

# Iran Rejects U.S. Bullying Amid Nuclear Talks

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## Iranian volleyball teams into final of 2021 ISG

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s and men’s volleyball teams booked their place in the final match of the 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games on Sunday.

Alessandra Campedelli’s girls defeated Azerbaijan 3-1 (25-18, 18-25, 25-16, 25-22) in the semifinals.

It was Iran’s second medal in an international tournament since 1966 Asian Games in Bangkok, Thailand, where Iran won a bronze medal.

Iran will play the winners of Turkey and Cameroon in the final match on Monday.

Iran’s men’s team also defeated Azerbaijan in straight sets (25-17, 25-20, 25-11) in the semifinals and will play with the winner of Turkey and Cameroon in the final match on Monday.

The 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games are being held in Konya, Turkey, from August 09 to 18, 2022. It is a multinational, multi-sport event that is played between the athletes from the nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

With an exception of the 2010 Games, it has taken place every four years since its debut in 2005 at Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

The Islamic Solidarity Games are organized and directed by the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, but for the first time in history, the event is organized by the Turkish Olympic Committee.

## Qatar’s deputy FM meets Amir Abdollahian, delivers message to him

TEHRAN— A Qatari Foreign Ministry delegation headed by the country’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Regional Affairs Mohammad bin Abdul Aziz al-Khalifi met on Saturday afternoon with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

They held talks over bilateral ties and issues of mutual interest as well as ways to expand relations between Tehran and Doha in all fields, the Iranian Foreign Ministry website reported.

During the meeting, Amir Abdollahian underlined the necessity to implement agreements signed by Iran and Qatar during Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi’s visit to Doha and also during the Qatari emir’s visit to Tehran.

The Qatari deputy foreign minister extended greetings from the foreign minister of his country to Amir Abdollahian.

Al-Khalifi also said Qatar is resolved to expand relations with Iran.

The visit comes as Iran and U.S. are seeking to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Meanwhile, Qatar News Agency (QNA) said that the Qatari diplomat has handed in a written message from the Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani to his Iranian counterpart.

“The message was delivered by His Excellency Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh Al-Khulaifi, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Regional Affairs, during his meeting today in Tehran with the Iranian foreign minister,” QNA reported. ▶ Page 2



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TEHRAN— August 15, 2021 marks a turning point in Afghanistan, as the Taliban took over the city of Kabul and overthrew a corrupt president, named Ashraf Ghani who relied heavily on the United States.

The story of how Taliban came to power goes back to the Doha agreement signed in

February 2020.

Then U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo sat down with a Taliban delegation in Doha, Qatar, to discuss “how to reduce violence in the war-torn country,” according to a statement from then State Department spokesperson Cale Brown.

## Iran, Mauritius explore avenues of economic co-op

TEHRAN – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture on Saturday hosted the first Iran-Mauritius business forum which was attended by senior officials and private sector representatives from the two sides.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, the fo-

rum was attended by a high-ranking trade delegation from Mauritius that traveled to Iran to explore ways of expanding trade relations between the two countries.

ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, Head of Iran-East Africa Joint Chamber of Commerce Masoud Berahman, ICCIMA Secre-

Ironically, the joint statement after the meeting was labeled “Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan.”

“The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States have partnered ▶ Page 2



## Weightlifter Reza Beiravand collects gold

TEHRAN – Iranian weightlifter Reza Beiravand seized a gold medal in the men’s 96kg of the 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games on Sunday.

Beiravand lifted 167kg in the snatch and 194kg in the clean and jerk to win the gold to lift a total of 361kg.

The silver medal went to Sunnatilla Usarov from Uzbekistan with 164kg (snatch) and 190kg (clean and jerk) and 354kg (total).

Saudi Arabian Ali Alothman snatched the bronze with 157kg in the snatch, 192kg in the clean and jerk and 349kg in total.

## Council established to safeguard Yazd’s cultural heritage

TEHRAN—Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has established a special council tasked with monitoring and protecting historical monuments, sites, and centuries-old traditions in Yazd province.

The most important task of the members of this council is to investigate the damage caused by the recent flood to the historical core of Yazd (the provincial capital), CHTN reported.

In addition, the council is charged with formulating and implementing plans to safeguard, re-

store, and revitalize centuries-old monuments, and providing solutions to prevent damage caused by natural disasters.

“The great heritage of Yazd must be protected and restored through a comprehensive system,” reads a decree handed out to council members.

“Moreover, your mission is to secure technical, educational, and research support in the field of cultural heritage, and to enhance cooperation in developing strategies, policies, and programs for the protection and restoration of buildings, his-

torical textures, and sites of Yazd province.”

Dozens of flash floods ravaged more than 700 mud-brick houses and structures in the ancient oasis city in late July.

According to the tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami, torrential downpours in the historical core of Yazd caused some 25 trillion rials (\$83m) in damage. “Losses from the natural catastrophe in the historical core of Yazd totals around 25 trillion rials,” he said on August 1. ▶ Page 6

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## Iranian students grab colorful medals at mathematical competition

TEHRAN – The students of Sharif University of Technology won three gold, one silver, and one bronze medal in the 29th International Mathematical Competition (IMC 2022).

The event took place in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, from August 1 to 7.

The IMC competition is the most prestigious international mathematics competition at the college student level, and every year teams from the world’s top universities attend this competition.

Soroush Rezaei, Amir Abbas Mohammadi, and Javad Farrokhnejad were the gold medal winners. Also, Mobina Azimi won the silver medal and Alireza Tayebpour won the bronze medal. They ranked 11th in the world.

The Iranian Mathematical Olympiad team won three gold medals and three silver medals, ranking 8th in the 63rd International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) which was held in July in Oslo, Norway. Teams of the best young mathematicians were present from more than 104 countries of the world.

In 2021, the six-member student team won three silver and three bronze medals, taking 29th place among 107 countries. So, the country climbed 21 steps in the 2022 contest.

Over the past Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 20, Iranian students won seven gold medals, 11 silver medals, and nine bronze medals at different international Olympiads.

## UNICEF, Farabi to cooperate on plan to enhance Iran children’s films

TEHRAN – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund – UNICEF and Iran’s Farabi Cinema Foundation will cooperate on a five-year plan to enhance children’s films in the country.

The plan was announced in a meeting between the UNICEF Representative in Iran, Robin Nandy, and Farabi director Mehdi Javadi, Farabi said in a press release published on Saturday.

Nandy said that after completion, the five-year plan will also include annual mutual workshops.

He also stressed the need for the expansion of collaboration on the Isfahan International Film Festival for Children and Youth, and said that UNICEF is eager for the cooperation to be broadened into other fields.

He also praised the Iranian drama “No Prior Appointment” and its child star Hami Torabi for his portrayal of an autistic boy. ▶ Page 8



## Amir Abdollahian says language of force against Iranians ends in failure

TEHRAN- Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the foreign minister of Iran, has cautioned the United States from speaking to the Iranian people in a forceful manner.

In a late-night tweet on Saturday, Amir Abdollahian made the comments in response to recent U.S. claims against Iran over a fictitious conspiracy to assassinate former President Donald Trump's national security adviser John Bolton.

The top Iranian diplomat highlighted that “history ought to have taught the U.S. that language of threat against Iran and Iranians achieves nothing.”

“Futile attempts at deflection won't allow the U.S. to evade responsibility for the thousands of Iranian and other victims of its involvement in terrorist crimes in our region,” he added.

The U.S. Department of Justice on Wednesday accused a man going by the name of Shahram Poursafi of trying to orchestrate the murder of Bolton in retribution for the U.S. airstrike in January 2020 that assassinated Iran's fabled anti-terror leader Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

The most recent scenario describes Poursafi as a member of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps of Iran who sought to offer Americans a \$300,000 bounty in October 2021 to carry out the scheme in either Washington, DC, or Maryland.

Nasser Kanaani, the spokesperson for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said on Friday that raising fuss about the hoax Bolton assassination plan won't help Washington cover up its own transgressions.

Kanaani said in a post on his Twitter account that the U.S. was fabricating allegations about a politically bankrupt element, a known terrorist, and a coup plotter against sovereign states in order to escape its international obligations.

“Such fanfares won't whitewash U.S. regime's

image, but makes Iranians & the world more resentful of it,” he added.

The creation of these flimsy and false fictions is turning into a repeating practice in the American court and propaganda system, Kanaani said on Wednesday in response to past allegations of conspiracies against Bolton.

“Such baseless claims are made with political motives and aims and in fact amount to ‘escape forward,’ creating propaganda ruse and especially escaping the responsibility of responding to numerous terrorist crimes that the American government has either directly participated in, such as the cowardly assassination of General Martyr Soleimani, or like the terrorist crimes committed by the Zionist regime and terrorist groups like Daesh, they have been committed with the support of America,” the Foreign Ministry spokesman underlined.

Kanaani added, “The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly warns against any action against Iranian citizens under the pretext of these ridiculous accusations, and emphasizes that it reserves the right to take any action within the framework of international law to defend the rights of the government and citizens of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

In a commentary on August 12, the Tehran Times wrote the U.S. moves in inventing such fabrications have long been out of date. For example, it said, in 2002 George W. Bush used a similar tactic against Iraq.

“Bush stated in October 2002 that Saddam Hussein has a ‘massive stockpile’ of bioweapons. However, as CIA Director George Tenet stated in early 2004, the CIA had ‘no particular knowledge on the types or quantities of WMD agents or stocks at Baghdad’s disposal.’ The phrase ‘huge stockpile’ was completely made up. They eventually admitted that their allegation was a brazen lie,” the Tehran Times said.

## Kuwait sends ambassador to Tehran after more than 6 years

TEHRAN— Kuwait has promoted diplomatic relations with Iran to ambassadorial level after more than six years.

Kuwait reduced diplomatic ties with Iran in 2016 to the level of charges d'affaires. Two years later, Kuwait also recalled its charge d'affaires from Tehran.

The decision to lower diplomatic ties followed an attack on the Saudi embassy in Tehran by a group of angry protestors in early January 2016 over the execution of 47 pro-democracy activists, including cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr.

After the attack on the embassy, which was even censured by the top officials in Tehran, the Saudi kingdom cut diplomatic ties with Iran. Other Persian Gulf Arab countries also followed Saudi Arabia and lowered diplomatic ties with Iran.

However, political ties between Iran and its southern regional neighbors are being improved, especially after Iran and the Saudi kingdom have so far been holding five rounds of talks in Baghdad.

## Israel killing Palestinian children as it fears its future: Iran deputy FM

TEHRAN- Ali Bagheri Kani, Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs, has criticized the Zionist regime for murdering Palestinian children, saying such a practice has become routine for the regime and demonstrates its dread of the future.

The official made the remarks at a meeting with Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi, Qatar's Assistant Foreign Minister for Regional Affairs, on Saturday in Tehran.

The Zionist regime's murdering of Palestinian children is a sign of their deep apprehension for the future since it has come to understand that the next generation is their greatest threat, Bagheri Kani asserted.

The Iranian diplomat emphasized that Palestine continues to be the most important issue facing the Islamic world and urged Muslim states to increase their support for the Palestinian people all over the world.

Nearly more than a week has passed since the three-day Israeli offensive against the beleaguered Gaza Strip, during which almost 50 Palestinians were killed. Among those slain were at least 16 kids.

For his part, the Qatari official emphasized the significance of strengthening mutual relationship as the two officials spoke about matters pertaining to Tehran-Doha relations as well.

# Agreement in Vienna could be reached in a week: Russia's Ulyanov

TEHRAN— A final deal on the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program could be attained as early as next week if the developments proceed in a “favorable” way, Russia's top negotiator in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov told TASS in an interview published on Sunday.

“In the event of favorable development of events the final agreement may be reached as early as next week,” he said.

“However, it is possible if all countries participating in the Vienna talks agree with the version of the text provided by EU coordinators on August 8. If amendments, objections appear it is difficult to project further developments now. We have to wait for the beginning of next week,” the diplomat said.

Ulyanov noted that EU coordinators have made various changes to the draft that is now on the table.

“This is not an EU text, but the one developed by all participants of the talks that have been underway since last April. As coordinators the EU's representatives may offer compromise options, which they did. Indeed, the U.S. has apparently agreed, whereas Iran has not yet defined its position on the text, which is why I will not speculate on what issues Tehran may still have,” he explained.

The five permanent members

of the UN Security Council and Germany reached a nuclear agreement with Iran in 2015. In 2018, then U.S. President Donald Trump chose to withdraw from the agreement, imposing the most severe sanctions in history against Tehran in line with his “maximum pressure” campaign against Tehran.

Joe Biden, the current U.S. President, has consistently stated his support for resuming the nuclear deal just in words.

### U.S. top negotiator rebuffs report U.S. giving concessions

In an interview with PBS News Hour on Saturday, U.S. top negotiator Robert Malley rebuffed the claims made in media that the U.S. is giving Iran concessions.

In response to a question regarding the U.S. is showing flexibility in exchange for the IAEA dropping allegations against Iran, Malley said, “No. And, again, we have made this clear. And I know there's been some reporting to the contrary. Our position is transparent. And it's clear for everyone to hear, which is, we're not going to put any pressure on the Atomic — International Atomic Energy Agency to close these outstanding issues.”

He continued, “They will be closed when Iran provides the technically credible answers that the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency, has requested of them. As soon as they do that,



and as soon as the agency is satisfied, we will be satisfied, but not before.”

On Friday night, Politico published a report saying that the Biden administration is prepared to make greater concessions than expected to secure a deal, “especially by reducing pressure on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

“Under the proposed text, Europeans and other non-Americans could conduct business with Iranian entities engaged in ‘transactions’ with the IRGC without fear of triggering U.S. sanctions, as is currently the case, provided their primary business partner was not on a U.S. sanctions registry,” Politico said.

When asked about Politico's report, Malley said, “We would not and have not and will not negotiate any lowering of our standards about what European or other companies need to do if they want to do business with Iran. They have to respect our sanctions.”

“The sanctions are very well-defined. The Treasury Department puts out very clear standards for what companies need to do, what kind of due diligence they need to do. And any report to the contrary that is claiming that we will lower those standards, that we will negotiate those standards are just flat-out wrong,” he remarked.

However, Malley said that if the agreement is signed, Iran would have access to its frozen assets.

“I can say there are assets that have been frozen, assets, money that Iran collected at a time when the sanctions were not in place, and that are now in bank accounts across the globe. They would be able to have access to those if they come back into compliance with the nuclear deal,” the top U.S. negotiator noted.

He then pointed out, “And, of course, they would be able to sell oil, which they are not able to do now, and to get the proceeds from the sale of oil.”

On Sunday evening, a draft of the EU proposals was submitted to the Iranian parliament, the spokesman for National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the parliament said.

“As representatives of the people, we will review the government's report of the text being discussed in the Vienna negotiations, and if it (Majlis) reaches the final conclusion, it will definitely be considered in the interaction between the government and the Majlis in close collaboration,” Abolfazl Amouei told IRNA.

He added, “We believe that the negotiations should lead to the removal of sanctions in such a way that the economic benefits and benefits of foreign trade are provided for the country's businessmen and people.”

## Afghanistan crisis rooted in reliance on U.S.

From page 1 ► closely since 2001 to respond to threats to international peace and security and help the Afghan people chart a secure, democratic and prosperous future,” the joint statement read without a reference to 20 years of destructive war that destroyed core infrastructure of the country.

“The two countries are committed to their longstanding relationship and their investments in building the Afghan institutions necessary to establish democratic norms, protect and preserve the unity of the country, and promote social and economic advancements and the rights of citizens,” the joint statement continued.

The Americans occupied Afghanistan in 2001 to “establish democracy” and dislocate terrorists who had been using the Central Asian country as a safe haven. What happened to those claims?

Pundits were of the opinion that 20 years of war between U.S.-led troops and insurgents were beyond futile, let alone waste of trillions of dollars.

It is important to note that Afghanistan's neighbors and allies of the Afghan people were not important to Pompeo or the Taliban at the time. The U.S., under Donald Trump, only wanted to find a route to flee Afghanistan and cover up its foreign policy blunders, including its wrong-headed decision to quit the 2015 nuclear deal, which had been endorsed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231.

“I would be most interested in getting your thoughts on how we can increase the probability of a successful outcome,” reporters heard Pompeo telling the Afghan negotiating team.

The Doha deal set fighting constraints for both the U.S. and the Taliban, as well as the removal of all NATO forces from Afghanistan. The U.S. committed to reduce its troop level from 13,000 to 8,600 within 135 days (by July 2020), followed by a full departure within 14 months (by May 1, 2021).

However, for the United States, things did not go as planned. The Taliban launched the takeover process on May 1, 2021, coinciding with

the withdrawal of 2,500 U.S. troops and those of other international partners from Afghanistan. In the first three months of the takeover, the Taliban managed to achieve major land grabs in the countryside, increasing the number of areas it controlled from 73 to 223 in the rural areas.

The Taliban started an advance on the provincial capitals on August 6, with most towns falling without a fight. Key cities such as Herat, Kandahar, and Lashkargah fell on August 13.

On August 15, President Ashraf Ghani escaped the country, and the Taliban conquered Kabul without resistance; hence, the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan disintegrated, resulting in the de facto control of the country and the resurrection of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Even before May 2021, the Taliban's effective use of online social media, its strategic decision to attack northern provinces, and freely using major Afghan highways following the U.S.-recommended strategy of sacrificing rural areas in favor of defending key urban centers played a vital role in their victory.

On July 8, U.S. President Joe Biden told a press briefing that a Taliban takeover of Afghanistan is not certain, arguing that “the Afghan Army have 300,000 well-equipped troops—as well-equipped as any army in the world—and an air force against something like 75,000 Taliban.” Biden stated that the U.S. intelligence community did not believe the Afghan government would fall.

When asked about whether there were parallels between this withdrawal and what happened in Vietnam, Biden replied, “None whatsoever. Zero. What you had is—you had entire brigades breaking through the gates of our embassy—six, if I'm not mistaken. The Taliban is not the south—the North Vietnamese army. They're not—they're not remotely comparable in terms of capability. There's going to be no circumstance where you see people being lifted off the roof of an embassy in the—of the United States from Afghanistan. It is not at all comparable.”

He continued, “The likelihood there's going

## Qatar's deputy FM meets Amir Abdollahian, delivers message to him

From page 1 ► Following the meeting, Amir Abdollahian tweeted, “History ought to have taught the U.S. that language of threat against Iran and Iranians achieves nothing. Futile

attempts at deflection won't allow the U.S. to evade responsibility for the thousands of Iranian and other victims of its involvement in terrorist crimes in our region.”

Qatar and Oman, two Arab countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, have been mediating between Iran and the U.S. to revive the 2015 nuclear deal

(JCPOA) ditched by the former Trump administration. Doha also hosted an indirect meeting between the top Iranian and U.S. nuclear negotiators in late June.



# Iran rejects U.S. bullying amid nuclear talks

TEHRAN – With Iran busy studying recent proposals submitted by the European Union, the talks in Vienna entered a new phase that is expected to generate much kerfuffle springing from an apparent U.S. decision to up the ante vis-a-vis Iran.

The latest Iranian statement regarding the EU proposals was made on Friday when a senior assistant to the Iranian president announced that Tehran was still reviewing the European ideas.

Mohammad Jamshidi, who is the director of the Iranian president's office for political affairs, insinuated that Iran is in a comfortable position with respect to the Vienna talks over reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, formally called the JCPOA, while the West is under pressure to get a deal with Iran.

“Of course, I cannot speak about the content or the authenticity of the recent text published by media about safeguards issues, but such coordinated leaks indicate which side is under pressure and need an urgent deal. The review is underway,” Jamshidi said on Twitter.



Despite the fact that Iran has yet to give an answer to the EU proposals, the U.S. seems to be increasingly impatient to conclude the talks. The U.S.'s patience wearing thin was evident at the start of the latest round of talks in Vienna in which the EU foreign policy chief submitted what he called a final text, a move that seemed to have been coordinated with the White House.

Before heading to Vienna, U.S. special envoy for Iran Rob Malley said he was going to Vienna with his expectations “in check.”

“The United States welcomes EU efforts and is prepared for a

good faith attempt to reach a deal. It will shortly be clear if Iran is prepared for the same,” he added on Twitter.

Josep Borrell unveiled his “final text” soon after that tweet and insisted on a yes-or-no answer from Iran, something that Borrell's final text was no more than “proposals”.

While Iran is still reviewing the EU proposals, the U.S. seems to have reached out to Qatar and Oman to send messages to Iran. Qatar's Deputy Foreign Minister for Regional Affairs Mohammad bin Abdul Aziz al-Khalifi arrived

in Tehran on Saturday with a message from Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, who has recently spoken with his American counterpart, Tony Blinken, about the status of the Vienna talks.

Neither Iran nor Qatar provided any details as to the content of the written message. But the Iranian foreign minister, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, advised the U.S. to abandon the “language of threat” in dealing with Iran after he met the Qatari deputy foreign minister.

“History ought to have taught the US that language of threat against Iran and Iranians achieves nothing. Futile attempts at deflection won't allow the US to evade responsibility for the thousands of Iranian and other victims of its involvement in terrorist crimes in our region,” the Iranian foreign minister tweeted.

As things stand, the U.S. could well resort again to pressure and bullying to get Iran to accept a deal that falls short of meeting Iran's demands.

## Islamic Jihad proved any resistance group can destroy biggest Zionist fortress: speaker

From Page 1 ► The Iranian parliament speaker praised the Islamic resistance, which confronted an entity that, during nearly eight decades of its founding, has been committing crimes against every free person in the world, carrying out assassinations, occupying the lands of others, and committing organized crimes throughout the region.

Also, its existence is at the cost of undermining the security of others, the speaker remarked.

“The world today is witnessing more crimes committed by this entity and the evil plans of the Zionists and their complicity with the arrogant and reactionary regimes (is more evident) than ever before,” Qalibaf added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the speaker said, “In the first days of the wars in Syria and Iraq, some people made a mistake in their calculations, but when they saw the reality of the crimes committed by the Daesh group, which even worried European countries, they realized this fact... that the defenders of the holy shrines are not only defenders of the shrines of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, but they are also defending the honor and



dignity of dear Iran.”

The speaker was referring to those Iranians who fought Daesh in Syria and Iraq.

Praising the martyrs who defended the holy sites in Iraq and Syria, Qalibaf said they sacrificed themselves for the Iranian people and for the preservation of the holy shrines.

Those who asperse these heroes these days are bringing themselves disappointment and loss by insulting these righteous martyrs, noted Qalibaf, a former military commander and national police chief.

Qalibaf has recently spoken over the phone with Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) secretary general Ziyad al-Nakhalah.

In the conversation, Qalibaf congratulated the Palestinian leader on the recent victory achieved by the Palestinian Islamic resistance against Israel.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran stands by the Palestinian nation and the Palestinian Islamic resistance under all circumstances and with all its might,” Qalibaf told al-Nakhalah, according to Iran's state news agency IRNA.

Expressing regret over the martyrdom of the commanders of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement in the recent battle with Israel, Qalibaf said, “The Palestinian Islamic Jihad is one of the most effective resistance movements of the Palestinian people against the occupying regime of Jerusalem, which plays an important role in confronting this regime.”

The speaker of the Iranian parliament emphasized the comprehensive support of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Palestinian people in order to achieve their rights for freedom of the occupied territories.

Al-Nakhalah, for his part, expressed appreciation for the continuous support of the Iranian Parliament and speaker Qalibaf to the struggles of the Palestinian people.

## Heads of three branches of government hold meeting

TEHRAN – The heads of the three branches of government held a meeting on Saturday to discuss a variety of issues related to solving the people's problems.

The meeting was attended by President Ebrahim Raisi, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, and Judiciary Chief Mohsen Ejei.

The meeting was held as the president finished its first round its provincial trips on Friday.

In the meeting, the three senior officials emphasized the need for cooperation to implement what has been promised during the trips to the provinces.

Appreciating the trips and the government's direct interaction with the people, the speaker and the Judiciary chief emphasized the importance of implementing cabinet approvals made in provincial trips through the cooperation of the three government branches, according

to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

In the Saturday night meeting, that was hosted by Raisi at the presidential office, discussions were made to better promote interaction between the three government branches to overcome the problems.

The president, speaker and Judiciary chief also expressed their satisfaction with the existing convergence among the three branches. They considered the convergence as an opportunity to solve the structural and chronic problems in the country.

It was also emphasized to make coordination between the government, parliament and judiciary to implement the great national decisions to create economic stability and improve people's livelihood.

On Friday, Raisi finished a two-day trip to the province of Kerman, where he held a press conference

at the end of his visit.

Speaking at the presser, Ayatollah Raisi elaborated on the results and achievements of the 31st provincial trip of his administration, saying, “This trip was a good end to the provincial trips in the first round, and trips will be different in the second round,” according to the official website of the presidency.

Stating that urgent issues were followed in the first round of trips, the president added, “In the second round of trips, while following up on the resolutions of the first round of trips, we will take the best steps towards progress and justice.”

Referring to the delegation of special powers to provincial governors, Ayatollah Raisi said, “It was emphasized to the ministers that the necessary powers should be delegated to the governors, and specifically regarding Kerman, which is the mineral paradise of

Iran, the necessary powers will definitely be delegated, especially regarding mines.”

President Raisi also explained about the water supply projects and provision of water resources in Kerman, saying, “The government is seriously following the water supply projects in Kerman province.”

He said, “Despite the lack of rainfall, with good water management, these problems can be reduced.”

President Raisi pointed out that water management, like electricity management, is a special agenda of the administration.

“In the administration, we managed electricity through planning, and the capacity to create power plants has also been created to build a high-megawatt power plant where industrial electricity is separated from household electricity.”

“revolutionary” Iran.

The enemy wants, through this media attack, to deviate the Iranian people from their revolutionary affiliations and principles, to spread fear about economic and living situation and to instill a spirit of despair and frustration in the hearts of citizens about the future, or urging them to leave the country.

“The enemy is betting in all these steps on its media machine and psychological warfare,” General Sharif added.



## IRAN IN FOCUS

AUGUST 15, 2022

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## SPORTS

### Woman cyclist Dehghan collects bronze

TEHRAN – Cyclist Mandana Dehghan from Iran won a bronze medal in the 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games on Saturday.

Dehghan finished in third place in the women's road race.

Uzbekistan's Olga Zabelinskaya and her compatriot Margarita Misyurina won the gold and silver medal, respectively.

Earlier in the day, Iran's Mohammad Ganjkanlou had won a gold medal in the men's road race.

The 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games are being held in Konya, Turkey, from August 09 to 18, 2022. It is a multinational, multi-sport event that is played between the athletes from the nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

With an exception of the 2010 Games, it has taken place every four years since its debut in 2005 at Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

The Islamic Solidarity Games are organized and directed by the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, but for the first time in history, the event is organized by the Turkish Olympic Committee.

### ISG 2021: Iranian gymnast Khezerabad wins bronze

TEHRAN – Ali Khalili Khezerabad of Iran claimed a bronze medal in the 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games on Sunday.

He finished in third place in the Aerobic Men's Individual.

Azerbaijan's Vladimir Dolmatov won the gold medal and the silver medal went to Turkey's Mehmet Utku Ç?rak.

Iran Trio team also won a bronze medal after Turkey and Azerbaijan.

The Games have started on August 9 and will run until August 18.

### Iran come fifth in 2022 AVC Cup

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Pakistan in straight sets (25-18, 25-16, 26-24) to finish in fifth place of the 2022 AVC Cup for Men at the Nakhon Pathom Provincial Gymnasium on Sunday.

Japan will face China in the final match and South Korea meet Bahrain in bronze medal game.

The competition is being held from Aug. 7 to 14 in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand.

The 2022 Asian Men's Volleyball Cup, so-called 2022 AVC Cup for Men is the seventh edition of the Asian Cup, a biennial international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Thailand Volleyball Association (TVA).

### Friendly: Iran suffer second loss against Japan

TEHRAN – Iran national basketball team were defeated against Japan 80-58 in a friendly match on Sunday.

Iran had lost to Japan 82-77 on Saturday.

Two teams are preparing for the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 Asian Qualifiers.

Iran and Japan are in Group F along with Kazakhstan, China, Australia and Bahrain.

Iran will host Japan on Aug. 25 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium in their opening match.

“We want to increase the experience of young players in our generational change,” Iran coach Saeid Armaghani said.

“We were pushed by the pressure of Japan's defense, which led to 23 turnovers,” he added.

Iran traveled to Japan with a mixture of young and experienced players to hold a training camp.

Iran were knocked out of the 2022 FIBA Asia Cup after losing to Jordan 91-76 in July

The Iranian federation is going to field the young players with the aim of injecting fresh blood into the National Team.

### Iran's women's hockey 5th at 2022 Indoor Asia Cup

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Chinese Taipei on Sunday to finish 5th in the 2022 Indoor Asia Cup in Bangkok.

The match finished in 2-2 in regular time and Team Melli Banovan emerged victorious 2-1 in penalty shootout.

Iran lost to Indonesia and Kazakhstan in the competition and defeated Pakistan, Chinese Taipei and Singapore.

The competition started in Bangkok on August 5 and will run until August 15.

The 2022 Women's Indoor Hockey Asia Cup is the eighth edition of the Women's Indoor Hockey Asia Cup, the biennial international women's indoor hockey championship of Asia organized by the Asian Hockey Federation.

### Results of IPL Matchweek 1

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team were held to a goalless draw against 10-man Zob Ahan on Matchweek 1 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Saturday.

In the match held in Isfahan's Fooladshahr Stadium, Nader Mohammadi was sent off in the 53rd minute after receiving his second yellow card but Persepolis's strikers lacked the cutting edge.

In Ahvaz derby, Foolad and Sanat Naft Abadan shared the spoils in a goalless draw and Gol Gohar defeated Tractor 2-1 in Sirjan.

### Greco-Roman wrestler Yousefi bags gold

TEHRAN – Ali Akbar Yousefi of Iran claimed a gold medal in the Men's Greco-Roman 130kg of the 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games on Saturday.

He defeated Osman Yildirim of Turkey in the final match.

Ramin Taheri of Iran also won a silver in the 87kg after losing to Uzbekistan's Jalgasbay Berdimuratov.

Mohammad Javad Rezaei in 67kg and Amin Kaviyaninejad in 77kg also claimed two bronze medals.

Shirzad Beheshtitala and Mohammad Reza Rostami had claimed two gold medals on Friday.

### ISG 2021: Iran's men's handball earn bronze

TEHRAN – Iran's men's handball team claimed a bronze medal in the 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games (ISG) on Sunday.

Iran defeated Saudi Arabia 30-21 in the bronze medal match.

Turkey and Qatar will play in the final match.

Iran's women's team finished in sixth place.

The 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games are being held in Konya, Turkey, from August 09 to 18, 2022. It is a multinational, multi-sport event that is played between the athletes from the nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

With an exception of the 2010 Games, it has taken place every four years since its debut in 2005 at Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

The Islamic Solidarity Games are organized and directed by the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, but for the first time in history, the event is organized by the Turkish Olympic Committee.

## Enemy still optimistic about its psych ops on Iranians: IRGC spokesman

TEHRAN – The spokesman for the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has said that the enemies are still optimistic about the results of psychological warfare and the media atmosphere they are creating to inflame public opinion in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif said the enemies are doing so to cover up their failure in other regions.

He made the remarks at a ceremony honoring correspondents (on the occasion

of the National Journalist's Day), which was held on Saturday afternoon in the city of Ahwaz, capital of Khuzestan province, according to Al Alam.

The IRGC spokesman stressed that the enemy's resort to psychological warfare is due to its repeated failure over the past 43 years in many battlefields and wars it waged against the Islamic Republic.

He pointed out that the enemies pursue three main purposes in their psychological war, which they provoked against the



## TCCIMA to host business forum with Russia's Republic of Tatarstan next week



TEHRAN – A 75-member trade delegation from Russia's Republic of Tatarstan is scheduled to visit Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) on August 20 to attend a business forum, the TCCIMA portal reported.

Headed by the deputy prime minister and minister of industry and commerce of the Republic of Tatarstan, the delegation is comprised of the representatives of 45 companies active in a variety of areas including oil, gas and petrochemicals, transportation and logistics, aviation, food and agriculture,

health, cosmetics, chemicals, automobile, construction materials and supplies, polymer, investment, and entrepreneurship.

As reported, during their visit to Iran, the group will also meet and hold direct talks with private sector representatives of Tehran, Gorgan, Rasht, and Tabriz with the aim of developing business relations.

The Republic of Tatarstan is a republic of Russia located in Eastern Europe. It is a part of the Volga Federal District, and its capital and largest city is Kazan which is an important cultural and economic center in Russia.

## Commodities worth \$377m traded at IME in a week



TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 1,974,403 tons of commodities worth \$377million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1.701 million tons of commodities valued at almost \$237 million

On this floor the IME sold 762,102 tons of cement, 583,000 tons of iron ore, 236,375 tons of steel, 55,000 tons of sponge iron, 62,505 tons of zinc, 5,475 tons of aluminum, 700 tons of copper, 30 tons of precious metals concentrate and 50 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 264,614 tons of commodities worth more than \$136 million.

Commodities traded on this floor included 53,988 tons of polymeric products, 108,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 18,000 tons of lube cut, 21,011 tons of chemicals, 500 tons of sulfur, 3,629 tons of base oil, 235 tons of insulation and 57,710 tons of bitumen.

The IME also traded within the same week 7,806 tons of commodities on its side market.

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

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

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

## TEDPIX drops 3,400 points on Sunday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 3,447 points to 1.463 million on Sunday.

As reported, over 8.615 billion securities worth 46.117 trillion rials (about \$164.7 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dropped 1,785 points, and the second market's index fell 9,142 points.

Tehran Stock Exchange experienced a growth of 9.5 percent in the value of its trades in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

TSE is one of 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).



Senior stock market analyst, Ashkan Zoudfekr, believes government must support the stock market against other parallel competitors like money and property markets, the Securities and Exchange News Agency (SENA) reported on Sunday.

"Considering the fact that the capital market provides liquidity and dynamism to the economy, and is a useful and active part of the country's economic development, strengthening it should become a priority for the government," Zoudfekr said.

Stating that lack of sufficient attention and determination by the government to regulate and supervise speculative markets has caused liquidity to be guided to such markets and become idle and unproductive.

The expert further stressed that the government needs to formulate a specific strategy for the capital market to be followed by other institutions. He noted that the representatives of Stock Exchange Organization (SEO) should be actively collaborating with the country's legislative and decision-making institutions to improve the market's condition.

"Despite the excellent reports of the companies in spring, these days we are witnessing a significant outflow of resources from the market," he regretted, adding: "By implementing

a calculated and specific strategy, which is adhered by all the economic institutions, it is possible to achieve the goals set for the stock market in the shortest time."

Iranian stock market has been struggling for months to get back on track, however various internal and external factors have been hindering this market from reaching its true potential.

According to Market Analyst Vahid Halalat, the uncertainty of the global economy in the wake of the Ukraine war, the unclear situation of the privatization of the country's major automakers, and most importantly, the lack of enough attention paid by the government officials to the stock market are among the internal and external factors that have caused the capital market to fall behind other markets such as property.

From page 1 ► In this gathering, the two sides discussed ways of developing economic cooperation between the two countries and examined the existing obstacles.

At the end of the forum, a cooperation memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between ICCIMA and MCCI.

Speaking at the event, Shafeie emphasized that the Iranian government and private sector have always placed special importance on the expansion of economic relations with African countries and stated: "We are determined to pave the way for the businessmen of our country to reach the African markets."

He described the prominent position of the Republic of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean Rim Association as one of the important capacities of this country and continued: "This can lead to the development of Iran's cooperation with Mauritius and other member countries of this union."

"Iran's privileged, strategic and geopolitical position in the West Asian region and the country's access to the region's 400-million market will definitely be a good opportunity for Mauritius' businessmen and trade companies," he added.

# Iran, Mauritius explore avenues of economic co-op



ICCIMA Secretary-General Mojtaba Modareszadeh (R) and MCCI Secretary-General Yousouf Ismael sign MOU documents in Tehran on Saturday.

Pointing out that Mauritius is known as the economic gateway of the African continent, the ICCIMA head continued: "Tourism, banking and insurance services and maritime transport are among the most important potentials for cooperation between the two countries. Mauritius buys more than one billion dollars of fuel and oil products every year, which will provide another basis for the development of relations between the two countries."

Elsewhere in this gathering, Ismael enumerated some of the advantages of trade with Mauritius and said: "We can be a suitable facilitator for Iranian businessmen to develop their trade

with African countries."

He further mentioned the unsatisfactory level of trade between the two countries and said: "We want to change this trend and therefore we have traveled to Iran with one of the largest business delegations."

### Mauritius' FTA with China, India to facilitate trade with Iran

Prior to the business forum, Shafeie met with Mauritius' Minister of Labor, Human Resource Development and Training Soodesh Satkam Callichurn to discuss mutual economic cooperation between the two countries.

In this meeting, the official

suggested that Mauritius' free trade agreement (FTA) with China and India should be considered as the basis to draw a roadmap for the expansion of trade with Iran.

According to Shafeie, Iran can benefit from the opportunities that this FTA could present for the businessmen of the both sides.

He further stressed the importance of exchanging information about the commercial capacities of the two countries between their private sectors.

### Development of agricultural cooperation

Later, On Sunday, the trade delegation attended a meeting with the members of the ICCIMA Agriculture Committee, in which the two sides discussed joint cooperation and investment in the agriculture sector as the most important capacity in Mauritius.

In this meeting, Mohsen Amini, Chairman of the ICCIMA Agriculture Committee referred to Iran as a land of opportunities, especially in the field of agriculture, and said: "Joint investment and commercial cooperation in the agriculture sector should be considered by both countries. In this regard, Iran is offering good incentives."

## NIOC raises September OSP for Asian buyers

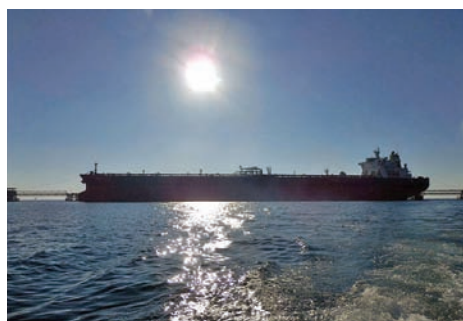
TEHRAN - National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has increased its crude oil selling prices (OSP) for Asian buyers in September considering the global rise in oil prices, Shana reported.

NIOC's official selling price increase affected three grades of Iranian oil namely Light, Heavy and Forouzan.

The NIOC has set the September OSP of Iranian Light grade for Asia at \$9.5 a barrel above the Oman/Dubai average, up \$0.6 from the previous month.

The prices for Iranian Heavy and Forouzan grades are also set to be \$6.3 and \$6.4 above the Oman/Dubai average, respectively.

The September OSPs for heavy and Forouzan grades have increased by \$0.7 and \$0.75 compared to the prices for the previous month, respectively.



Iran has been shipping its oil into the global markets successfully despite the U.S. sanctions and over the past year, the export of Iranian crude oil increased significantly.

Considering the increase in exports, NIOC has also been ramping up production so that according to Oil

Minister Javad Oji, the country's oil production has increased almost to the pre-sanctions level.

Back in April, Oji had said that the country's crude oil production reached the pre-sanction levels.

Putting the current capacity of Iran's oil production at more than 3.8 million barrels per day (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.

## Domestic firms to invest \$39b in oil, gas industry

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) has said that contracts for \$29 billion of investment in the oil and gas industry projects have been concluded with domestic firms, and another \$10 billion worth of new investment deals will be concluded soon, Shana reported on Sunday.

Masoud Mirkazemi said that over the past month various working groups and consortia have been formed in PBO which led to the signing of a \$7 billion contract for the development of the joint Azadegan oil field and a \$19 billion memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the construction of two petrochemical plants.

"We are also preparing another \$10 billion worth of projects to be awarded,

so it is necessary to use different methods and initiatives to attract the necessary resources," Mirkazemi said.

Back in September 2021, Oil Minister Javad Oji said his ministry was making necessary arrangements and planning for attracting \$125 billion of foreign and domestic investment in the country's oil and gas industry within the next four to eight years.

Earlier this month, Oji reiterated that the oil ministry is seriously following the plans for funding the oil industry's development projects.

Speaking on national TV, Oji noted that recent studies show that over \$160 billion of investment is required to complete the country's oil industry development projects

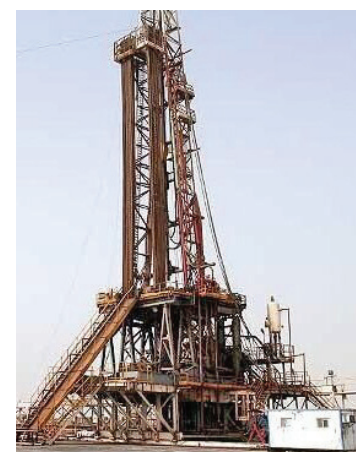
over the next eight years.

"Planning has been done to provide this figure, and considering the current progress [in our plans] there will be no problem in this regard," he said.

The official noted that the current government has so far attracted over \$80 billion for the country's oil and gas projects and an agreement worth \$40 billion has also been signed with Russia's Gazprom.

Our priority is developing joint oil and gas fields, he said, adding: "In the downstream sector, we reached an agreement with Gazprom to build gas transmission and export pipelines to countries such as Oman and Pakistan."

"We have also signed 28 contracts with a total value of over one billion



dollars for collecting flare gas, most of which have been signed with private companies that will use the collected gas as payment," Oji added.

## A vessel carrying basic goods enters ports every day since late March



TEHRAN- Since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21), every day, a vessel carrying basic goods has entered the ports of the south and north of the country and the cargoes of these ships have been sent to storage centers after unloading, Government Trading Corporation (GTC) announced.

The basic goods imported into the country include wheat, rice and oil, which are purchased and imported from foreign sources to provide the country's strategic reserves, supply to

consumption centers and regulate the market.

From the beginning of this year, more than 3,602,000 tons of these items have entered the country through southern and northern ports, and currently, the cargoes of several ships carrying essential goods that have recently docked in the country's ports are also being unloaded, the GTC stated.

As previously announced by the deputy head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran has imported 30.9 million tons of basic goods in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20).

Foroud Asgari, the deputy head of IRICA for customs affairs, said that the imported goods were in 25 commodity groups.

Putting the value of the imported basic commodities at \$19.6 billion in the past year, the official said that the imports show a 60-percent rise in worth and 32-percent growth in weight, as compared to the Iranian calendar year 1399.



# Hamid Karzai: “Millions of people are leaving the country”

Der Spiegel traveled to Kabul to interview former Afghan president Hamid Karzai about the return of terror in his country and the ban on education for women.

For this interview, Karzai, 64, invites the journalist to his private office in the sprawling backyard of his home in the center of the capital city. The politician has lived here with his wife and four children since the end of his term as president in 2014. He is still considered one of the most influential voices in the country.

But the ethnic Pashtun politician's years in office are controversial. Time and again, he has criticized the United States' policy in Afghanistan. At the same time, Washington accuses him of tolerating and encouraging corruption in Afghanistan.

The past months have been difficult for him. After the Taliban seized control of Kabul in August 2021, they placed Karzai under a form of house arrest.

**Question: Mr. Karzai, last Sunday, the United States killed the leader of the terrorist organization al-Qaida, Aiman al-Zawahiri, in the middle of Kabul. Does international terrorism once again have a safe haven in Afghanistan?**

Answer: Afghanistan has been a victim of terrorism for so long. We have suffered immensely from foreign terrorists and strongly oppose the presence of international terrorists. The people of Afghanistan have suffered immensely at the hands of foreign terrorist elements and the fight against them.

**They say you are not allowed to leave the country and are under house arrest. Are you a hostage of the Taliban?**

I have visited a few places in the capital, but I am not allowed to leave. In October, I wanted to go to a conference in Sochi, Russia. The new leadership in Kabul did not allow this. Later, I was to attend an event with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the Korber Foundation in Berlin, which was not approved. Most recently, I planned to attend the condolence ceremony for the late President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Khalifa. Rejected.

**Are you afraid of the Taliban? Do you fear for your life?**

No, I am not afraid. Otherwise, I would have left Afghanistan a year ago. I am much more concerned about this country and my children than I am about myself.

**The Parliament and the Women's Affairs Ministry have been closed, your name at “Hamid Karzai International Airport” has been removed. Have the Taliban erased the past 20 years of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan?**

The history of the republic has not been erased. It is reflected in the number of educated Afghans we have today. Millions of boys and girls have been educated, Afghan society has modernized, and it has experienced freedom of the media. The greatest achievement of the republic is education and human rights. They can't just take that away from the Afghans again.

**The leadership of the emirate already held such a gathering of**



**popular representatives in June to legitimize itself.**

A Loya Jirga is an assembly of representatives of all Afghans. That was not the case here.

**Girls over the age of 12 are no longer allowed to go to school. Does it say anywhere in the Quran that women shouldn't read smart books?**

Afghans want education, also for their daughters. I know that, I talk to many Afghans. They fully understand that the future of the country depends on education. But education is under attack here, and the question is: Why is it under attack? Who benefits from it? You see, Mr. Sirajuddin Haqqani is in favor of girls going to school, for example. He said that publicly in an interview with CNN. And he is serious about it. Other Taliban leaders I spoke to are also of this opinion. It has nothing to do with Islam. The end of schooling for girls means an isolated Afghanistan that cannot stand on its own two feet. Without educated women, we are a dead country.

**But it is the Taliban who imposed the ban on girls' education!**

This is not a religious issue. It's a political decision. The majority of the people want security and lasting peace. But happiness requires a bit more than that, namely the possibility to have a decent income, education, freedom. One can see in people where there is happiness. The economic hardship is appalling. Millions of people are leaving the country.

**So, should the international community work with the Taliban after all?**

The Taliban government should work intensively toward its international recognition ...

**Isn't the exact opposite happening right now? The United Nations recently criticized attacks by the Taliban against journalists and activists, ...**

Such incidents happen again and again. And if then also girls are not allowed to go to school, you cannot hope for international recognition. Moreover, the Taliban are being fought internally by different groups. So, they have to work on both issues – international recognition and internal acceptance. Otherwise, there will be neither development nor peace.

**The U.S. has frozen \$7 billion of Afghanistan's state assets stored in the United States. U.S. President Joe Biden now wants to give part of it to the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks as reparations. Can**

**you understand that?**

There are certainly many reasons to sanction this country. But why is the U.S. taking away our assets because of this? These are our foreign exchange reserves that we have been saving since 2003 as collateral for our new currency, the then freshly printed Afghani. This money belongs neither to the Taliban, nor to the old government, nor to the Americans. It is the money of the Afghan people. I think it is despicable to take money away from one victim to give it to another victim. We share the pain of those who died in the Sept. 11 attacks. But aren't Afghans the biggest victims of terrorism, more than any other nation? Mr. Biden should take that into account.

**The Taliban have promised a general amnesty, yet former army and government members are still being persecuted. Why is this happening?**

Well, the Taliban have repeatedly assured that no one has anything to fear, but many people are taking revenge. This has to stop. The government has to make sure that the amnesty is enforced.

**Are the Taliban too weak or unwilling?**

I know from Mr. Anas Haqqani ...

**... another leader of the Taliban's Haqqani network, who is now supposed to enforce the amnesty ...**

... that he is working hard on it. But so far, the integrity of former government officials is not guaranteed.

**You meet regularly with Taliban leaders. How united are they on the internal distribution of power and their policies?**

As in any organization, they have their disagreements.

**It is said that some Taliban leaders follow orders from Pakistan, while others prefer to emancipate themselves from Islamabad. Is that true?**

The Taliban are Afghans, even if they were in exile in Pakistan and fought us from there. But now they are here, and many of them are patriots and want to work for their country. I can only urge them to do everything they can to help Afghanistan achieve true independence and sovereignty in the national interest. For this, all Afghans must join hands, the Taliban among themselves and also those Afghans who are now out of the country and unhappy. Otherwise, it won't work.

**Is the country on the brink of civil war again?**

I hope not. What we need now is a dialogue between Afghans. In the end, a Loya Jirga of the Afghan people should decide on all the important issues, on the flag and the government of the country and the form of government. That is the only way out. If that does not succeed, the conflicts will become rampant.

**Afghanistan's economy was kept going artificially, also because countless aid organizations were working there. The army's salaries came from the U.S. All that no longer exists. How are the Afghan people getting by today?**

There is abject poverty. The middle class that we built up during my time in office is essential for the country's growth – it is disappearing. The lecturers at the universities, the teachers, the businesses, the people in the administration, they have left. But that was the class that held this society together. So, I appeal to the current government to provide every possible incentive so that the people who are still working will stay. And again: If women are not part of the workforce, then there will never be security in Afghanistan.

**What do you mean?**

These well-educated women must go back to work, they are part of Afghan progress. The Taliban government must ensure that they do not once again become a neglected group that symbolizes regression.

**We just came from a patrol by the Ministry “for Virtue and the Prevention of Vice.” Quranic scholars stop women in the street and force them to veil their faces. Is the face veil part of Afghanistan?**

Well, that is for the religious scholars to discuss. But the clerics I asked all said the hijab means covering, but it does not mean covering the face and the hands. That's how I have known it since childhood. So, I would leave it at that.

**With all due respect, you also represent the traditional Pashtun patriarchs – your wife never appeared in public.**

But she has worked. She is a gynecologist. When we lived in Pakistan, as refugees, she worked. Only during my term as president was she not working in the hospital, because of the cumbersome security arrangements. She always wears the hijab, but no face veil. She traveled alone to Pakistan, to Iran and other countries. She meets people and goes out whenever she wants.

**Your son Mirwais has been living in Germany for a little over a week now. Why did you decide to get him out of the country?**

Back in 2020, my son Mirwais was offered the opportunity to study in Germany, but as parents, we thought it would be better at the time if he completed high school in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the situation here has become so difficult that we decided to send him to Germany now for security reasons.

**Do you also fear for the lives of your daughters?**

Yes, they are still small and regularly leave the safe confines of our house. And it is no longer safe out there.

## Rosatom: Putin's nuclear arm in West Asia and North Africa

For those who seek to recalibrate their relationships with the United States, Putin's nuclear arm remains an attractive option.

Three months after launching the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Alexei Likhachev, the director general of Rosatom, the Russian state-owned nuclear corporation.

In that meeting Putin, who was interested in the corporation's foreign revenues, asked Likhachev: “Has the number of foreign orders grown?” Likhachev responded,

Yes, they continue to grow every year, and every six months... Mr. President... 1.5 trillion rubles is the income we will try to achieve this year. Let me stress that this is the open part of the income (regarding open products and open programmes), so in total it will be higher. ... At the same time, our own investment is growing at a greater rate. I hope that at the end of the year we will exceed 400 billion rubles in corporate investment.

Rosatom corporation is an important source of revenue for Moscow. It is one of the world's leading suppliers of nuclear reactors. In addition, it is responsible for the Russian nuclear power industry, nuclear weapons division, nuclear-powered icebreaker fleet, and nuclear research institutions. More importantly, it represents Putin's ability to establish and maintain the nuclear capabilities of multiple countries worldwide. It manages more than 300 companies and organizations involved in all stages of the nuclear weapon and power production chain. According to its annual report for 2020, the corporation's ten-year portfolio of overseas orders reached \$138.3 billion. Atomic power plant constructions abroad constituted \$89.1 billion.

According to The National Interest, the corporation is entirely under the control of the Russian president, who sets its strategic objectives and appoints its director and the members of its supervisory board. In addition to conventional arms supplies, mercenaries, and a military base in the region, Putin actively uses Rosatom to expand Russian influence in West Asia and North Africa. Rosatom plays a key role in approaching and establishing closer ties with regional powers. Today, the corporation has a regional headquarters in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and plans to open a branch in Saudi Arabia. Despite Western sanctions on Russian exports, Rosatom still seeks to increase the number of its regional clients. When President Joe Biden announced a U.S. ban on Russian oil, gas, and coal imports in March, there was no mention of Rosatom. That exemption could be attributed to the dependency of the United States and its Western allies on Russian uranium, which made up 14 percent of U.S. uranium purchases in 2021 and 20 percent of EU imports of uranium in 2020. Sanctioning Rosatom after cutting Russian gas exports to Europe could aggravate the global energy crisis. That fact may give Rosatom the privilege and the freedom to act in West Asia and North Africa.

After Iran, plans to go nuclear in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the UAE reveal ambitions for economic growth to address the increasing demand for electricity and desalinated water. These plans also match these countries' desire for energy self-sufficiency, to reduce imports, to diversify their energy sources, and to increase their exports. Furthermore, in the Muslim world, there is a belief that possessing nuclear technology could add to the state's prestige and power on the global stage. For decades, the unfulfilled dream of possessing nuclear technology was mired by narratives of Western and Israeli conspiracies to deprive the Arabs and Muslims of nuclear technologies. Today, going nuclear in West Asia and North Africa not only responds to the population's needs but also serves the Arab autocracies' interest in asserting their legitimacy. In non-democratic contexts, a lack of electoral legitimacy could be compensated by distributing rents, establishing national megaprojects, and using propaganda machines to domestically market the regimes' achievements. Rosatom is well positioned to help satisfy those needs and interests.

Since the Arab uprising in 2011, Russia has sought to establish footholds in the region. It benefited from the regional conflicts, the political vacuum resulting from the U.S. withdrawal (pivoting to Asia), and the tension between some Arab regimes and various U.S. administrations over the Iran nuclear deal. Reapproaching Russia, which counterbalanced the Western powers during the Cold War, loomed again as an opportunity for the Arab regimes to recalibrate their relationships with the United States. Strengthening ties with Putin could allow the Arab governments to pressure the United States as needed. Moreover, Putin has asserted himself as a credible ally by stabilizing Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and offering him impunity despite international pressure. But

even before the Arab uprisings, Russia successfully challenged the West and proved its potential to satisfy the need of Iran for nuclearization.

In 2005, Iran and Rosatom signed a cooperation agreement according to which Russia contributed to the development of the Bushehr Reactor. Though the United States had urged Moscow to end the project, U.S. officials said in 2002 that Washington would drop its objection if Russia took steps to mitigate the project's proliferation risks. And again, despite Western pressure, Rosatom signed a contract with Iran in November 2014 to construct two additional nuclear power reactors in Bushehr. The project's construction began in September 2016 and is expected to take ten years to complete. However, Putin's ambition goes beyond Iran to include other regional players. That entailed approaching Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Morocco, and Jordan.

In 2015, Rosatom signed agreements with multiple Arab countries, including an agreement with the Saudi kingdom related to small and medium reactors and another pre-investment agreement with Jordan which was then scrapped three years later. But Rosatom has not given up, and hopes that a future proposal for Jordan to use small modular reactors “would be revived at some point in the future.” Ultimately, Rosatom's focus on countries that used to be part of the U.S. orbit has yielded big catches in Egypt and Turkey. Both countries play influential roles in regional politics based on their strategic locations, demography, and cultural influence. In 2015, Rosatom signed an agreement with Egypt to build a nuclear power plant in Egypt near Dabaa on the Mediterranean coast by extending a \$25 billion loan from Russia. The high cost for Egypt, which already struggles with its foreign debts, highlights the Egyptian government's need to enhance its domestic political standing and go beyond Washington, who has criticized Egypt since 2013 over its human rights record. Following Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia in July, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov traveled to Cairo to rally nations on his country's side. A few days later, Egypt announced that Rosatom began constructing Egypt's first nuclear reactor for peaceful use, calling it “the largest project of Russian-Egyptian cooperation” since the 1950s.

In Turkey, construction is also ongoing for what Rosatom called “the biggest project in the history of the Russian Turkish relations.” The project went back to 2010 when Turkey concluded a \$20 billion contract with Rosatom to build a nuclear power plant including four power units. In December 2010, the Akkuyu Nuclear Joint-Stock Company was set up in Ankara to implement the project. Rosatom's share ratio in Akkuyu Nuclear is approximately 75 percent. Four years later, analysts in Washington debated whether Turkey sought to possess nuclear weapons. That question came amid a series of Turkish interventions outside of its borders (in Syria, Iraq, and Libya) as well as a contestation with other regional powers and disagreement with the United States over multiple issues, including Syria's Kurds and Turkey's 2019 procurement of a Russian S-400 defense system. Like Egypt, Turkey is now facing an economic crisis. Thus, progress in its nuclear program may help Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan enhance his domestic political standing and diversify his country's relationships beyond Washington to other global players such as Russia. This month, Rosatom awarded TSM Enerji the contract to undertake the remaining construction work at the \$20 billion nuclear power plant it is building in Akkuyu in southern Turkey.

In 2017, Morocco, too, signed a memorandum of understanding with Rosatom that opened the door for multiple areas of bilateral cooperation, including but not limited to Rosatom's assistance in developing the nuclear infrastructure, maintenance, and equipment supply for the needs of the kingdom's national atomic program. However, as in the Jordanian case, Morocco-Rosatom cooperation has not yet materialized. Progress has also been slow in the UAE, which despite embracing Rosatom's regional headquarter in Dubai and signing a memorandum of understanding in 2019, has relied on a group led by Korea Electric to build its nuclear plants (of which two of four have been built).

Nonetheless, Russia is committed to further cooperation with the Arab states. Development needs, entangled with political dynamics in a volatile region, do not exclude an additional role for Rosatom in future nuclear projects in West Asia and North Africa. For those who seek to recalibrate their relationships with the United States, Putin's nuclear arm remains an attractive option.

Amr Salah is an Egyptian Analyst, Ph.D. Candidate and Instructor at Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. He has made numerous contributions to Arab journals and newspapers as well as the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Freedom House.

## Macron signs protocols on accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO

French President Emmanuel Macron signed protocols on NATO accession for Finland and Sweden on Saturday, AFP reported with reference to the Elysee Palace.

“This sovereign choice by Finland and Sweden will strengthen their security in the face of the existing threat in their immediate vicinity and will make a significant contribution to the collective position and our European security,” the press service of the French leader's administration was quoted as saying.

On August 3, the National Assembly (lower house of parliament) of France ratified the protocol on the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO. The



accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO must be ratified by all members of the bloc. To date, more than 20 of the 30 countries that make up the alliance have done that.

On May 18, Finland and Sweden applied to join NATO, but Turkey immediately blocked the accession process, demanding that these countries declare Kurdish organizations terrorist, extradite those accused of terrorism or participating in a coup attempt in 2016 to Ankara, and lift bans on weapons supply to Turkey. On June 28, the foreign ministers of Turkey, Sweden, and Finland signed a memorandum that removes obstacles to the accession of the two countries to NATO, but later Ankara said that it was not final and the Turkish parliament might not approve it if Stockholm and Helsinki did not comply with the provisions enshrined in it.

(Source: TASS)



## Council established to safeguard Yazd’s cultural heritage



From page 1 ► Flash floodings hit 17 provinces of the country claimed 32 lives and left 25 people missing. Sistan-Baluchestan, Tehran, Fars, Kerman, Hormozgan, Qom, Semnan, Mazandaran, Yazd, East Azarbaijan, South Khorasan, Golestan, Isfahan, Bushehr, Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad, Markazi, and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari are the provinces ravaged by the heavy rainfalls.

Yazd is chock-full of adobe houses, mansions, bazaars, public bathhouses, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and centuries-old gardens. From the divine point of view, the city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

A UNESCO World Heritage, Yazd is regularly referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a “don’t miss” destination by almost all of its visitors. The

city is full of mud-brick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

Cultural heritage experts believe that Yazd is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center. Furthermore, the use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs through the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant micro-climate.

Yazd is home to numerous qanats which have supplied water to agricultural and permanent settlements for thousands of years. The man-carved underground qanat system relies on snow-fed streams flowing down the foothills of surrounding mountains. The earliest water supply to Yazd is estimated to date from the Sassanid era (224 to 651 CE). However, many others have been continually repaired and used over time, and most surviving Ab-Anbars (traditional mud-brick cisterns) can be today traced to the late Safavid and Qajar periods.

## Tourism minister hails suspension bridge as iconic destination in Ardabil province

TEHRAN—The suspension bridge of Hir in Ardabil province is a tourism icon of the northwestern province, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami has said.

“The glass suspension bridge of Hir is one of the tourism icons of the region that has had a positive impact on the economy,” the minister said on Saturday.

While the Hir city has only a population of 3,000 people, the suspension bridge sells up to 10,000 tickets a day, demonstrating the prosperity of tourism in the region, he added.

The bridge’s designers, while respecting security, showed taste and designed a stunning complex that deserves to be admired, he noted.

The bridge, which is made of curved sheets of glass and was the first of its kind in the world, was inaugurated in 2020. It connects two hills in the Hir district.

Measuring 220 meters in length, the bridge’s all glass parts and metal cables have been constructed by domestic engineers using high-quality materials.

In July 2020, provincial tourism chief Nader Fallahi announced that Ardabil can be named the province of suspension bridges, pointing to Mesh-

ginshahr suspension bridge and Hir curved glass suspension bridge as well as Azna suspension bridge.

Earlier tourism authorities of the province announced that they have developed extensive plans to draw more tourists during the winter season to the province and make it the winter tourism hub of the country.

In December 2019, Fallahi announced that the objective to launch tourism projects in the province is to provide tourists from all over the world and domestic tourists as well with the opportunity to use these facilities and select Ardabil as their prime destination.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardabil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

## Archaeologists discover Neolithic, Elamite relics near Tehran

TEHRAN – Archaeologists have recently discovered some prehistoric relics during a field survey conducted in Robat Karim county, which is situated southwest of the Iranian capital.

Relics dating from the 5th millennium BC to the early 3dr millennium BC have recently been unearthed in trenches carved by archaeologists on Tepe Parandak of Robat Karim county, a tourism official said on Saturday.

Based on preliminary studies, the objects date from the Neolithic and Elamite eras, the official said.

The official said that extensive archaeological excavations would soon carry out in this area to determine the role and position of Tepe Parandak in the history of the nation, the report said.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

From the Caspian in the northwest to Baluchistan in the southeast, the Iranian plateau extends for close to 2,000 km. It encompasses the greater part

of Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan west of the Indus River, containing some 3,700,000 square kilometers. Despite being called a “plateau”, it is far from flat but contains several mountain ranges, the highest peak being Damavand in the Alborz mountain range at 5610 m, and the Dasht-e Loot east of Kerman in Central Iran, falling below 300 m.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC). A 2019 study published by the Journal of Human Evolution suggests that Neanderthals were roaming over the Iranian Zagros mountain range between 40 to 70 thousand years ago. 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.

# Iranian-Italian team finish work to document relief carvings

TEHRAN --A team composed of Iranian and Italian cultural heritage experts has completed documentation of relief carvings situated on an ancient site in southwest Iran.

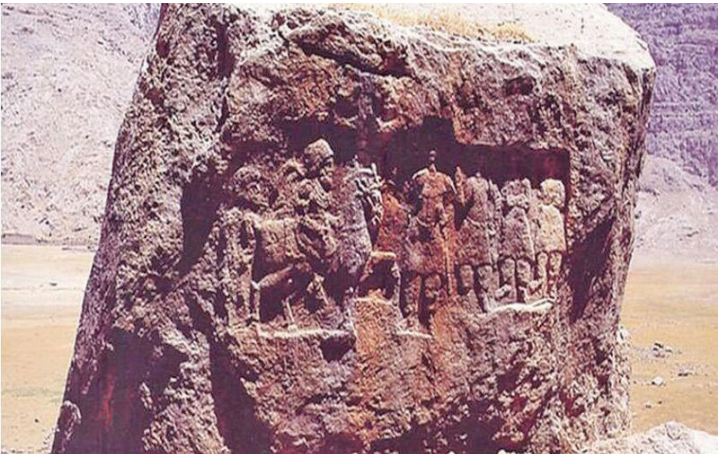
The follow-up project has completed a previous three-year professional work of laser-scanning that Iranian experts in close collaboration with their Italian counterparts commenced in Hung-e Azhdar, Khuzestan province, in the year 1386 (March 2007– March 2008), IRNA quoted Iranian archaeologist Mehdi Faraji as saying on Saturday.

Commenced early in 2021, the current expedition came to an end after two bas-relief carvings dating from the Old Elamite and Elymais/ Parthian eras were documented, the archaeologist said.

Moreover, the team concocted field surveys to help determine (legal) boundaries of Hung-e Azhdar, the archaeologist said.

Elymais was an ancient Parthian vassal state located east of the lower Tigris River and usually considered part of the larger district of Susiana. It incorporated much of the area of the biblical region of Elam, approximately equivalent to the modern region of Khuzestan.

In 2010, the Iranian-Italian joint expedition in Khuzestan reportedly



started the 2nd campaign in the area of Hung-e Azhdar, to develop the research begun in the 1st campaign (2008).

Located in a region inside the modern provinces of Ilam and Khuzestan, Elam was one of the most impressive civilizations of the ancient world. It was never a cohesive ethnic kingdom or polity but rather a federation of different tribes governed at various times by cities such as Susa, Anshan, and Shimashki until it was united during the Middle Elamite Period, briefly, as an empire.

The name Elam was given to the region by others– the Akkadians and Sumerians of Mesopotamia-- and is thought to be their version of what

the Elamites called themselves– Haltami (or Haltamti)– meaning “those of the high country.” ‘Elam’, therefore, is usually translated to mean “highlands” or “high country” as it was comprised of settlements on the Iranian Plateau that stretched from the southern plains to the elevations of the Zagros Mountains.

Susa was formerly the capital of the Elamite Empire and later an administrative capital of the king of Achaemenian Darius I and his successors of 522 BC. Throughout the late prehistoric periods, Elam was closely tied culturally to Mesopotamia. Later, perhaps because of domination by the Akkadian dynasty (c. 2334–c. 2154 BC), Elamites adopted the Sumero-Akkadian cuneiform

script. Documents from the second period, which lasted from the 16th to the 8th century BC, are written in cuneiform; the stage of the language found in these documents is sometimes called Old Elamite. The last period of Elamite texts is that of the reign of the Achaemenian kings of Persia (6th to 4th century BC), who used Elamite, along with Akkadian and Old Persian, in their inscriptions. The language of this period, also written in the cuneiform script, is often called New Elamite.

Although all three stages of Elamite have not been completely deciphered, several grammatical features of the language are known to scholars. These include a plural formation using the suffix -p, the personal pronouns, and the endings of several verb forms.

Elamite language is an extinct language spoken by the Elamites in the ancient country of Elam, which included the region from the Mesopotamian plain to the Iranian Plateau. According to Britannica, Elamite documents from three historical periods have been found. The earliest Elamite writings are in a figurative or pictographic script and date from the middle of the 3rd millennium BC.

## Visit Mahdishahr, a piece of paradise

TEHRAN—Mahdishahr, formerly known as Sang-e Sar, is a city and the capital of Mahdishahr county, in north-central Semnan province. While Semnan is known for its arid climate, the climatic condition of Mahdishahr is different from most other regions in the province.

Due to its location on the southern slopes of the Alborz Mountains, the city is completely mountainous, with cold winters and heavy snowfalls, but mild summers and green villages that have made it a piece of paradise.

It is a great travel destination all year round, especially in the summer, due to its natural attractions and historical monuments, such as castles and historical mansions.

Among the top tourist destinations of the county, which attracts many domestic tourists annually to the region, is Shahmirzad, a city well-known for its beautiful gardens and plum and walnut trees. It is also home to Shir Qaleh (Lion Castle), a prehistoric defensive structure located on a high mountain.

The home of a different species of animals as well as several old trees, the protected area of



Parvar, is another tourist attraction of the county. A historical public bathhouse and cemetery can also be seen in this area. It is also the summer house of the region’s nomads.

Dargazin is another good-weather city where Armenian plums and pomegranates are grown in high quality.

Ebrahim Khan Palace, Molladeh Village, Kaffer Qaleh, Rudbarak and Chashm regions, Sang-e Sar Nomadic Museum, and the ancient area of Kharand, are among the other tourist attractions of Mahdishahr county.

Handwoven carpets, kilims, and jajims are the

main handicrafts of Mahdishahr people. There are many dairy products made by the region’s nomads from sheep milk, such as yogurt, a special product called Arsheh, butter, cheese, etc. Agricultural products such as walnuts, plums, Armenian plums, and pomegranates can also be purchased as souvenirs.

The history of the city goes back to the pre-Islamic era and its name is mentioned in the Shahnameh, the epic masterpiece of Persian poet Ferdowsi.

The main population centers of Semnan province lie along the ancient Silk Road (and modern-day Imam Reza Expressway), linking Rey (Tehran) with Khorasan (Mashhad). While few visitors spend much time in the area, driving through you can easily seek out several well-preserved caravanserais (notably Dehnamak and Ahowan), cisterns (the Cafe Abenbar in Garmsar is a special treat), and ruined mud citadels (Padeh is lumpy but fascinating.). The large, bustling cities of Semnan, Damghan, and Shahrud (Bastam) all have a small selection of historic buildings and Semnan has a fine old covered bazaar.

## Tomb attributed to mythical Persian hero to undergo restoration

TEHRAN– A modest mausoleum attributed to Kaveh the Blacksmith, a Persian historical mythical hero, in Chadegan, central Isfahan province, is planned to undergo some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Following the completion of the arrangements and the allocation of the necessary budget, the restoration project will begin in the near future, Alireza Izadi said on Sunday.

The city hosts several tourist attractions, so the development of the tourism infrastructure in collaboration with the private sector could contribute to the region’s tourism industry and handicraft sector’s prosperity, the official added.

Kaveh the Blacksmith is a 5000-year-old figure in Iranian mythology who leads a popular uprising against a ruthless foreign ruler, Zahhak. His story is narrated in the Shahnameh, the epic masterpiece of

Persian poet Ferdowsi.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, Kaveh fashions a makeshift banner from a spear, and his leather apron gathers the disgruntled Iranians around him and leads them to Zahhak’s rival, Fereydun. Fereydun adopts Kaveh’s banner as his own, decorates it with silk and jewels, and names it the Kavian Banner (The Royal Banner). This banner remained Iran’s national flag until the Arab conquest of the country in the 7th century CE.

## Tourism projects underway in Marivan

TEHRAN— A total of four tourism-related projects are currently underway in the city of Marivan, the western province of Kordestan, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

An investment value of 50 billion rials (\$167,000) has been channeled into the projects, Arman Vatandust explained on Sunday.

The projects have been launched to develop the tourism infrastructure of the city, the official added.

ed.

In 2017, Marivan won the WCC-APR status as the city of Kalash, particularly lightweight and breathable footwear.

Located in western Kordestan province, the city is nationally famous for being a living museum of footwear made of natural cotton and leather.

The name Kordestan refers to the region’s principal inhabitants.

After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th-century CE (Seljuk period), the name was given to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains.

It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran’s Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century.

## Ancient cistern discovered near subterranean chamber in Abarkuh

TEHRAN—Locals in Abarkuh have recently discovered an ancient cistern and traditional water supply system situated near a subterranean chamber in the central Iranian town.

The subterranean settlement was found last November after cultural heritage experts followed traces they had previously discovered

within some small stone rooms in a historical core of the town, a local tourism official said on Sunday.

This cistern is in the form of a hand-carved chamber situated at a depth lower than a water channel, the official explained.

Locally named an Ab-Anbar, such underground reservoirs are part of

the iconic qanat systems, which rely on snow-fed streams flowing down from surrounding mountains. For thousands of years, qanat systems have supplied water to agricultural and permanent settlements in arid regions of Iran, tapping alluvial aquifers at the heads of valleys and conducting the water along underground tunnels by gravity, often over

many kilometers.

The concept of “Persian Qanat” was registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2016, representing a selection of eleven aqueducts across Iran. Qanats, according to UNESCO, provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.



# Tehran, Moscow to enhance academic co-op

TEHRAN – Iran and Russia will expand academic cooperation, as well as student exchange.

Mohammad Javad Salmanpour, the deputy head of the Organization for Student Affairs, and Dmitry Kalinichenko, head of the Russian Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and the International Humanitarian Cooperation, met on Saturday in Tehran.

Kalinichenko, for his part, noted that there are 300 Iranian students with scholarships in Russia and that the number can increase in the future.

The purpose of the Russian Federal Agency in Iran is to select Iranian students for scholarships in Russian universities and organize events and Olympiads, he explained, adding, we are willing to cooperate with Iran for student exchange, and we also want the Russian language to be taught in Iran and Persian language in Russia.

Salmanpour also expressed interest to attract more Russian students to Iranian universities, referring to the expansion of student exchange between the two countries.

Currently, most of the Russian students in Iran are studying without a scholarship mostly in



the fields of Persian language and literature, linguistics, etc., and the Islamic Republic welcomes the increasing number of foreign students in these fields, he said.

## Leading in attracting international students

Currently, nearly 100,000 foreign nationals are studying in Iran, more than 90 percent of whom are from Iraq and Afghanistan and the rest are from other countries.

These students are studying in different fields of science, research and technology, health and medical education, and also in the fields of humanities, Islamic sciences, Persian language and literature, law, fundamentals of Islamic law, management fields, economics, psychology, social sciences, as

well as engineering, agricultural sciences, animal sciences, and basic sciences.

Iran is among the 15 successful countries in attracting international students, according to Salmanpour.

We have the ability and capacity to have more than 250,000 foreign students by 2026, he stated.

According to unofficial statistics, more than 300,000 Iranian students study abroad.

Russia is one of the prioritized countries for scientific and technological relations with Iran. Since 2016, various specialized working groups formed by the two countries in the fields of space, aerospace, cognitive sciences, biotechnology, nanotechnology, university cooperation, mega-science, information tech-

nology, energy, and regional cooperation.

During the last 5-6 years, the capacity of international interactions has been considered by Iran and Russia, and this cooperation has expanded by forming bilateral agreements through inter-sectoral coordination.

Currently, nearly 100,000 foreign nationals are studying in Iran, more than 90 percent of whom are from Iraq and Afghanistan.

## 95 incubation centers operating in health sector

TEHRAN – A total of 95 incubation centers, as well as 12 science and technology parks are active in the country's health sector, Younes Panahi, the deputy minister of health for research and technology, has said.

The incubation centers seek to help entrepreneurs transform ideas and results of research into marketable products.

The most important activities of the center include providing support and guiding services such as educational services, establishing communication between technology units and governmental or nongovernmental organizations, and helping to commercialize the research achievements of the technology sector.

As much as 1,693 knowledge-based companies are active in the field of health, he said, ILNA reported on Sunday.

Referring to the transformation of health research into technology, he said that over 222,000 research projects and 553 technology plans have been prepared from 75,000 ISI articles published in universities and research centers.

Pointing out that the total number of employees of knowledge-based health companies is 28,000 people, he said that 343 health technology products and 335 patents in medical sciences have so far been produced.

Currently, 95 technology growth centers and 12 science and technology parks are op-



erating in the health sector nationwide, he noted.

Recently, the statutes of health innovation centers have been approved, and in this way, the necessary platform has been prepared to facilitate development and commercialization of products, and entrance to the health market, he stated.

Referring to the highest number of knowledge-based companies in the field of health based on specialized fields, he explained that the first category is related to medicine and advanced products in the field of diagnosis and treatment with 411 companies, followed by advanced materials and products based on chemical technologies, advanced medical devices and equipment, and medical equipment tools.

## Rise in pharmaceuticals, medical production

The import of pharmaceuticals has declined in Iran by 91 percent, which shows the

capability of the country's pharmaceutical industry, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, former head of the Food and Drug Administration, said last October.

Today, all medicine used in the treatment of coronavirus are produced by domestic manufacturers, and if we wanted to import all the items, there would be a high exchange rate, he further stated, emphasizing that COVID-19 vaccine development indicates the pharmaceutical industry's capability.

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.

Knowledge-based companies can produce any medicine effective in countering coronavirus or approved by the scientific committee within a week to 10 days, Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, said.

Also, Iran is capable of production of biopharmaceuticals, which has so far reached 28 items, making Iran the third leading country in Asia.

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

Despite the sanctions that have existed since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, Iran has the strongest health system in the region.

## ENGLISH IN USE

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## Educational projects worth \$330m to be inaugurated

A total of 1,015 educational projects worth 14 trillion rials (nearly \$330 million) will be inaugurated across the country, Mehrolah Rakhshanimehr, director of the organization for renovation, development, and equipment of schools, has announced.

The projects will be inaugurated by the next 10 days, on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, he stated, ISNA reported on Sunday.

According to Rakhshanimehr, the projects include 4,168 classrooms, 11 swimming pools, and 32 gyms.

About 14,000 classrooms have been built so far this year (started March 21, 2019), compared with some 10,000 last year, he concluded.

## افتتاح ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان پروژه آموزشی

رئیس سازمان نوسازی، توسعه و تجهیز مدارس کشور گفت ۱۰۱۵ پروژه آموزشی با اعتباری به میزان ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان در سراسر کشور به بهره‌برداری می‌رسد. به گزارش ایسنا، مه‌راله رخشانی مهر افزود این پروژه‌ها طی ۱۰ روز آینده و به مناسبت چهل و یکمین سالگرد پیروزی انقلاب اسلامی افتتاح خواهند شد. به گفته او، این پروژه‌ها شامل ۴۱۶۸ کلاس درس، ۱۱ استخر، و ۳۲ سالن ورزشی هستند. رخشانی مهر ادامه داد تاکنون در سال ۹۸ حدود ۱۴ هزار کلاس درس افتتاح شده است در حالیکه در سال ۹۷ حدود ۱۰ هزار کلاس افتتاح شده بود.

## SOCIETY

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TEHRAN TIMES

7

## 454 Covid deaths reported in a week

TEHRAN – During the third week of the current Iranian calendar month (August 5-12), 454 deaths as a result of the coronavirus were reported across the country.

In 24 provinces out of 31 provinces of the country, a decrease in hospitalized patients has been reported, while the number of deaths in 19 provinces is on the rise, ISNA reported.

For the time being, 78 cities are in the red zone, 184 cities are in the orange zone, 174 cities are in the yellow zone, and 12 cities are in the blue zone.

A new wave of the coronavirus is currently sweeping the country, and the seventh peak of the disease is expected to occur by October.

Considering that infection with the BA5 variant is milder than other variants, it is expected that the seventh peak of the disease to occur by October with lesser mortality, Hamidreza Jamaati, secretary of the National Scientific Committee of Coronavirus, said on



July 22.

If preventive measures such as wearing masks and injecting booster doses are adopted, we will not experience the rates of mortality that happened in March with Omicron or last summer with Delta, he added.

At present, in Asia and Europe, the incidence of Covid and its mortality is steady and declining, while in some African and American countries, there is a growing trend of omicron variants such as BA4 and BA5, which have not spread in Iran, Jamaati said in May.

## IRGC seizes vessel carrying contraband fuel



TEHRAN – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has seized a vessel carrying 22,000 liters of smuggled fuel in the Persian Gulf, IRIB reported on Sunday.

On Friday, the Iranian authorities also seized a vessel carrying 277,000 liters of smuggled fuel in the waters around Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf.

The smugglers intended to transfer the consignment to one of the Persian Gulf littoral states.

Jalal Amini, head of the anti-trafficking police, said in July that smuggled goods worth 2 trillion rials (nearly \$7.1 million) have been confiscated across the country through the third stage of the plan to combat the smuggling of goods and currency.

In order to help domestic production, the fight against smuggling is underway continuously through monitoring of goods (origin and desti-

nation), implementation of plans, periodic and intermittent inspections of roads, etc. are on the agenda by the anti-trafficking police throughout the country, he explained.

Every year, \$20-25 billion worth of goods are smuggled in and out of the country, which, if stopped, will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, MP Hassan Norouzi has said.

Mohammad Hassan Nejad, a member of the Majlis (the Iranian parliament) energy committee, says the smuggled fuel amounts to 22 million liters per day. With a 50 cent per liter profit, the total daily income adds up to 400 trillion rials annually or \$3.3 billion, nearly the same as the country's annual development budget.

In June 2020, the first phase of the national anti-smuggling plan was implemented with the priority of customs, tobacco, and transit goods nationwide.

In order to help domestic production, the fight against smuggling is underway continuously.

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON AUGUST 14

New cases	6,279
New deaths	83
Total cases	7,475,173
Total deaths	142,944
New hospitalized patients	798
Patients in critical condition	1,474
Total recovered patients	7,171,824
Diagnostic tests conducted	53,492,475
Doses of vaccine injected	153,365,758



TEHRAN TIMES



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Generosity is to help a deserving person without his request, and if you help him after his request, then it is either out of self-respect or to avoid rebuke.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:13:09    Evening: 20:13    Dawn: 4:52 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 6:24 (tomorrow)

## Persian elements in Indian languages

Part 1  
Some Persian elements are present in most of the modern languages of the subcontinent of South Asia, as a consequence of the prolonged cultivation of Persian associated with pre-modern Indo-Muslim culture.

In those languages and registers in which the impact of the classical Indo-Muslim civilization is most clearly discernible the presence of Persian elements is a very substantial one.

In order to provide a clear if simplified picture of the quite complex factors which need to be considered in an overall mapping, the following treatment begins with a survey of the historical and cultural processes governing the differential presence of Persian elements in Indian languages.

This is followed by descriptions of the principal elements which may be discerned, arranged in terms of broad linguistic categories.

### Persian and South Asian languages

The vast region of the Indian subcontinent is characterized by great linguistic diversity.

The variety of local spoken languages has, however, always been balanced by the parallel use of trans-regional standard languages in royal administration and in religious and secular literature.

In the earlier period of Indic civilization, the standard language was Sanskrit, carefully preserved by the Brahminical elite as a learned classical tongue, a function which it continues to preserve in the religious context of orthodox Hinduism.

Elsewhere Sanskrit came to be replaced by Persian as the major language of administration and literary culture, first in the Ghaznavid kingdom of Lahore in the northwest, then over much of northern and central India after the substantial Muslim conquests of the 13th century onwards, with subsequent reinforcement thereafter through the continuing immigration of Muslims from the larger Persian world of Iran and Central Asia.

The core position of Persian in the pre-modern Indian education system ensured its wide diffusion as a pan-Indian standard language amongst the indigenous elite and service classes, including significant groups of Hindus as well as the Muslims.

Itself somewhat distinguished from the Persian of Iran both by its greater conservatism and by the influence of Indian languages, this Indo-Persian remained culturally dominant until the consolidation of British rule in the 19th century led to its substantial replacement by English, the transnational elite language of all the countries of modern South Asia.

Both geography and cultural history have conditioned the levels of Persian elements variously present in the different languages of the subcontinent.

Linguistic contact has been greatest between Persian and the Indo-Aryan languages of the northern plains which are linguistically cognate with Iranian, particularly the languages of the northwest like Sindhi and Panjabi, which are closest to the Indo-Iranian linguistic border.

Generally speaking, the currency of Persian elements diminishes with progressive distance from that border, whether towards Bengali at the eastern end of the vast Indo-Aryan area, or towards the south, where Persian elements are markedly less prominent in Marathi than in Gujarati.

Going still further south across the major linguistic divide of the region, Persian elements are predictably much less well represented in the

Dravidian languages spoken in peninsular India.

This geographical spectrum is, however, crosscut by socio-political factors. The earliest centuries of Muslim rule in South Asia saw the rise of a lingua franca based upon an amalgam of Persian elements with an Indian linguistic base, which has been identified as a mixture deriving from the local dialects of the Lahore-Delhi region.

This mixed lingua franca is conveniently given the traditional label “Hindustani,” in distinction from “Urdu,” defined as the highly Persianized language of the elite which evolved from it as a literary language written in the Persian script, first in Hyderabad and the Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan and then in Delhi, Lucknow, and other centers of Muslim courtly culture in northern India.

In the colonial setting of the 19th century, the increasing competition between different groups in Indian society came to be pursued in terms of language as well as of religion.

This was particularly the case in northern India, where the position granted by the British to Urdu as a convenient vernacular standard for use alongside English was challenged with increasing success by proponents of a de-Persianized “Hindi,” structurally identical to Urdu but written in the Devanagari script associated with Sanskrit and characterized by the exclusion of Persian words in favor of learned Sanskritic equivalents (called tatsama as opposed to the inherited Indo-Aryan tadbhava vocabulary).

The opposition between Urdu and Hindi came to be enshrined in their respective status as official languages in Pakistan and in India, and although the total identification between language and religion sought by zealots on both sides is far from being achieved, an important touchstone is provided by the presence of Persian elements.

These elements are most prominent in formal Urdu, notably present in languages of the north and west such as Punjabi or Sindhi or Gujarati, especially in the usage of Muslim speakers, and are also well represented in everyday Hindustani, which has itself acted as a medium for the transmission of Persian loans into other Indo-Aryan languages, besides the Dravidian Telugu in the Deccan.

Persian elements are, however, rather sparse in other Dravidian languages and are most rigorously excluded from the modern Hindi, which is most closely identified with the cause of Hindu nationalism.

Although the picture is thus a dynamic one, it remains true that, along with English, Persian still provides the Indo-Aryan languages with their most substantial set of non-Indian elements.

### Persian elements in South Asian languages

Against this general background, the following survey first describes the Persian influence on the phonology and the morphology and syntax of South Asian languages, before concluding with a survey of the major Persian impact on vocabulary.

For the sake of conciseness, detailed parallel examples from different languages have been omitted here in favor of a broad representation through citations of Urdu words and forms, with distinction where appropriate between the modern standard language, taken as the exemplar of elite usage which is also partially reflected in other Pakistani languages, and the spoken “Hindustani” lingua franca, whose Persian inventory is to a greater or less degree reflected in many other Indian languages.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica  
To be continued.

# “World, Northern Hemisphere”, “The Dreams of a Horse” to compete in Nancy film festival

TEHRAN – Iranian movies “World, Northern Hemisphere” and “The Dreams of a Horse” will be competing in the Nancy International Film Festival in France.

The 28th edition of the festival will take place in the northeastern French riverfront city from August 26 to September 4.

Directed by Hossein Tehrani, “World, Northern Hemisphere” tells the story of 12-year-old Ahmad, who is the breadwinner of his family. At his mother’s request, they rent a farm, but human bones are discovered, disrupting their plan.

“The Dreams of a Horse”, a short film by Marjan Khosravi, follows Shahnaz, the oldest daughter of a nomad family, who loves writing and her stories are inspired by her lifestyle. Her father wants to marry her off to better the family’s condition, but Shahnaz wants to pursue bigger dreams.

The festival will also screen “Any Day Now” directed by Iranian-Finish director Hamy Ramezan.

The film is about Ramin Mehdipur, a 13-year-old boy and

A scene from “World, Northern Hemisphere” directed by Hossein Tehrani.

his Iranian family, all of whom have been living in a refugee center in Finland. Just as Ramin starts to enjoy the school holidays, the family receives the terrible news their asylum application has been

denied. The Mehdipurs file a final appeal, and they continue with their everyday lives, trying to keep a positive attitude despite the looming danger of deportation. As Ramin starts the new school year,

every moment, every friendship will be more precious than ever.

Marine Ottogalli, Igor Ivanov and Alain Chrétien will judge the official competition of the festival.

## UNICEF, Farabi to cooperate on plan to enhance Iran children’s films

UNICEF Representative in Iran, Robin Nandy, and Farabi Cinema Foundation Director Mehdi Javadi meet in Tehran on August 13, 2022, to discuss the expansion of cooperation. (FCF)

From Page 1 ► Nandy and a number of his colleagues watched the film in a private screening at the Resaneh Cultural Center in Tehran in May.

Iranian actress Mahtab Keramati, who is a UNICEF goodwill ambassador, and Child Protection Officer at UNICEF Iran Vahid Hedayati were also in attendance at the meeting.

Keramati warmly welcomed the ideas discussed during the meeting to foster collaboration between Farabi and UNICEF and expressed her hope the cooperation would sustain increasingly.

For his part, Javadi said, “In the new management, one of Farabi’s crucial missions is to liven up Iranian children’s

films and improve the quality of films in this area.”

He referred to the minimum level of UNICEF participation as a sponsor of an award at Iranian film festivals, and asked the organization to play a much greater role in Iranian films.

He noted that Farabi seeks quality films and added that Iran is eager to have UNICEF participation in Iranian films from the beginning of their production process.

Javadi, who is also the president of the Isfahan International Film Festival for Children and Youth, said that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a decline in the number of children’s films in Iran.

## “Friendship in an Age of Economics” appears in Persian

TEHRAN – “Friendship in an Age of Economics: Resisting the Forces of Neoliberalism” by Todd Gifford May has been published by Ney Publications in Tehran.

Kaveh Behbahani is the translator of the book originally published in 2012.

We live in an age of economics. We are encouraged not only to think of our work but also of our lives in economic terms.

In many of our practices, we are told that we are consumers and entrepreneurs. What has come to be called neoliberalism is not only a theory of market relations; it is a theory of human relations.

“Friendship in an Age of

Front cover of the Persian edition of Todd Gifford May's book “Friendship in an Age of Economics: Resisting the Forces of Neoliberalism”.

Economics” both describes and confronts this new reality.

It confronts it on some familiar terrain: that of friendship. Friendship, particularly close or deep friendship, resists categorization into economic terms.

In a sustained investigation of friendship, this book shows how friendship offers an alternative to neoliberal relationships and can help lay the groundwork for resistance to it.

May is a political philosopher who has been teaching at Clemson University, a public land-grant research university in Clemson, South Carolina, for nearly thirty years with specialization in recent French thought, especially that of

Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze.

He writes on topics of anarchism, post-structuralism, and post-structuralist anarchism.

More recently he has turned his attention to broader life concerns: meaning in life, coping with suffering, acting with moral decency, and so on.

He is the author of sixteen books of philosophy. In addition to his academic work, he teaches in a local prison, and has organized both inside and outside the university, examples of which include opposing the university administration’s public silence on such important issues as racism on campus and the Muslim ban.

## Ashura and its value in our beliefs

### An interview with the author of the book “Asghar’s Sermon”

“Asghar’s Sermon” is the title of a new book by Ali Muhammad Moadab, published by Soore Mehr. This book is a compilation of Masnavi poems about the Karbala tragedy and Hazrat Ali al-Asghar (AS).

#### \* What is the overall theme of this book?

This lengthy masnavi tells the story of Hazrat Ali al-Asghar (AS), the youngest martyr of Karbala, and his martyrdom. I have made an effort to work by examining the Iranian tradition of systematization and by researching the same framework that our ancestors used, but with fresh expression and viewpoints.

#### \* Hazrat Ali al-Asghar is the subject of few literary works. How did you settle on this character from the Ashura tragedy?

I recently had a dream that inspired me spiritually and I choose to accept it as a significant invitation. I discussed my dream in the preface to the book. I studied a lot about it because it was a difficult task. As you pointed out, there aren’t

many sources regarding him, which is why it took me over 15 years to review this material by looking through relevant sites and books. Regarding this character from the Karbala story, I wrote a number of poems in a variety of genres, but none of them satisfied me, so I yearned to improve. I wasn’t able to articulate the contents in any other way till the month of Muharram two years ago.

#### \* Which verse or part stood out to you the most in the poem?

I love every word of this poem since I’ve been so invested in it for such a long time. In this poem, I tried to approach Hazrat Ali al-Asghar (AS) from a different perspective. I also wanted the poem to be informative as well as emotional for the readers. This poem is similar to a sermon that Hazrat Ali al-Asghar (AS) never really had the chance to deliver, and he was the only martyr of Karbala without a sermon, which is why I chose this title for the book.

#### \* What are the major challenges in Ashura’s literature?

The main challenge, in my opinion, is to

begin working on a topic with insufficient or inadequate knowledge. Our primary necessity is to learn about history and traditions because nobody can speak about a subject they do not fully comprehend.

#### \* What is the status of Ashura and religious literature right now, and what changes need to be made?

Ashura is the most valuable concept in our beliefs. We must first educate ourselves and broaden our understanding of Ahl al-Bayt (AS) as those who want to work in this field. A poet should possess knowledge and information in addition to writing poetry from their emotions because the combination of these two maintains our religious literature alive.