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Iran Holds Firm as West Ramps Up Rhetoric

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Report

Bolton admits U.S. planned foreign coups

Former White House National Security Advisor and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton, has admitted he played a role in Washington's plans to overthrow governments around the world. A policy that has long been strongly condemned internationally, from Latin America to West Asia and beyond.

Bolton made the remarks to CNN following Tuesday's congressional hearing into the January 6 2021 insurrection on Capitol Hill by supporters of ex-U.S. President Donald Trump to stop the certification of his successor.

The former U.S. official said Trump was not capable enough to pull off a "carefully planned coup d'etat," because "that's not the way Donald Trump does things."

The TV host said that "one doesn't have to be brilliant to attempt a coup," but Bolton remained defiant, admitting that he was personally involved in overthrowing foreign governments and that these operations must be planned carefully.

"I disagree with that. As someone who has helped plan coup d'etats, not here but, you know, other places, it takes a lot of work, and that's not what [Trump] did. It was just stumbling around from one idea to another" he said.

The host pressed Bolton on which governments he helped overthrow. "I'm not going to get into the specifics," Bolton replied, before pointing to Venezuela. "It turned out not to be successful. Not that we had all that much to do with it but I saw what it took for an opposition to try and overturn an illegally elected president and they failed," Page 5

Opinion

Effect of worn-out industrial machinery in increasing electricity consumption

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- Electricity consumption in Iran reached an unprecedented record-breaking level of 67,700 megawatts on Tuesday.

The daily consumption was 700 megawatts higher than that of the same day in the past year, and 300 megawatts higher than the previous record.

Over the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease in rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

In the past two years, however, new deteriorating factors like severe drought and the decline in the country's water resources as well as a new wave of illegal cryptocurrency mining across the country have also worsened the situation.

Among such factors, outdated equipment used in industry and agriculture sectors are a major contributor to the high electricity consumption in the country.

These two sectors have become major consumers of electricity in the country due to their outdated equipment.

Many of the country's industrial equipment is not updated and still use old technologies; This has caused this industry to use more electricity to produce products. Page 4

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TEHRAN – President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has underlined that Iran will not step back from its rightful positions regarding the 2015 nuclear deal.

Speaking in the cabinet meeting on Wednesday in response to the recent claims of the Americans regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), President Raisi said, "The Americans have said that Iran should return to the JCPOA, while the Islamic Republic of Iran has never withdrawn from the JCPOA and it was America who violated the JCPOA."

He added, "Today, it is a question not only for the Europeans, who are allies of the Americans in the negotiations, but also for all the nations around the world that why the United States did not adhere to its commitments under the JCPOA and withdrew from it." Page 3

Lake Urmia in grave peril

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Lake Urmia started to dry up in the 2000s, and although it revived at some point over the past few years, it is in serious danger these days.

Lake Urmia, located in northwest Iran, is the largest lake in the Middle East and the sixth-largest Salt Lake in the world with a water surface area of 5,000 to 6,000 km2. The lake is designated for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, Ramsar Site, as well as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, which is a protected area with the aim of conserving nature and culture in the region and community development.

However, the water in the lake has been decreasing during the past years. The water surface area shrank by approximately 80 percent of its (once-large) original size at the end of the dry season in 2013 and by approximately 70 percent at the end of the rainy season of the same year. Page 7

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Iran's canoe polo league begins

TEHRAN – Iran canoe Polo League kicked off on Tuesday in Tehran's Azadi Lake.

The competition has brought eight teams across the country together.

Each team has five players on the pitch, who compete to score in their opponent's goal, which is suspended two meters above the water.

Iran start 2022 FIBA Asia Cup on high note

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Syria 80-67 in their opening match of the 2022 FIBA Asia Cup on Wednesday.

Behnam Yakhchali scored 31 points for Iran while Hani Adribe, Amer Alsati and Anthouny Bakar earned 12 points for Syria each.

The Persians will also play Kazakhstan and Japan in Pool C on Friday and Sunday, respectively.

The Group Phase will be played from July 12-17. The 16 teams competing in Asia Cup 2022 were drawn into four groups of four.

Every group winner will gain direct access to the quarter final, while runners-up will play third placed teams in a playoff games.

Originally intended to be the 2021 edition, the tournament was initially scheduled to take place between 3 and 15 August 2021, but it was postponed due to 17 to 29 August 2021 to avoid scheduling conflict with the 2020 Summer Olympics which was postponed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was later postponed again to 12 to 24 July 2022.

Kermanshah enjoys one million years of continuous human settlement, archaeologist says

TEHRAN - Kermanshah is a unique region that enjoys continuous human settlement for a span of one million years, top archaeologist Saman Heydari-Guran said on Wednesday.

"We have abundant evidence indicating one million years of human settlement in Kermanshah, which is an exception in the plateau of Iran and even in West Asia...," the archaeologist said.

"In addition, the geography of this region is full of ancient monuments that have been affected by many factors,"

Heydari-Guran made the remarks in an event organized to mark the 16th anniversary of Bisotun's registration on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

"Bisotun inscription dates back to 2500 years ago, which has unique features. Bisotun is the largest text panel in the world written in cuneiform in three languages, Akkadian, Elamite, and ancient Persian," he explained.

"Kermanshah region has had one million years of archaeological continuity and we do not have a gap during this period, which is due to the geography of the region. The high number of springs, the fertile soil due to the mountainous area, and the rivers have contributed to this continuity," Heydari-Guran said. Page 6

Op-ed

How to counterbalance sanctions for the future

By Hossein Askari

Iran was entirely compliant with the nuclear agreement (JCPOA) signed by president Obama and ratified by the United Nations Security Council; nevertheless Trump tore it up. The economic sanctions relief that was due to Iran was rescinded and Trump piled on more sanctions, ordered the assassination of Iran's general Soleimani and designated its Revolutionary Guard as terrorist. Yet Iran continued to keep up its end of the deal for some time before deciding that enough was enough.

Now that indirect negotiations have resumed in Qatar, the U.S., the country that recanted the agreement, is unwilling to make meaningful concessions for its restoration.

A simple restoration of the agreement will do almost nothing for Iran. Iran has paid a heavy price for Washington's scrapping of the agreement. Iran will not get the sanctions relief it expects. Major companies will not make long-term and significant investments in Iran because they fear future U.S. sanctions, possibly under a new administration with another abrogation of a new agreement. Similarly, commercial banks are unlikely to extend financing on favorable terms given the continuing uncertainty. Any concessions Iran gets will be short-term, such as gaining the ability to open up its oil to more export markets. This would be oil that is much needed by the world, and yet Iran would have to submit its nuclear facilities to intrusive inspections and limit its nuclear progress. Page 5

Iran aims for cultural products export expansion in new plan: minister

TEHRAN – Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili said on Tuesday that the ministry's new plan calls for an expansion of the export of Iranian cultural products.

Speaking to reporters during a visit to an exhibition displaying calligraphic paintings by Jalil Rasuli, he explained that the plan would be implemented by Iran's cultural centers abroad, which fall under the auspices of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization.

"Work accomplished by Iranian cultural attachés will be assessed based on their success in the export of Iranian cultural products," Esmaeili noted.

"Over the past month, I held meetings with culture ministers of five regional countries, during which I noticed their eagerness to expand cultural relations and organize mutual cultural exhibitions," said Esmaeili, adding that Qatar, Lebanon, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are ready to collaborate in organizing art exhibitions. Page 8

More value will be added to BRICS if Iran joins: commentary

"The potential of the Iranian economy is huge"

TEHRAN - In an article published on July 13, al-Monitor says "more value will be added to BRICS" in case Iran joins the economic bloc.

Feng Xingke, secretary-general of the World Financial Forum and director of the Center for BRICS and Global Governance, has told the Global Times that including Iran in BRICS will mean closer and more effective channels between resources and markets, which will benefit all members.

Following is the text of the commentary headlined "Iran weighs benefits of BRICS membership":

Recently, Iran applied to join BRICS, a group consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. On a global level, this forum represents 40% of the world population and 26% of the world economy. According to IMF data, China has the largest economy in this grouping and accounts for more than 70% of the BRICS total worth of around $27.5 trillion, while India comes in second at 13% and Russia and Brazil comprise the remaining 7%.

Now with Iran's entry, more value will be added to BRICS as it holds around a quarter of the Middle East's oil reserves and second-largest global gas reserves. Invited to a virtual meeting of the BRICS summit, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has delivered a speech expressing Iran's readiness to share its vast capabilities and potential to help the BRICS countries attain their goals.

Around the same time that Tehran joined two-day talks in Doha to resuscitate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) deal between Iran and the United States which ended without any positive result. Apparently losing hope of normalizing its ties with the Western bloc, Iran could be exploring alternate options to survive economically under the current U.S. sanctions.

Since joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) last year, this participation in BRICS is Iran's second step toward the East. Feng Xingke, secretary-general of the World Financial Forum and director of the Center for BRICS and Global Governance, told the Global Times that including Iran in BRICS will mean closer and more effective channels between resources and markets, which will benefit all members.

Discussing the motive behind this move, Hamidreza Azizi, CATS Fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin, told Al-Monitor, "The Rouhani administration was trying to pursue a balanced foreign policy and believed that having normal relations with the West is the key to expanding relations with the East and vice versa. But since President Raisi took over last year, Iranian foreign policy has increasingly become anti-Western in the traditional sense of the word."

Consequently, he said, "Iran's moves to join different non-Western groupings, from SCO to BRICS, are presented as the inevitable path the country needs to take in a world in which — as the narrative goes — the West is experiencing a political, economic and moral decline. In that sense, even the JCPOA if revived is a tactical solution, while Eastward policy is of strategic nature."

However, even though it was the 20th anniversary of BRICS last year, its achievements have remained debatable. In 2017, a BRICS plus concept was also introduced to link more emerging economies and build consensus on global development, but the group seems to be hampered by these basic factors.

To start with, China has become the world's second-largest economic power, while Brazil, Russia and South Africa have remained far behind. Only Beijing has moved forward in the group while other member countries may be large in size but are not equal in wealth. Though there are annual meetings, intra-BRICS economic cooperation has remained very limited.

Jim O'Neill, who coined the BRICS acronym when the group was launched, wrote, "The bloc's economic trajectory has been a mixed bag. While the first decade was a roaring success for all four countries, with each surpassing all four scenarios that I originally outlined, the second decade was less kind to Brazil and Russia, whose respective shares of global GDP have now fallen back to where they were 20 years ago. If it weren't for China — and India, to some degree —there wouldn't be much of a BRICS story to tell."

Next, most member countries have divergent political interests. While Russia and China may view it as a forum "building a more balanced global order," India is part of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, also known as the Quad, and is reluctant to be labeled anti-West. And now, New Delhi and Beijing also have an ongoing military standoff at their mutual border — a temporary line called the Line of Actual Control.

Discussing why India had joined BRICS, Ashok Swain, professor of peace and conflict research at Uppsala University in Sweden, told Al-Monitor, "India decided to join BRICS in 2006 when its economy was booming, and it expected to catch up with China in economic development. Russian diplomacy was behind creating this bloc at that time, but not precisely to make it an anti-American grouping. Russia wanted India in it to balance China, for India it was a platform to maintain a cooperative structure with China and Russia while developing its strategic relationship with the West."

But now, Swain observed, "China does not need BRICS anymore as much as BRICS needs China. The relationship between China and Russia has become stronger while China and India's relationship has deteriorated considerably. So, India's value for BRICS or vice versa is not the same as it used to be a decade ago."

Lastly, initially all the member countries had shown signs of high growth but things did not work out as planned. As Stephen Grenville wrote for The Lowy Institute, "What lasting contribution did BRICS make? They had a few desultory meetings and formed a BRICS bank, which added nothing (in terms of funds or ideas) to the existing multilateral development banks."

Under these circumstances, what can BRICS offer Iran?

A European diplomat posted in Islamabad told Al-Monitor, "Tehran is aware of the great potential members have to establish an independent financial mechanism to neutralize Western attempts to impose their policies, in particular, to challenge the Swift mechanism, whose availability for Iran on the short/medium term will be strictly linked to the future of the nuclear talks."

Nevertheless, he said, "It will be extremely difficult to get full benefits from BRICS without the complete lifting of Western sanctions. The potential of the Iranian economy is huge; its development requires Western technology, especially in the energy sector, something which BRICS countries cannot fully provide. Therefore, Tehran is following several parallel paths like the SCO, ECO, INSTC, hoping at the same time for the resumption of the JCPOA."

In Azizi's opinion, "There is not much Iran can actually get from BRICS in the short to medium term, except for some room for political and diplomatic maneuvering. There is no real prospect for the BRICS countries to ignore the U.S. sanctions — which may be complemented by European sanctions if the JCPOA talks fail — for the sake of having trade and economic relations with Iran. What Iran often boasts about, in terms of China and Russia continuing to work with Iran despite the U.S. sanctions, is first a bilateral issue and second comes with a considerable cost such as the discount Iran provides for China for its oil trade. Therefore, neither SCO nor BRICS are expected to help Iran find a way out of the current economic difficulties."

Considering Iran's chemistry with Beijing and Moscow, Swain observed, "Iran will benefit considerably by joining BRICS, as it does not intend to be an ally of the West and its relations with China and Russia are more as a junior ally, not as a competitor. As part of BRICS, there is a lot for Iran to gain, economically and diplomatically."

Ultimately, BRICS could become a club of the world's largest energy producers and consumers outside the United States. For a while, the forum has been working on a mutual payment system, credit rating agency, currency bank and reserve mechanism. In this way, member countries might escape U.S. sanctions.

Iran: Time and venue for next round of talks to be decided soon

TEHRAN — In his first press briefing as the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Nasser Kanaani told the French foreign minister that the window of diplomacy has been open because of Iran's various initiatives.

Speaking at a weekly presser on Wednesday, Kanaani said that Iran's stance regarding the sanctions lifting negotiations is quite clear.

"The clear message of the Islamic Republic of Iran is that we are committed to multilateral negotiation and diplomacy to resolve disputes. As the foreign minister has pointed out several times, if there were no initiatives and efforts of Iran followed by Tehran's goodwill, perhaps the window of diplomacy for the remaining issues would not remain open until now. Therefore, the European parties and their allies, i.e., the American government, must know that the window of negotiations remains open due to the responsible behavior and prudent planning of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Kanaani said in response to Catherine Colonna, France's chief diplomat who said Tuesday that Iran is playing the "procrastination game."

He then noted that Iran has fully fulfilled its responsibilities and obligations in the nuclear agreement, and it was the U.S. government that illegally and unilaterally left the agreement in violation of its international responsibilities and refused to fulfill its obligations.

The spokesman added, "These European governments were members of the JCPOA, which, despite having pledged to accept the responsibilities resulting from America's withdrawal from the JCPOA and to compensate for this illegal and unilateral withdrawal, in practice, except for hollow statements, did not take any positive action in fulfilling their commitments."

The diplomat noted that it is the Iranian government that has the right to make demands and hold the European JCPOA signatories accountable for their failure to honor their commitments.

"Iran does not recognize a right for these parties to question and make demands or even threaten and blame Iran," he strongly cautioned.

'Time and venue of negotiations'

Elsewhere in the briefing, the spokesman noted that Tehran still adheres to the negotiation process and these negotiations are ongoing as before through the exchange of messages.

"The exchange of messages is both at the level of Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian with Mr. Josep Borrell and at the level of Mr. Bagheri, the chief negotiator of our country, with Mr. Enrique Mora. The way of coming to a conclusion regarding the continuation of the negotiations and also the place of the negotiations are being discussed in the communiques

and messages of the parties and the time and place of the negotiations will be determined soon," he added.

He then went on to note that Iran does not consider a failure to determine the time and venue of the negotiations as the end of the talks.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is on the path of negotiation, and Iran will follow this path as long as the opposite parties adhere to the negotiation process and multilateral diplomacy. Of course, as the government and the foreign ministry have stated many times, Iran will not condition its foreign relations, especially the development of its economic and commercial relations, and will not wait for the JCPOA and nuclear talks to lift sanctions," the spokesman remarked.

He then expressed hope that through a constructive approach and goodwill by all parties to the negotiations, including the United States, which is chiefly responsible for the current predicament in the negotiation process, it would be possible to bring the talks to a result in the near future.

The diplomat reiterated that Tehran is serious about reaching an agreement that will meet the interests of the Iranian nation and guarantee Iran's economic interests from the JCPOA, and so far Iran has presented the most initiatives in the negotiations.

"I believe that it is the opposite parties, both the European side and especially the American side, that should make their own political decision whether to conclude the negotiation process in the near future or not," he underlined.

According to the spokesman, Iran's positions are clear and rightful. Returning to the 2015 agreement is a principled position for Tehran, and it has announced this numerous times, he noted, adding, "A government that illegally and unilaterally withdrew from the agreement and caused a lot of damage to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian nation should not sit as a claimant and blame the Iranian side."

The spokesman went on to say that if the American government acts responsibly and makes a political decision that proves in action that Iran's defined economic interests will be guaranteed within the framework of the 2015 agreement, Iran will return to the agreement.

"It is the U.S. government that should provide the necessary guarantees. There is no extravagant demand from Iran in the negotiations that have taken place (so far)," he clarified, rebuffing the Western media narrative that Iran made excessive demands in both Doha and Vienna.

Americans can't justify their destructive behavior through op-eds

In response to a question about the recent claims of U.S. President Joe Biden who wrote in The Washington Post that the increase in economic and diplomatic pressure on Iran has reduced the number of so-called Iran-backed attacks on American forces compared to two years ago, Kanaani said, "It is very surprising to me that the Americans think that by uttering such sentences or writing op-eds in a newspaper, they can justify and explain the result of their bad and destructive actions that they have practiced in the region and especially in the West Asia region for many years."

He added that Biden and the American officials must know what the people of the region think about America's interventionist policy in the region.

"We are on the eve of the U.S. president's visit to the region. In his article, he stated that one of the main goals of his trip was to help strengthen peace and security, and to create stability and peace in the region, as well as resolving disputes. I try very hard to be optimistic, but I think a glance at the tradition of American foreign policy over many years in the region and the world shows that these statements cannot be consistent with the on the ground policy of the United States in the region," he responded.

The spokesman said creating peace, stability and tranquility in the region entails a practical change in Washington's "destructive" behavior.

He noted that the nature of the Zionist regime is illegitimate as its history has been full of crime, occupation and violation of law for more than seven decades.

"America is the full and unconditional supporter of this regime in the region. America's interventionist policy in the countries of the region is an illegal policy. U.S. military presence in the countries of the region has been illegal. The illegal presence of the United States in the countries of the region, including Iraq and Afghanistan, has not brought stability, order and security to these countries; rather it has brought extensive material, spiritual and human losses... and suffering, pain and sorrow," the spokesman lamented.

The diplomat went on to state that the American government cannot forward-escape with an op-ed and the comments of its president and possibly attribute the actions against the presence of the American military forces in the region to Iran or to the forces attributed to Iran.

Kanaani continued, "I believe that the American government and the president of this country, who announces that he wants to travel to the region with the intention of creating peace and stability, should review the regional foreign policy of the United States and take a look at the public opinion in the region and match the facts. They should change their behavior and abandon the policy of supporting the Zionist regime. The presence of the Zionist regime in the region and the full support of the U.S. to this regime is the source of the maximum instability and unrest in the region. Correcting this behavior, avoiding interference in the internal affairs of countries, avoiding creating symbolic alliances and political and security divisions in the region, as well as respecting the sovereignty and independence of countries, is the best behavior that the American government can adopt in order to bring stability and peace to the region."

We hope to see Assadollah Assadi be released soon

Responding to a question on the latest developments regarding Assadollah Assadi, the jailed Iranian diplomat in Belgium, the spokesman noted, "Undoubtedly, the pursuit of the release of this diplomat of the Islamic Republic of Iran as soon as possible since the beginning of his illegal arrest and detention in violation of the Vienna Convention has been and continues to be pursued by the foreign ministry and all relevant government entities of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

An immediate and unconditional release of Assadollah Assadi is a serious demand of Iran, he insisted, adding, "Political talks and consultations are held with the Belgian authorities, and there are close contacts and consultations with the Belgian Judiciary."

Kanaani continued, "We hope that we will soon witness the release of this Iranian diplomat in the context of the actions taken and the follow-ups that have been carried out so far and the efforts that we have made so far, and we think that the Belgian government should also pay attention to Tehran's legal request."

Tehran, Seoul discuss release of Iran's frozen funds

TEHRAN— Senior South Korean and Iranian officials spoke by phone on Wednesday to explore methods to restore bilateral relations strained by the problem of Iranian funds frozen in the country, according to Seoul's foreign ministry.

During the phone call, First Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun-dong and his Iranian counterpart and chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Bagheri-Kani, discussed the latest developments in negotiations aimed at reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as well as other outstanding bilateral issues, according to the ministry.

Bilateral relations are still strained as a result of US$7 billion in Iranian cash held in two Korean banks under U.S. sanctions, which were re-imposed when then-U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018. Tehran has long demanded that Seoul release the funds.

During the talks, Bagheri Kani stated that "urgent bilateral issues" must be resolved as soon as possible, to which Cho responded that the Seoul government will make steps to release the cash and resume oil imports if the Iranian nuclear agreement is restored, according to the ministry.

Officials in Seoul have stated that the fate of the frozen funds is dependent on the outcome of Iran's nuclear discussions with international powers.

Later, Bagheri Kani tweeted, "In the phone call with Mr. Cho Hyun-dong, the First Vice Foreign Minister of (South) Korea, I emphasized that the government/people of Iran expect the new Korean government to immediately release the foreign exchange resources of Iran in Korean banks in order to provide a basis for improving the relations between the two countries. The Korean side stated that Seoul is seriously looking for a way to solve this problem."

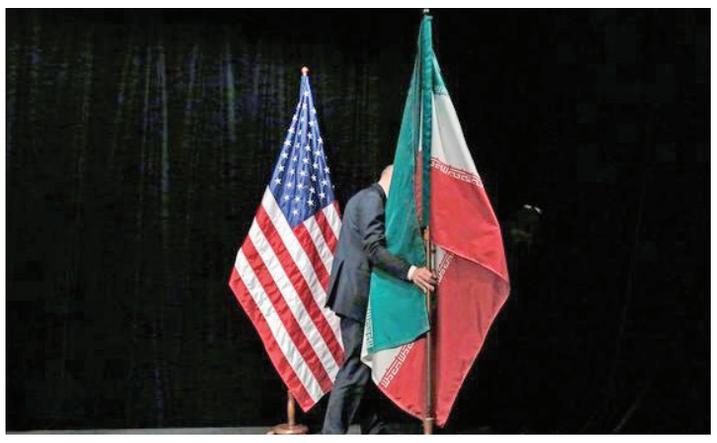
Iran holds firm as West ramps up rhetoric

TEHRAN – Iran has made it clear that recent Western calls for Tehran to take the draft deal currently on the table will not make it budge and that the conclusion of the nuclear talks depends on the United States moderating its negotiating position.

Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi rarely speaks about the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). But after France and the United States ramped up their rhetoric against Iran and accused it of procrastination, Ayatollah Raisi spoke in detail on Iran's positions toward the JCPOA.

On Tuesday, the new French foreign minister, Catherine Colonna, claimed that there were only a few weeks to revive the nuclear deal. "There is still a window of opportunity ... for Iran to finally decide to accept an accord which it worked to build, but time is passing," she said. "The window of opportunity will close in a few weeks. There will not be a better accord to the one which is on the table."

She accused Iran of using delaying tactics and of going back on previously agreed positions while forging ahead with its uranium



enrichment program, according to Reuters. "Time is passing. Tehran must realize this," she warned.

A senior U.S. official also told Reuters that "every day that goes by without a deal makes reaching a deal less likely."

On the other hand, Iran has said JCPOA talks will resume soon but that does not mean that Tehran will be acquiescing to U.S. demands or stepping back from its own positions.

Nasser Kanaani, the new spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry, said on Wednesday that the time and place of the next round of nuclear talks will soon be announced. "The way to continue the negotiations and the place for the negotiations is being discussed," Kanaani said.

Meanwhile, President Raisi has said that Iran will stick to its positions. Speaking in a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Raisi reacted to American demands for Iran to return to the JCPOA. "The Americans have said that Iran should return to the JCPOA, while the Islamic Republic of Iran has never withdrawn from the JCPOA and it was America who violated the JCPOA," he said, adding, "Today, it is a question not only for the Europeans, who are allies of the Americans in the negotiations, but also for all the nations around the world that why the United States did not adhere to its commitments in the JCPOA and withdrew from it."

Underlining that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not back down from its rightful and logical positions, President Raisi advised the Americans to see the facts and learn from the past instead of repeating the failed experience of maximum pressure on the Iranian nation.

He said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always acted completely rationally in negotiations with the P5+1 and P4+1 and stated its reasonable demands. Even today, the negotiation team has not raised any demands outside of the frameworks, and is acting according to standards in continuation of the path that has been taken so far."

The U.S. and some of its European allies have accused Iran of raising issues beyond the scope of the JCPOA. But Iran has reiterated its position that its demands are in strict accordance with the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Shamkhani to visit Baku on Friday

TEHRAN – The top security of official of Iran will visit Baku on Friday for talks with high-level Azerbaijani officials.

During his visit to neighboring Azerbaijan, Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, will meet President Ilham Aliyev.

He will exchange views with Azerbaijani officials over bilateral issues and the latest international and regional developments.

The visit comes a week after Shamkhani traveled to Armenia where he met with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

In his meeting with the Armenian prime minister, Shamkhani noted that Iran is interested in developing and strengthening relations with Armenia in all fields. In this context, the interlocutors referred to a number of issues of bilateral cooperation, according to Armen Radio.

The sides exchanged thoughts on ensuring regional stability and security. Shamkhani emphasized that Iran considers any attempt to change the geopolitical situation in the region unacceptable and noted that his country also supports the process of unblocking infrastructure within the framework of preserving the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states.

The interlocutors emphasized that strengthening of economic ties is fundamental for the development of Armenian-Iranian cooperation in various directions. In this context, Nikol Pashinyan and Ali Shamkhani emphasized the need to boost the existing cooperation in trade, infrastructure, energy, industry and other areas. The parties discussed current programs and projects, as well as those of mutual interest.

Iran proposes 'regional union' to deal with environmental challenges

From Page 1 ▶ He added, "To deal with environmental problems in a sustainable way, the creation of a union or organization for environmental cooperation of West Asian countries can organize the regional cooperation of these countries."

He noted, "Another point of interest for this cooperation is that in order to achieve the goals stated in the UN resolutions, many of which have been carried out with the follow-ups of the Islamic Republic of Iran, it is necessary to establish a regional fund for financial support of executive measures in the field of action."

Raisi continued, "Therefore, the proposals of the Islamic Republic of Iran include the establishment of a mechanism and organization in the form of a regional union, the creation of a financial fund as a financial support for executive actions, the need to carry out some kind of division of labor between the member countries and the formation of the secretariat of this union in order to diligently follow up on the resolutions, because if there is no secretariat, the resolutions of these organizations will not be followed and implemented as they should be."

Iran won't back down on JCPOA positions: president

TEHRAN – President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has underlined that Iran will not step back from its rightful positions regarding the 2015 nuclear deal.

Speaking in the cabinet meeting on Wednesday in response to the recent claims of the Americans regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), President Raisi said, "The Americans have said that Iran should return to the JCPOA, while the Islamic Republic of Iran has never withdrawn from the JCPOA and it was America who violated the JCPOA."

He added, "Today, it is a question not only for the Europeans, who are allies of the Americans in the negotiations, but also for all the nations around the world that why the United States did not adhere to its commitments under the JCPOA and withdrew from it."

Referring to the unjust U.S. sanctions against the Iranian nation, Ayatollah Raisi said, "Americans have repeatedly said that the pressure they imposed on the Iranian nation was unprecedented and maximum, but the spokesperson of the U.S. Department of State officially announced that these pressures did not work at all and failed miserably."

Stating that the Islamic Republic will not back down from its rightful and logical positions, the president advised the Americans to see the facts and learn from the past instead of repeating the failed experience of maximum pressure on the Iranian nation, according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

Ayatollah Raisi added, "Americans must have realized during the last 43 years that it is not possible to speak to the Iranian people with the language of coercion. It is strange that they still want to speak with the same literature that will definitely not bring them any results."

Ayatollah Raisi said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always acted completely rationally in negotiations with the P5+1 and P4+1 and stated its reasonable demands. Even today, the negotiation team has not raised any demands outside of the frameworks, and is acting according to standards in continuation of the path that has been taken so far."

Referring to the visit of American officials to the region, Raisi emphasized, "If the visits of American officials to the countries of the region are to strengthen the position of the Zionist regime and normalize the relations of this regime with some countries, then their efforts will not bring about security for the Zionists in any way."

Addressed the Americans, the president said, "If you want to know the effect of your actions on the region, look at the stances of nations closely to see how much hatred of the Zionists and the crimes of this regime has increased in their hearts."

Ayatollah Raisi also emphasized that Iran is closely monitoring all developments in the region and is not oblivious to any movement. "We have repeatedly told those who have brought messages from the Americans that if the slightest movement is made against the territorial integrity of Iran, it will be met with our decisive reaction."

In another part of his speech, Raisi pointed to the importance of improving welfare infrastructure for higher education and emphasized the necessity to develop, renovate and equip student dormitories, especially for married students.

Raisi also emphasized the attention of the institutions to provide proper service to the people and their demands, stating that there is nothing more important than serving the people and maintaining peace and hope in the society. He described increasing the social capital and hope in the hearts of the people as the super project of his administration.

"All the government officials should consider themselves obliged to create hope in the society and anyone who is indifferent to the people's affairs and, knowingly or unknowingly, disappoints the people is going against the system and the government's strategy."

Iran says will decisively respond to any Israeli unwise move

TEHRAN – Nasser Kanaani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry, has warned Israel against any adventurous move against Iran, saying Tehran will decisively and firmly respond to any unwise move by Israel.

Kanaani was responding to a question on the Israeli prime minister's comments that Israel still has freedom of action to counter Iran's nuclear program.

Speaking at a weekly press conference on Wednesday, the spokesman

said Iran's nuclear program is completely transparent and legal and that all Iran's activities are being done under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

He added that Israel which possesses nuclear weapons and is not party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), has not right to comment on Iran's peaceful nuclear activities.

SPORTS

Vahid Amiri fit for 2022 World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran iconic midfielder Vahid Amiri has reacted to the speculations that he will miss the 2022 FIFA World Cup due to the injury.

Amiri underwent back surgery in mid-May and his doctor said that he needs 3-to-4 months to make a full recovery.

According to local media reports, the Persepolis player has not started his training yet and will most likely miss the World Cup.

"It's not true. I have started my physical training and will be fit for the World Cup," Amiri said.

"My doctor has told me I will be fit to represent Iran in the World Cup next month," he added.

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

Foolad to hold camp in Turkey

TEHRAN – Iran's Foolad football club will hold a training camp in Turkey.

Foolad will travel to Turkey on July 15 to hold a nine-day camp in the country.

Javad Nekounam's team prepare for the 2022-23 Iran Professional League.

The Ahvaz-based football club have also qualified for the 2022 AFC Champions League Round of 16, where they have been scheduled to play Saudi Arabian team Al-Faisaly in February.

Austrian keeper Knett joins Foolad

TEHRAN – Iranian football club Foolad completed the signing of Austrian goalkeeper Christopher Knett.

Knett joined Sepahan in September 2021 from Greek football team Panetolikos as a replacement for Payam Niazmand but failed to meet the expectations.

The 31-year-old goalie parted ways with Sepahan on Tuesday and joined Foolad.

Foolad has qualified for the 2022 AFC Champions League Round of 16, where they have been scheduled to play Saudi Arabian team Al-Faisaly in February.

Iran learn fate at 2022 Asian Junior Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran discovered their rivals at the 2022 Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship.

Iran have been drawn in Group A along with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and South Korea.

Group B consists of Bahrain, India, Japan and Pakistan.

Iran will start the campaign on August 20.

The 2022 Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship will be the 17th edition of the championship scheduled to be held in Manama, Bahrain under the aegis of Asian Handball Federation (AHF).

It will be the second time in history that the championship will be organized by the Bahrain Handball Federation (BHF).

It also acts as a qualification tournament for the 2023 Men's Junior World Handball Championship, with top four teams from the championship directly qualifying for the event to be jointly hosted by Germany and Greece.

Hossein Vafaei donates his cup to National Sports Museum of Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian professional snooker player Hossein Vafaei donated his championship cup to the National Sports Museum of Iran.

He donated his Snooker Shoot Out trophy, which won in January by defeating Peter Devlin.

Vafaei was accompanied by Hashem Eskandari, head of Bowling, Billiard and Boules Federation of Iran in the Iran's Olympic Committee headquarters.

Reza Salehi Amiri, head of National Olympic Committee (NOC), former weightlifters Behdad Salimi and Sajad Anoushiravani also attended the ceremony.

Iran can make history in 2022 World Cup

TEHRAN – Former Iran coach Afshin Ghotbi says that Iran can pass through to the knockout stage if the right decisions are made.

The Iranian football federation dismissed Dragan Skocic, the Croatian coach who has guided the national soccer team since February 2020.

The leading candidates to replace Skocic with four months until the World Cup in Qatar are Iranian.

After clinching qualification for the World Cup in January, 'Team Melli' is preparing for high-profile games in Group B against England on Nov. 21 and the United States eight days later. Iran will also face Wales on Nov. 25.

A 2-1 loss in a friendly against Algeria last month, Iran's only warmup game so far for the tournament, increased pressure on Skocic.

"The importance of the World Cup on a global scale and in terms of national pride has added to the urgency of the decision," Afshin Ghotbi, an Iranian-American coach who was in charge of Iran's national team from 2009 to 2011, told The Associated Press. "Especially with politically sensitive opponents such as England and the United States.

"While the team qualified easily for the World Cup, poor performances and results against strong opponents South Korea and Algeria have led to fans and key players losing faith in the coach."

The national football federation has been considering whether Iran should be represented by a local in the same way as England, the United States and Wales have homegrown coaches in Gareth Southgate, Gregg Berhalter and Rob Page. An appointment could be made as early as this week.

Ghotbi, who was a member of the U.S. coaching staff at the 1998 World Cup when the team lost 2-1 to Iran, has been mentioned as a possible replacement for Skocic, along with two other former coaches.

Despite reports that Ali Daei has turned the job down, the country's leading international goalscorer is still on the IFF's shortlist, as is Amir Ghaleneoi, who led the team from 2006 to 2008.

Former Iran captain Javad Nekounam, a popular figure who made more than 150 appearances for the country as a player and is currently coaching leading club Foolad, is in the running. So are Yahya Golmohammadi, who has won two league titles with Tehran giant Persepolis, and Farhad Majidi.

If there is to be a foreigner in charge, then it may be one of two former coaches. Branko Ivankovic, another Croatian, led the team to the 2006 World Cup and is currently in charge of Oman. Former Real Madrid coach Carlos Queiroz took Iran to the last two global tournaments and is currently available after being released by Egypt.

Iran has failed to progress past the first round in five previous trips to the World Cup but Ghotbi believes that the soccer team can match its volleyball counterparts and make history.

"It is a tough group but it is one in which Iran can pass through to the knockout stage if the right decisions are made," he said.

Iran's June oil output rises 31,000 bpd: OPEC

TEHRAN - Iran produced 2.574 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil in June, registering a 21,000-bpd increase compared to the figure for the previous month, according to OPEC's latest monthly report published on Tuesday.

Iran produced 2.543 million bpd of crude oil in May based on secondary sources, the report read.

As per OPEC data, the Islamic Republic's average crude output for the second quarter of 2022 stood at 2.560 million bpd indicating a 32,000-bpd increase compared to the figure for the first quarter of the year.

The report put the average Iranian crude output for 2021 at 2.392 million bpd, while the average output in 2020 was reported to be 1.991 million bpd.

The country's heavy crude oil price also increased by $0.37 in June, to register a 0.3 percent rise compared to the previous month, according to the OPEC report.

Iran sold its heavy crude oil at $115.85 per barrel in the mentioned month, compared to May's $115.48 per barrel.

The country's average heavy crude price was $105.14 from the beginning of 2022 up to the report's publishing date, in comparison to $64.31 in the previous year's same period.

OPEC statistics show that despite the U.S. sanctions, Iran's oil production has been increasing gradually and the country has been able to compensate for the output decline.

Earlier this month, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Director for Supervising Oil and

Gas Production Hormoz Qalavand said that the company is now ready to return to the maximum level of oil production.

"This would be rapidly done if the country needs to increase export, or domestic refineries need more feed", Qalavand stressed.

Back in April, Oil Minister Javad Oji had said that the country's crude oil production has reached the pre-sanction level.

Saying that the current capacity of Iran's oil production has reached more than 3.8 million bpd, the minister said, "We hope that through the efforts of all those active in this sector, we will reach higher figures in the exports of crude oil, gas condensate, oil products, and petrochemicals."

"By taking effective measures in onshore and offshore oil fields, drilling new wells, repairing wells, rebuilding and modernizing facilities, and oil collection centers, the current oil production capacity has reached before the sanctions, and we have no problem in performance and this amount of production", Oji added.

Effect of worn-out industrial machinery in increasing electricity consumption

From page 1 ▶ Also, many agricultural wells use old pumps and this has fueled the increase in electricity consumption by the agriculture sector.

In addition, the industry and agriculture sectors have always enjoyed very good government support, so that this support has led them to enjoy almost free electricity.

These very good supports have made the industry and agriculture sectors to become the main consumers of electricity in the country.

Now and according to the conditions of electricity supply, electricity tariffs for these two sectors need to be seriously reformed so that they are encouraged to be modified and have equipment that requires less electricity.

The country's large industries are still dependent on cheap electricity from the national grid, and no plan has been defined to cut this dependence.

Now that people are gradually doing their part in using low-consumption equipment such as low-consumption lamps and are making more efforts to observe the consumption pattern well, the industry and agriculture sectors should also pay more attention to observing the consumption pattern and in the meantime tariff reform of these two sectors will help more to comply with the consumption pattern.

The other resolution is the plan based on which the large industries will build power plants to supply their required electricity.

In the current government, there has been a strong determination for industries to build power plants to supply their electricity, and the continuation of this process can lead to a general improvement in the state of electricity supply in the national grid.

In this due, Ministry of Energy signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade in mid-October last year, based on which major industries of the country can build power plants to meet their electricity needs.

According to a part of this agreement, 13 industrial companies will invest for the construction of new thermal and renewable power plants with the capacity of 10,360 megawatts in 10 provinces within a period of three years.

On May 29, the director of the plan to construct theses power plants announced that the executive and operational stage of the construction of new power plants in seven sites with a capacity of 5,302 megawatts has begun.

This is in line with the policies of resistance economy and according to the interest of large industries to invest in order to provide reliable and stable electricity for their production units.

Quarterly non-oil export to Oman jumps 168% year on year

TEHRAN- The value of Iran's non-oil export to Oman jumps 168 percent in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), from that of the same quarter in the previous year, the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that Iran exported commodities worth $331 million to Oman in the three-month period of this year.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

Last month, the head of Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce said that a special barter system will be established in trade between Iran and Oman.

Mohsen Zarabi made the remarks pointing to the 145-percent growth in trade between the two countries in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Zarabi has also said that the trade between Iran and Oman is expected to reach $2 billion by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2023).

He made the remarks in the annual ordinary general assembly of the mentioned chamber

held at the place of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), saying, "Considering the upward trend of trade with this country [Oman], it is predicted that by the end of the year, we will record 1.2 billion exports and $2 billion of trade".

Last year, the trade between the two countries reached $1.336 billion, indicating a growth of 57 percent compared to the preceding year, Zarabi said.

He said that in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year, exports to Oman reached $283 million with a growth of 28 percent, noting that the figure in the import sector increased by 187 percent to $128 million dollars.

According to Zarabi, the trade between the two countries reached $331 million in the mentioned two months, registering a growth of 145 percent.

The official further noted that agreements have been reached to increase Iranian exports to the Arab country, saying: "One of the ways to increase trade is to introduce Iranian commodities to Omani traders and raise awareness; This is possible by sending trade delegations and holding exhibitions in this country."

In late May, Head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman-Pak and Omani Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef met and agreed on creating a roadmap for the expansion of trade relations and also discussed the establishment of an Iranian trade center in Muscat.

Speaking in this meeting, Peyman-Pak voiced the readiness of his organization and the Iranian Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade for providing the necessary infrastructure for expanding trade exchanges between the two countries.

He also proposed signing a roadmap for trade cooperation between Iran and Oman, which was welcomed by the Omani minister.

Mentioning some of the challenges in the way of developing economic cooperation between Tehran and Muscat, Peyman-Pak said that talks were underway between the ministries and private institutions of the two countries to resolve the problems related to transportation and banking relations.

Govt. approves bylaw to support knowledge-based production in oil industry

TEHRAN – The cabinet approved a new bylaw on knowledge-based production and job creation in the oil industry, in a meeting chaired by President Ebrahim Raisi on Wednesday, Shana reported.

The mentioned bylaw has been suggested by the Oil Ministry in line with the slogan of the current year which is "Knowledge-based production and job creation" and based on the law on supporting knowledge-based companies and institutions and startups.

TCCIMA criticizes instability in govt. business policies

TEHRAN – Representatives of the Tehran private sector gathered on Wednesday for the 18th meeting of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) Industry and Mining Committee in which the attendees discussed the challenges facing the private sector.

The problems caused by the government's interference in the pricing of some products, restrictions on the import of machinery, changes in trade-related regulations, and sudden implementation of new business policies were some of the main issues raised at the said meeting, TCCIMA portal reported.

The committee meeting was attended by industrial officials including Head of TCCIMA's Industry and Mining Committee Ali Naghib, Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Baradaran, and Chairman of Iran Home Appliance Industry Association Alireza Daniali.

Speaking at the meeting, Naghib pointed out that Iranian businessmen are currently facing serious problems due to the inflationary conditions and the implementation of new policies, saying that Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi-Amin is also against such decision-making in the country's economic sectors.

He underlined the capacities of old and experienced entities in various economic sectors and said that the government can delegate a series of responsibilities to such institutions and take over the supervision role itself.

He further mentioned smuggling as one of the major problems that the country's businesses are currently struggling with, adding: "The products that are imported through smuggling do not pass the strictures that are applied to domestic production and this ends up harming domestic producers."

Elsewhere in the gathering, Daniali delivered his

speech saying that the government's interference in the pricing of commodities, especially in the home appliance sector is harming the manufacturers active in this sector.

"Despite the 40-percent inflation and the 57 percent increase in wages, the government has allowed only a 10 percent price increase in some appliances," Daniali said.

The government should avoid "reinventing the wheel" and follow the path of other countries that recognized the mechanism of supply and demand, he stressed.

Annual export of polymer products rises 23%

TEHRAN – Iran exported over $3.320 billion worth of polymer products in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), registering a 23-percent rise year on year, a board member of Iran National Plastic and Polymer Industries Association (INPIA) said.

Speaking at a press conference on the international conference of promoting exports of polymer products in Tehran on Wednesday, Barmak Ghanbarpour said that polymer industry accounted for 73 percent of the total value of the non-oil exports made by the country's industrial sector in the previous year, IRNA reported.

"Iran's total non-oil export was 48 billion dollars last year, and the share of polymer industries from the total non-oil export is estimated at seven percent," Ghanbarpour said.

According to the official, currently, 8,000 production units are active in this industry which have a total production capacity of 13 million tons.

He noted that the annual import of raw materials for the polymer industry is about five million tons which indicates that there is eight million tons of idle capacity in this industry.

The international conference on promoting the exports of polymer products will be held next Iranian calendar month Mordad (begins on July 23) for the second consecutive year with the aim of exploring issues and challenges in the country's polymer industries and exchanging views on ways of increasing exports.

According to Reza Tofiqi, the secretary of the

conference, export-oriented production is the key to the development of industrial units in the polymer industry.

"By learning about new export markets, we also become more active in the domestic markets and this will reduce the production costs and consumer prices and is a great economic advantage," Tofiqi said.

The official further mentioned the capacity of the country's petrochemical industry, saying: "The feedstock needed by the polymer industry is provided, to a large extent, within the country by domestic petrochemical complexes."

He pointed out that the international conference on promoting polymer products exports is trying to develop export-oriented investment, saying: "By doing this, we will maintain a significant part of the added value in the country's economy, which will increase the country's gross production and lead to economic development."

Introducing Iran's polymer export capacities and opportunities, identifying new target markets, and getting acquainted with the laws and regulations of the mentioned countries are also among the topics explored in the mentioned conference.

Construction operation of 1.383m National Housing Movement units begins

TEHRAN- The operation started for the construction of 1,383,513 units of National Housing Movement throughout the country by the fourth Iranian calendar month Tir (began on June 22), Ministry of Transport and Urban Development announced.

Of the mentioned units, 954,238 units are in different stages of physical progress, and the ground has been broken for the construction of 429,275 units.

As announced in a meeting to review the strategies for organizing the housing market, the first series of National Housing Movement units will be delivered to the applicants in the second half of the present Iranian calendar year (September 23, 2022-March 20, 2023).

The mentioned meeting, held on June 15, was attended by Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi and Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohsen Rezaei.

On June 11, the minister 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.

The ceremony to begin the mentioned operation and also to launch some development projects in the housing sector was attended by the transport and urban development minister.

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.

Land supply was the first condition for the realization of the national movement plan and housing construction, in this regard, a series of measures were taken by the government and Ministry of Transport and Urban Development. According to the latest statistics, the lands of 2.8 million housing units of National Housing Movement have been provided by the ministry.

Although, studies show that the provision of land and financial resources are two serious obstacles to the construction of this number of residential units.

TEDPIX gains 6,500 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 6,517 points to 1.49 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 4.991 billion securities worth 30.378 trillion rials (about $108.5 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 6,754 points, and the second market's index gained 7,121 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).

"Terrorism has no nationality, ethnicity nor religion. FETO threatens humanity as a whole"

By Mevlut Cavusoglu, Foreign Minister of Türkiye

On the evening of July 15, 2016, the "Fethullahist Terrorist Organization" (FETO) launched a bloody coup attempt against the people and the government of my country. Their aim was to establish a radical, fundamentalist regime, loyal only to their ringleader Fetullah Gülen.

As FETO affiliated army units left their barracks to occupy key locations, such as the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul and fighter jets and attack helicopters bombed strategic targets including the Parliament, Presidential compound, army and police headquarters; thousands of civilians took to the streets to stop this unprecedented heinous coup attempt. The plotters killed 251 innocent civilians and left thousands injured. On that night the Turkish people defended democracy with their lives. This heroic response was something the conspirators did not foresee. To understand what transpired, one has to understand the true nature of FETO. FETO was established in the late 1960's as a so-called "religious movement". In the guise of promoting education and inter-religious dialogue, it managed to cover its malign intentions. The well-planned and wide-spread infiltration by FETO members and converts into the army, law enforcement, judiciary and numerous government institutions, including my Ministry, was carried out for decades clandestinely for an overarching plan, of which the final phase was unleashed on July 15, 2016. Had the coup attempt succeeded, there would have been a very different Türkiye today. Democracy would not have existed and fundamental rights and freedoms would have been suspended indefinitely. The nation would have fallen in the hands of an extremist government. FETO not only controlled a significant portion of educational institutions, but also owned numerous financial institutions. Their bank accounts were fed by prominent FETO members in industry and commerce, as well as by officials and members of the public. Many innocent civilians were also lured into contributing to FETO's finances as their piety was manipulated. The enormous income driven from their schools around the globe was channeled into these accounts clandestinely waiting for their ultimate move.

Following the bloody coup attempt of July 15, 2016, a resolute cleansing of the public sector, including government institutions and the military, as well as of the private sector from all FETO affiliated persons and companies was initiated. Some prominent conspirators have been apprehended. Others escaped justice and found refuge in foreign countries. The head of the FETO terrorist organization, Fethullah Gülen, still resides in the United States. Our government has been requesting the extradition of Gülen to Türkiye from the United States as well as that of FETO members from European countries for years. Unfortunately, these requests have not been fulfilled yet. On the other hand, elsewhere in the world, an increasing number of governments understand the danger this terrorist organization also poses to them and are taking the necessary steps. FETO is also engaged in illegal activities such as visa fraud, money laundering and arms trafficking. Consequently, FETO members are being cleared from public and private sectors in many countries. Many schools affiliated with this terrorist organization abroad have been transferred to the Turkish Maarif Foundation after 2016. Today, Maarif Schools are functioning in many countries and are providing excellent education worldwide.

The nature and scope of Türkiye's fight against FETO is no different than that exercised by other countries against organizations which had terrorized officials and civilians alike, and endangered democratic values, fundamental rights and freedoms. Türkiye is doing what the respective countries in their fight against terrorism have done in the past. All procedures are in compliance with law. Terrorism does not have a nationality, ethnicity or religion. This menace threatens humanity as a whole. Therefore, the response to this threat must be united and determined. No state has the luxury to differentiate between terrorists and no terrorist organization can be classified as "useful" according to preferences. FETO is responsible for the loss of hundreds of lives as well as other grave crimes against the Turkish people. Six years after July 15, 2016, Türkiye continues its resolute fight against FETO, just as it continues its fight against other terrorist organizations such as the PKK, PYDYPG, DHKP-C and DAESH. We expect the international community to stand in solidarity with Türkiye in the fight against terrorism.

The views expressed in this article are those of the writer

How to counterbalance sanctions for the future

From page 1 ▶ Iran should not go back to the JCPOA without legitimate demands. Trump's nullification of the agreement has caused irreparable human and economic harm to Iran. Iran should demand compensation for the damage along with much stronger financial guarantees against new sanctions and any potential unilateral annulment of the re-established agreement. Such compensation would be tantamount to reparations due after a war and these guarantees would simply serve as insurance.

In parallel, Iran should spearhead an association of like-minded countries to challenge the legal basis of sanctions at the International Court of Justice and to initiate a counterbalance to sanctions. Are sanctions legal without a formal declaration of war? Do sanctions contravene the Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund? Do sanctions violate clauses of the World Trade Organization? In addition to legal challenges to sanctions, recognizing that only the powerful or modern-day imperialists use sanctions to subjugate weaker countries, the association of countries could form cartels around a number of commodities needed by the powerful, such as rare earth elements—if the powerful impose sanctions, then there would be an automatic response.

Some would respond that Israel and the U.S. would bomb all of Iran's nuclear facilities and maybe Iran's non-nuclear infrastructure. This is the same U.S. that has not been willing to support a nuclear free zone in the Middle East (West Asia)—a goal supported by Iran and numerous other countries, with, of course, the exception of Israel. If the U.S. starts a war, it would boomerang on the U.S. and its allies in the Persian Gulf.

Today, the U.S. is in no position to ignite a regional war. Such a war could bring in Russia and China; a war with the background of the Ukraine war and Europe under threat. There are ominous signs elsewhere, as China flexes its muscles in the Pacific, worldwide economic turmoil with high inflation and food and energy shortages. And as always, with potential upheaval in a number of Arab countries as the U.S. pressures Arab governments to embrace Israel while it builds more illegal settlements on Palestinian lands, making a two-state solution near impossible.

This may be the best time for Iran to challenge U.S. hegemony in the Middle East (West Asia).

Hossein Askari is Emeritus Professor of Business and Int. Aff., George Washington University

Bolton admits U.S. planned foreign coups

From page 1 ▶ "I feel like there's other stuff you're not telling me (apart from Venezuela)," the TV host said, to which Bolton offered this reply: "I'm sure there is."

In 2019, Bolton as National Security Adviser to Trump publicly supported Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido's call for the country's military to oust the democratically elected government of President Nicolas Maduro.

In what was a carefully planned chain of events, following Guaido's call, Washington immediately declared it's recognition of Guaido as President despite the fact he had never contesting an election.

Caracas accused Washington of orchestrating several plots to overthrow the government. These included military operations involving the participation of U.S. agents that were captured. Washington is also accused of using sanctions to destroy the Venezuelan economy with the aim of triggering unrest so people rise up against the government.

Maduro's government ultimately remained in power as the majority of Venezuelans stood by it and Guaido lost whatever popularity he had.

It is evident that the U.S. has a long history of interventions in other countries.

U.S. officials have admitted the CIA orchestrated the overthrow of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953 after he nationalized the country's oil sector which had been mainly controlled by the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

Leaked documents reveal the United Kingdom's spy agency helped the U.S. overthrow the democratically elected Iranian leader and ultimately replacing Mosaddegh with a dictatorship that would serve foreign interests in particular the United States.

The pattern of U.S. interference in foreign countries is quite clear. Washington targets governments that are independent, oppose, and/or denounce U.S. policy in the region as destabilizing. America does not target the political and economic affairs of governments that are already serving U.S. interests or host U.S. military bases because as some analysts say 'you can't invade the invaded'.

Bolton boasting about how Washington carefully plans to overthrow foreign governments is not a secret but is uncommon for a former U.S. official to say so in public.

The U.S. is accused of using various methods to overthrow foreign governments. From military means by invading countries (Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq for example) or using proxies (Syria, Libya, Bolivia for example) to economic means through the use of sanctions in an attempt to suffocate another country's economy (Venezuela, Cuba, Lebanon, Iran for example) and more recently the use of social media to spread anti-government propaganda (see below).

Syria accuses the U.S. of trying to overthrow the government in Damascus by training, funding, and backing different terrorist groups to do the job. U.S. troops are also illegally present in the country.

At least two Iraqi governments have blamed the United States for overthrowing them despite being publicly elected. The governments of Nouri al-Maliki and Adel Abdul Mehdi have two things in common. They both strongly pushed for the U.S. military to withdraw from Iraqi soil.

The government of al-Maliki successfully did so but in 2014 accused Washington of intentionally delaying the delivery of weapons that Baghdad had paid for (in particular hellfire missiles).

The former Iraqi PM says had Washington provided the missiles, Daesh terrorists, who began gathering in the Eastern Desert of Anbar province (having crossed the border with Syria) could have been wiped out there and then. The weapons were delivered eighteen months later after Daesh expanded its presence to two-thirds of Iraq and led to the government of al-Maliki stepping down.

Following the assassination of Iran's Lieutenant General and anti-terror war hero Qassem Soleimani alongside the deputy commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis (another highly respected anti-terror commander) by the U.S. military in the vicinity of Baghdad International Airport in an act of U.S. state terrorism; Iraqi PM Abdul Mehdi also strongly pushed for the exit of U.S. forces (who crept back under the pretext of helping fight Daesh), the U.S. is accused of using a social media campaign to cause unrest in southern Iraq that led to the former Iraqi PM stepping down.

The use of social media to overthrow foreign governments is nothing new.

A public relations company in Washington DC was caught red-handed in the act of destabilizing Latin American nations such as Bolivia, Venezuela, and Mexico by using large-scale social media campaigns. CLS strategies operated in many countries, but revelations by U.S. media regarding its regime change policies in Latin America on behalf of the former U.S. administration put it under the spotlight.

The firm posted fake content on social media platforms Facebook and Instagram in Spanish supporting Bolivia's military junta that ousted President Evo Morales the country's first indigenously President.

In November 2019, the democratically elected leader was ousted in a U.S.-backed military coup following a contested election. In the lead-up to that election, CLS was working with far-right military figures including coup leader Jeanine Anez.

It set up accounts spreading fake news in Spanish by supposedly disaffected former supporters of Morales. Despite winning just four percent of the election, Anez was recognized by the U.S. as Bolivia's interim President. During her time in charge, she oversaw a brutal crackdown on protesters.

Anez would later be sentenced to prison and the party of Morales returned to power in an election that showed how nobody in the country supported Anez and her authoritarian rule apart from Washington.

Experts say the CLS scandal is just a fraction of a much larger campaign regarding Washington's use of social media to foment unrest or regime change in other countries.

Washington's policy of overthrowing governments is an ongoing process, critics argue it's the only way the U.S. can survive by trying to maintain an empire that conquers and divides. At the same time, there is also a growing amount of evidence that this empire is facing difficulties and sinking.

Sri Lanka president flees to Maldives

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled to the Maldives early on Wednesday, hours before he was due to submit his resignation and while many of the protesters who had pressured him for months were asleep.

In the dead of night, the 73-year-old Rajapaksa caught an Antonov military plane along with his wife, Ioma, and two other passengers including a bodyguard. Maldivian authorities initially refused to clear the plane to land, Nikkei Asia has learned, but granted clearance after the intervention of their ex-president and incumbent speaker Mohamed Nasheed, apparently on request from Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Sources in the Maldivian capital of Male confirmed to Nikkei that Rajapaksa's plane landed at Velana International Airport at around 2:50 a.m. local time, and that a special security detail was dispatched to welcome the Sri Lankan president. It was unclear where and how long Rajapaksa would stay in the Indian Ocean island state, a dream destination known for its idyllic blue waters and luxury accommodations.

From the Maldives, Rajapaksa is expected to head to Dubai with his wife, according to a close confidant. "All necessary arrangements are in place," the confidant told Nikkei.

Rajapaksa's departure ushers in an uncertain era for a country where many have been demanding his resignation with cries of "Go Home Gota." Protesters blame him and his government for the country's dire economic crisis, its severe shortages of fuel, food and other essentials, and its lack of foreign reserves. Sri Lanka defaulted on its foreign debt for the first time earlier this year.

Rajapaksa and his family are also dogged by suspicions of corruption, though they deny all such allegations.

The crisis took a dramatic turn over the weekend, when demonstrators managed to occupy the presidential residence and office, prompting Rajapaksa to finally agree to resign. Prime Minister Wickremesinghe also said he would quit to make way for a new government.

Rajapaksa has been in hiding since then and has not addressed the country.

The once-powerful president known as "the Terminator" appears to have been determined not to stick around to find out what would await him post-resignation.

This was at least his second attempt to flee the country within 24 hours, after an earlier try was thwarted by immigration officers at the country's main international airport, according to sources. Officials prevented his brother, former Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa, from leaving on Tuesday, but he too left for the U.S. early on Wednesday. Basil holds U.S. citizenship.

Another attempt by the president to obtain a visa from the U.S. Embassy failed after his application was rejected, sources said.

Although most in Sri Lanka were asleep when news of the president's flight broke, a few night owls took to social media to express their anger, branding Rajapaksa a "coward." One tweet says the Maldives is no longer a friend of the Sri Lankan people.

Meanwhile, although protesters appear to be getting their wish with Rajapaksa's resignation set to become official, the turmoil throws into question the prospects for already difficult bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund. On Sunday, the fund said it hopes for "a resolution of the current situation that will allow for resumption of our dialogue on an IMF-supported program."

Christian believers to make pilgrimage to St. Thaddeus

TEHRAN – Tens of Christian worshippers will come together at St. Thaddeus to observe an annual ritual and pilgrimage after two years of hiatus due to coronavirus restrictions.

Baptism of children and youngsters along with performances of traditional songs and dances are amongst the highlights of the event, which will be held from July 28 to 30.

The pilgrimage, called Badarak, is traditionally made by travelers from Iran, Armenia, Syria, Lebanon, the Netherlands, France, Austria, Germany, Canada, and some other countries.

The event is of high importance for Iranian-Armenians who mostly come from the cities of Tabriz, Urmia, Tehran, Isfahan, and Qazvin, to stage the reunion in groups and families. It also provides them an opportunity to go on holiday and visit distant relatives.

Furthermore, the attendees commemorate the martyrdom of St. Thaddeus, one of the twelve disciples killed while he was preaching the Gospel. The legend says a church dedicated to him was first built in 68 CE where Qareh Klise is standing. Thaddeus was an apostle of Christ and the ceremony is rooted in the last supper with Jesus Christ on the night of his arrest and execution by the Roman soldiers.

Also known as the Qareh Klise ("the Black Church"), the monastery is one of the oldest surviving Christian monuments in the country. It is situated in Chaldoran county some 20 kilometers from Maku, adjacent to the borders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. The ancient Church shows off elaborate bas-reliefs of flowers, animals, and human figures on its façade and exterior walls. It bears verses from the Old and New Testaments in Armenian calligraphy as well.

Together with St. Stepanos Monastery and the Chapel of Dzordzor, Qareh Klise was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2008 under the name "Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran". All three sites are located in West Azarbaijan and are of high significance from historical and cultural perspectives. They bear credible testimony to interchanges with the ancient regional societies in particular the Byzantine, Orthodox, and Persian. UNESCO has it that the churches bear examples of the outstanding universal value of the Armenian architectural and decorative traditions.

Kermanshah enjoys one million years of continuous human settlement, archaeologist says

From page 1 ▶ "If we want to honor anyone for this cause, we should encourage the people of this land who have lived here for over a million years."

Last November, a team of archaeologists led by Heydari-Guran announced the discovery of stone tools such as an ax and machete believed to be created by Homo erectus, an extinct species of archaic human, on the outskirts of Kermanshah.

According to Heydari-Guran, the creators of those tools may have been the so-called 'Homo erectus' although other groups [of early humans] made similar tools, given the similar sites in other parts of Asia.

"During a week-long survey in this area, tens of stone axes, utensils, and mother stones related to the [Lower] Paleolithic period were discovered, which according to their technical characteristics and typology are related to the Acheulean era," the archaeologist said.

"This is the first time in 60 years that tools from the Paleolithic period have been discovered in Kermanshah," the archaeologist said.

"In the 1960s, an archaeological mission from the University of Chicago, headed by Robert Braidwood, discovered a stone ax near Gakiyeh village and since

then there has been no report of the discovery of such tools in Kermanshah."

Such axes are stone tools related to the [Lower] Paleolithic period and that were made 250,000 years to 1.5 million years ago, he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Heydari-Guran noted the recently discovered stone tools may date back to about 700,000 to one million years ago.

"Since there is currently no absolute historiography for this human settlement, it is not possible to give an exact date for the construction of these tools, but it is possible to predict a date of about 700,000 to one million years ago."

The Iranian plateau was roamed by the Neanderthals. A 2019 study published in the Journal of Human Evolution, suggests that Neanderthals were roaming over the Iranian Zagros mountain range between 40 to 70 thousand years ago.

Until the late 20th century, Neanderthals were regarded as genetically, morphologically, and behaviorally distinct from living humans. However, more recent discoveries about this well-preserved fossil Eurasian population have revealed an overlap between living and archaic humans.

Neanderthals lived before and during the last Ice Age of the Pleistocene in some of the most unforgiving environments ever inhabited by humans. They developed a successful culture, with a complex stone tool technology, that was based on hunting, some scavenging, and local plant collection. Their survival during tens of thousands of years of the last glaciation is a remarkable testament to human adaptation.

Zagros mountain range in southwestern Iran, extending northwest-southeast from the border areas of eastern Turkey and northern Iraq to the Strait of Hormuz, is about 990 miles (1,600 km) long and more than 150 miles (240 km) wide. It forms the extreme western boundary of the Iranian plateau, though its foothills to the north and west extend into adjacent countries.

According to Britannica, the oldest rocks in the Zagros range date to Precambrian time (that is, before 541 million years ago), and the Paleozoic Era rocks date to between 541 million and 252 million years ago and are found at or near the highest peaks. Most of the rocks in the mountain range, however, are limestone and shale from the Mesozoic Era (252 million to 66 million years ago) and the Paleogene Period (66 million to 23 million years ago). The range was primarily formed by orogenies (mountain-building episodes) driven by the movement of the Arabian Plate underneath the Eurasian Plate during the Miocene and Pliocene epochs (23 million to 2.6 million years ago).

Festival of Iranian tribes to open in Fars province

TEHRAN – Tribespeople from nine Iranian provinces have been invited to take part in a ten-day festival in Fars province, southern Iran.

The festival is aimed to introduce customs, nomadic lifestyle, and the culture of different tribes and clans of the country, Mehr quoted a provincial official as saying on Tuesday.

Experts say that ethnic tourism provides the ground for potential sightseers to feel like indigenous people by living with a nomad or rural family or enjoying an independent stay. However, as the name implies, it's a trip for recreational purposes rather than an expedition for anthropological research.

Visiting and even staying with nomads during their migration, even for a day or two, might be a lifetime experience. As a traveler, one has the chance to visit, live, eat, and sleep in a nomadic camp with a real nomad family. Colorful dresses, vast black tents, colored-eyed children with rosy cheeks, modest lifestyle, scenic landscape, and local dishes are probably among the delights of such visits.

The majority of the Iranian nomads use mobile internet, cell phones, etc as they still set up their tents on the flanks of the snow-capped mountains. And these days cars and rented trucks, rather than domestic animals, bring them, and their flocks to pastures high up on the highlands and vice versa.

Nomads may surprise visitors with the dignity in their rough and overworked hands and integrity in their compassionate eyes at first sight. In popular Iranian culture, literature, and public opinion, nomads have always been a proud part of the nation.

Ardabil seeks national recognition for historical pieces of porcelain

TEHRAN – Ardabil tourism directorate has put forward pieces of historical porcelain as candidates for inclusion in the national list for cultural heritage.

"We have commenced preliminary work to register ten pieces of porcelain in the national cultural heritage list," Ardabil's deputy tourism chief said on Wednesday.

They are being kept at the [UNESCO-registered] Sheikh Safi al-din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble, the official said.

"Covered with blue and white coating, the pieces of chinaware have been restored and cleaned... And they will be documented soon,"

Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble is a microcosm of Sufism where arrays of harmonious sun-scorched domes, well-preserved and richly-ornamented facades and interiors, and, above all, an atmosphere of peace and tranquility have all made a must-see stopover while traversing northwest Iran.

The ensemble is named after Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardebili (1253-1334), who was a Sufi philosopher and leader of

Islamic mystic practices. It embodies the essence of Sufi traditions by having a microcosmic 'city', which embraces a mosque, a madrasa, a library, a cistern, a bathhouse, kitchens, and a hospital, as well as religious houses amongst others. The place also boasts a remarkable collection of antique artifacts.

Developed between the early 16th century and the end of the 18th century, this place of spiritual retreat enjoys principal elements of traditional Iranian architecture to make the best use of existing space for accommodating a variety of functions.

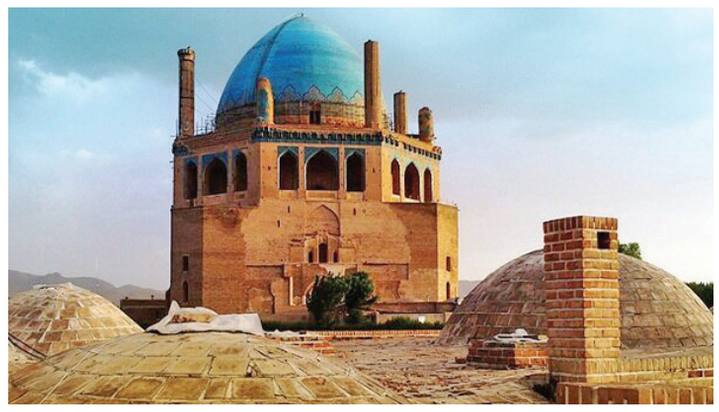
Restoration finishes on first floor of Soltanieh monument

TEHRAN – Restoration work has finished on the first floor of the UNESCO-registered Soltanieh, which supports the third-largest brick dome in the world.

Interior decorations, plaster columns, electrical and mechanical installations operations, and wooden fences are among the elements restored based on scientific restoration principles, Zanjan tourism chief Amir Arjmand said on Wednesday.

Meaning "Town of the Sultans", Soltanieh was briefly the capital of Persia's Ilkhanid dynasty (a branch of the Mongol dynasty) during the 14th century. It is situated in Zanjan province, northwest Iran.

Experts believe that the brick dome is the earliest extant example of its type and became an important reference for the later development of the Islamic dome. Similarly, the extremely rich interior of the



mausoleum, which includes glazed tiles, brickwork, marquetry, or designs in inlaid materials, stucco, and frescoes, illustrates an important movement towards more elaborate materials and themes.

The 14th-century building, which is also famed as the Mausoleum of Oljaytu, is highly recognized as an architectural masterpiece particularly due to its innovative double-shelled dome and elaborate interior decoration. The very imposing dome stands about 50 meters tall from its base. A great-grandson of Hulegu, founder of the Il-Khanid dynasty, Oljaytu was a Mongol ruler who, after dabbling in various religions, adopted the Shia name Mohammed Khodabandeh.

Soltanieh's decoration is such impressive that scholars including A.U. Pope described it as 'anticipating the Taj Mahal'. It is the earliest existing example of the double-shelled dome in Iran.

UNESCO says the Mausoleum of Oljaytu is an essential link and key monument in the development of Islamic architecture in central and western Asia. Here, the Ilkhanids further developed ideas that had been advanced during the classical Seljuk phase (11th to early 13th centuries), during which the arts of Iran gained distinction in the Islamic world, thereby setting the stage for the Timurid period (late 14th to 15th centuries), one of the most brilliant periods in Islamic art.

According to the UN cultural body, excavations carried out in the 790-ha Mausoleum of Oljaytu property have revealed additional vestiges of the old city, and a large part of this property has retained its archaeological character. As the ancient capital of the Ilkhanid dynasty, Soltanieh represents an exceptional testimony to the history of the 13th and 14th centuries in Iran.

Cultural elements in West Azarbaijan made national heritage

TEHRAN - A selection of ten cultural elements practiced in West Azarbaijan province have been added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts on Tuesday announced the inscriptions in separate letters it submitted to the governor-general of the northwestern province, CHTN reported.

The skills of making local dishes and an indigenous performance were among the elements added to the significant list.

West Azarbaijan embraces a variety of lush natural sceneries, cultural heritage sites, and museums including the UNESCO sites of Takht-e Soleyman and Qareh Klise (St. Thaddeus Monastery), Teppe Hasanlu, and the ruined Bastam Citadel.

The region was home to several ancient civilizations. According to Britannica, it was conquered by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander's generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. Ultimately, the area returned to Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE.

Malayer, a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture

TEHRAN – Iran's Malayer is named a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture by the World Crafts Council - Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR).

Located in the west-central Hamedan province, the ancient city is home to over 4,000 furniture workshops in which more than 8,000 wood masters and some 25,000 crafters are engaged.

Although the art had been practiced in Malayer for a long time ago, it is about a half-century that it has gained prosperity in the region.

In some cases, the whole family is occupied with traditional furniture making and although they didn't make much money this way, their love for handicrafts and the increasing perseverance of woodcarving artists of Malayer shows today a new face of this art-craft to the world.

Artists and crafters of this region use the wood of beech, walnut and plane trees to make different products such as traditional, classic, steel, and sofa furniture. Their other products are dining tables, desks, all kinds of chairs, beds, and decorative pieces.

Currently, more than 60 percent of the furniture and woodcarving products in Iran are reportedly produced in Malayer and they are sent to various Iranian cities or exported to Central Asian countries, the Persian Gulf littoral states, Turkey, and Iraq amongst others.

India's medical exhibition to host Iranian knowledge-based firms

TEHRAN – The Indian medical equipment exhibition, which will be held from September 17 to 19 in New Delhi, will host knowledge-based and creative Iranian companies.

Medicall, is India's largest B2B Medical Equipment Exhibition, which serves as a marketing platform wherein the equipment companies showcase their products and services to Hospital owners and decision-makers.

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, in cooperation with the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, has provided the possibility of the presence of knowledge-based and creative companies active in the field of medicine at this event to present their latest achievements and capabilities to enter the global market.

Share of Iran in medical equipment global market

Iran holds a share of one percent (about $5 billion) in the global market for medical equipment of approximately $500 billion, but the country has the potential to increase the share, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Health.

In 2018, the National Medical Device Directorate reported that the Iranian medical equipment market was worth $2.5 billion, 30 percent of which belonged to over 1,000 domestic firms.

On a global scale, 56 percent of 500,000 medical equipment items available in the world market have Iranian versions. In pharmaceuticals, around 70 percent of Iran's $4.5 billion markets are domestic products and, in 2018, 97 percent of pharmaceuticals consumed in the country were manufactured locally.

In 2018, 67 percent of the active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) used to produce drugs in Iran were made locally.

A total of 227 knowledge-based firms are supplying medical equipment for health centers across the country, according to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

Iranian companies producing medical equipment export their products to 54 countries across the world.

Int. congress on reproductive biomedicine to be held in Tehran

TEHRAN – The 23rd Congress on Reproductive Biomedicine will be held in Tehran on September 7-9.

Organized by Royan Institute, the International Congress is a hybrid meeting that combines "live" sessions with an "online" component.

Also, the 18th Hybrid Congress on Stem Cell Biology and Technology will kick off concurrent with the international congress.

This year, Royan International Hybrid Congress's main objective is to preserve and enhance the connections of researchers and practitioners from all over the world despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

Royan International Twin Congress (Reproductive Biomedicine and Stem Cells Biology & Technology) has demonstrated to be one of the most successful experiences of scientific gathering in Iran and the Middle East since 2000.

During these twenty years of active involvement in sharing and exchanging scientific knowledge and expertise with renowned scientific institutes and scientists, Royan Congress has helped to form many shared scientific projects and exchanges.

Swedish company censured for not providing Iran with EB bandages

TEHRAN – Iranian Ambassador to Stokholm Ahmad Masoumifar has severely criticized a Swedish company for refraining from selling special bandages which are vital for patients suffering from epidermolysis bullosa (EB) in the country.

"A Swedish company manufacturing medical supplies is still refraining from selling bandages needed for EB patients in Iran under the pretext of U.S. sanctions," the envoy wrote on his Twitter on Tuesday.

"These innocent angels are in pain in front of the eyes of those who claim to advocate human rights. Isn't it a flagrant violation of human rights?"

> The criminal policy of the United States government has caused the death of 15 EB patients from 2010 to 2018 when the Swedish bandage maker decided to halt shipments to Iran.

epidermolysis bullosa, a severe and life-threatening skin condition, which causes extremely painful wounds. Many are children, who are often referred to as "butterfly kids" because of their fragile skin.

Across the country, 950 people have been diagnosed with EB, but considering that EB is estimated to occur in 1 newborn per 50,000 live births, it is suggested that in Iran 1,200 people are suffering from EB.

Without the bandages, they face difficulties even in their daily routine, including walking, eating, or even breathing, and unfortunately, there is no alternative treatment for such pain.

The criminal policy of the United States government has caused the death of 15 EB patients from 2010 to 2018 when the Swedish bandage maker decided to halt shipments to Iran due to fear of secondary sanctions as part of over-compliance.

In October 2021, experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council said over-compliance with United States-imposed sanctions against Iran is harming the right to health, and people with rare skin diseases are among those affected, many of them children.

As a result, EB patients in Iran can no longer enjoy the right to health, said the experts.

Astrology and astronomy in Iran

Part 12

Concept of the heavens

The first of Ohrmazd's material creations was the sphere of the sky, which encloses the other creations like an egg.

It has been suggested that the notion of the heavens' sphericity is a borrowing from Hermetic cosmology (Widengren, Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung, p. 76).

Beyond the sky lay the heaven of Ohrmazd. Between it and earth at the center of the "egg" were three other spheres or "stations" (payag): those of the sun, the moon, and (just above the earth) the stars.

This archaic arrangement of the heavenly bodies is delineated in Bundahishn, chap. 2 (see Henning, Astronomical chapter). The number of spheres was later made a potent seven, but with no change in the basic order (e.g., Dhabhar, Persian Rivayats, p. 426; for the number seven as pervading the cosmos [cf. Ismailism] see Bundahishn, chap. 28. 17-18, pp. 194-95).

For the distances between the stations, see Zaehner, Zurvan (on the Pahlavi Rivayat) and Dhabhar, Persian Rivayats, pp. 426-27. The various heavenly bodies were created at their stations in a state of repose.

Their motions began only when the Evil Spirit and his demons, including the planets, invaded the sky from below and pulled it downward somewhat (Bundahishn, chaps. 2.17, 4.10, pp. 29.12-30.1, 41.13-42.2; Zatspram 1.27, 32).

Ahriman thus penetrated as far as the star station, where the stars and the planets wage war; and the sun was dislodged from his position on an axis passing through the center of the earth-disc and the top of the sky-sphere.

The violent assault of Ahriman explains the assymetry in the sky—why the revolutions of the heavenly bodies are at an oblique angle to the plane of the earth, why the north celestial pole is not at the zenith of the sky.

In the present, disarranged universe the north-point is inauspicious. (This traditional belief was inherent in the Av. term for "north," apaxtara-, i.e., the direction "further away." See Eilers, "Stern—Planet—Regenbogen," pp. 114-15.)

The south, "the breast of the world" (Bundahishn, chap. 28.9, p. 163.3-4) is pointed out as the auspicious direction by the sun, which inclines toward the south as it rises (Denkard, bk. 3.18).

Sun and moon

In the Avestan and Pahlavi texts the good luminaries are referred to in such formulae as "I reverence the stars, moon, and sun" (Mihr Niyayishn 12).

These beings are created but immortal; their radiance is intrinsic to their being (Denkard, bk. 3.51). The sun and moon are commanders over the stars (Bundahishn, chap. 2.12, p. 28.12-13); all revolve around Mount Terag, the central point of the earth-disc, at their appropriate levels (Yt. 12.25, Bundahishn, chap. 5 B.2, p. 55.6-7).

The sun represents Ohrmazd, and his daily passage testifies to ultimate victory over the demons (Denkard, bk. 3.18, 81; bk. 5.20). He exerts a force on earthly things, drawing them upward (Denkard, bk. 3.160). He fosters creatures and measures out time (Menog i Xrad 49).

The seasons are defined by his movement through the zodiac (Denkard, bk. 3.419). Each nychthemeron is divided by him into two night-periods (gah) and three-day periods. Thus, it can be said that "the sun gives a command to the people of the world three times a day" (Chidag handarz 48, Pahlavi Texts, p. 48).

He determines the rhythm, not only of economic life, but also of ritual practices. (Regulations relating to reverencing the sun may be found in Shayast ne shayast [chaps. 7.1-6, 12.31, tr. E. W. West, SBE 5, pp. 297-99, 351-52] and Nirangistan [tr. S. J. Bulsara, Aerpatastan and Nirangastan, Bombay, 1915, pp. 155-56]; see also the Mid. Pers. Xwar Niyayishn.)

Because he is the repository for each person's "light-image" (ewenag), he is a reminder of future immortality (Zand i Xwurdag Abestag, tr. Dhabhar, p. 322; Bailey, Zoroastrian Problems, pp. 96ff.).

The moon has particular associations, not only with light, but with water. Thus, this god distributes health and growth to plants and, through Goshurwan (q.v.), to animals (Bundahishn, chap. 26.21-25, pp. 164.13-166.1; Mah Niyayishn).

The lunar month and year are regarded as relevant primarily to agriculture and animal husbandry, but also to human fertility (Denkard, bk. 3.259, 419).

Stars

While the term sta/ar may refer to any of the luminous heavenly bodies, "fixed star" is either starag i awiyabanig (Bundahishn; chap. 2.5, p. 27.6) or axtar; the latter also indicates "constellation" and "zodiacal sign."

Stars were classed physically according to three magnitudes (wuzurgih); for these and for estimates of the size and velocity of the heavenly bodies, see Bundahishn, chap. 2 in Henning, "Astronomical Chapter."

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

Lake Urmia in grave peril

From page **1** ▸ Restoration measures caused the level of Lake Urmia to reach 1278 meters in 1995 and 1274 meters in 2005 and finally, it stood at 1270 meters in 2015.

After 7 years and spending about $4 billion, the condition of Lake Urmia was returned to its first point, Somayeh Rafiei, member of the Majlis (Iranian Parliament) said.

Based on the studies and according to the statement of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program, 18 percent of the drying was due to climate change and 82 percent was due to the mismanagement of water resources in the catchment area, she lamented.

The water level of Lake Urmia was supposed to reach 1274.1 by 2028. Currently, the last level of the Lake on July 10th was estimated at 1270.57, which means that it is only 53 cm higher than the minimum level of November 2015, she explained.

According to experts' forecasts, evaporation will continue in Lake Urmia until the end of September, and the water level will reach the level of the first day of the Lake Urmia restoration project, and the south of the lake will be completely dry, she lamented.

Paleontological studies conducted by two Iranian researchers at the University of Miami on Lake Urmia show that even when the rainfall was 180 mm, the lake did not dry up, and this shows that the lake's condition in recent years has been affected by human factors.

Researchers realized that the situation of Lake Urmia in the last 20 years is not fully related to lack of rainfall, which shows that the share of human factors

The share of natural factors in the drying of Lake Urmia is 31 percent, which includes an 18 percent decrease in rainfall and a 1.5-degree increase in temperature in the last two decades compared to the long term, and the share of human factors is 69 percent, which includes agricultural development and construction of dams and extraction from groundwater sources.

The amount of water consumption in the Urmia catchment area for the agricultural sector is 4699 million cubic meters and the consumption for drinking, health, and industry is 588 million cubic meters.

Threats to the shrinking lake

The phenomenon of the dramatically shrinking lake has diminished tourism, water transportation, and fisheries industries, and destroyed a wide range of wildlife habitats in the region.

According to the Department of Environment (DOE) in West Azerbaijan Province, salty dust that is blown from the dried lake bed in wind or "Salt Storm" negatively affect agricultural crops and is menacing to human health in adjacent areas, and some village in East Azerbaijan Province has already been abandoned by its people due to salinization of groundwater.

Expansion of farmlands, population growth, dam construction, and extraction of groundwater through tens of thousands of illegal wells are among the main anthropogenic causes. Importantly, it has been said that irrigation water accounts for approximately 90 percent of all extracted water from the Lake Urmia Basin.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

5,000 clunker garbage trucks move in Tehran at night

Some 5,000 clunker trucks, aged over 40 years, move across the city of Tehran during the night to collect wastes, Tehran Governor Isa Farhadi has announced.

The renovation of the garbage collection fleet requires high amount of budget; this is while the Municipality of Tehran cannot afford the cost and the issue needs urgent measures, he stated.

He went on to say that the vehicles are extremely old resulting in huge amount of emission and contributing to air pollution.

"We tried to replace the clunker trucks with new ones, however, there is a large number of trucks that replacing the whole fleet is not nearly possible for Tehran traffic and transport affairs directorate," he added.

Clunker garbage trucks aged 40 years or above which travel through the capital at night amounts to 5,000, he concluded.

۵۰۰۰ کامیون زباله‌کش قدیمی شب‌ها در تهران تردد دارند

فرماندار تهران از وجود ۵۰۰۰ کامیون زباله‌کش که شب‌ها در تهران تردد دارند و عمرشان بیش از ۴۰ سال است، خبر داد.
به گزارش خبرنگار اجتماعی خبرگزاری فارس، عیسی فرهادی گفت: نوسازی این ناوگان هزینه بسیاری دارد که از توان ما و سازمان شهرداری خارج است و باید فکری برای آن اندیشیده شود.
اکنون میانگین سن این خودروها بالا رفته است و به تبع آن آلودگی‌های ایجادشده نیز افزایش خواهد یافت.
فرماندار تهران افزود: ۵ هزار کامیون زباله‌کش شب‌ها در تهران تردد دارند که سن آنان بالای ۳۵ تا ۴۰ سال است. در جلسات گذشته تلاش شد که راهکاری اندیشیده شود تا این خودروها جایگزین شوند، ولی متأسفانه خودروهای سنگین تعدد بسیاری دارند که انجام این کار از توان ما و معاونت حمل و نقل ترافیک شهرداری تهران خارج است.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON JULY 13

New cases	5,000
New deaths	5
Total cases	7,260,017
Total deaths	141,456
New hospitalized patients	541
Patients in critical condition	397
Total recovered patients	7,065,989
Diagnostic tests conducted	52,784,149
Doses of vaccine injected	150,839,855

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JULY 14, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Overlook and forgive the weaknesses of the generous people because if they fall down, Allah will help them.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:13:10 Evening: 20:42 Dawn: 4:17 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:00 (tomorrow)

Iran aims for cultural products export expansion in new plan: minister

From Page **1** ▸ "Iranian cultural attachés must demonstrate good performance in cultural exchanges. We have selected a number of prominent artists to work as Iran's cultural attachés in several countries in Europe and enhance the country's cultural exchange with other nations," he mentioned.

He called art the most expressive language for communication among different societies, and added, "Peace and friendship are the achievements of art, and our country has been a standard-bearer for peace and friendship over the past few millennia."

Esmaeili also praised Rasuli for his lifetime achievements and said, "Calligraphy is an authentic Iranian art, and Iran must be regarded as the cradle of this art."

He also called on Iranian art aficionados to visit the exhibition currently underway at the Gooya House of Culture and Art in Tehran.

The exhibition entitled "Plant a Friendship Tree" will run until July 28 at the gallery that can be found at No. 89, Kharim Khan Ave.

Rasuli's works have been showcased in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Iran and other countries.

His "Bismillah Bird", a diptych calligraphic painting was priced at 800 million rials (over $40,000), the top-priced work of two large auctions that were held for Quranic calligraphy works in Tehran in 2012.

The UNESCO office in Tehran, the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and Iran's Eternal Figures Committee honored Rasuli by organizing an exhibition of his artworks at the Museum of Fine Arts of Tehran's Sadabad Historical-Cultural Complex in 2008.

Culture Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili (L) visits an exhibition of calligraphic paintings by Jalil Rasuli (R) at the Gooya House of Culture and Art in Tehran on July 12, 2022. (IRNA/Asghar Khamseh)

Middle Persian literature

Part 2

As yet, no complete edition of the Denkard has been published, apart from the monumental work initiated by Dastur P. B. Sanjana and completed by his son, D. P. Sanjana (Sanjana and Sanjana, 1874-1928).

Early translations were done by West of Books III, IV, V (all only partially), VII, VIII, and IX. However, several individual books of the Denkard have been published according to modern philological criteria.

Today one may refer to de Menasce's translation of Book III (1973), Sh. Shaked's edition of Book VI (1979), M. Molé's edition of Book VII and parts of Book V (1967), and the recent edition of Book V by J. Amouzgar and Tafazzoli (2000).

In 1991, Amouzgar and Tafazzoli translated in Persian a selection of passages taken from books V, VII and IX. Ms. B was published in facsimile by M. J. Dresden in 1966; K43a and K43b were published in 1936 in the series of the Codices Avestici et Pahlavici Bibliothecae Universitatis Hafniensis, while DH was published by the Iranian Culture Foundation (P. K. Anklesaria, 1970a).

A printed edition of the Pahlavi text of the Denkard was completed in 1911 by D. M. Madan, and a lithograph of the 7th Book of the Denkard was published by M. R. Unvala (1904).

The first three books of the Denkard (books III, IV, and V) all share a common apologetic nature, expounding the precepts of the Good Religion and polemicizing with other religions of the time, mainly Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, though a few chapters are directed also against the dualistic religion founded by Mani.

The material found in these books seems to be a re-writing of the precepts found in the Pahlavi commentary to the Avesta, inspired by it, but not directly deriving from it.

The 3rd book of the Denkard was written, at least in its final version, by Adurbad i Emedan, while the other two are more archaic, and go back to Adurfarrbay i Farroxzadan, as overtly stated both in the 4th and in the 5th book.

The 6th book contains the largest preserved collection of gnomic literature in Middle Persian, partially drawing on other attested collections, as is shown by Sh. Shaked in his edition (1979).

This literary genre must have been widely current in the Sassanid world; and ethical, political, and moral sayings may well have constituted the essential part of one of the Hada-mansarig (ritual) nasks of the Sassanid Avesta: the Barish Nask.

The 7th, 8th, and 9th books of the Denkard, though differing deeply one from the other, share the common character of being exegetical books, aimed at preserving the memory of the Sassanid Avesta, making its contents—or rather those found in its Zand—available to a public which had by then lost any profound knowledge of the Avestan language.

The 7th book is entirely devoted to the legend of Zoroaster, in the form that it had taken in Sassanid times. Though deeply, rooted in the Avesta and Zand, it should not be considered as a mere translation, but rather as a Middle Persian composition, rich in passages taken from the Avesta and its Zand.

The 8th book is a summary of the Sassanid Avesta as it was preserved in the 9th century. It contains a description of nineteen of the twenty-one nasks; of the other two, the Washtag was by then completely lost, and only the Avestan text of the Naxtar was still preserved, for teaching, studying, and worship (pad chashishn ud ushmurishn ud ezishn).

However, not all parts of the Zand Avesta were described in equal detail. The greater part of Book eight was devoted to four legal nasks: the Nigadum, the Duzd-sar-nizad, the Husparam, and the Sagadum; all sections (brinag) of these are listed.

Finally, book nine contains a detailed description of three gathic nasks, each of them containing different commentary to the Gathas: the Sudgar, the Warshtmansar, and the Bay.

An important book, similar in style and genre to the first three surviving books of the Denkard, is the Shkand Gumanig Wizar. It was written by Mardanfarrox i Ohrmazd-dadan in the 9th century CE, and it mentions the name of Adurfarrbay i Farroxzadan, the first compiler of the Denkard, but not that of Adurbad i Emedan, the scholar-priest who was responsible for the final version of this work.

Mardanfarrox aimed at expounding the main doctrines of the Zoroastrian creed, criticizing at the same time the contradictions of the three great monotheistic religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, as well as the beliefs of the Manicheans.

In this connection it should be remembered that, due to the fact that all three Abrahamic religions are monotheistic, and thus share a set of theological beliefs, criticizing certain aspects of Judaism and Christianity amounts to indirectly criticizing Islamic beliefs.

Thus the chapters on Christianity (chap. XV) and Judaism (chaps. XIII and XIV) may have been meant to target Islam as well, a religion which is directly addressed only in chapters XI and XII.

The book can be divided into two main parts, excluding the initial eulogy. Chapters II-X, affirm, describe, and uphold the main tenets of the Zoroastrian religion, while chapters XI-XVI are polemical attacks against the four abovementioned religions.

Identifiable sources of Mardanfarrox are Adurbad i Yawandan, a book called Rushn Nibeg, written by Rushn son of Adurfarrbay, who was identified by West with a commentator known from the (Madayan i) Hazar Dadestan.

The apologetic chapters show a detailed knowledge of the other religions, but no specific source can be identified. The most ancient manuscripts of the Shkand Gumanig Wizar transmit its Pazand and Sanskrit text, while the codices which contain a Pahlavi version of its first part are all secondary.

The manuscript tradition is complex and not completely studied. The standard edition is still the one by de Menasce (1945), though D. Taillieu (2004) has studied the last chapter of this text in his Ph.D. dissertation on the Zoroastrian polemic against Manicheism.

Two texts expound the cosmological theories of the Zoroastrians. One, whose contents seem to be more ancient, is the Bundahishn, the other, marked by the personality of its author, is known as the Wizidagiha i Zadspram.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

Documentary chronicles history of Iran crime scene photography

TEHRAN – Naji Honar, Iran's Police institution that produces and supports films and series, has recently completed a documentary that sheds light on the history of crime scene photography in the country.

Directed and produced by Jamshid Raufi, the documentary entitled "Crime Scene Photography" was broadcast from the Mostanad Channel, an IRIB channel dedicated to screening documentary films.

"The ups and downs of the field have been studied from the Qajar period [1789–1925] to the present time," Raufi said in a press release published by IRIB.

"The advent of photography occurred in Iran during the Qajar period, and a few years after its inception, it was fairly common for the Taminat Office, Iran's criminal investigation department at that time, to take photos of criminals and prisoners," he added.

The Iranian prisons didn't have any photography equipment, Raufi noted, and added that criminals and prisoners were taken to a photographic studio set up on Tehran's Lalezar Street by the Armenian-Georgian photographer Antoin Sevruguin.

Raufi, who spent four years researching his project, lamented the lack of sources for this subject and a reluctance on the part of the police and courts to contribute to his efforts.

However, Naji Honar consented to collaborate with him after reading a copy of the screenplay.

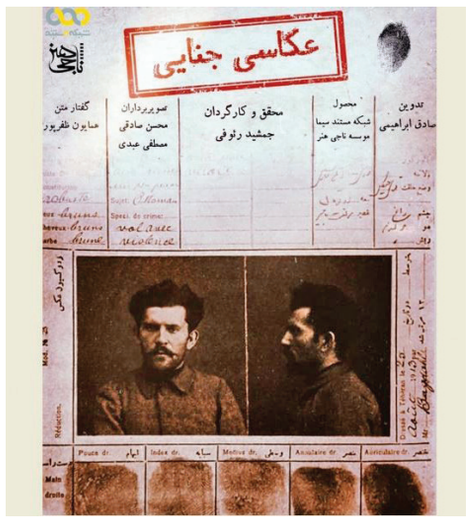
With contributions from Naji Honar, Raufi called on dozens of veteran photographers and experts on crime scene photography to appear in his documentary and share their useful information about the subjects.

The film also features a number of photojournalists talking about how good crime scene photographs can help newspapers and magazines increase the number of their readers.

The idea to make a documentary about crime scene photography popped into Rauf's mind in the 2000s, but he failed to reach an agreement with Naji Honar on the project.

"I am really interested in working on historical topics that have been ignored in the documentary films, so I began new studies on crime scene photography to broaden the information I had about the subject, which has been presented in the documentary," Rauf said.

Had the COVID-19 pandemic not brought the project to a halt in 2020, "Crime Scene Photography" would have been completed earlier.



A poster for the documentary "Crime Scene Photography" directed by Jamshid Raufi.

Iranian bookstores embellished with "Portrait of the Mother as a Young Woman"

TEHRAN – "Portrait of the Mother as a Young Woman" by German novelist Friedrich Christian Delius has been published in Persian.

Translated by Mahmud Haddadi, the novel has been published by Ofoq.

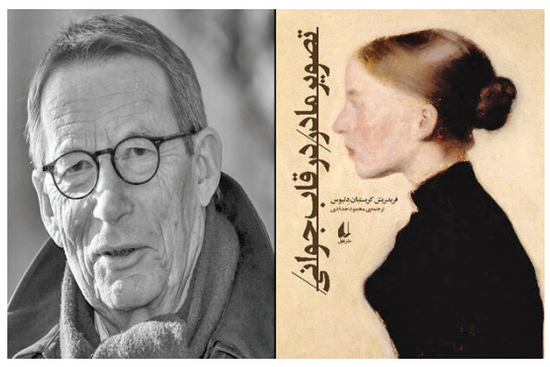
The novel was originally published in 2006. An English translation by Jamie Bulloch came out in 2012.

In Rome one January afternoon in 1943, a young German woman is on her way to listen to a Bach concert at the Lutheran church.

For her, the war is little more than a daydream, until she realizes that her husband might never return.

"Portrait of the Mother as a Young Woman", winner of the prestigious Georg Büchner prize, is a mesmerizing psychological portrait of the human need to safeguard innocence and integrity at any cost, even at the risk of excluding reality.

More than just the story of this one woman, it is a compelling and credible description of a typical young German woman during the Nazi era.



A combination photo shows German novelist Friedrich Christian Delius and the front cover of the Persian edition of his book "Portrait of the Mother as a Young Woman".

Delius was born in Rome and grew up in Wehrda and Korbach in the state of Hesse. He studied German literature at the Free University and the Technical University in Berlin.

He graduated in 1970 and went to work in the publishing field. Between 1970 and 1978, he worked at the publishing firms Klaus Wagenbach and Rotbuch.

He has published more than a dozen novels and a number of poetry collections. His work has been translated into seventeen languages.

He has won numerous German literary prizes including the Joseph Breitbach Prize, the Georg Büchner Prize, and the Critics Prize.

He is a member of the Freien Akademie Hamburg, the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung and the Akademie der Künste Berlin.

Since the late 1970s, he has divided his time between Berlin and Rome.

General Soleimani's true personality will never be understood

An interview with the author of the book "The Hajji Qasem Whom I Know"

Two years have passed since Sardar Soleimani's martyrdom, and as more time goes by, we discover more about him and come to understand what a magnificent person we have lost. This book contains the memoirs of Lieutenant-General Qasem Soleimani's comrade Hojjatoleslam Ali Shirazi about their 40-year friendship.

Ali Shirzai credited General Soleimani's success to his determination to go from Kerman to Tehran once a month to see his parents, even at the height of his reputation and glory and despite his hectic schedule.

"Another interesting part was that despite being a military leader, General loved youngsters and enjoyed conversing with and aiding them," he said.

"The most notable quality of General Soleimani, in my opinion, was his devotion to the people. He even stated in his will that his life would be sacrificed a thousand times for them," he added.

When we asked about General Soleimani's leisure activity, Ali Shirazi said that the general had a great passion for reading and that he usually observed him reading with extreme exhaustion.

There are so many things we haven't heard from him yet, like how he was quite funny and enjoyed cooking, according to his comrades!

"Even when things were tough, he was considerate of the soldiers and insisted that their food be served hot and with cool drinks," he added.

He cared deeply about the families of soldiers and martyrs, and Ali Shirazi remarked that when a fighter's child became seriously ill, Haj Qasem would travel to Iran, in any case, to accompany that child to the hospital and check on his or her well-being.

In this book, his comrade expresses the commander's sole wish to be martyred.