based companies, universities, and research institutes to advance its development goals.

To pursue its new goals, the Oil Ministry has signed numerous memorandums and agreements with domestic knowledge-based firms and research institutions in recent years and such entities now play a significant role in making the country's oil and gas industry more and more self-reliant.

IME's monthly value of trades rises 21%

TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar month Khordad (ended on June 21), the third month of Iranian calendar year, 10,826,000 million tons of commodities worth more than \$3 billion were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), showing 21 percent and 36 percent growth in value and weight, respectively, as compared to the second month.

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange saw on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor, trade of 1.558 million tons of commodities valued at more than \$1.1 billion.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 300,800 tons of vacuum bottom, 400,622 tons of bitumen, 444,102 tons of polymeric products, 206,000 tons of lube cut, 155,855 tons of chemicals, 25,165 tons of sulfur, 24,198 tons of oil, 500 tons of argon and 800 tons of insulation.

Furthermore, the exchange saw trade of more than 9.181 million tons of commodities worth nearly \$2 billion on its metals and



minerals trading floor.

Items traded on this floor included 5,986,000 tons of cement, 1,669,000 tons of steel, 1,224,000 tons of iron ore, 180,000 tons of sponge iron, 83,470 tons of aluminum, 55,149 tons of zinc, 35,361 tons of copper, 670 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 1,000 tons of coke, 60 tons of lead, 90 tons of precious metals concentrate and 5 kg of gold bars.

On its agricultural trading floor, the exchange saw offering of five tons of saffron.

Next was the IME's automobile trading floor with trades of 22 Cara Sedan automobiles.

Last was the IME's side market on which the

exchange traded 86,358 tons commodities.

The value of trades at the Iran Mercantile Exchange rose 102 percent, and the volume of trades at the exchange increased 128 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), which was the highest level of growth in the history of the exchange since its establishment.

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

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

TCCIMA calls on govt. to reduce interfering in economic affairs

TEHRAN – During the 87th meeting of the dialogue council of the government and the Tehran Province's private sector which was held on Tuesday, the representatives of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) called on the government to reduce interfering in economic affairs.

The meeting was attended by TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari, and representatives of various government and private sector institutions and organizations, the TCCIMA portal reported.

During the gathering, the private sector representatives analyzed and examined the cases of government interventions in various markets such as poultry and eggs, livestock feed, small-scale and renewable power plants, postal services, and the textile industry, pointing out the problems and challenges created by this approach and called for reducing such interventions.

Speaking in the meeting, Khansari stated that the less the government intervenes in economic affairs, the better the results.

As an example, the TCCIMA head pointed to the situation of the poultry industry in the country and said: “Over 96 percent of production in this industry is carried out by the private sector, however, the whole process of importing raw materials is done by the government.”

The Agriculture Ministry continues to force poultry breeders to keep certain breeds of chickens which are not economically justifiable for them, and insisting on following such approaches in the country's

poultry industry will cost the industry a lot, he added.

Also, the Chairman of the Board of the Textile Industry Association spoke about the problems created for the production units of this industry following the changes in import duties and customs tariffs.

Elsewhere in the meeting, some issues related to the activities of transportation companies including the constant changes in the names of streets and roads were raised by some attendees.

TEDPIX falls 716 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 716 points to 1.513 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 6.073 billion securities worth 36.691 trillion rials (about \$122.3 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dropped 1,046 points, while the second market's index rose 179 points.

A market analyst believes that the Iranian stock market has the potential to grow despite the distrust created in the market as a result of some bad decisions.

Emphasizing that there is potential for growth in the market, Hassan Kazemzadeh told ISNA on June 5: “Given this potential, the market will grow. Of course, there are ups and downs, but no matter how much distrust there is, the changes of major economic factors will affect the market, but this effect takes place gradually and over time.”

According to the analyst, uncertainty about monetary policies, especially interference in valuing the shares of companies, imposition of various duties, imposing corporate expenses such as taxes and export duties, etc., has caused shareholders to be pessimistic about the market.

“Although there is a 30 to 40 percent growth potential in the market, even professionals are disappointed,” he regretted.

Regarding the situation of the capital market

in the second half of the year, Kazemzadeh said: “According to the fundamental analysis, many stocks that are profitable, regardless of whether their profit margins or profitability are high or low, have the potential to reach their price ceiling of the Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20, 2021). If this happens, the market index will also pass the ceiling of that year.”

Another market analyst believes that the Iranian stock exchange market can grow by 30 percent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2023).

In an interview with IRNA on May 8, Ahmad Eshtiaqi pointed to the growth of the stock market index and the factors affecting it and said: “It seems that the shares of companies still have room for growth and according to the forecasts, the stock market can grow by about 30 percent by the end of the year, but this growth will be gradual and slow.”

The analyst noted that the shareholders' interest in the capital market over the past few years has been due to the value of companies' stock, so when the shares still have room to grow, the market index will grow as well.

The capital market expert further mentioned another factor influencing the rise of the stock market index and continued: “World prices rose sharply after the Russia and Ukraine war and oil prices reached more than \$100, and this has affected the performance of some companies to some extent.”

From page 1 ▶ The discovery is the deadliest tragedy among the thousands of refugees who have died trying to cross the U.S. southern border from Mexico over the past several decades.

Politicians especially Texas Governor Greg Abbott and U.S. President Joe Biden have been quick to exchange blame for the deadly incident.

Laura Pena, the Director of Beyond Borders program at Texas Civil Rights Project, has accused both political leaders of being at fault and having "utterly failed" the dead refugees.

She says President Biden's continued implementation of his predecessor Donald Trump's immigration policies including - Title 42 - which allows officials at the border to block the path of asylum seekers because of the COVID-19 pandemic is to blame. Also Abbott's "Operation Lone Star", an initiative that ordered National Guard Forces to be stationed at the southern border is to blame.

The activist says both policies have made the circumstances more dangerous for refugees seeking to enter the U.S. Pena says "when migrants can't cross ports of entry they're forced to take more dangerous routes.

"This leads to what happened in San Antonio where people's only option is to be locked in a trailer... as if they're not even human, instead of receiving a dignified, humane process at the border."

"[Biden and Abbot] have utterly failed people who are seeking safety by crossing the border... the closure of borders are forcing people to take more dangerous routes. That's just the facts. It's resulted in thousands of deaths across the border... and it's a direct result of these efforts to harden the border and criminalize people," she noted, "instead of investing in processing - simple processing of people who are trying to seek asylum



and refuge at our ports of entry at our borders."

The simple processing of asylum seekers that Pena was referring to is being enjoyed by the more than 3,000 Ukrainian refugees allowed to enter the same U.S. southern border with Mexico and allowed to be granted asylum.

"We've been advocating for a dignified, humane process at the border, where people are not forced to risk their lives. We've seen the ability of the federal government to do that. We saw all the resources come to bear for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters, rapid humane processing at the border. But when it comes to Black and brown migrants, those same benefits are completely stripped away. They are not afforded across the board. It's the underlying racism, and how and where both the federal and the state governments choose to militarize," Pena said.

She also pointed out that "if putting your life, not just as risk, but affirmatively packing yourself into a container is a better option than remaining in a dangerous situation in which you are currently in, it really speaks volumes of those situations,"

Spokespeople for Biden and Abbott have not immediately responded to requests for comment.

Other campaigners also saw a direct link between the disaster and the Biden administration's border

policies. Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, policy director at the American Immigration Council, said he had been dreading such a tragedy for months. "With the border shut as tightly as it is today for migrants... people have been pushed into more and more dangerous routes. Truck smuggling is a way up," he wrote on social media.

The San Antonio-based Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services provides legal assistance to those seeking asylum in the U.S.; Miriam Camero, the organization's Vice President of social programs, says the lives lost are a result of a "failure at all levels."

"They clearly lack a moral compass and they use every opportunity to amplify the complete wrong agenda and education for our community," she said of the politicians' response.

"These are not numbers, these are not headlines, these are actually human beings that were trying to seek a better life in the United States," Camero said.

According to Camero, the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services dispatched attorneys to the scene, where bodies were being recovered and survivors sent for medical assistance, but they were unable to make contact with any of those who survived.

"We will not stop until we get to access and we're able to at least

show what options and resources and support these victims do have as well as their family members," Camero declared.

A memorial vigil honoring those lost in Monday's incident has also been held. Jessica Azua, a community organizer, told the crowd "I'm so tired that we have been here before, that we have done this before. It shouldn't be this way."

Last year, the number of refugee deaths was 650, the highest annual death toll since 2014.

The number is a shocking reminder of the human costs because of U.S. immigration policies, which strictly limit the number of refugees able to seek asylum despite being allowed to seek asylum at the point of the refugees' destination being a right enshrined in international law.

Advocates say because of that; refugees have resorted to extremely dangerous conditions and risk their lives in the hope of making the journey across the U.S. border with Mexico.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has warned that unless immigration policy changes are made "it will enshrine a new legacy for the United States - a legacy of turning its back on international commitments and sending people directly into harm's way."

Despite Monday's disturbing discovery being the deadliest tragedy involving refugees, it is not the first of its kind in San Antonio. In 2017, ten people traveling by tractor-trailer died after going without water, food, or fresh air.

Also in Texas last year, ten refugees traveling by van died after crashing into a pole. In Houston, six migrants died in an SUV after being chased by police through rainy weather in 2019.

Advocates have long said that those cases are an example of the risks and dangers that refugees are being forced to take to seek asylum in the United States.

Turkish media hails Erdogan's 'victory' deal to lift NATO veto

Pro-government Turkish media lauded a deal to allow Finland and Sweden to join NATO as a triumph for President Tayyip Erdogan, saying on Wednesday he had wrested concrete gains from the West in the country's fight against terrorism.

The 11th hour agreement on Tuesday, which caught many by surprise, lifted Ankara's veto over the Nordic states' membership bids. It ended a weeks-long dispute that tested the defence alliance's unity against Russia's invasion of Ukraine ahead of this week's NATO summit in Madrid.

"President Erdogan's Madrid Victory," said a Sabah newspaper headline, above a photo of him standing next to NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg at the centre of a group photo after the accord was signed.

"Erdogan's decisiveness and leadership vision won acceptance for all of Turkey's arguments in the fight against terrorism," the paper said.

The pro-government papers echoed a note circulated by Erdogan's office before the memorandum was released in Madrid. The much smaller number of independent and anti-government media gave little immediate coverage or comment on the deal.

Meral Aksener, head of Turkey's opposition IYI

Party, said the deal was unacceptable and that Ankara would have no "NATO card" to play if the three-way mechanism did not work.

"This signature that the government gave without any concrete developments from Sweden and Finland is unfortunately a compromise that is not in line with the interest of our country," she told MPs from her party in parliament.

'Nine guarantees'

The pro-government Aksam newspaper listed the elements of the agreement noting it would establish a monitoring mechanism sought by Ankara. "Nine guarantees for Turkey," it said.

The two Nordic nations pledged not to support groups which Ankara deems terrorists and committed to prevent activities of the militant Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and its affiliates.

Notably, the statement said Finland and Sweden would not support the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia, which Ankara says is such an affiliate.

Turkey's Western allies designate the PKK as a terrorist group but not the YPG, which is a key element of the Kurdish-led coalition that the United States largely relied on to fight Islamic State.

The PKK launched its insurgency against the Turkish state in 1984. More than 40,000 people



have been killed in the conflict.

"Two strongholds of terrorism fall in Europe," said the Yeni Akit newspaper. "Sweden and Finland accepted Turkey's demands".

The agreement also said Finland and Sweden would address Turkish extradition requests for suspected militants thoroughly and they would both lift restrictions on selling weapons to Turkey.

"Turkey got what it wanted at the table," said Milliyet newspaper, adding PKK suspects would be extradited to Turkey. However the deal said only that the Nordic states would "address" Turkey's requests "expeditiously and thoroughly".

Finnish President Sauli Niinisto noted the memorandum did not list individuals for extradition.

(Source: Reuters)

Lebanon's Mikati hands government lineup to president

Lebanese Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati said on Wednesday that he had handed the list of his cabinet team to the country's President Michel Aoun.

"I have handed President Aoun the cabinet line-up that I see fit," Mikati told reporters following his meeting with Aoun, Anadolu Agency reported.

On Tuesday, Mikati concluded his parliamentary consultations with lawmakers regarding the formation of the upcoming government.

The premier-designate voiced hope that he could form a government "that can carry out its duty and deals with the issues of border demarcation with Israel, talks with the International Monetary Fund and deals with the electricity linkage with Egypt, Syria and Jordan."

Mikati headed the last Lebanese government in September 2021 after a



vacuum of 13 months. His government, however, turned into a caretaker capacity in May following the Lebanese parliamentary elections.

Since late 2019, Lebanon has been grappling with a severe economic crisis, including a massive currency depreciation as well as fuel shortages.

Turkish politician: Arab states unlikely to join Israeli-led anti-Iran alliance

TEHRAN - Osman Faruk Logoglu, a senior member of Turkey's CHP and veteran politician, says despite problems, Arab states have no interest in antagonizing Iran, especially in collaboration with Israel.

Ahead of a visit by U.S. President Joe Biden to the West Asia region, many reports have surfaced regarding significant developments in play that will likely come together during Biden's trip. A number of Arab countries and the Israeli regime have increased their diplomatic interactions and contacts amid a tense atmosphere in the West Asia region.

Western and Israeli regime's media outlets have raised speculation about the U.S. plan to form a military alliance in the region. The Jordan king further exacerbated

these speculations by voicing support for the alliance.

Recently, the Israeli regime's war Minister Benny Gantz announced that Israel has joined what he called the Middle East Air Defense Alliance (MEAD), a U.S.-led regional air defense network that includes some Arab countries without naming the Arab countries.

When rumors of the defense arrangement circulated earlier this month, a White House spokesperson told Breaking Defense that only the U.S. "strongly support[s] Israel's integration into the broader Middle East region, and this will be a topic of discussion when the President visits Israel."

So far, many Arab states, especially the Persian Gulf ones, have been silent about the new

development. Their media also remained silent on the issue. But Israeli media magnified the new U.S. initiative and sought to portray it as directed against Iran.

To know more about the issue and the possibility of formation of such a claimed alliance against Iran we reached out to Faruk Logoglu.

Here are his comments on the issue.

"President Biden's planned visit to Israel and Saudi Arabia in mid-July will surely have important ramifications in the region. However, the talk of a new regional alliance against Iran is premature and not likely to be the central theme of the Biden trip. The alliance idea is one so far being promoted by Israel. For the U.S., Israel is a strategic partner and Biden's visit is designed to underline that fact.

For Biden, it also has the function of sending a message to the Jewish lobby for its support in the upcoming mid-term elections in November.

The Saudi visit however is primarily one to help secure a steady flow of oil, given Biden's economic woes at home. Gasoline is as important as drinking water in the American way of life. Hence keeping gasoline prices low is a national interest for any American president.

One final point: while there have been improvements in the ties between the Arab countries and Israel, it is unlikely that the Arabs will be willing or are ready to forge a military alliance with Israel. The Arab countries may have problems with Iran but should have no interest in further isolating or antagonizing their neighbor, especially in collaboration with Israel."

(Source: BBC)



And after his supporters marched to the Capitol, Trump insisted he wanted to join them, she said.

Mr Trump lunged for the steering wheel of his presidential limo after he was told he could not be taken to the Capitol, she said she was told by another aide. He was eventually returned to the White House.

Trump denied the claim that he attempted to commandeer his limousine, writing online: "Wouldn't even have been possible to do such a ridiculous thing".

A source close to the Secret Service told CBS News that the driver and another officer are willing to testify that the former president did not try to grab the steering wheel.

Hutchinson also said that her boss, Meadows, had sought a pardon from the president after the riot.

During her testimony, she recalled seeing Trump's tweet, condemning his vice-president, Mike Pence, for lacking the "courage" to overturn the election results.

Pence rejected claims he had the power to halt the congressional certification of the election.

"As an American I was disgusted... It was unpatriotic, it was un-American, and you were watching the Capitol building get defaced over a lie," she said.

In a statement following her testimony, her lawyers said "her duty" compelled Hutchinson to testify to the committee.

Hutchinson is one in a series of Republicans and former White House staffers to cooperate with the congressional probe.

Vice chairwoman Liz Cheney, one of only two Republicans on the committee, praised her co-operation with the inquiry, saying that Trump allies have pressured fellow Republicans to "continue to be a team player".

The select committee has conducted a nearly year-long investigation into how Trump supporters invaded Congress to disrupt lawmakers as they certified Democrat Joe Biden's election victory.

It plans to continue its work with at least two more public hearings next month.

(Source: BBC)

Trump urged armed supporters to storm Capitol: aide

Donald Trump knew supporters had weapons when he urged them to storm the Capitol to overturn the 2020 election, a former White House aide has said.

Ex-aide Cassidy Hutchinson testified to the committee probing the 6 January 2021 riots that Donald Trump and his top staff knew the potential for violence.

But a planned rally went ahead, with Trump saying the armed attendees were "not here to hurt me".

The president also demanded to join the march on the Capitol himself, she said.

Up until now, the congressional panel was missing testimony from inside the room - someone who could offer a first-hand account of the situation in the White House in the critical hours before and during the attack.

But at its sixth hearing on Tuesday - hastily announced with what the committee said was the revelation of new evidence - Hutchinson, 25, filled in the blanks.

As principal advisor to Trump's chief of staff Mark Meadows, she sat just feet from the Oval Office and spoke daily with Meadows.

She recounted that several top officials warned repeatedly that Trump's rally on 6 January could spiral out of control.

During her testimony, Cassidy said:

* Days before the attack Meadows predicted that things "could get real, real bad" on 6 January

* When told on 6 January that Trump's supporters had brought guns, knives and other weapons with them, Meadows barely looked up from his phone and asked "anything else?"

* Trump was angered when told that Secret Service agents were turning away his supporters because they were armed and setting off security devices

* "They're not here to hurt me" and "let them in", Trump said

* Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe told the White House the event could be "dangerous for the president's legacy"

* White House counsel Pat Cipollone expressed concerns it would look like the White House was inciting a riot

As she was speaking, Trump denied her account on his Truth Social online platform, saying: "I didn't want or request that we make room for people with guns to watch my speech. Who would ever want that?"

Other parts of Hutchinson's testimony portrayed the former president as reacting angrily when he was upset by certain events.

When attorney general William Barr dismissed the president's election fraud claims in a December 2020 interview, Trump smashed crockery in a rage - which Hutchinson said he had done in the past - and sent ketchup splattering onto the walls of a White House dining room.

Archaeologists unearth 'great' Sassanid fire temple in northeast Iran

TEHRAN – Archaeologists have unearthed the ruins of what they believe was one of the greatest fire temples in Iran during the Sassanid age.

"We have probably discovered the third greatest fire temple that existed in ancient Iran," ILNA quoted archaeologist Meysam Labbaf-Khaniki as saying on Wednesday.

Labbaf-Khaniki leads the fifth season of an areological survey, which is currently underway in a valley near the village of Robat-e Sefid/Bazeh Hur, northeast Iran.

"During this archaeological season, we have gathered considerable evidence such as engraved plasterwork and inscriptions that suggest the ruins are related to an important fire temple."

Inscriptions and their fragments that bear Pahlavi scripts should first be arranged and categorized till they could be read (and deciphered) by linguists and cultural heritage experts, he explained.

These fresh discoveries are expected to open a new chapter in the history of Iranian arts during the Sassanid epoch, the archaeologist said.

Exquisite stuccoworks embellish capital columns that support the main hall of the fire temple, he said.

Since 2014, Labbaf-Khaniki has taken part in previous excavations conducted at the ancient site. In 2018, a joint Franco-Iranian mission was tasked to study the whole valley, its human occupations, its geomorphology, and its implication in the large territory of Khorasan Razavi province.

The Sassanid age is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian architecture in addition to arts experienced a



general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan which are amongst the highlights of the ensemble.

Sassanid archaeological designs typically represent a highly efficient system of land use and strategic utilization of natural topography in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization.

In 2018, an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran, titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region", was named a UNESCO site. The ensemble is comprised of eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan.

The World Heritage reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

Aside from architecture, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

Flood-hit ancient bridge undergoes restoration

TEHRAN – The third round of a restoration project has been commenced on the historical Kashkan Bridge, which suffered damage from heavy flooding in 2019.

The Sassanid-era (224 CE to 651) monument is located in the western province of Lorestan.

The project involves strengthening the bed of the bridge, on which the pillars are fixed, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The foundation of the bridge is also being reinforced and restored, Seyyed Amin Qassem explained on Wednesday.

Restorers have been tasked to remain loyal to the bridge's original design as much as possible using the same material similar to those used in its construction, he noted.

Kashkan Bridge is 300 meters long, and it originally had 11 columns and 12 arches, some parts of which are ruined or wiped away. Its

height varies between 10 to 26 meters. Inscribed on the National Heritage List, the bridge is one of the most spectacular attractions of the ancient region.

Days of devastating flooding and heavy rain in March 2019 inflicted damage to tens of cultural heritage sites in Lorestan. For instance, it washed away parts of a historic hill, on top of which the famed Falak-ol-Aflak Castle is nested.

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmericians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period. Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

Tourism brings world security and peace: Iran minister

TEHRAN – Tourism can facilitate interactions between nations and improve stability and security, Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami has said.

He made the remarks in the ministerial meeting of the 11th edition of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM), which was held in Baku, Azerbaijan on Tuesday.

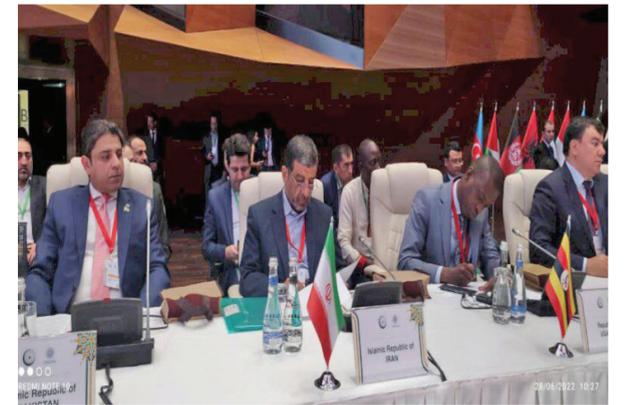
"Along with economic dimensions, tourism has also a spiritual and humanitarian component that can provide a forum for promoting cultural exchanges, strengthening solidarity, and bringing peace to all nations," he said.

"In an increasingly dangerous

world, an increasing number of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states have been victims of terrorism, aggression, and extremism, but tourism can pave the way for greater interaction between nations," he explained.

In the fields of religious tourism, health tourism, environmental tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, maritime tourism, and gastronomy, the OIC member countries have high capacities and capabilities, so they should attract more international tourists, he noted.

Before the outbreak of the coronavirus, about 250 million of the 1.4 billion international tourists visited OIC member countries, he mentioned.



"It is therefore important that all OIC members do their utmost to promote their tourism potential to the world, and to encourage their citizens to visit each other's countries."

All people in the world are entitled to tourism, but most of the world's sights are located in Islamic countries due to their geography, he added.

"Therefore, both Islamic countries and the international community should provide the necessary conditions for world visitors to visit these sites so that this right is not denied."

The participants in this conference, representing Islamic countries, can assist each other

in developing and prospering tourism in the Islamic world, thereby ensuring security, stability, peace, prosperity, and well-being in society, he said.

With the full cooperation of the media and the expansion of members' capacities, it is necessary to quickly compensate for the historical backwardness of tourism in Islamic countries, he concluded.

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.

Iranian poet Ibn Yamin's mausoleum named national heritage



TEHRAN – Mausoleum of 14th-century Iranian poet Ibn Yamin, in full Amir Fakhruddin Mahmoud bin Amir Yamin al-Din, has been named a national cultural heritage.

The Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister inscribed the

monument on the National Cultural Heritage list on Wednesday intending to receive further care and protection, IRNA reported.

The mudbrick mausoleum is located in the ancient town of Mayamey in Semnan province, which connects Tehran to the Khorasan region.

Ibn Yamin was born in c. 685 AH/1286-87 CE in Faryumad, a center of culture in western Khorasan, into a family of the landed gentry.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, Ibn Yamin had an eclectic style and a variety of thematic influences. "His poetry epitomizes the major characteristics of the late Khorasani school of Persian poetry, both in generic divisions and stylistic features.

His Divan (collection of poems) includes almost all the major genres made current by that school, as well as many of the minor ones like Chistan (puzzle-poem), the epigram, the chronogram, and various occasional and commemorative poems.

Stylistically, Ibn Yamin's poetry reflects the main features of the Khorasani school characterized in the main by relatively simple expressive devices, a pronounced rhythm, and a straightforward syntax.

A selection of Ibn Yamin's poems has been translated into German by Maria von Ottakar, with a "Foreword," containing the poet's biographical sketch. Moreover, E. H. Rodwell has also translated 100 of his works into English from a lithograph edition printed in 1865 in Calcutta.

Khoy offers nature, leisure, and culture

TEHRAN – Visiting Khoy in northwest Iran means experiencing a pleasant crossroads of nature and culture.

Situated near the ancient Silk Road in West Azarbaijan province, Khoy was enormously fortified in different eras of its history, most recently by a decree of Qajar rulers in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Here is what to expect when visiting or tracing the history of the ancient town.

It may not be on every traveler's radar, but it is a

natural fit for eco-tourists as it offers loads of scenic hikes and panoramic views besides colorful geological features. Therapeutic warm-water spas, salt mines, and Christian centers are among its other charms.

The town is surrounded by huge sunflower farms and snowcapped towering mountains. Moreover, it has long been a destination for those who are interested in its virgin nature, genuine culture, and architecture.

Moreover, it is home to



many centuries-old mosques, churches, caravanserais, bathhouses, fortresses, and ramparts, each telling their own tales.

Khoy is also a destination for lovers of Persian literature, who come to visit the mausoleum of Shams Tabrizi, a renowned

Iranian poet, and mystic who lived between 1185 and 1248.

During bitter times of its history, Khoy was occupied by foreign military forces; for instance in 1911 when the county was at odds with the then Ottoman Empire, and at some points during World War I and II by Russians.

The economy of its surrounding regions is highly dependent on agriculture; various fruits, grains, timber productions, and sunflowers. The latter is what Khoy is nicknamed for.

Tourism main area of development for Kermanshah, official says



TEHRAN – As a major field of development for the western province of Kermanshah, tourism plays an important role, the provincial tourism chief has said.

"From all the capacities present in Kermanshah, tourism has the largest effect on the development of the province," CHTN quoted Mohammadreza Soheili as saying on Wednesday.

To attract investment into the tourism industry, major steps must be taken, the official added.

"A major goal of the province's tourism directorate should be to attract new and effective investments to the tourism

sector of the province, and to encourage large investors from the private sector to do so."

For the welfare of tourists, it is necessary to prioritize the development of tourism infrastructure as well as the use of historical monuments and tourist attractions, he noted.

Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites including Taq-e Bostan and the UNESCO-registered Bisotun.

Inscribed into the base of a towering cliff, Taq-e Bostan comprises extraordinary Sassanian bas-reliefs of ancient victorious kings divide opinions. Late afternoon is the best time to visit, as the cliff turns a brilliant orange in the setting sun, which then dies poetically on the far side of the duck pond.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting king Darius I and several other figures. UNESCO has it that Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values in the

development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

Another popular historical site in the province is the Temple of Anahita in the city of Kangavar, which is believed to have been built circa 200 BC. Several column bases and ruins of a wall remain from the magnificent Greek-style temple. The temple was used during the Parthian era (248 BC-224) as well as the Sassanid era (224-651).

Kermanshah was founded in the 4th century CE by Bahram IV of the Sassanid dynasty. Conquered by the Arabs in 640, it was called Qirmasin (Qirmashin). Under the Seljuk rule in the 11th century, it was the chief town of Kordestan. The Safavids (ruled 1501-1736) fortified the town, and the Qajars repulsed an attack by the Turks during Fath Ali Shah's rule (1797-1834). Occupied by the Turkish army in 1915 during World War I, it was evacuated in 1917. The construction of a road in the 1950s over the age-old Khorasan track added considerably to the importance of the city.

Hormozgan handicrafts sector receives support from government



TEHRAN – Handicrafts businesses across the southern province of Hormozgan received financial support in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 21), the provincial tourism chief has said.

Some 77 billion rials (\$257,000) in loans were paid to the handicraft artisans of the province during the mentioned time, 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.

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.

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 past 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 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.

University entrance exam begins nationwide

From page 1 ▶ The oldest and the youngest participants are 81 years old and 13 years old, respectively.

This year's Konkur is also being held in 17 overseas centers in 15 countries.

Konkur is held annually in June or July in Iran and in some other countries as well. Every year the participants sit for the multiple-choice exam to vie to get the best results possible as the seats at tuition-free public universities are limited.

Based on figures only 20 percent of the students would manage to win the seats at top charge-free public universities.



It includes three main groups of mathematical sciences, experimental sciences, and human sciences along with two other groups of art and foreign languages. This year, some 915,041 were

females. In other words, women constituted 61 percent of the participants.

Depending on how well the students have performed in the exam they will choose the field and university they would like to choose to study.

This year's Konkur is also being held in 17 overseas centers in 15 countries.

Finland, Poland ready to develop health diplomacy with Iran



TEHRAN – Finland and Poland announced readiness to strengthen cooperation in health sector with Iran.

Mohammad Hossein Nicknam, director of the International Affairs Department at the Ministry of Health met separately with Ambassador of the Republic of Finland to Tehran Kari Kahiluoto and Poland chargé d'affaires Wojciech Unolt, at a meeting in Tehran on Wednesday.

Kahiluoto has announced readiness to develop health diplomacy with Iran, highlighting that Iran has been successful in the field of health.

Iran is a rich and successful country in the field of health, and the development of cooperation should be completely bilateral and city-to-city, company-to-company, and university-to-university, he stated, IRNA reported.

Referring to Finland's good experiences in improving the health and insurance system, public health, referral system, new family laws, and anti-coronavirus experiences, Nicknam called for the exchange of experiences between the two countries in these areas and the cooperation of pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies.

Unolt also announced his country's readiness to cooperate with the Islamic Republic in

the field of health.

One of the projects we are implementing in Iran is in the field of pediatric neurosurgery, which is called Isfahan Children.

Nicknam also stressed the readiness of the Ministry of Health to develop health cooperation, establish a joint cooperation committee and sign a memorandum of understanding in this regard.

Earlier in April, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said that developing international health relations with different countries and organizations is one of the government's strategies.

Fortunately, the young generation of Iran has reached great achievements by creating knowledge-based firms.

"Health affects all political, social and economic dimensions of societies," he said, adding, therefore, we suggest to all foreign embassies to plan and act specifically for health by appointing

In April, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said that developing international health relations with different countries and organizations is one of the government's strategies.



a health deputy in their system.

Iran is ready to cooperate with other countries in holding international conferences in the field of health, he concluded.

Health development

Based on innovative indicators of health technology development in 2021, Iran was ranked 60th among 132 countries, which shows an improvement of 60 steps compared to 2014, the deputy health minister for research and technology, has announced.

A total of 1,670 knowledge-based firms are operating in the health sector, ISNA quoted Younes Panahi as saying.

He added that there are 13 science and technology parks and 95 technology growth centers in the field of health, while 343 technological products have so far been licensed, and 335 inventions in medical sciences have been patented.

The health technology development is evaluated by the Global Innovation Index with seven indicators, including institutional structure, human capital and research, infrastructure, market and business complexity, technological knowledge, and creativity, he explained.

Uzbekistan to host Iranian technology delegation

TEHRAN – The vice president for science and technology, Sourena Sattari, will travel to Uzbekistan at the head of a delegation to develop technological and scientific cooperation.

On this trip on July 19-22, a group of knowledge-based companies active in the fields of "agricultural inputs and machinery", "medicine, vaccines, and supplements for animal feed, including livestock, poultry, and aquatic animals", "food industry" and "health and medical equipment" will accompany him.

Organized by the Center for International Interactions of Science and Technology of the Vice Presidency for

Science and Technology and by the House of Innovation and Technology of Iran (IHIT), the trip can expand Iran's technology market in Uzbekistan and bring Iranian-made products closer to the global market.

The Iranian delegation will travel to Uzbekistan to develop Iran's technology market in the region by holding specialized seminars and business meetings, and visiting the country's technological and industrial infrastructure, ISNA reported.

In February, Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Sardor Umurzakov announced readiness to develop

technological cooperation with Iran.

Good opportunities exist for technological cooperation between the two countries and Uzbekistan is ready to interact with Iran in this field, he said, appreciating Iran's achievements in the

The delegation covers the areas of agriculture, medicine, animal husbandry, food industry, and health.

field of technology, innovation, and development of knowledge-based firms.

Science, technology advancement with knowledge-based ecosystem

Today, the country's knowledge-based ecosystem accounts for more than 3 percent of GDP. And the figure is projected to reach 5 percent, however, the main goal is to step toward a 10 percent share in GDP, Sattari told Fars on February 13.

The share of knowledge-based companies in the country's economy has exceeded 9 quadrillion rials (about \$34 billion), and since 2019, it has experienced a growth of more than 450 percent, he stated.

The knowledge-based ecosystem is



a newly-emerged ecosystem but has so far been able to solve many of the country's problems.

The Innovation and Prosperity Fund affiliated with the Vice Presidency of Science and Technology has earmarked a sum of 170 trillion rials (nearly \$650

Significant increase in refugee literacy

From page 1 ▶ addressed the issue of the education of immigrant children.

Only about 10 percent of the first generation of refugees who entered Iran in the early 1980s were literate before arriving, which has now reached 64 percent. In the early 2010s, the literacy rate among refugees was about 52 percent, but by the end of the 2010s, it had risen to 64 percent.

The literacy rate is much higher in the second and third generations of immigrants. Some 76 percent of Afghan youth aged 15 to 29 in Iran are literate.

The literacy rate of Afghan immigrants living in Iran is higher than the number of literate people in Afghanistan itself. So that the literacy rate of the second generation of Afghan immigrants in Iran is much closer to the literacy rate of Iranians.

In the last academic year (September 2020- September 2021), out of the total number of non-Iranian students, 1610 are preschoolers, 335,963 students are in the first and second elementary school, 104,458 were in the first year of junior high school, and 55,590 in the second year of junior high school. One-third of enrolled students are undocumented and illegal residents.

The educational situation of refugee children, especially Afghans, has always been facing contradictory policies over the past decades. This issue has been particularly affected by the confusion of citizenship policies in Iran, and because of this turmoil, many children have been denied the right to education.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has placed special emphasis on "covering the education of foreign nationals" and this enabled these students to enjoy educational facilities and services just like Iranian students.

Half a million foreign students

Some 527,000 foreign students are studying in Iran, the majority are Afghans



and the rest are from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iraq, and other countries, Abolfazl Kamali, the deputy minister of education for international affairs and schools abroad, stated.

There are also 22 special schools for foreign nationals across the country, educating 10,000 foreign students.

Many of the refugees living in Iran are the second and third generation, according to the UNHCR.

Iran spends about 20 trillion rials (nearly \$77 million) every year on the education of foreign national students residing in the country, head of the international affairs department of the Ministry of Education Gholamreza Karimi said in March 2020.

Some 527,000 foreign students are studying in Iran, the majority are Afghans and the rest are from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iraq, and other countries.

In April, Mohammad Javad Salmanpour, the deputy head of the Organization for Student Affairs, said twenty-five percent of the foreign students studying in Iranian universities are Afghan nationals.

Afghan students attend Iranian universities in three ways; some enter the university by participating

in the national entrance exam of Iran, and some others receive admission from universities that have non-Iranian student licenses. The third group also attended the country's universities through scholarships, he explained.

Many of the Afghan students are studying master's and Ph.D. courses in Iranian universities, he added, IRNA reported.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Wildfire extinguished in northern forests

Wildfire, erupted in northern forests of Gilan province over the past 2 days, has been fully extinguished, commander of the protection unit of natural resources and watershed management organization of Gilan has stated.

According to the latest statistics, approximately 130 hectares of forests in Gilan province have been burnt in recent days, IRNA quoted Mohammad Qorbani as saying on Sunday.

He went on to say that 99 percent of fires in 13 cities of Gilan province have caused no serious damage to the trees.

In spite of the complete containment of fire, the protection unit is on full alert, he further noted.

Appreciating all the forces who made efforts to control the wildfire, he concluded that fire broke out in various cities, including Rezvanshahr, Talesh, Roudbar, Siahkhal and some others.

آتش سوزی جنگل های گیلان مهار شد

فرمانده یگان حفاظت اداره کل منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری گیلان گفت: آتش سوزی جنگل های استان گیلان پس از ۲۲ ساعت تلاش، کاملاً مهار شد. سرهنگ محمد قربانی لرد عصر روز شنبه در گفت و گوی اختصاصی با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: بر اساس آخرین آمارها به صورت تقریبی حدود "۱۳۰ هکتار" از اراضی جنگلی استان گیلان در چند روز اخیر دچار آتش سوزی شدند.

وی افزود: ۹۹ درصد از آتش سوزی جنگل های ۱۳ شهرستان استان گیلان سطحی بوده و خسارت جدی به درختان وارد نشده است.

فرمانده یگان حفاظت اداره کل منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری گیلان خاطر نشان کرد: به رغم مهار کامل آتش در جنگل های استان، نیروهای یگان حفاظت اداره کل منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری در آماده باش کامل هستند.

وی ضمن قدردانی از تمامی نیروها در مهار آتش در جنگل های استان گیلان اضافه کرد: آتش سوزی در سطح شهرستان های مختلف استان از جمله رضوانشهر، تالش، رودبار، سياهکل و غیره روی داده.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON JUNE 29

New cases	441
New deaths	0
Total cases	7,237,597
Total deaths	141,386
New hospitalized patients	70
Patients in critical condition	189
Total recovered patients	7,062,409
Diagnostic tests conducted	52,599,590
Doses of vaccine injected	150,370,697



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Value of each man depends upon the art and skill which he has attained.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:13:08 Evening: 20:45 Dawn: 4:06 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:52 (tomorrow)

Jamshid in Persian literature

Part 11

The third age, that of bronze, saw hybrid and violence. Men enjoyed war and, killing one another, had to go to Hades, leaving the bright light of the Sun.

In Yasna, the strophes preceding Yasna, the poet first mentions "the many sins for which he is seeking renown in lack of peace(?) and then states, "of these sins I declare in honesty I know none at all, the ones that are renowned as (tales?) of violence (juiia), for which (one/he?) is renowned by (his) shining metal (weapon)."

In light of Hesiod's description, the mythoeic references (srauuahiiieiti "he is seeking renown," srauii "was renowned") may be to weapon-wielding heroes of great strength, whose violent bent betrayed them into the sin of hybrid.

The "shining metal" (xaena aianha) is also what the sky is made of and may well refer to (bronze) weapons. There is no evidence that the term refers to the ordeal by fire, as assumed from Bartholomae to Insler and Humbach. Kellens and Pirart, however, suggested the etymology hu-waina- "good to look at," which would fit, for instance, mirrors made of shiny bronze.

Hesiod's fourth age, that of iron, was inhabited by a nobler divine race of heroes. This age saw the battles before Thebe and at Troy, which would correspond to the battle of the Kauuis with Franrasiiian and the great battle in the Mahabharata. After the wars, the heroes lived in a place free from worries ruled by Cronus, who had become king after castrating his father.

Hesiod's fifth and last age, that of iron, was one of war and good mingled with evil (line 179). Apparently, this was caused by Zeus as a revenge for the theft of the fire by Prometheus (cf. Vivasvant, above on Yima as solar figure), by fashioning Pandora, whose box contained all evils that afterward befell men (the story is told before that of the five ages). This age would correspond to the period of the "mixture" in the Pahlavi scheme.

It is therefore likely, that the Avestan and pre-Avestan myths of the first ages were considerably more archaic than their Pahlavi versions, which explains why it is difficult to reconcile the two.

The subsequent fall of Yima, however, is not clarified by these mythical chronologies, but depends on the myth of the Fortune (xarenah), which is not yet understood.

Yima as first man and the cosmogonic sacrifice: Since the 19th century, the Videvdad Yima myth has been taken to be that of the mythical "first man" as well as "first king."

That we are dealing with a first king is clear from the terms xshatra "royal command" and xshaiia- "rule, be in command", but the claims that Yima is also the "first man," mainly based on the Indic Yama, are more doubtful and poorly supported by the Iranian sources.

According to the Avesta, Yima's father, Viuuanhant, was the first mortal to press the haoma and thereby obtained a son, Yima, while, in Videvdad 2, Yima is only the first mortal to be addressed by Ahura Mazda.

As the Iranian Yima had no obvious features of the first man in the Iranian myths, early scholars thought this was an Indo-Iranian part of the myth that had been kept in India

but been modified in Iran by Zarathustra, leading to the replacement or displacement of Yima by Gaiia Martan/Gayumard.

By the turn of the century, it had also been suggested that the Indic Yama and Manu were mythological complementary doublets of the first man, an idea that was taken up and applied to the Iranian myth, as well (for a personal interpretation of Yima as originally prophet and Messiah.) Christensen also suggested that the Indians had the Flood story from the Babylonians.

The "cutting" of Yima has also been connected with myths about the cutting up of a primordial man or giant to make the world, such as the Rigvedic Purusa and the Old Norse Ymir.

The idea was developed by Hermann Güntert, who, to strengthen his case, provided an etymological connection between Yama and Ymir, explaining Ymir as a derivative of yemo-/yomo-: Germanic yum(i) yaz from Indo-European yem(i)yos with "schwa secundum," a reduced vowel Güntert posited in 1916 in consonant groups that were difficult to pronounce, but on a rather arbitrary basis (Yima/Ymir is not discussed there).

He did not, however, explain the function of the suffix, which, at least, ought to mean "belonging to, related to," or, in the case of a proper name, "son of" (another question is whether Indo-European had -iya-/-iyad-derivatives with zero grade from this type of nouns).

It should be noted that the surface similarity between the two names is deceptive, since the only letter they have in common is -m-; the initial y- of the Indo-Iranian forms is a consonant (as in year), while the initial y- of Ymir is a vowel (German ü-). There is also no guarantee that the original initial was y-, as "yem(i)yos, wem(i)yos, and Hem(i)yos" would all become Old Norse ymir by Güntert's rule.

Purusa, Ymir, and Gayumard (first man in the Iranian myth) are also not twins, and Yama and Gayumard are not dismembered to form the parts of the world. Güntert circumvented these problems variously.

He interpreted the name of Tacitus' Tuisto, father of Mannus and first ancestor of the Germanic people, as related to German Zwitter "hermaphrodite" and Zwilling "twin," then compared Ymir, whom he regarded as the factual equivalent of Tuisto.

The twin nature of Ymir, however, was only preserved in a myth according to which, when Yimir fell asleep, a boy and a girl were born from under his arm, while his two feet engendered a son with six heads. From the fact that Gayumard's offspring were the first two humans (male and female), he concluded that Gayumard was not yet sexually differentiated (nor was the First Bull), but a hermaphrodite, male-female.

The lack of dismembering of Indic Yama was explained by early confusion of Purusa "Man," who was really Manus, with Manus's step-brother Yama, which also made Purusa a "twin".

The (unattested) dismembering of Gayumard to make the world was replaced by the transformation of his body parts into metals at his death.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

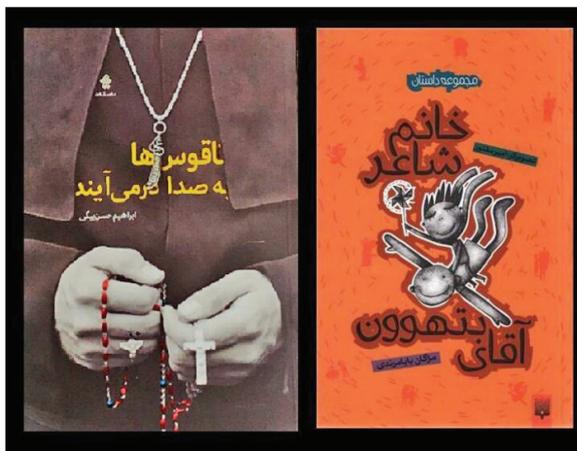
To be continued

Overseas publishers acquire copyrights to books by Persian writers

From Page 1 ▶ The Cairo-based publishing house Official Egyptian has only bought the copyright to the Arabic edition of "Church Bells Ringing".

Written by Ebrahim Hassanbeigi, the young adult book tells the story of a manuscript, which draws a priest to learn more about Imam Ali (AS), the first Imam of the Shia.

The story begins in a church, where a Tajik man offers to sell a manuscript to a priest who has an interest in manuscript books. Parts of the manuscript, which dates back to about 1400 years ago, are about Amr ibn al-As, the Arab military commander who led the Muslim conquest of Egypt and, when at the Battle of Siffin in 657 he fought to decide the succession to the caliphate, he sided with Muawiyah I, governor



A combination photo shows the front covers of the Persian books "Church Bells Ringing" and "Mrs. Poet and Mr. Beethoven".

of Syria, against Imam Ali (AS).

The manuscript also carries

material about the Imam's

other opponents as well as his

companions, and the battles that were imposed upon him.

The priest, who realized the value of the manuscript, is now curious to know more about Imam Ali (AS).

Hassanbeigi is the author of "Muhammad(S)", a young adult novel about the Prophet of Islam which has been translated into several languages.

His credits also include "Two Captions for One Picture", "The Rose on the Rug", "Gisu and the Magic Lamp", "Sufi and the Magic Lamp", "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp" and "Mayor's Excellency".

"Mrs. Poet and Mr. Beethoven" by Mojgan Babamarandi consists of several short stories for youth, including "When Do You Comb My Hair?", "I'm a Crow That Has Been Overshadowed by You" and "Mrs. Poet and the Brave Mr. Beethoven".

Iranian play explores life story of Italian convert to Shia Islam Edoardo Agnelli

TEHRAN – An Iranian play on stage in Tehran recounts the life story of Italian convert to Shia Islam Edoardo Agnelli.

The first performance of the play "Edoardo" written by Rahil Sarhangi was held at the Mehr Theater of the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization on Tuesday.

Speaking before the performance, director Abolfazl Eshrab said that he gave the plot to Sarhangi in February to write the play.

"None of us, not even the cast members, knew of Edoardo Agnelli. Through research, we raised our knowledge of the character of Agnelli and he attracted our attention," he added.

Iran's former ambassador to Rome, Mohammad-Hassan Qadiri, director of the Art Bureau's Dramatic Arts Center, Kurosh Zarei, and a group of cultural figures attended the performance.

"The life story of Edoardo Agnelli has the potential for being turned into a film or TV series," Qadiri said.

"Portraying Agnelli's story can encourage the followers of other religions to convert to Islam," he added.

"Agnelli was the sole son in a wealthy and renowned Italian family. He acquired acquaintance with the Holy Quran in an

American university four years before the victory of the Islamic Revolution and converted to Islam and then to Shia Islam," he explained.

"Agnelli shot to fame after conversion to Islam, which was not acceptable to his family and relatives," Qadiri noted.

He asked artists and filmmakers to invite people across the world by means of "the language of art" to convert to Islam.

"Edoardo" will remain on stage until July 22.

Edoardo Agnelli was the eldest child and only son of Gianni Agnelli, the industrialist patriarch of Fiat and of Marella Agnelli.

He converted to Islam when he was living in New York City, and changed his name to Mahdi. In mid-November 2000, he was found dead under a bridge on the outskirts of Turin.

As an adult, Agnelli claimed to be the heir apparent to the Fiat empire, but his father, who had already been unhappy with Edoardo's conversion to Islam, ensured that he would not inherit it.

The only official position that the younger Agnelli held in the family businesses was as a director of Juventus F.C., in which capacity he was present at the Heysel disaster. In 1990, he was accused of heroin possession but the charges were later dropped.

Agnelli converted to Sunni Islam in an Islamic center in New York where he was named



A poster for the Iranian play "Edoardo".

"Hisham Aziz". He then met Imam Khomeini in Iran and was reported to have converted to Shia Islam.

According to Qadiri, Agnelli recited his shahada and became a Shia Muslim and changed his name to Mahdi.

"Meyerhold on Theatre" appears in Persian

TEHRAN – "Meyerhold on Theatre" by Edward Braun has been published in Persian by Nimaj.

Jonathan Pitches, a professor of theater and performance at the University of Leeds, UK, has written an introduction to the book translated by Rezvaneh Emamipour.

"Meyerhold on Theatre" brings together in one volume Vsevolod Meyerhold's most significant writings and utterances, and covers his entire career as a director from 1902 to 1939.

It contains a comprehensive selection from all published



Front cover of the Persian edition of Edward Braun's "Meyerhold on Theatre".

material, unabridged and translated from the original Russian, updated and supplemented with a critical commentary relating Meyerhold to his period and eyewitness

accounts describing all his productions.

The book is illustrated with photographs of Meyerhold's designs and productions.

Within this diverse collection

of sometimes dense, sometimes lyrical, and always fascinating writings, Meyerhold emerges from this book as a forerunner of such directors as Brecht, Piscator, Planchon and Brook, a relentless enemy of naturalism and a supreme exponent of total theatre whose influence continues to be felt throughout the theater of today.

The introduction by Pitches helps to demystify some of the terminology used by Meyerhold and his associates, and indicates the fundamental connection between culture and politics present in his life and art.

Carl Gustav Jung's "Dream Analysis" published in Persian



A poster for the Persian edition of Carl Gustav Jung's book "Dream Analysis".

TEHRAN – "Dream Analysis: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1928-1930" by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung has been published in Persian by Afkare Now in Tehran.

First published in English in 1984, the book has been translated into Persian by Reza Rezaei and Azadeh Shokuhi.

In 1991, the book was translated and

published in the German language.

Its overall premise is to provide further clarification on Jung's dream analysis methods. Said dreams include ones from patients who were not previously analyzed in his earlier works.

The title written upon the spine is "Seminar on Dream Analysis". It is privately issued in multigraphed form by the Psychological Club, Zurich.

This edition of Jung's Seminars is being published in the United States by Princeton University Press. In the American edition, the volumes of the seminar notes constitute number 99 in the Bollingen series.

Jung was a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology. His work has been influential in the fields of psychiatry, anthropology, archaeology, literature, philosophy, psychology and religious studies.

Jung worked as a research scientist at the

famous Burghölzli hospital, under Eugen Bleuler. During this time, he came to the attention of Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis.

The two men conducted a lengthy correspondence and collaborated, for a while, on a joint vision of human psychology.

Freud saw the younger Jung as the heir he had been seeking to take forward his "new science" of psychoanalysis and to this end secured his appointment as president of his newly founded International Psychoanalytical Association. Jung's research and personal vision, however, made it impossible for him to follow his older colleague's doctrine and a schism became inevitable.

This division was personally painful for Jung and resulted in the establishment of Jung's analytical psychology as a comprehensive system separate from psychoanalysis.