

Saudi Arabia Apathy Could Doom Iraqi PM Mediation

Page 3

Report

FTO hypocrisy

TEHRAN— On September 28, 2012, the United States removed the Iranian terrorist group Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO or MEK) from its list of foreign terrorist organizations.

Then State Department Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made the decision in view of the so-called claim of publicly renouncing violence, the absence of confirmed acts of terrorism by the group for more than a decade, and their cooperation in the closure of their paramilitary base in Iraq.

The move meant that Washington will no longer block the group's property in the United States and that U.S. entities may engage in transactions with the MKO without obtaining a license.

The MKO terrorist group leader, Maryam Rajavi, who is residing in Paris welcomed the decision in a statement, vowing to step up its international campaign against the Islamic Republic and the Iranian people.

"This has been the correct decision, albeit long overdue, in order to remove a major obstacle in the path of the Iranian people's efforts for democracy," Rajavi said.

In 1988, 7000 MEK members joined hands with Saddam Hussein and formed an alliance called National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA). Saddam armed these forces. On July 26, 1988, only six days after the acceptance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 598 which ordered a ceasefire between Iran and Iraq, the so-called NLA crossed Iranian borders with a heavy aerial support from Saddam's forces.

The NLA conducted over 100 military operations against the Iranians during the time they joined the Saddam army. If these operations do not account as examples of violence for Americans, what is their definition of violence? Page 2

Opinion

Hossein Askari: it's worthy of note

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN – Football is the most popular sport in Iran and a football player becomes famous as a result of this. However, many Iranian athletes have already started to shine in the other sports. Cyclist Hossein Askari is one of them.

On Saturday, Askari won the title of Iran Cycling Championships in time trial discipline. Askari is 47.

He started winning medal in 2001, where the Iranian cyclist finished in third place in the Tour of Saudi Arabia.

Askari is one of the most decorated Iranian athletes but not as famous as the others.

He has participated in many cycling championships so far and bagged many medals in the various tours.

As a sign of respect to Askari, the hat should be taken off.

He is not an athlete like Ali Daei, Saied Marouf and Hamed Haddadi because the cycling in Iran is not popular as football, volleyball and basketball.

In my opinion, all the Iranians must respect him because Askari has hoisted the country's flag for many times.

Cycling is among the most difficult sports and is the most physically demanding sport as all the muscles of the rider's body gets into action.

Hezbollah sends "message" to Israel



File photo

Lebanon's Hezbollah Resistance movement has announced that it has "launched three unarmed drones in the direction of the disputed area" at the Karish field, on reconnaissance missions, noting that "the drones accomplished the required mission and delivered the message."

In a statement, the Lebanese Islamic Resistance Movement said that one of its units named after "the martyrs Jamil Skaf and Mahdi Yaghi launched three unarmed marches," adding that the drones used in the operation were

of various sizes and were launched "in the direction of the disputed area at the Karish field, to carry out reconnaissance missions."

The Islamic Resistance confirmed that "the required mission has been accomplished, and the message has been delivered." Page 5

Iran, Russia, Turkey mulling over joint auto production

TEHRAN – Head of Iranian Association of Auto Parts Manufacturers Mohammadreza Najafi-Manesh has said industry officials of Iran, Turkey, and Russia have expressed willingness for the joint design and production of automobiles, IRNA reported.

"There is great capacity for tripartite cooperation of automakers and parts manufacturers of the three countries," Najafi-Manesh said.

According to the official, the Automobile and Parts Manufacturing Association of Turkey has proposed the formation of a tripartite consortium with the participation of

Iranian, Russian, and Turkish industrialists in order to design and produce passenger cars.

"With a population of about 400 million people, and also a market of at least 800 million in their neighboring region, these three countries can have a suitable market for their product or products." Page 4

Zagros forest restoration document drawn up

TEHRAN – A document on Zagros forest restoration has been prepared by a working group under the supervision of the first vice president, Naghi Shabanian, deputy of forest affairs of the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization, has said.

According to this document, regional and sectoral actions will also be carried out. One of these measures in line with the biological balance of the Zagros forests is the real participation of the people.

This year, the plan will be piloted in three regions of the country, including Kurdistan, he noted.

Referring to the importance of Zagros forests, he said that these forests play a significant role in the economy and livelihood of locals as well as reducing environmental problems, especially in the fight against sand and dust storms. Page 7



IRNA/ Akbar Tavakoli

Mourners bid farewell to Japanese-Iranian cultural figure Koniko Yamamura

Mourners carry the coffin of Japanese-Iranian cultural figure Koniko Yamamura during her funeral in Tehran on July 3, 2022.

Yamamura, who was called by her Iranian name Saba Babai after her marriage to an Iranian man, died on Friday from a respiratory problem.

Kashan to become 'event-oriented' tourism hub

TEHRAN – Kashan tourism directorate seeks to promote the oasis town and its surrounding villages into an 'event-oriented' tourism hub.

On Saturday, Ahmad Danaeinia, tourism chief of the ancient site, said Kashan should enjoy sustainable tourism.

Kashan should become an event-oriented tourism hub during the four seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter, Danaeinia said.

"Kashan and its surrounding regions are renowned for its subcultures, rituals, a unique variety of historical, cultural, and tourist attractions," he explained.

Atmospheric spaces, rosewater, textiles, rugs, delicious dishes, and above all, hospitable people are some famous examples to describe Kashan. Moreover, the delightful oasis city is famed for numerous architectural masterpieces, a photogenic bazaar, and many old traditional houses some of

which transformed into cozy boutique hotels where sightseers may feel the traditional lifestyle.

Citing an example, the official noted Kamu-va-Jowshegan District has a great potential to go on the tourism map as an "international city for astronomy".

"Kamu-va-Jowshegan is one of the most unique star observation centers of the country and this potential can turn this area into an international astronomy city." Page 6

From Inside

- Amir Abdollahian calls Egypt important country in Islamic world P2
- Iran demands accountability from countries complicit in Sardasht chemical attack P2
- U.S. seeking to disrupt talks under Israeli pressure: senior MP P3
- Iran to continue talks and nuclear program: MPP3
- Non-oil exports to Turkey rise 57% P4
- Iran's daily refining capacity exceeds 2.2m barrels: OPEC P4
- Bank loans to fishery units rise 108% in Q1 P4
- U.S. to return another batch of Achaemenid tablets to Iran P6
- Bushehr to promote hydro tourism P6
- Omicron BA4, BA5 subvariants may soon prevail P7
- IRCS seeking to expand services in Sierra Leone P7
- Jane Goodall portrays Naneh Sarma in children's Persian environmental book P8
- "Psychology: The Comic Book Introduction" published in Persian P8

Interview

Trump is being damaged by the hearings: professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Robert Y. Shapiro, the former chair of the Department of Political Science at Columbia University, says that after hearings Donald Trump has lost the votes of people who may support him because of their hatred towards Democrats.

"He is being damaged by the hearings, if not in a legal sense but in terms of his prospects of winning the 2024 election," Shapiro tells the Tehran Times.

"His supporters will continue to support him but those who would vote for him only because they dislike the Democrats will be less likely to want to vote for him. And Trump needs these voters," he adds.

Last week's testimony at congressional hearings on the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol assault portrayed an enraged Trump throwing food against a White House wall, voicing support for threats against his vice president, and dismissing the news that some of his supporters had come armed with rifles.

Everyone has a point about recent hearings and their potential consequences. But about Trump and GOP-leaning voters, there's a credible case to be made that the most likely effect of the Jan. 6 hearings isn't criminal charges against Trump or his party breaking from him fully, but a more gradual realization that it might be best to move in a different direction in 2024 — if for no other reason than Trump's baggage. Page 5

Munich Cinema Iran Festival unveils 2022 program

TEHRAN – The Munich Cinema Iran Festival has announced its 2022 program will begin by screening "Killing the Eunuch Khan" on July 13.

Directed by Abed Abest, the film is about a serial killer that uses his victims to kill more victims.

In this film set during the war between Iran and Iraq, a father lives with his two daughters in a big, strangely haunted house in a nearly deserted city close to the border.

One day, he leaves the girls at home alone in order to participate in a funeral ceremony. That same day, the city is struck by a bombing raid, and a bomb falls in his garden. From that point on, some sort of ghostly vibration unhinges his own reality, and the world of the dead seems to mingle with the world of the living.

The film won the Breakouts Feature Grand Jury Prize at the Slamdance Film Festival in the United States.

On the second day, the festival will go on with a review of Nasser Taqvai's 1969 short documentary "Wind of Jimn". Page 8



## FTO hypocrisy

From page 1 ► “The main reason for de-listing the MEK from British, EU & U.S. terrorist lists (FTO) was the organization’s public claim – and subsequent legal guarantee – that they had renounced violence since 2001 and would continue to do so,” Reza Nasri, an international lawyer and legal expert, wrote on Twitter on Saturday.

However, a minor explosion in a southeastern Tehran in the Malek Ashtar Basij headquarters on Saturday night, resulted in minor infrastructure damage. In a statement, the MKO claimed responsibility for the explosion.

In their statement issued on the same night, the terrorist group claimed the attack was carried out by “revolutionary cells”.

“In light of this recent development, the UK, EU and U.S. – along with Canada – should seriously consider revising their past decision and designate MEK again as a terrorist organization,” Nasri continued in his thread of tweets.

According to the legal expert, aside from doing justice to the thousands of Iranian, Iraqi and Kurdish victims that were killed or maimed by this brutal cult over the years, designating MEK again would be viewed as a good-faith gesture that will have a positive impact on the ongoing JCPOA negotiations.

“This is the Western countries’ opportunity to show good-faith, break the negotiations’ deadlock and set the ground for a sustainable and long-term cooperation with Iran. Don’t miss it!” Nasri noted, advising the Americans.

According to media sources, the issue of removing the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps from the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) list is one of the hurdles that Tehran and Washington cannot agree on in the negotiations to revive the JCPOA.

On Saturday, Vahid Jalalzadeh, Head of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian parliament said Tehran and Washington could not reach agreement on two issues in Doha held on

Tuesday and Wednesday.

“One is the issue of our economic benefits, and the other is the issue of the ‘red list of the sanctions’. In this regard, we reached a list with the Europeans and the Americans in Vienna, and we said that this list should be removed from the red list, but the Americans said that they will again add these people to the red list if anything comes up,” Jalalzadeh continued.

The MP added that the U.S. is turning its back on its promise regarding the red “list of sanctions,” noting that it doesn’t work that way.

“We keep negotiating and the U.S. could add these people to the red list under any pretext? No. It doesn’t work that way,” he underlined.

Matthew Levitt, a Fromer-Wexler Fellow and director of the Reinhard Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at The Washington Institute, wrote an opinion piece in The Washington Institute on March 21 advising the Biden administration not to remove the IRGC from the FTO list.

The hypocrisy comes at a time, when several former U.S. officials attended the MKO rallies to get a few extra dollars for their election campaigns, and introduce the terrorist group as the best alternative for “a regime change” in Tehran. Mike Pompeo, the former secretary of state, and Mike Pence, the former vice president, who both served under Trump, were among those top guests.

However, the IRGC has always been and will continue to remain the main harbinger of internal security and regional stability. While Daesh (ISIS) was committing genocide in Iraq and Syria, especially from July 2014 to November 2017, the IRGC proved as the main force in defeating them.

Having refused to remove the IRGC from the FTO list, the U.S. has stubbornly been dead-set not to put the name of the MKO to its list of sanctions. By doing so, it once again shows the world how hypocrisy can hamper countries from their legal rights.

# Amir Abdollahian calls Egypt important country in Islamic world

*Messages exchanged between Iran and Egypt, but no direct talks, Iran FM says*

TEHRAN— Iran’s top diplomat says that so far there have been no direct negotiations between Tehran and Cairo, but Iran has received some messages from Egypt.

“We have not had direct negotiations with the Egyptian side. Egypt is an important country in the Islamic world and the development of relations between Tehran and Cairo is in the interest of both nations,” Amir Abdollahian told the press before leaving Damascus.

“We have not yet had a negotiation for the progress and development of relations directly with the Egyptian side, but some efforts are underway in order to revert Tehran Cairo relations back to normal,” the foreign minister elaborated.

Amir Abdollahian stated, “We now have an office for protection of Iran’s interests in Cairo, and on the other hand, the other side has an office for protection of Egypt’s interests in Tehran. My explanation refers to the fact that Egypt is an important country in the Islamic



world and we consider the natural and developing relations between Tehran and Cairo to benefit the two countries, two nations and the region.”

On Thursday, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein announced that concurrent with Tehran-Riyadh negotiations, talks are underway between Iran and Egypt as well as Iran and Jordan.

Additionally, Hussein pointed out that Iran has come up with the idea of creating channels of

communication with the Egyptians.

**Iran-Syria joint economic commission to be formed soon**

The chief diplomat also said his visit to Syria was in line with President Bashar Assad’s recent visit to Tehran and his talks with the Iranian president.

“Good progress was made in the implementation of some of the signed agreements, and it was decided that me and the Syrian foreign minister follow up the implementation of some items,” he

added.

He then informed the press that the heads of the Iran-Syria joint commissions are going to organize their meeting at the earliest time possible.

“We had a conversation with Bashar Assad for more than two hours about various issues. One of our important missions at this point is to investigate the possibility of Turkey’s special military operation in parts of Syria, which we discussed during my trip to Turkey a few days ago. Tehran is trying to resolve this crisis and the problem between the two countries through political means, and we reject resorting to war,” the chief diplomat stated.

Amir Abdollahian then pointed out that Tehran and Damascus have agreed to activate all the commercial and economic agreements, as well as the tourism cooperation agreements that exist between the two countries.

“I hope that the results of this trip and the agreements that were made will be used for the benefit of the two nations,” he noted.

## Iran demands accountability from countries complicit in Sardasht chemical attack



TEHRAN- Kazem Qaribabadi, head of Iran’s Human Rights Headquarters and deputy chief of the Judiciary, said on Saturday that the U.S. and certain European nations were complicit in providing chemical weapons to the former Iraqi despot Saddam Hussein, and that they should be held accountable.

Speaking at a ceremony commemorating the anniversary of the Saddam regime’s bombardment

of Sardasht in West Azerbaijan, Qaribabadi asserted that “the Islamic Republic of Iran is a victim of weapons of mass destruction, more than 13,000 people have been martyred and more than 100,000 injured as a result of the use of chemical weapons against the people of our country, and some of our war veterans which were affected by the Saddam chemical attacks still become martyrs on a daily basis.”

In accordance to a report by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), he said, more than 15 countries, mostly in Europe, as well as the U.S., were involved in arming the Saddam regime with chemical weapons and that these governments must now be held accountable for their complicity.

In addition, Qaribabadi urged the international legal bodies to hold these counties accountable,

saying that lawsuit has been filed against certain European individuals, but that is not enough.

Sardasht was the first city that Saddam struck with chemical weapons during his imposed war on Iran.

In two consecutive bombing flights on four civilian districts on June 28, 1987, Iraqi planes dropped what Iranian officials thought to be mustard gas bombs on the city.

Out of a population of 20,000, 25% are still suffering severe illnesses from the attacks.

During the 1980–1988 war that Iraq inflicted on Iran, chemical weapons caused tens of thousands of deaths and injuries. The impacts, which include chronic respiratory issues, eye and skin problems, immune system illnesses, psychiatric disorders, genetic abnormalities, and presumably cancers, are still being felt by around 100,000 Iranians.

## Israel mired in worst political, security condition, Iran FM says

TEHRAN – Iran’s Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has said the Israeli regime is facing the worst security and political situation ever, criticizing several nations in the region for normalizing relations with the regime.

The statements were delivered by Iran’s top diplomat during a meeting with leaders of Palestinian resistance groups on Saturday evening in Damascus, Syria, where he was on an official visit.

Amir Abdollahian emphasized Iran’s unwavering support for the Palestinian people until they free their motherland and establish a single Palestinian government with Al-Quds as its capital. He noted that the issue of Palestine remains the top priority for the Muslim world.

“At the present time, Israel is going through its worse security and political condition. However, there are those who think they can divert public opinion from problems in their own countries through normalization of relations with Israel,” Iran’s top diplomat underlined.

As part of the so-called Abraham Accords, which were negotiated by the administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump in 2020, a number of regional Arab countries, notably the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, normalized relations with the occupying regime. Sudan and Morocco also signed similar agreements with Tel Aviv regime.

The accords have been denounced by Palestinians and their regional and international allies as a “stab in the back” to

the Palestinian cause.

The foreign minister of Iran expressed sadness over the decision made by these countries, saying they had ignored the Palestinian issue and were attempting to hide their own issues by magnifying their ties with the Tel Aviv regime.

“Such measures amount to betraying the lofty cause of the oppressed people of Palestine in their fight against the oppression and aggression of the usurper Zionist regime,” Iran’s foreign minister added.

The occupier regime itself is grappling with multiple challenges, Amir Abdollahian continued, noting the states that have signed such accords with Tel Aviv believe they can resolve their own domestic problems via compromise with the regime, but they are certainly making a mistake.

The Iranian foreign minister went on to say that resistance is the only way to end the Zionist regime’s occupation of Palestine.

“The experience gained in the last seven decades shows that a fundamental solution to the issue of Palestine is only possible through resistance,” Amir Abdollahian remarked, adding, “We stand by the Palestinian nation with all our might until realization of their goals, considering this to be incumbent upon us on moral and religious grounds.”

In his closing remarks, Amir Abdollahian condemned all acts of armed conflict, whether they took place in Yemen, Palestine, or Ukraine, stressing that “any region’s problems must be solved by the people of that region.”

## FM to Assad: We understand Turkey’s concerns, yet we oppose war

TEHRAN— Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian who visited Damascus for the fourth time in his tenure met with the country’s President Bashar Assad on Saturday.

In the meeting, Amir Abdollahian extended the greetings of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian president to Assad.

He described the recent visit of the Syrian president to Iran as a turning point in bilateral relations and as being effective and fruitful in promoting ties between Tehran and Damascus.

The Iranian foreign minister also hailed the Syrian government and president’s efforts to strengthen the country’s national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty.

He said the known enemies of Syria’s territorial integrity and sovereignty are trying to disrupt the situation in the country.

Amir Abdollahian then condemned the Israeli regime’s attacks against Syria.

He went on to describe the silence of the Western organizations and also the failure of the Western governments to react to the attacks as an “indication of their double standards.”

The chief diplomat added the failure to seriously deal with the Israeli regime’s destructive moves and its acts of aggression shows that Western governments’ claim that they are

making efforts to stabilize Syria and restore security to the country is simply not true.

Based on what Amir Abdollahian said, such approach has further emboldened the racist regime of Israel to try to disrupt the situation in Syria.

He added, “We understand the current concerns (of Turkey), but we are opposed to use of military operations to resolve problems.”

Tehran believes that problems must be solved and concerns allayed through direct talks and cooperation, the foreign minister reiterated.

For his part, Assad described the top Iranian diplomat’s visit to Damascus as important under the current circumstances, especially given the regional and international developments.

Assad added that a situation is unfolding in the region that will tip the balance in favor of Tehran and Damascus.

He accused Western governments of provocative acts in Syria for the purpose of destabilization of the status quo, rivalry and gaining concessions from other sides.

The Syrian president then referred to the existing concerns and dangers in the region, saying some of these issues are mutual among regional countries and must be resolved collectively through dialogue.

“We are happy that under such circumstances, the Islamic Republic of Iran is part of the political solution in the region,” Assad noted.

He added that Damascus welcomes any solution that shifts Syria away from war.

The Syrian president also described his country’s relations with Iran as “strategic” and said over the past 40 years, ties between Tehran and Damascus have been growing.

Assad also pointed out that Palestine is an important issue for both Iran and Syria.

**FM consults Astana process with Syrian counterpart**

After meeting Assad, the foreign minister held a lengthy meeting with his Syrian counterpart, Faisal Mekdad.

The Iranian and Syrian foreign ministers exchanged views on ways for an all-out expansion of bilateral ties, regional developments and international issues during a meeting on Saturday evening.

Amir Abdollahian described mutual exchanges of high-ranking delegations as a sign of the strategic depth of ties between Iran and Syria.

He also hailed a recent visit to Tehran by the Syrian president as a turning point in ties between the two sides.

The foreign minister also pointed to

the unparalleled role played by martyr Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in the regional fight against terrorism, particularly in Iraq and Syria, and praised the struggles of the honorable martyr.

Iran’s chief diplomat then highlighted the capacities of both states to enhance mutual relations in political, economic, industrial and commercial fields, saying that Iran’s technical and engineering capabilities can help implement the two countries’ joint big projects.

In turn, the Syrian foreign minister described Amir Abdollahian’s trip to Damascus as important, given the significant developments unfolding in the region and the world.

The visit, he said, would deepen the already strong bonds between the two countries.

Mekdad emphasized that Damascus was ready for further promotion of ties with Tehran in all spheres.

He also referred to Martyr Soleimani’s struggles and said the general sacrificed his life on the holy path of fighting terrorism.

The chief Syrian diplomat also expressed satisfaction with the positions adopted by Iran in the negotiations held within the Astana format and said that Tehran’s policies and current diplomatic approach were wise and smart.

## Scholar calls on Iran and Arab states to speed up talks

TEHRAN – A distinguished scholar believes that it is necessary that Iran and its Arab neighbors accelerate their talks as the United States is seeking to form a coalition between Israel and some Arab states against Iran.

Farhang Jahanpour, an emeritus professor

who taught at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge for many years, made the suggestion as U.S. President Joe Biden is planning to visit the region on July 13–16.

During Biden’s visit to Saudi Arabia, Arab leaders, including those ruling countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, will be attending the meeting scheduled to be held in Jeddah.

Jahanpour says the U.S. also intends to give legitimacy to Israel’s “military role in the Arab world” and thereby facilitate forming a “strategic

cooperation” against Iran.

“US is trying to form an Israeli-Arab alliance to militarise relations between ME neighbours & ‘further legitimize Israel’s military role in the Arab world and facilitate strategic cooperation against Iran.’ Iran & Arab neighbours must speed up peace talks,” Professor Jahanpour tweeted.

Through mediation by Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia have taken steps toward mending ties. Iraq’s Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi visited Iran on June 26 to deliver the Saudi message to

Iran. He flew directly from Saudi Arabia to Tehran. It was after this visit that the Foreign Ministry said the message included the Saudi side’s readiness to upgrade the level of negotiations with Iran from security to diplomatic level.

The Iraqi prime minister also made a reciprocal visit to Saudi Arabia on Sunday, July 3, to send Iran’s messages to the Saudi leaders.

It was after meeting the Iraqi prime minister in Tehran that Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said the Islamic Republic supports

reopening the Saudi and Iranian embassies in the capitals of the two regional powerhouses.

Speaking on June 30, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein also announced Baghdad is also a host to separate bilateral talks between Iran and Egypt as well as Jordan.

Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian who had visited Syria on July 2 called Egypt an “important country in the world of Islam” and said an expansion of ties between Tehran and Cairo will “benefit the two nations”.

*(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](https://tehrantimes.com))*



# Iran to continue both talks and nuclear program, MP says

TEHRAN – An Iranian lawmaker has said that Iran will simultaneously continue the nuclear talks and its nuclear program.

“While we will continue the negotiations, we will continue our peaceful nuclear activities with full force and will not heed the other side’s acts of obstruction in the negotiations,” Mojtaba Yousefi said.

In remarks to Fars News, Yousefi said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has shown by its behaviors that it is a puppet of the U.S. and Israel.

The latest round of talks between Iran and the West was held last week in Doha, Qatar. The talks did not result in an agreement. Iran said it will continue the talks.

Head of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian parliament has said that Iran and the United States have not reached an agreement on the economic benefits of the JCPOA for Iran during their talks in Doha.

Vahid Jalalzadeh made the remarks in an interview with the ICANA news agency published on Saturday.

Iran and the U.S. held indirect talks on Tuesday and Wednesday in Doha through European Union coordinator Enrique Mora. The talks took place soon after EU



foreign policy chief Josep Borrell visited Tehran for talks with relevant Iranian officials.

Jalalzadeh went on to say that the negotiating partners almost agreed on concluding the talks to revive the JCPOA in Vienna in March as the two sides had agreed on some details and implementing certain steps, yet the U.S. backtracked and therefore talks came to a 4-month halt.

“The U.S. backtracked on the promises it had made to the European parties, China, Russia and Iran in the same negotiations in Vienna; unfortunately, it broke them and there was a break in these negotiations for about 4 months. And finally, Mr. Mora and Borrell maintained this connection

in commuting and exchanging the messages and finally reached the conclusion to continue the negotiations in Doha, Qatar,” the legislator stated.

The MP said unfortunately Tehran and Washington could not reach agreement on two issues in Doha: “One is the issue of our economic benefits, and the other is the issue of the ‘red list of the sanctions’. In this regard, we reached a list with the Europeans and the Americans in Vienna, and we said that this list should be removed from the red list, but the Americans said that they will again add these people to the red list if anything comes up,” Jalalzadeh continued.

Mohammad Marandi, an advisor to the Iranian negotiating team

at the nuclear talks, has said that the West was compelled to give up some of its positions in recent months and they will be forced to give up other positions in order to resolve the remaining issues.

Marandi added in a press interview that Iran demanded throughout the negotiations that took place in Vienna to give it tangible guarantees. He rejected Western rumors that seeking these guarantees are beyond the nuclear agreement, Al Alam reported.

Marandi explained that the Americans and Europeans, despite their resistance, were forced to accept the Iranian demands, one after the other, gradually. He explained that the tangible guarantees that Iran is now also demanding are for the continuation of the nuclear agreement and not an issue outside the agreement, because it was America that violated the agreement during Obama’s era and during the time of Trump who tore up the agreement, and Biden also refrains from implementing the agreement.

The advisor to the Iranian delegation said arguments by the West that Iran has violated the nuclear agreement are aimed at putting pressure on Iran so that Western countries can extract concessions from it.

## SPORTS

### Iran learn fate at 2023 IHF World Championship

TEHRAN – Iran discovered their opponents in the 2023 IHF Men’s World Championship.

The Iranian team are drawn in Group A along with Spain, Montenegro and Chile.

On Saturday afternoon, the World Championship draw was completed at the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, the same city which will host the first match of the competition, Poland vs France, on 11 January 2023.

Iran will play Chile on Jan. 12 in their opening match and meet Montenegro and Spain on Jan. 14 and 16, respectively.

#### The full draw:

- \* Group A (in Krakow): Spain, Montenegro, Chile, Iran
- \* Group B (in Katowice): France, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia
- \* Group C (in Gothenburg): Sweden, Brazil, Africa 2, Uruguay
- \* Group D (in Kristianstad): Iceland, Portugal, Hungary, Republic of Korea
- \* Group E (in Katowice): Germany, Qatar, Serbia, Africa 5
- \* Group F (in Krakow): Norway, North Macedonia, Argentina, Netherlands
- \* Group G (in Jönköping): Africa 1, Croatia, Africa 3, the U.S.
- \* Group H (in Malmö): Denmark, Belgium, Bahrain, Africa 4

### Iranian tennis player Safi misses 2022 Wimbledon C’ships due to visa issues

TEHRAN – Meshkatolzahra Safi, a 17-year-old Iranian girl, missed out on playing at Wimbledon this year after failing to get a visa in time.

Before the tournament, she obtained a license to participate in the junior tournament but had to withdraw at the last moment.

According to Safi’s manager, the British government and Wimbledon were uncooperative on the visa. “Today is a sad day for sport in general and for tennis in Iran,” her manager wrote on Instagram.

“Meshkat had to withdraw from the tournament because the UK government did NOT grant him a visit visa in time nor did the tournament organizers do anything to help. It’s sad to think how politics affects so many people’s lives, their dreams, their careers and their ambitions.”

It should be noted that Safi became the first Iranian girl to play at the junior Australian Open earlier this summer.

During the tournament, she revealed that she was a big fan of Rafael Nadal and started playing tennis after seeing the Spaniard. After Melbourne, she also participated in the junior event at the French Open. She expected to play three Grand Slam tournaments in a row at Wimbledon, which did not happen this year.

She is currently ranked 76th in the ITF junior rankings and became the first Iranian girl to be ranked in the top 100. At the beginning of March, she achieved the highest ranking of hers, that is, 69. Apart from that, she has a total of 14-8 win record in the junior circuit.

### Iran wins West Asia Squash Tournament

TEHRAN – Iran claimed the title of the West Asia Squash Tournament held in Tehran’s Enghelab Sports Complex on Saturday.

In the individual section, Abdullah Al-Tamimi from Qatar won the gold medal, Iran’s Alireza Shamli seized the silver medal, and Omar Al-Tamimi from Kuwait and Azlan Amjad from Qatar jointly claimed the bronze.

In the team section, the Iranian team won the first place.

Qatar and Iraq finished in second and third place respectively.

### Persepolis add Jalal Hosseini to coaching staff

TEHRAN – Jalal Hosseini signed a deal with Persepolis to assist Yahya Golmohammadi in the upcoming season of the Iran Professional League (IPL).

The 40-year-old defender announced his retirement on Friday.

Hosseini represented Iran in the 2014 and 2018 FIFA World Cups and the 2007, 2011, and 2015 AFC Asian Cups.

With nine league titles, Hosseini is considered the most honorable and unattainable Iranian player in this regard.

On Saturday, Hosseini started a new chapter in his sporting life after he was chosen as Persepolis’s assistant coach.

### What makes Amir Yazdani Olympic wrestling’s next big super star?

TEHRAN – In a country that’s birthed some of wrestling’s biggest stars, Amir Yazdani is on the cusp of becoming a household name. He has the perfect mix of attack-first style of wrestling, a massive smile and boatloads of energy – on and off the mat – which makes the 21-year-old a perfect candidate to be wrestling’s next big thing.

The United World Wrestling sat down with Yazdani to talk about his introduction into wrestling and how having one of wrestling’s most-famous last names impacted his path into the sport.

He also walked us through his breakout performance at the 2021 World Championships where he reached the world finals.

Furthermore, Yazdani discussed the difficulties that came along with handling Iran their 65kg berth to the Tokyo Olympic Games but falling short in Iran’s Olympic wrestle off and how that impacted him in moving up to 70kg.

He also talked about his #PathToParis and how 74kg is the likely destination over the next few years.

### Mahdaviaia shortlisted for Iraq job: report

TEHRAN – According to reports, Mehdi Mahdaviaia is one of the options that the Iraqi football federation is considering for coaching their men’s national football team.

This has been revealed by Mohammad Nazemasharieh who is the head coach of Iraq’s national futsal team, persianleague.com reported.

Speaking to an Iranian sports newspaper, he said that the Iraqi federation was considering Mahdaviaia and Carlos Queiroz for their hot seat.

“What I say is not official or certain. Iraqis are in contact with Queiroz. They were also following up on the discussion about Mahdaviaia,” said Nazemasharieh who managed to finish the 2022 Arab Futsal Cup runner-up with the Iraqi team recently.

“When I attended a meeting of Iraqi federation’s technical committee, they were studying CVs of coaches and Queiroz and Mahdaviaia were among the names. I do not how much is the possibility of their appointment,” he added.

Mahdaviaia is now head coach of Iran’s U23 football team, striving to end Iran’s 48-year Olympics qualification drought.

## U.S. seeking to disrupt talks under Israeli pressure: senior MP

TEHRAN – Under Israeli pressure the United States is making efforts that the nuclear talks don’t result in an agreement, a senior Iranian lawmaker has said.

Ali Reza Salimi, who is a member of the Parliament’s presiding board, told state news agency IRNA, “Under the pressure of the Zionist lobby, America wants Iran not to secure its interests in the negotiations and wants the implementation of commitments for Iran to be a one-way street.”

He added, “The news from Qatar says that the Americans are obstructing the negotiations.”

Salimi said, “The disruption of the Americans in the negotiations has reached the point where the representative of the European Union has reacted to this behavior of the United States and stated that the United States does not follow the path of the negotiations.”

He added, “The Americans have focused all their efforts on the issue that Iran does not achieve the benefits intended for it in the JCPOA and only fulfills its commitments. And in fact, they are trying to limit Iran in various scientific,

nuclear, economic, missile, and other fields.”

The lawmaker was referring to the latest round of indirect nuclear talks held in Qatar between Iran and the U.S. The talks were held on Tuesday and Wednesday.

However, Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the UN, has said the Doha talks were positive.

“During our intensive consultations with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr. Joseph Borrell, in Tehran last week, Iran once more emphasized its willingness to provide creative solutions to the remaining issues in the hope of ending the deadlock. We agreed to hold indirect talks with the U.S. through the EU in order to overcome the last hurdles in the talks. We were sincere in the Doha talks that were serious and positive. As in the past, we will be in touch with the EU Coordinator for the next stage of the talks,” he said in a statement to a UN Security Council meeting on Thursday.

Takht Ravanchi added, “Our negotiating team is ready to engage constructively again to conclude and reach a deal. The ball is in U.S.’s

court and if the U.S. acts realistically and shows its serious intention to implement its obligations, the agreement is not out of reach.”

He said, “Iran is committed to multilateral diplomacy, the outcome of which should assure the effective and verifiable lifting of all unlawful sanctions.”

The ambassador went on to say, “Iran has demanded verifiable and objective guarantees from the U.S. that JCPOA will not be torpedoed again, that the U.S. will not violate its obligations again, and that sanctions will not be re-imposed under other pretexts or designations - as occurred during the previous U.S. administration - and that JCPOA mechanisms will not be abused. In fact, these are the minimum requirements for determining the deal’s long-term viability. In the course of Vienna talks, we exercised maximum flexibility and showed good faith in order to reach an agreement acceptable to all and even introduced innovative solutions to the remaining issues with the hope to break the impasse. However, the United States’ unrealistic and rigid approach has led to the current stalemate.”

## Saudi Arabia apathy could doom Iraqi PM mediation

TEHRAN – Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi will reportedly visit Saudi Arabia for the second time in a week after a trip to Tehran, where he pushed for thaw in Iran-Saudi relations.

German news agency DPA broke the news on Saturday that al-Kadhimi will visit Saudi Arabia again this week. Citing a Persian Gulf diplomatic source in Riyadh, the news agency said the Iraqi prime minister was expected to arrive Sunday in the Saudi Red Sea port city of Jeddah to meet Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and other high-level Saudi officials.

The visit comes days after two other visits to Saudi Arabia and Iran over the last week. In a bid to breathe new life into Iran-Saudi talks, al-Kadhimi visited Jeddah on June 26 and met with bin Salman. In the meeting, they put emphasis on “regional cooperation in a way that

promotes sustainable development in the region,” according to a press release by the Iraqi Prime Minister’s office. The two sides stressed the prominent role of Iraq in the convergence of views in the region and in the efforts to establish calm and constructive dialogues, a clear reference to Iraq’s mediatory role in facilitating and hosting five rounds of security-oriented talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Al-Kadhimi left Jeddah for Tehran, where he met Iranian President Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

In Tehran, the Iraqi prime minister discussed a variety of regional issues ranging from Yemen to Egypt. Al-Kadhimi discussed with President Raisi “the most important regional issues that are of common interest, which involve issues

related to the security of the two neighboring countries and the stability of the region.”

In continuation of his diplomatic push, the Iraqi prime minister is now planning to visit Saudi Arabia to brief Riyadh officials on his discussions in Tehran, according to DPA. The diplomatic source told the German news agency that al-Kadhimi “will brief the Saudi leadership on the results of his recent visit to Iran and Tehran’s position on the agenda of negotiations with Riyadh, which will pave the way for raising the level of the two parties’ talks to reach a solution to the points of contention between the two countries and thus restore full diplomatic relations between them.”

Baghdad has so far played host to five rounds of talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia, with the last round resulting in the two sides agreeing

monitor all moves of the enemies constantly.

Pointing to rare and sporadic mischievous measures by the enemies, the top general said the Iranian armed forces serving in the IRGC, the Army and the Border Police are acting uninterruptedly to monitor the hostile moves on the ground and in the air.

The general said he has visited Kurdistan Province to get updated on the activities of the armed units, regional security and border situation in the province.

## Iran constantly monitoring enemy moves: top general

TEHRAN – Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Mohammad Hossein Baqeri has said that Iran is constantly monitoring the enemy’s moves.

Speaking to reporters during a visit to the western province of Kurdistan on Sunday, Major General Baqeri highlighted the excellent security conditions across Iran including Kurdistan, saying sustainable security prevails along the western boundaries without any problem, according to Tasnim.

Baqeri hailed full security along the country’s western borders, saying the Iranian military forces

Back in April, Major General Baqeri said all Iranian military forces are ready to give a decisive and crushing response to any threat at any level in such a way that the enemies of Iran would regret taking hostile action against the Islamic establishment.

In comments in December 2021, President Ebrahim Raisi cautioned the enemies that any bellicose move will draw such a decisive response from the Iranian military forces that it will bring about a significant change in strategic equations.



## Iran, Russia, Turkey mulling over joint auto production



From page 1 ► and now with the war between Russia and Ukraine and the greater need of Russia's automotive and parts manufacturing industry for cooperation with Iran, this idea can be realized very soon," Najafi-Manesh said.

The supply of all the parts needed for the production of automobiles by the three countries, not needing to exchange any currency to supply parts and the existence of suitable export markets are among the advantages of such a project, the official

stated.

Having an annual export of more than \$12 billion worth of auto parts, Turkey has a very good potential in the parts manufacturing industry, the Russians also have high technical and technological capability, especially in heavy vehicles, and the existence of factories and production lines for the assembly of various cars in Iran, along with the ability to design are among the factors that can be encouraging to turn this idea into an executive project, he added.

Iran has been ranked the world's 19th biggest automaker in 2021, according to the latest report released by the International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (OICA).

Based on the OICA data, Iranian automakers produced 894,298 vehicles in 2021 to register a two percent increase compared to 2020, IRNA reported.

## Bank loans to fishery units rise 108% in Q1

TEHRAN – The value of bank loans provided to fishery units across Iran has increased 108 percent in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) compared to the same period in the previous year.

As IRNA reported, Bank Keshavarzi Iran, as the only Iranian specialized financial institution in the agricultural sector, has provided 3.587 trillion rials (about \$12.9 million) of facilities to 819 fishery units in the mentioned three months.

Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) is implementing a program to provide the country's fisheries with low-interest bank loans since subsidized input is no longer provided for them, an official with IFO said in late May.

According to Director-General of IFO's Planning and Budget Office Rajab-Ali Qorbanzadeh, Agriculture Ministry is seriously pursuing a program for providing working capital at a rate of 10 to 12 percent for the country's livestock, poultry, and aquaculture production units.

The IFO head has held several meetings with the representatives of the Agriculture Ministry after which primary agreements have been reached for the allocation of the mentioned resources.

Hopefully, the allocation of the mentioned facilities will begin in the next few days after



Agriculture Ministry finalizes the directive in this regard, Qorbanzadeh said.

He further noted that one trillion rials (about \$3.9 million) of facilities with a 14-percent interest rate will also be provided for the country's fisheries by Bank Keshavarzi (Agriculture Bank).

Fishery production has increased noticeably in Iran in recent years and the Islamic Republic of Iran plans to further boost its annual fishery production to 714,000 tons in the current Iranian calendar year.

Enjoying high quality, Iran's fishery products are sold easily in the export markets, and some new export destinations including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations have also welcomed these products in the past three years.

## Iran's daily refining capacity exceeds 2.2m barrels: OPEC



TEHRAN – The Organization of Oil Exporting Countries (OPEC), in its Annual Statistical Bulletin 2022, has put Iran's daily refining capacity in 2021 at 2.202 million barrels, indicating a 1,000 barrels per day (bpd) increase compared to 2020.

Iran's refining capacity has increased by more than 480,000 bpd from 2011 to 2021, according to OPEC's Annual Statistical Bulletin. Iran's refining capacity in 2011 was reported to be 1.715 million bpd.

Despite all the external challenges like the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. sanctions, the Iranian oil and gas sector has been developing at a fast pace and the country is passing new milestones in this industry every day.

Various sectors of Iran's oil and gas industry including exploration, production, processing,

and distribution are all among the world's top charts and the country is taking new steps to develop the industry even further.

Among different sectors of this industry, refining is a major one being seriously paid attention for development.

Back in September 2021, Oil Minister Javad Oji had said that the country's oil refining capacity will be increased by 1.5 folds by the end of the current government's incumbency (in four years).

He mentioned promoting the quantity and quality of the current refineries' products and the construction of new refineries as some major plans of the Oil Ministry in the new government.

According to the defined schedule for the quantitative and qualitative development of existing refineries and planning for the construction of new refineries in the next four to five years, the country's daily oil refining capacity will increase by one and a half times to 3.5 million barrels, the minister stated.

"Following the improvement of the quality of petroleum products and the increase of the quality of gasoline and gas oil, which is very important for us in the field of environment, the discussion of quantitative and qualitative development plans of refineries is seriously on the agenda of the current government", he added.

TEHRAN – The value of Iran's exports of non-oil goods to Turkey increased by 57 percent in the first five months of 2022, according to the data released by Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT).

The released data show that Iran has exported commodities worth \$1.536 billion to its neighbor in the mentioned five-month period, IRNA reported.

The total value of trade between the two countries also increased 39 percent to stand at \$2.742 billion in the said time span, while the figure was \$1.975 billion in the same period of 2021.

Meanwhile, Turkey's exports to Iran rose 21 percent to stand at \$1.206 billion, while the figure was \$996 million in the same five months in the past year.

Based on the said data, Iran's trade balance with Turkey was \$330 million positive during this period.

As reported, Iran exported \$304 million worth of goods to Turkey in May 2022, while importing \$262 million worth of commodities. Iran

# Non-oil exports to Turkey rise 57%



was the 17th export destination and the 19th import source of Turkey in May 2021.

The value of trade between the two neighbors had increased 53 percent to \$5.594 billion in 2021.

During a webinar, held in March,

on trade relations between Iran and Turkey, which was held through cooperation between Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) and Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ICOC), and attended

by officials from both chambers and a group of entrepreneurs, ways to develop economic relations between the two countries and some problems in this due were examined.

In this virtual conference, which was attended by more than 250 entrepreneurs from Iran and Turkey, the opportunities for cooperation between the two countries were examined and the two sides emphasized the development of cooperation.

Addressing the conference, Nihat Alayoglu, the secretary-general of Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, referring to the political, economic and cultural similarities between Iran and Turkey, said: "The two countries have long-standing relations dating back more than 400 years, and more than 500 kilometers of common border, as well as several trade agreements with each other, in particular, the preferential trade agreement, which was concluded in 2015, is very important for both countries."

## Commodities worth \$720m traded at IME in a week

TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 2,294,055 tons of commodities worth \$720 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1.974 million tons of commodities valued at more than \$495 million.

On this floor the IME sold 1.263 million tons of cement, 566,843 tons of steel, 96,000 tons of sponge iron, 36,970 tons of zinc, 6,500 tons of aluminum, 6,501 tons of copper, 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate and 6 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 313,292 tons of commodities worth more than \$219 million.

Commodities traded on this floor included 78,691 tons of polymeric products, 50,400 tons of vacuum bottom, 41,500 tons of lube cut, 39,191 tons of chemicals, 2,040 tons of sulfur, 4,055 tons of base oil, 110 tons of feed gas, 99,298 tons of bitumen and 225 tons of insulation.

The IME also traded within the same week 6,172 tons of commodities on its side market.

As previously reported, 10,826,000 million tons of commodities worth more than \$3 billion were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange during the past Iranian calendar month Khordad (ended on June 21), the third month

of Iranian calendar year, showing 21 percent and 36 percent growth in value and weight, respectively, as compared to the second month.

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).

## Housing rental rises 46.5% in Tehran city in a month on year

TEHRAN- Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has announced that the rental price has increased 46.5 percent in Tehran city during the third Iranian calendar month Khordad (ended on June 21), as compared to the same month in the past year.

According to the CBI, the rental price has also risen 2.7 percent in Tehran city in the third moth from the second month.

The CBI has also announced that the average housing price has increased 8.4 percent in the capital Tehran during the third month, from its previous month, and 32.8 percent from the same month of the past year.

Based on the CBI data, the average price for one square meter of a residential unit in Tehran stood at 394.14 million rials (about \$1,313) during the mentioned month.

As reported, the number of real estate deals stood at 13,900 in the capital city in the third month of this year, rising 32.3 percent from the previous month, and 171.9 percent from the same month of the past year.

As previously reported by the CBI, the average housing price rose 16 percent in the capital Tehran during the last month of the past Iranian



calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), compared to the same month in the preceding year.

Based on the CBI data, the average price for one square meter of a residential unit in Tehran stood at 351.2 million rials (about \$1,170) during the last month of the past year, up 6.2 from its previous month, and 16 percent from the same month of the preceding year.

Housing prices in Iran have been constantly rising over the past three years due to various internal and external factors.

Although, in early May, the chairman of Real Estate Agencies Union said, "This year is the year of lower housing prices; this condition will continue in the country for the next two years, and we will see a continuous decrease in housing prices".

Mostafa Qoli Khosravi referred to a report released by Central Bank of Iran in terms of housing

price in the first Iranian calendar month Farvardin (ended on April 20), and said: "The government is trying to compensate the housing shortage in the country with the National Housing Movement plan, and this plan is being prepared and implemented in several urban and rural areas".

He said that there is currently shortage of about 720,000 housing units in the country, adding: "Every year, dilapidated apartments are added to this number, therefore, the current government intends to compensate for the housing deficit by recognizing this shortage and implementation of National Housing Movement."

The market will react positively to the increase in supply, and the completion of the government plans including Mehr Housing and National Housing will control the uncontrolled growth of housing prices, he further predicted.

In early June, transport and urban development minister said that 1.35 million units of National Housing Movement are currently under construction throughout the country and the number is increasing every day.

Making the remarks in a

ceremony to break the ground for starting the construction operation of 15,000 units of National Housing Movement in Chitgar region, northwest of Tehran city, Rostam Qasemi said, "With the support of the parliament and the credit provided for the facilities of National Housing Movement, we will proceed according to the schedule".

After National Housing Action Plan (started in 2018), National Housing Movement is the government's second major program to provide affordable housing units for the low-income classes.

The operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of National Housing Movement began in early February.

National Housing Movement to construct four million housing units in four years is one of the major plans of the current government in the housing sector.

According to the plan, out of these four million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and 800,000 units in villages, some of these units are currently being constructed after providing lands and preparing the necessary conditions.

## TEDPIX gains 1,346 points on Sunday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), climbed 1,346 points on Sunday to reach 1.502 million points, IRNA reported.

About 9.151 billion securities worth

63.308 trillion rials (about \$228.1 million) were traded at the TSE on the mentioned day.

The first market's index gained 1,405 points, and the second market's index climbed 10,146 points.

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



# Trump is being damaged by the hearings: professor

From page 1 ▶ Following is the text of the interview with Shapiro about the consequences of the Jan 6th hearing:

**How do you evaluate the Jan 6th hearing sessions?**

They have raised the visibility once more of what happened leading up to the January 6th assault on the Capitol, and what Trump did and did not do, and the same for those around him

**While the difference between Trump and his close colleagues like Mike Pence is undeniable, how can his supporters justify or trust him?**

He is being damaged by the hearings, if not in a legal sense but in terms of his prospects of winning the 2024 election. His supporters will continue to support him but those who would vote for him only because they dislike the Democrats will be less likely to want to vote for him. And Trump needs these voters.



**While many see him as an abnormal impulsive personality, do you agree that Trump was successful in certain areas like economy?**

The economy was good when he

was President but he inherited a strong economy from the Obama presidency period. There is no disagreement that his personality hurt him - especially in how he handled the pandemic.

**Do you think America is following the teachings of its founders, given the rate of violence and racism?**

The founders were overall racists so this is an odd part of the question. America is at odds with the founders if people are deviating from the rule of law and preventing free and fair elections from occurring.

**How do you see the future of American democracy in light of such split?**

I see continued partisan conflict. The future of American democracy itself is fine if the country can hold free and fair elections, and does not prevent or overturn the votes of the people.

## Hezbollah sends “message” to Israel

From page 1 ▶ In reference to the latest development, Israeli media reported that “Hezbollah’s launch of unarmed drones towards Karish is an indication that it does not want a military confrontation now,” but “this is an indication that it is capable of otherwise, and it may be repeated in the coming weeks.”

Some Israeli media reports claimed that the Israeli occupation forces have “interrupted three Hezbollah drones, which were heading towards the Karish gas platform.”

And the regime’s “Channel 13” pointed out that “Hezbollah’s drones, which were launched towards Karish, were not armed, and thus it wanted to wage a war on awareness and to say that it is capable, and it is following up on Israel’s activities.”

“Channel 13” continued “when it (Hezbollah) decides to do so, it will launch armed drones or missiles towards the gas platforms.”

Hezbollah has confirmed its readiness to take measures, including force, against Israeli gas drilling operations in the disputed offshore areas saying “all options are on the table”

Israeli political, military, and religious leaders (former and current), as well as commentators, writers, and pundits, have been reflecting on their fears and belief of the eight-decade curse. They have cited historical Jewish rule; all of which had failed to continue their position of power beyond the eighth decade.

Putting that into context is fear among Israelis about the existential continuity of the regime in the eighth decade following its creation in 1948 by the former British colonialist rule of Palestine. The fear comes as much from the inside as it does from the outside.

There is an unprecedented political crisis and division (associated with that) within Israel not seen anywhere else in the world, as the regime is facing its fifth election in three years.

The latest development of trying to drill from somebody else’s natural resources has pitted the regime against its arch-foe, Lebanon’s Hezbollah.

A movement that has defeated Israel militarily on more than one occasion, with victories in 2000 and 2006. Also a movement that has promised any future war Israel tries to initiate with Lebanon will see the end of the Israeli apartheid regime.

It is noteworthy that the Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, confirmed, on June ninth, that “Lebanon is facing a new stage [with the Israeli regime] and “all options are on the table,” following the installation of an oil drilling platform in the Karish gas field “to begin work within three months by the British-Greek company, is similar to an aggression against Lebanon, and put it in front of a difficult situation [to make a decision].”

Sayyed Nasrallah clarified that “all the measures of the Israeli enemy cannot protect the floating rigging platform, nor the process of extracting from the Karish field,” stressing that “any folly that the enemy commits will have repercussions, not only strategic but existential. What Israel will lose in any war that threatens with [the extraction of Lebanese natural resources], it is much greater than what Lebanon can lose.”

He pointed out that “all options are open to the resistance,” stressing that “we do not want war, but we do not fear it. Israel must stop its activity in the Karish field, and withdraw the ship quickly and immediately.”

Sayyed Nasrallah explained that “our country is rich, and our treasure is in the sea, and this is what the data says. What we need is to have the courage to seek this reward,” adding that “if the

enemy wants to prevent us from excavating, we are able to prevent it” from excavating as well.

Nasrallah stressed the need to “set a goal of protecting and extracting oil wealth and making maximum use of it after its extraction,” pointing out that “in the region, only Syria and Lebanon are prohibited from exploring for their oil and gas under the penalty of sanctions.”

He added, “the danger from the attack on the maritime borders is the stripping of a very large area of ??Lebanon, from its [oil/gas] fields and wealth,” while the second danger is that “Lebanon is prohibited from extracting its oil, and this is a problem that the Lebanese must think of a solution to.”

Nasrallah empathized that the issue of water, oil and gas extraction is no less important than the issue of liberating the occupied border sliver.

“Indeed, this matter has advantages, which should constitute a motive and an incentive for everyone to bear responsibility,” he added.

The Hezbollah chief declared “we are going to confront the risks related to the oil wealth,” highlighting “the need to know that time is not on Lebanon’s side here.”

Sayyed Nasrallah added that “the direct goal should be to prevent the enemy from extracting oil and gas from Karish, and to stop the activity that it will or may have started,” stressing that “every day of delay will be recorded the loss of the wealth and money of the Lebanese people.”

Hezbollah’s Deputy, Sheikh Naim Qassem, recently insisted that the issue of border demarcation “requires a decisive decision and opinion from the Lebanese state,” and “it is necessary to answer the following question: Does the ship operate in a disputed area, or not?”

Sheikh Naim Qassem affirmed the party’s readiness to take measures, “including force,” against Israeli gas exploration operations in the disputed offshore areas, as soon as “the Lebanese government announces Israel’s violation of Lebanon’s maritime borders.”

In an interview, Sheikh Qassem said, “When Lebanon announces an Israeli attack on our waters and oil, we are ready to do our part in pressure and deterrence, and use appropriate means, including force, to prevent Israel from doing so.”

Qassem stressed the need for a deadline to be set saying it was not correct for this matter to remain suspended without the Lebanese people knowing how much Israel is infringing on Lebanese resources.

In response to a question about giving the Lebanese state “respite” before Hezbollah takes any action, Sheikh Qassem replied “we do not give a deadline to the Lebanese state. The Lebanese state is above all of us, and it determines its course, and we are under the roof of the state in such decisions, but we encourage it to hurry.”

News has surfaced that a British-Greek company installed an oil rigging platform in the “Karesh” field and announced that it will start extracting gas within three months, while the Israeli public broadcaster and radio admitted that “the Israeli Navy forces are conducting patrols to guard the platform,”

Following news that the ship of the liquefied natural gas production and storage unit “ENERGEAN POWER” operated by a British-Greek company had entered the “disputed” area at the southern maritime border, Lebanese President Michel Aoun, who has condemned the Israeli move, contacted Prime Minister Najib Mikati and a number of officials to monitor the developments.



## How the Pentagon uses a secretive program to wage proxy wars

*Exclusive documents and interviews reveal the sweeping scope of classified 127e operations*

Small teams of U.S. Special Operations forces are involved in a low-profile proxy war program on a far greater scale than previously known, according to exclusive documents and interviews with more than a dozen current and former government officials.

While The Intercept and other outlets have previously reported on the Pentagon’s use of the secretive 127e authority in multiple African countries, a new document obtained through the Freedom of Information Act offers the first official confirmation that at least 14 127e programs were also active in the greater Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region as recently as 2020. In total, between 2017 and 2020, U.S. commandos conducted at least 23 separate 127e programs across the world.

Separately, Joseph Votel, a retired four-star Army general who headed both Special Operations Command and Central Command, which oversees U.S. military efforts in the Middle East, confirmed the existence of previously unrevealed 127e “counterterrorism” efforts in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen.

Another former senior defense official, who requested anonymity to discuss a classified program, confirmed that an earlier version of the 127e program had also been in place in Iraq. A 127e program in Tunisia, code-named Obsidian Tower, which has never been acknowledged by



the Pentagon or previously identified as a use of the 127e authority, resulted in combat by U.S. forces alongside local surrogates in 2017, according to another set of documents obtained by The Intercept. A third document, a secret memo that was redacted and declassified for release to The Intercept, sheds light on hallmarks of the program, including use of the authority to provide access to areas of the world otherwise inaccessible even to the most elite U.S. troops.

The documents and interviews provide the most detailed picture yet of an obscure funding authority that allows American commandos to conduct counterterrorism operations “by, with, and through” foreign and irregular partner forces around the world. Basic information about these missions — where they are conducted, their frequency and targets, and the foreign forces the U.S. relies on to carry them out — are unknown even to most members of relevant congressional

committees and key State Department personnel.

Through 127e, the U.S. arms, trains, and provides intelligence to foreign forces. But unlike traditional foreign assistance programs, which are primarily intended to build local capacity, 127e partners are then dispatched on U.S.-directed missions, targeting U.S. enemies to achieve U.S. aims. “The foreign participants in a 127-echo program are filling gaps that we don’t have enough Americans to fill,” a former senior defense official involved with the program told The Intercept. “If someone were to call a 127-echo program a proxy operation, it would be hard to argue with them.”

Retired generals with intimate knowledge of the 127e program — known in military parlance as “127-echo” — say that it is extremely effective in targeting militant groups while reducing risk to U.S. forces. But experts told The Intercept that use of the little-known authority raises grave accountability and oversight concerns and potentially violates the U.S. Constitution.

One of the documents obtained by The Intercept puts the cost of 127e operations between 2017 and 2020 at \$310 million, a fraction of U.S. military spending over that time period but a significant increase from the \$25 million budget allocated to the program when it was first authorized, under a different name, in 2005.

(Source: theintercept.com)

## Lukashenko says Ukraine fired missiles at Belarus military posts

*Belarusian leader threatens retaliation against “the decision-making centers” in Western capitals*

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko says his military has shot down missiles fired at his country from Ukraine and promised to respond “instantly” to any enemy attacks.

“We are being provoked,” Lukashenko was quoted as saying by state news agency Belta on Saturday.

“I must tell you that around three days ago, maybe more, they tried to strike military targets in Belarus from Ukraine.

“Thank God, our Pantsir anti-air systems intercepted all the missiles fired by the Ukrainian forces.”

The claim, which Lukashenko did not provide evidence for, came one week after Ukraine said missiles

struck a border region from Belarus, a long-term Russian ally.

But the Belarusian president denied any involvement in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, reiterating that there were no troops from his country fighting in what Moscow calls its “special military operation”.

“As I said more than a year ago, we do not intend to fight in Ukraine,” he said.

“We will only fight in one case. If you... enter our land, if you kill our people, then we will respond,” he added, threatening retaliation against “the decision-making centers” of Western capitals in the event of an attack on Belarus.

“Don’t touch us and we won’t



touch you,” he warned.

Belarus has supported Russia’s military operation in Ukraine since it began on February 24 by acting as a

rear base for Moscow’s forces.

Russian troops crossed the Belarusian border into Ukraine as they tried and failed to take the capital Kyiv.

Lukashenko is heavily dependent on Russia militarily and economically and relied on his neighbour’s support to stabilise his position when widespread protests broke out in 2020 after an election the Belarusian opposition say he stole.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced last week that Moscow would deliver Iskander-M missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons to Belarus “in the coming months”.

(Source: Aljazeera)

## Trump considering announcing 2024 presidential bid

Former President Donald Trump has privately told allies and aides in recent days that he is seriously considering announcing a 2024 presidential run as early as this summer, CBS News has learned.

Trump’s latest exploration of a political comeback and a potential summer announcement of another presidential campaign was first reported by The New York Times.

Even as Trump moves closer to a 2024 run, his deliberations remain fluid. No final decision

has been made on whether to run and, if so, when to launch such a bid, according to three people close to Trump who requested anonymity in order to share details on private conversations.

Still, Republican allies of Trump and former White House and campaign aides tell CBS News that they believe an early entry for another White House bid for Trump is a possibility. The former president left his home at Mar-a-Lago in Florida last month for his seasonal migration to his club in Bedminster, New Jersey.

Several people who have spoken to Trump recently tell CBS News that Trump and his small group of closest advisers are now mapping out various ways for Trump to announce a 2024 campaign, be it this summer or after this year’s midterm elections. Traditionally, major party presidential candidates wait until well after the fall elections before jumping into presidential campaign mode. An early Trump launch, before the November elections, could upend campaigning strategies for both parties.



## Kashan to become ‘event-oriented’ tourism hub



From page 1 ► “However, despite that capacity, Kamu-va- Jowsheqan is still unknown,” the official added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official invited private investors to help exploit the untapped potential to achieve that sustainable tourism.

Kashan is situated on a route that connects Tehran to the giant destinations of Isfahan, Shiraz, and Yazd. Moreover, the ancient town is a gateway to many sights, stories, and surrounding attractive villages to discover. Amongst the highlights are the lavishly-decorated houses of Brujerdi, Tabatabai, Ameri, and Abbasi.

Apart from cultural sites such as a domed bazaar, where travelers can find loads of Kashani traditions and souvenirs, they may scape the city for the UNESCO-registered Fin Garden, which is believed to

be the epitome of Eden.

Kashan is highly famed for rosewater distillation ceremonies, which draw visitors from all over the country. Many believe traditionally-distilled rosewater is of higher quality than that produced in factories probably due to shorter time intervals between the harvest and distillation practices. Golab or rosewater is a fragrant distillate of Mohammadi roses, which is used in dishes to flavor them or being consumed as a religious perfume as well.

In addition, Kashan embraces some archaeological gems. Most importantly, the Tepe Sialk has yielded interesting pottery pieces, metal tools, and domestic implements made from stone, clay, and bone that date from as early as the 4th millennium BC.

The name Kashan is tightly bound to the UNESCO-designated Abyane, which is situated around 90 km in a southward direction. The ancient village is known for its gorgeous architecture, traditional clothing specifically from the inhabitants, and its old dialect of Persian that dates from the Sassanid era. Abyaneh is truly a living piece of history. Its people's ways of life and traditions have survived almost unchanged for hundreds of years. It would be an unforgettable day trip from Kashan.

## ‘Oldest’ Iranian tombstone bearing Kufic script goes on show

TEHRAN – The oldest Iranian gravestone with inscriptions in the Kufic calligraphy has been put on show at the Archaeological Museum of Shahr-e Kord, the capital of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province.

Dating back to the early Islamic era, the gravestone was discovered in a holy shrine in Saman county, a local tourism chief has said.

The gravestone belonging to Harun Ibn Musa bears great significance in the history of Arabic script evolution in the area due to its antiquity and the simplicity of the writing, Ali-Asghar Noruzi explained on Sunday.

There are no older examples than this gravestone in any museums, collections, or published articles, the official added.

Other old gravestones discovered in historical sites are also being studied by cultural heritage experts, he noted.

Researchers are determining the material and spiritual value of gravestones after studying them scientifically, he mentioned.

“Studying the written information on these stones can be a guide for researchers who specialize in this area and can provide



valuable information about the deceased person, the language of the time, and even the calligraphy and literature of the time.”

Studying all these inscriptions, stone inscriptions, and historical ruins of the region will result in documentation of the ancient history of the province, he concluded.

An off-the-beaten-path tourist destination, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, is the birthplace of various unique traditions and rituals relative to the ‘tribal’ lifestyles. Special forms of music, dance, and clothing are noteworthy. It has considerable potential to become a vibrant tourist attraction because of its changing natural landscape.

# U.S. to return another batch of Achaemenid tablets to Iran

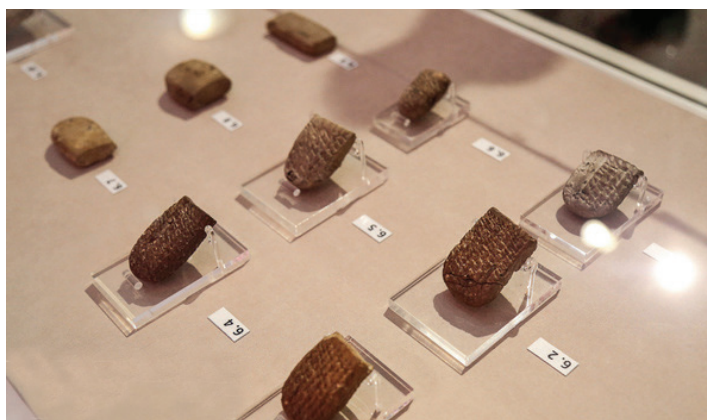
TEHRAN – The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago is getting prepared to return another batch of the Achaemenid tablets to the government of Iran after some 87 years of being on loan.

“Soon we will witness the return of another part of the Achaemenian tablets by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago...,” Director General of Museums and Historical-Cultural Properties Morteza Adibzadeh said on Saturday.

“Good news will be announced soon in that regard,” the official said.

“They are going through the necessary paperwork and correspondence, and U.S. sanctions have no effect on this matter,” Adibzadeh said in a response to a question about the possible effects of the U.S. sanctions on the legal process.

In September 2019, a batch of



the clay tablets, which comprised 1,783 pieces, were returned home after 84 years. They are part of thousands of clay tablets and related fragments, which were kept at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History and the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute.

In February 2018, following years of ups and downs, the fate of those ancient Persian artifacts was left in the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court, which

ruled in favor of Iran.

Archaeologists affiliated with the University of Chicago discovered the tablets in the 1930s while excavating in Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire. However, the institute has resumed work in collaboration with colleagues in Iran, and the return of the tablets is part of a broadening of contacts between scholars in the two countries, said Gil Stein, director

of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.

The tablets reveal the scenes of the economic, social, and religious history of the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC) and the larger Near Eastern region in the fifth century BC.

Darius I, by name Darius the Great, was king of Persia from 522 BC to 486 BC, one of the greatest rulers of the Achaemenid dynasty, who was noted for his administrative genius and his great building projects. Darius attempted several times to conquer Greece; his fleet was destroyed by a storm in 492, and the Athenians defeated his army at Marathon in 490.

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

## Gousheh-Shahanshah Caravanserai undergoes restoration

TEHRAN – Gousheh-Shahanshah Caravanserai, a 17th-century roadside inn in Lorestan province, has undergone restoration, the provincial tourism chief said on Sunday.

The restoration work will touch upon worn-out bricks and traditional insulation of the rooftops, Seyyed Amin Qasemi said.

The Islamic Republic has submitted an inclusive dossier on its caravanserais to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. The dossier comprises the obligatory data about a selection of 56 caravanserais, which are located in 24 provinces.

Caravanserai or caravansary is a compound word combining “caravan” with “sara”; the former stands for a group of travelers and the latter means the building.

Iran's earliest caravanserais were built during the Achaemenid era (550 -330 BC).



Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 – to 1629, he ordered the construction of a network of caravanserais across the country.

For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai, can be a wide experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age.

Self-serving chambers that are

## Tehran villagers invited to crafts workshop



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 a year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar

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

## Herbs cultivation prerequisite for sustainable health tourism, official says

TEHRAN – Sustainable health tourism can be enhanced by producing and cultivating medicinal herbs, a local tourism official in Fars province has said.

“Apart from developing hospitals and medical centers, health tourism can also benefit from complimentary treatments such as salt therapy, hot and cold water springs, and the capacity of medicinal plants, as well as the establishment of medical centers and equipping the infrastructure for the health system,” Mohammad Farokhzadeh said on Sunday.

The rich value of medicinal plants, along with their potential for importing currency to the country, make them valuable investments, the official explained.

In Fars province, medicinal plants are native products, and their cultivation is very popular among farmers because of their



ease of maintenance, low water consumption, and high economic value, he added.

Medicinal plant cultivation is widely used and lucrative in many countries, so they have created economic policies to take advantage of this industry, he noted.

Recent decades have seen a growing interest in medicinal plants and the traditional knowledge of their usage to

some extent that some believe the drugs of the future might come from the past.

Due to the side effects of synthetic drugs, herbal products and the desire for multilateral use of these plants in various pharmaceutical, food, and cosmetic industries are becoming more and more popular again. And such a trend steps up demands for potentially important tourist attractions.

That is why the rural destinations with medicinal herb resources are becoming increasingly popular in Iran and many other countries, especially as a part of alternative medicine.

Iran is a country of exceptional biological and landscape diversity, a huge, untapped potential that could help to improve the tourism offering. Of the 8,425 species of herbs identified in the country, 2,300 are medicinal, aromatic, and cosmetic properties, according to data provided by the Forests, Ranges, and Watershed Management Organization.

The ancient region of Fars, also spelled Pars or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (c. 550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

## Bushehr to promote hydro tourism

TEHRAN – Bushehr tourism directorate seeks to develop water games and sports, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Bushehr tourism enjoys a vast potential for water games as it lies on the shores of the Persian Gulf, Esmaeil Sajadimanesh explained on Sunday.

Private sector investors are welcomed and supported in this sector, the official added.

Despite its arid climate, Iran's tourism sector has tried to boost hydro tourism or water tourism in recent years.

This branch of tourism involves traveling to places specifically to take part in water-based activities. Some individuals who do not wish to partake in water-related activities embark on water tourism trips so that they can visit tourist sites that sit close to bodies of water such as lakes, rivers, dams, oceans, etc.

While water tourism often includes active chases, some water tourists visit islands and shore regions to join more relaxed pursuits such as diving or swimming. Travel businesses organize tours of coral reefs and arrange for local



tour guides to preside over excursions on which travelers can swim with local marine life such as dolphins or even sharks. Some tour operators also cater to families who are primarily focused on swimming and tanning rather than interacting with aquatic life.

Water trips occasionally involve inland destinations such as lakes and rivers. Holidaymakers can sail or swim on lakes while many rivers are ideally suited to white water rafting. Additionally, some leisure businesses operate water parks that contain swimming pools, water slides, and areas for kayaking or canoeing.



# Omicron BA4, BA5 subvariants may soon prevail

TEHRAN – Omicron BA4 and BA5 variants may soon dominate the country, Masoud Younesian, secretary of the epidemiology and research committee of the national scientific committee to deal with coronavirus, has said.

Pointing out that COVID-19 hospitalizations and outpatients have tripled in recent days in the country, he said that the probability of increasing transmission during the next week is relatively high.

Despite the fact that the BA2 subvariant of Omicron and its subtypes have been dominant in the world, now for several weeks in a row, BA4 and BA5, which started in the African continent, then went to America and other parts of the world, are increasing.

Of course, maybe it has not prevailed yet, and it is still dominated by BA2. Therefore, currently, the share of BA4 and BA5 cases in the world has increased and these two variants are more averse to vaccines, he stated.

In the rest of the countries, which had the same situation as us, they had a peak with a height of one-fifth to one-sixth compared to the main peak of Omicron. That is, if at the peak of our omicron we reached 20,000 infections per day, now it is not far from the expectation that our daily infection numbers will



reach four digits, and double-digit deaths are also not far from expectation and unfortunately there is a possibility of that.

To prevent the new wave, we should still use masks in closed spaces, especially those without ventilation. At the same time, it would be very helpful if people who have not received the vaccine are banned from gatherings, closed places, etc., he suggested.

According to the official statistics, about 20 to 25 percent of eligible people in the society did not inject the coronavirus vaccine at all, and between 30 to 35 percent only injected a dose of the vaccine, who is called the vulnerable population.

In the first week of the Iranian

calendar month of Tir which began on June 25, COVID-19 hospitalizations and outpatients have tripled in the country.

Also, unfortunately, a total of 11 patients died last week. Based on this, the total number of deaths from this disease has reached 141,390 people.

However, on Saturday, no covid-related mortalities were reported across the country.

Iran has been able to reduce the COVID mortalities from 700 cases to less than 10, and this successful experience of the Islamic Republic was made known in the seventy-fifth session of the World Health Assembly, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said on May 27.

So far, about 150 million doses

of vaccine have been injected into the Iranian population and the coverage of vaccination in the total population is about 75 percent, he highlighted.

Following the decision of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control and President Ebrahim Raisi, all universities affiliated with the ministries of science and health, and schools, started education in person on April 3 as the new cases of the disease have notably reduced.

The successful experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran in controlling the coronavirus pandemic was made known in the seventy-fifth session of the World Health Assembly.

In the first week of the Iranian calendar month of Tir which began on June 25, COVID-19 hospitalizations and outpatients have tripled in the country.

## IRCS seeking to expand services in Sierra Leone

### IRCS services worldwide

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

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

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

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

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

## Astrology and astronomy in Iran

### Part 6

The best known members of this group are Ghiath-al-din Jamshid Kashi, who completed the al-Zij al-khaqani in 1413-14, Qazi-zadeh Rumi, and Ala-al-din Qushji.

The principle result of their efforts was the publication of the Zij-e Ologh Beg in about 1440, which was immensely popular in Islam and was translated into both Arabic and Sanskrit.

The effects of Ologh Beg's work were felt in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Through the translations of his and Kashi's zij, the jyotisis of Benares in the seventeenth century learned of Ptolemaic astronomy and introduced some of its methodology into their Sanskrit works; contemporaneously at Delhi Farid-al-din composed in 1629 the Zij-e shahiahani, based on the Zij e Ologh Beg.

In the early eighteenth century the Maharaja of Amber, Jayasimha (1699-1743), built observatories at Benares, Mathura, Delhi, Ujjayini, and Jaipur in imitation of that at Samarkand; with the assistance of Khayrallah Khan, he composed a Zij-e jaded-e mohammad-shahi, dedicated to the Mughal Emperor Mohammad Shah (1719-48).

But it seems unlikely, in the present state of our ignorance, that these Indian texts added anything of significance to Ologh Beg's work, which remained the authoritative treatise on astronomy in Persian until the introduction of modern astronomy in the nineteenth century.

### ii. Astronomy and Astrology in the Sasanian Period

The arts of divination probably began to penetrate Iran (or at least its court circles) from Mesopotamia already in the Achaemenid period.

The philhellene Arsacid dynasts must have

been still more open to such foreign influences, although eastern Iran, from which they came, appears to be yet untouched by astrological doctrine in the second century B.C. (judging by the inventory of personal names at Nisa).

The sun and moon emblems on Arsacid coins may simply reflect traditional Iranian reverence for the chief luminaries, but they may also be symptoms of a growing consciousness of astrology (the most developed form of divination), particularly of the individual's nativity.

By the end of the Arsacid period, the Hellenistic-Roman science of astronomy cum astrology was fully developed.

The Talmud could depict a mage of that time, living in Mesopotamia, as expert in genethliology and catarchic (appointive) astrology (Neusner, History of the Jews, p. 165).

Perhaps the world chronology of the Spand and Warshtmansr nasks of the Sasanian Avesta already received its definitive form under the Arsacids.

It was in the course of the Sasanian period, however, that Iran assimilated both Hellenistic-Roman and Indian sciences of the heavens and integrated these with traditional Zoroastrian ideas.

Highly relevant to the Arsacid period are the subjects Mithraism and Zurvanism. It is here assumed that the exposure of Zoroastrian priests to Near Eastern divination (including judicial astrology), from the Achaemenid period on, helped foster cosmological speculation; and this developed a body of myth around Zurvan "Time," who must already have served as a personification of the fructifying year-cycle.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

## Zagros forest restoration document drawn up

From page 1 ► In recent years, this precious ecosystem is not in a good condition due to human interference and natural disasters, such as continuous droughts, improper use, and wildfires, while if we want to have food and biological security and sustainable development, we must pay attention to these forests.

Referring to pests and diseases as one of the main problems of the Zagros forests today, he noted that these pests and diseases are the results of activities that have disturbed the biological and ecological balance of the Zagros ecosystems.

Zagros forests are among the most important natural resources of Iran, as it constitutes 40 percent of the country's forests, and play an important role in the production of a large part of the country's freshwater.

A campaign called "people's movement for a green Iran and each Iranian a tree" began on December 1 to evoke the people's participation in the revival of forests for 14 years, Kamran Pour-Moqaddam, an official with the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization, said.

One of the major problems in these forests is the drying up of oak trees and a fungal disease that has infected these trees. The main cause of this disease is the droughts that have occurred in recent years.

The areas that were involved in this problem have been partially controlled by watershed management and forestry operations, but seeding and rehabilitation operations are required, he said.

Zagros forest steppe ecoregion with an area of about 6 million hectares (3.5 percent of Iran) is located primarily in Iran, ranging northwest to southeast and roughly paralleling the country's western border. The forest constitutes 40 percent of the country's forested area. The forest has also been called the western oak forest due to the dominance of oak species.

According to Science Direct Western, oak forests are home to many species including, the Persian squirrel which is the indicator species of this region. Persian squirrels and oak trees have symbiotic relationships, in which forests provide ecological requirements for Persian squirrels such as food and shelter, and, in return, the Persian squirrel contributes to seed germination and forests' regeneration.

A wide variety of wildlife, including wolves, leopards, and even the Persian fallow deer which was once thought extinct have made their homes in the mountains.

### Biodiversity in danger

Unfortunately, the protection of forests, pastures, and agricultural lands in the country has not been appropriate in recent years. Improper exploitation, land-use change, and land degradation are the main causes of deforestation and consequently biodiversity, Eskandar Zand, the national authority for the Convention on Biological Diversity, has said.

According to the statistics, there are about 2 million hectares of forest land and 15.7 million hectares of forests in Iran.

Comparing this statistic with the data of 2005 shows that during the past 16 years, the level of forests in Iran has not changed much, but the quality of forests has been damaged, so that about 1.6 million hectares of semi-dense forests in Iran (with a density of 25 to 50 percent) has been reduced and in contrast to 1.9 million hectares have been added to forest lands (with a density of 1 to 5 percent), he explained.

As a result, the quality of Iranian forests has dropped sharply, except for dense forests, which cover about 12 percent of the whole forest and are relatively inaccessible, the rest are severely damaged, he lamented.

### Iran's biosphere reserves

Iran is a vast country with a wide range of biodiversity and natural resources, with 13 bio-



sphere reserves named Golestan, Miankaleh, Arasbaran, Urmia, Arjan and Parishan, Geno, Hara, Hamoon, Dena, Tange Sayad, Sabzkooh, Turan, Kavir and Kopet Dagh has been registered in the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program, he explained.

Biosphere reserves include terrestrial, marine, and coastal ecosystems. Each site promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. There are currently 714 biosphere reserves in 129 countries, including 21 transboundary sites.

The Golestan Biosphere Reserve is located in the north of Iran and forms part of the Caucasus-Iranian highlands, situated between the sub-humid and semi-arid Caspian regions.

A wide variety of habitats and rich biodiversity can be found in the reserve, including 150 bird species, 54 species of reptiles and amphibians, 8 species of huge carnivores such as the leopard and brown bear, and more than 1,366 plant species.

Dena Biosphere Reserve is located in the Central Zagros Mountains of Iran, with a general slope of more than 60 percent. Dena is also home to a vast range of plant species and several endangered and endemic mammal species. Oak species dominate the highlands, while pistachio and almond are common at lower elevations.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

### ‘Water transfer from Sea of Oman entails no considerable environmental risk’

Transferring water from Sea of Oman to central drought-ridden provinces of the country, provided that the environmental requirements are met, will not poses threats to the environment, Issa Kalantari, the Department of Environment (DOE) chief has announced.

To provide the amount of water needed for the country, agriculture and industries, there is no choice but to use seawater, the incredible and abundant resources, now and in the future, Kalantari stated, IRNA reported on Monday.

He went on to say that Iran located in an arid and semi-arid area, is facing environmental problems including water shortage, sand and dust storms due to low precipitation amounts coupled with climate change.

“Renewable water resources have drastically decreased to less than 80 billion cubic meters from 132 billion cubic meters over the past 50 years, and 50 billion cubic meters water consumption rate have increased to 95 billion cubic meters,” he lamented.

### شیرین سازی و انتقال آب دریای عمان مشکل زیست محیطی ندارد

رئیس سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست کشور گفت: شیرین سازی و انتقال آب دریای عمان به استان های مختلف به شرط رعایت الزامات محیط زیستی، جانمایی مناسب در ساخت آب شیرین کن و رهاسازی پساب آن مشکل و مانع زیست محیطی ندارد و از نظر این سازمان بلامانع است.

عیسی کلاتری دوشنبه شب در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: برای تامین آب کشاورزی، آشامیدنی و صنایع کشور چاره ای جز استفاده از آب دریا نداریم و باید چه اکنون و چه آینده به این منابع بگردان و بسیار فراوان رجوع کنیم. وی افزود: ایران کشور پر آبی نیست و سالهای سال با بحران بی آبی، خشکسالی و مسائل زیست محیطی، گرد و غبار و ریزگردها مواجه است.

معاون رئیس جمهوری تصریح کرد: ۱۲۰ میلیارد مترمکعب آب تجدید پذیر ایران در ۴۰ تا ۵۰ سال گذشته به کمتر از ۸۰ میلیارد و مصرف آب از ۵۰ میلیارد مترمکعب به بالای ۹۵ میلیارد مترمکعب رسیده است.



