

Met Police: Uniformed Criminals

► Page 5

Parliament speaker visits IRGC headquarters, warns against EU blacklisting

TEHRAN – Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf paid a visit to the chief headquarters of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps in the early hours of Saturday morning and met with IRGC chief commander General Hossein Salami.

In the meeting, Qalibaf reacted to the European Parliament's recent resolution on Iran which called for listing the IRGC as a terrorist group. The resolution was adopted with an overwhelming majority and called on the European Council to list the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps as a terrorist group.

"They [MEPs] also call on the Council and the member states to add the IRGC and its subsidiary forces, including the paramilitary Basij militia and the Quds Force, to the EU terrorist list. Any country in which the IRGC deploys military, economic, or informational operations should sever and outlaw ties with this agency," the European Parliament said in a press release after the adoption of the Resolution. ► Page 3

OGPU: Ukrainian probe has not yet determined kamikaze drones originated from Iran

Currently, more than 50 criminal proceedings have been opened due to the use of kamikaze drones, however the Ukrainian investigation has not yet determined the origin of the drones.

This was stated by the Prosecutor of the Department for Combating Crimes in the Conditions of Armed Conflict of the Office of the Prosecutor General Ivan Chizhevsky.

"We can't say yet whether these are Iranian-made drones or not. A pre-trial investigation is underway. It won't be fast. After all, the examination needed is not simple, but with the participation of specialists of a wide scale, who will be able to find out." ► Page 5

Goalkeeper Tavasoli says CAFA tournament is ideal tune-up

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN – Farzaneh Tavasoli, captain and goalkeeper of Iran women's national futsal team, believes that the 2023 CAFA tournament will serve as a tune-up for major tournaments like the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup.

Iran women's futsal team started their training camp on Saturday. Forouzan Soleymani, head coach of the national team, called 20 players, including Farzaneh Tavasoli, for the current camp to prepare her side for the 2023 CAFA Women's Futsal Championship.

"We joined the training camp just after the recent matches of Iran's women futsal super league," said Tavasoli in her exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

"Our last camp was one year ago for the previous edition of the CAFA tournament. Since then, we haven't had any training camp or matches, and this is the first." ► Page 3

Sorkhrud wetland hosting migratory birds



© IRNA / Ehsan Fazli Osanlu

TEHRAN – Flocks of migratory birds, particularly geese, have come to Sorkhrud wetland in the northern province of Mazandaran to spend the winter.

The latest surveys in the current year put the number of migratory birds at around 2,000. This year, around 50 flamingoes have also migrated to the wetland, attracting the attention of tourists and

birdwatchers more than in the past.

Every year, from early September to late February, Iran hosts rare species of migratory birds heading from the north to the southern countries due to reduced seasonal temperatures and food availability.

Among the various groups of migratory birds wintering in Iran, the largest population belongs to the group of

geese, swans, and ducks and the smallest population of seven are the long-tailed ducks or oldsquaw.

The provinces of Mazandaran and Golestan are the first provinces with the highest number of migratory birds for having sufficient resources, as the movement of migratory birds is closely linked to the seasonal availability of resources.

Regular container shipping line active from Iran's Chabahar to Indian ports

TEHRAN – Spokesman of Iran's Valfajr Shipping Company says his company is operating a regular container shipping line from southeastern Chabahar port to various ports in India.

According to Abbas Kabousi, 15 voyages have been conducted along the mentioned line over the past three months, ISNA reported.

"The first vessel with a full capacity of 550 TEU arrived in Chabahar from Indian ports a few weeks ago and its cargo has been completely unloaded," Kabousi said, adding that his company is ready to transport more goods between Indian ports and Chabahar port.

The official noted that his company has also been operating some direct lines from

Persian Gulf Arab countries to Chabahar port.

"Valfajr Shipping Company has reduced the time of cargo transportation on the route from the southern ports of the Persian Gulf to Chabahar while reducing the freight rate and improving the schedules," he said. ► Page 4

Iran, Nigeria set up joint sci-tech working group

TEHRAN – A joint working group has been formed by Iran and Nigeria with the aim of broadening ties in the fields of science and technology.

The decision to set up the working group was made during a meeting between the Iranian deputy science minister, Hasham Dadashpour, and the Nigerian ambassador to Tehran, Yakubu Santuraki Suleiman, IRNA reported.

In fact, the field of science and technology is very important, and since Iran has developed in the field of science and technology, Nigeria is very interested in benefiting from the capabilities of Iran, the Nigerian official said.

"We hope that the bilateral relations will increase in the fields of science and technology and that durable relations between the two countries will be established." ► Page 7



© Jerusalem Governorate

A Palestinian forced to demolish his house

A Palestinian resident of occupied East Jerusalem started Saturday to tear down his house under pressure from the Israeli municipality of West Jerusalem and to avoid paying astronomical costs and fines, according to local sources. ► Page 5

Discover early example of Islamic architecture in southern Iran

TEHRAN – Constructed between the early and middle of the 9th century CE, the Friday Mosque of Siraf, located in the port city of Siraf close to the Persian Gulf, is a very early example of Islamic architecture in Iran.

Today, only the ruins remain, and the majority of the knowledge about its architectural features comes from the excavations carried out between 1966 and 1973 by the British Institute of Persian

Studies, led by archaeologist David Whitehouse.

The Friday Mosque of Siraf is the largest mosque among those previously discovered nearby that share a similar architectural style.

The mosque is a congregational structure, built on a two-meter-high podium and arranged in a rectilinear box. Simply arranged columns and a central courtyard serve to define the structure's interior. In comparison to other mosques of the

time, it is significantly larger; when it was completed, its square footprint was 55 meters long.

According to Archnet, the excavations uncovered numerous stages of construction, with two or three particularly noticeable ones. The mosque walls surrounded a space that was 51 meters deep by 44 meters wide at the end of the first construction phase, on top of the aforementioned two-meter-high platform. ► Page 6

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Tehran Papers

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in Yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

Enemy and miscalculation again

In an article entitled "Enemy and miscalculation again", the Jam-e-Jam newspaper refers to the European Parliament's policy towards the IRGC and writes: The IRGC is a part of the country that cannot be separated. Therefore, if the European Union is going to declare the IRGC as a terrorist group, Iran has the right to consider the military of EU member states as terrorist. ► Page 2

Vote against IRGC in EU Parliament breaches UN Charter, says Abdollahian

TEHRAN- Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the Foreign Minister of Iran, late on Friday highly denounced the European Parliament's irresponsible resolution in designating the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist group, asserting it is in violation of the UN Charter.

In a phone conversation with his Swedish counterpart Tobias Billstrom, whose country now holds the rotating presidency of the European Union, Amir Abdollahian stated that the IRGC had prevented strikes on European capitals by Daesh terrorists. ► Page 2

Overseas troupes line up for Fajr theater festival

TEHRAN – Ten troupes from across the world will perform during the 41st Fajr International Theater Festival, which opened in Tehran on Saturday.

Iraqi director Mohammad Moayyed's troupe performed "Mercy Shot" twice at the Main Hall of the City Theater Complex on the opening day.

Two more performances have also been arranged for Sunday at the same place.

Another Iraqi troupe with director Javad Asadi will take "Amal" on stage at Molavi Hall on Monday.

Spanish director Txema Muñoz will stage "Lumière" ("Light") at the Chaharsu Hall of the complex on January 26.

Waiting has never been so much fun. As if it were a silent movie, Muñoz wishes for the train to arrive. When it comes, his imagination goes beyond the station he is in. A light bulb, a jacket and his backpack transport him to a magical, endearing and comical place.

A stage adaptation of Italian poet Dante Alighieri's "The Divine Comedy" will be directed by Hafiz Khalifa from Tunisia. ► Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

Enemy and miscalculation again

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in Yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

from page 1 ► The newspaper points out 7 strategic mistakes of Europe towards Iran and writes:

- The IRGC played the biggest role in dealing with regional and global terrorists

- In that case Europe gives Iran the permission to consider the armies of hostile countries as terrorists

- The IRGC played a big role in the failure of the enemies in the hybrid war

- Calling a country's army, a terrorist is against international law.

- The IRGC is the legal and official military of Iran

- The Europeans are owed to IRGC for fighting against ISIS terrorists

- The IRGC is a popular army that takes most of its popularity from the people.

Javan: Half-dead JCPOA

The European Parliament passed a resolution Thursday calling on the EU and member states to designate Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist group, but it does not vote in favor of suspending the JCPOA talks.

It shows that the European move is a prelude to demand more concessions in nuclear negotiations. The body of the agreement must remain but the soul of the agreement must be weakened to the extent that it hangs between life and death. So, from America's point of view, the negotiations should continue and not be completely suspended but remain suspended and delayed as much as they like.

Europe is also a "yes-man!" to America, and the French cartoons as well as the European and Zionist instigated vandalism in Iran should be analyzed in this framework: "What should we do to make Iran give more concessions?"

In this process, the West has an active representative in Iran, who "represents" the plans of the EU in Iran! While the West is putting pressure on Iran, their representatives start talking about the JCPOA and FATF and warn the officials of the consequences of not signing them.

The plan is very simple. It has several aspects:

"1- The West wants more concessions. 2- Just when the Iranian government is preparing to sign the agreement, it holds back. 3- Those who receive fund from the UK and the US start rioting. 4- Reformists are either silent or implicitly supporting rioters or condemn dealing with the riots. 5- The West puts more pressure. 6- Reformists describe the pressure by the West as destructive for the country. 7- Reformists consider Iran as responsible for the failure of the JCPOA. 8- At the same time, reformists call on the president to resign. 9- The West spends more money. 10- The West sends a message that "give more concessions we will sign the deal".

Kayhan: Supporters of terrorism are angry about IRGC's role in providing security

Although the list of betrayals and crimes committed by the United States and Europe against Iran is not a secret, the recent action of the European Parliament against the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) shows that the West is angry over control of recent riots in the country by the IRGC.

The European Parliament passed a resolution Thursday calling on the EU and member states to designate the IRGC as a terrorist group, but it did not vote in favor of suspending the JCPOA talks.

In its resolution, the European Parliament urges Tehran to suspend the punishment of rioters and release the criminals arrested in the recent riots.

Europe's opposition to the IRGC is not only limited to the recent non-binding resolution. They have not only sanctioned Iran's military commanders many times in the past three and a half months, rather, the have been doing so for more than fourteen decades. Wherever they were fed up with the authority of the IRGC, they tried to damage the brilliant identity of the 'defenders of the security' in the public opinion.

The pointless move of the Europeans proved that they intend to confront the IRGC due to its effective role in establishing internal security and regional stability.

On the other hand, the resolution, which was welcomed by the U.S. and Israel, should be considered as completing the puzzle of the ominous plans of the Western domineering system to bring Iran to its knees in the nuclear negotiations.

It is interesting to note that the European Parliament has placed the IRGC on the list of terrorist groups but voted against the plan to suspend the JCPOA negotiations.

Accordingly, it can be said that the resolution is part of the propaganda campaign and maximum pressure on Iran to get more concessions from Iran in the nuclear negotiations.

Etemad: Protests in Iran are not over yet

In an interview with the Etemad newspaper, former Tehran University professor Sadeq Zibakalam says: The fire (of protests) is still flaming although it may be covered in ashes for a while; a wind blowing or something peripheral issue has the potential to make the flames stronger than before.

In the interview, Zibakalam criticizes the continued negative approach toward the needs of youth and women and says: Now that it seems that the intensity of the protests has decreased, the hard core of power is looking for the continuation of the past policies and is trying to return the situation to the conditions before the beginning of the unrest.

In general, many managers of the country do not believe in the existence of a crisis in the country and believe that the unrest was a challenge that was provoked by the hostile media from outside the country, which ended.

He says the reasons that led to the recent protests still remain. "On the contrary, I believe that the continuation of the wrong policies will make the dimensions of the next demonstrations much wider."

Zibakalam, the professor emeritus of political science, adds, "If there will be no changes or reforms and the system continues to follow the same past policies, we will not go anywhere. From now on, I am afraid for the future of this policy."

The protests are results of people's frustration and disappointment regarding lack of reform, he opines.

He also says it is not possible to link the fate of 80 million Iranians to 1 or 2 million hardliners.

from page 1 ► "It played a key role in destroying Daesh terrorist group in Iraq, Syria and the West Asia region. Therefore, the IRGC's efforts in the war against terrorism should be appreciated by Europeans."

The European Parliament on Thursday approved a bill urging the EU and its member states to add the IRGC to their list of terrorist organizations for alleged abuse of human rights during recent uprisings.

The parliament also approved another resolution asking for more sanctions against Iranian people and organizations.

The action has been vehemently denounced by Iranian officials, top generals, and political, legislative and judicial authorities as well.

In other parts of his Friday call, Amir Abdollahian emphasized the value of strengthening bilateral relationship and said "certain individuals" should not interfere with Tehran and Stockholm's long-standing connections for their own "personal and terrorist interests."

Iran refutes annexation of Russian-captured Ukrainian territories

Amir Abdollahian also said on Tuesday that Tehran will by no means recognize Russia's annexation of the seized lands of Ukraine.

In an interview with TRT, Amir Abdollahian stressed that "We reject the conflict and the forced exodus from Ukraine."

He went on to mention that "despite good ties between Tehran and Moscow, Iran will never recognize the secession of Crimea from Ukraine since we respect each nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity within the framework of international law."

"Due to our insistence on complying with our consistent foreign policy principle, we have not recognized the secession of Luhansk and Donetsk from Ukraine," the top diplomat underlined, adding, "War is not the solution in Ukraine, and when we say that, we really mean it and do believe it as a matter of fundamental policy."

"Iran is always worried about women, children in war-ravaged countries"

Amir Abdollahian also said the Islamic Republic is always distressed about the fate of women and children in war-torn nations in the world.

The senior diplomat made the comments while delivering a speech at the inaugural International Congress for Women of Influence in the Iranian capital Tehran on Friday.

"We are serious opponents of war no matter where it takes place," Amir Abdollahian re-



Vote against IRGC in EU Parliament breaches UN Charter, says Abdollahian

marked.

He went on to add, "Avoiding double-standards, the Islamic Republic is concerned about the situation of Ukrainian women and children, in the same way that it is concerned about the situation of women and children in Palestine, Yemen, Afghanistan, and other countries, which have been afflicted with war."

He underlined that the Islamic Republic makes every effort to bring about a ceasefire in Ukraine, where Russia has been waging a war since February 2022, and to encourage the warring parties to concentrate on peace.

Most recently, President Ebrahim Raisi gave his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin the reassurance that "Iran is ready to act as a helpful middleman in bringing an end to the 11-month war between Russia and Ukraine."

Amir Abdollahian mentioned how the conference underlined "the need to establish the greatest living circumstances and brightest future for women all over the world," with an emphasis on the role of women in the efflorescence of families and communities throughout the world.

He also criticized the American-led campaign that resulted in Iran's expulsion from the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations last year.

Stripping Iran of its commission seat does not serve to divert the Islamic Republic from its initiatives to raise the position of women in the Iranian so-

ciety and promote their participation in a variety of political, social, cultural, scientific, and artistic spheres, the chief diplomat remarked.

The conference drew 300 foreign attendees, including current female international authorities, wives of previous and present global officials, and dozens of women's rights advocates.

FM Qin Gang invites Abdollahian to visit China

Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang has also invited his Iranian counterpart Amir Abdollahian to pay an official visit to China.

In a phone conversation on Thursday, the Iranian foreign minister also wished Qin luck in his new post.

He also wished him and the government and people of China a happy Chinese New Year and spring season.

Chinese New Year officially began on January 22.

The senior diplomats also discussed the most recent state of bilateral relations as well as the most significant regional and global events of shared interest.

Amir Abdollahian made reference to the recently successful visit of a Chinese deputy prime minister to Tehran and stated that high-level delegation exchanges are very important.

Such visits will strengthen Iran-China comprehensive strategic partnership.

For his part, the chief Chinese diplomat remarked that Beijing places an outstanding value on strengthening ties with Iran

and will never spare any opportunity, including exchange of senior delegations, to precipitate such a splendid move.

Qin also reiterated China's determination in supporting Iran's national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"China is ready to work with Iran to uphold basic norms governing international relations such as the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, preserve the common interests of developing countries and safeguard international fairness and justice," Xinhua quoted Qin as saying.

On December 30, China appointed Qin Gang, its ambassador to the United States, to be its new foreign minister.

Qin, 56, replaced Wang Yi, who held the post for the past decade. Wang, 69, was promoted to the politburo of the Chinese Communist Party in October and is expected to play a bigger role in Chinese foreign policy.

In solving challenges common to all of mankind, China's diplomacy will offer "Chinese wisdom, Chinese initiatives and Chinese strength", Qin said in his first comments as foreign minister in a statement posted on his ministry's website.

Though Qin sounded optimistic tones about U.S.-China relations during his relatively brief, 17-month stint as ambassador in Washington, his tenure nonetheless coincided with deteriorating ties between the two superpowers.

Qin rose quickly through various positions in China's Foreign Ministry, including two stints as ministry spokesman between 2006 and 2014, and as chief protocol officer between 2014 and 2018, overseeing many of President Xi Jinping's interactions with foreign leaders.

As spokesman, he stood out among his peers for being one of the earliest Chinese diplomats to make sharp comments in defence of China's increasingly assertive foreign policy, what later became known as "wolf warrior" diplomacy, according to Reuters.

But he also displayed a willingness to work with the United States, declaring upon his arrival in Washington in July 2021 after a period of unusual public vitriol between senior U.S. and Chinese officials, that relations held "great opportunities and potential."

Xi and U.S. President Joe Biden pledged more frequent communication during mid-November talks aimed at preventing a new Cold War between their countries, and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is due to visit China in early 2023.

Qomi starts mission as ambassador in Kabul



TEHRAN- The president of the Islamic Republic of Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan formally began his work as Tehran's new ambassador in Kabul on Saturday.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi was named as the new head of mission for the Islamic Republic of Iran in Kabul on December 17, 2022. Kazemi Qomi will simultaneously retain his job as special envoy.

Previously, Bahador Aminian served as the chief of Iran's mission in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is grappling with terrorism and food scarcity.

Kazemi Qomi has recently proposed formation of a joint committee with the Afghan authorities to jointly combat terrorism.

Afghanistan has faced dire economic conditions since the Taliban took control in the country in August 2021.

Repeated droughts coupled with years of war has led to shortage of food and spread of violence and terrorism.

The international community is also refusing to recognize the group.

Lack of financial resources required to import essential foodstuffs such as rice, barley, wheat, and corn has resulted in food scarcity and high price rises in the country.

Human rights organizations have warned of a humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan, saying millions are facing starvation in the land-locked country.

Academics say European Parliament decision on IRGC is 'miscalculation'

TEHRAN- Prominent Iranian scholars have criticized the European Parliament's recent move to label the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as terrorist, asserting that the call is the result of "miscalculations" made by European nations.

University professors from across the country denounced the "despicable move" in a statement on Friday while simultaneously expressing support for the "Revolutionary and popular" IRGC.

The statement was made two days after the European Parliament approved an amendment to a yearly report on foreign policy that urged the EU and its member states to add the IRGC to their list of terrorist organizations.

"European leaders have accurately admitted their failure against the Iranian country and realized the power of the IRGC," the statement by the academics said.

"The IRGC is a legitimate and recognized armed force of the Islamic Republic of Iran," they stressed, noting, "Designating a country's army is against all international laws and standards and has no legitimate or operational function."



The academics also underscored that such a devilish designation would enable Iran to take retaliatory measures and view the militaries of hostile states as terrorists.

They said that the IRGC is the only well-liked military force in the world that has obtained a sizable amount of its strength from well-liked Basij forces.

Pointing to the struggle of the IRGC against terrorists, particularly Daesh (ISIS), the statement said, "The IRGC has performed the most significant role in battling domestic, regional, and global terrorists."

Iran has been saying that if it was not for the braveries and sacrifices of the IRGC,

Daesh would have turned Europe into a scene of battlefield.

"European governments should be appreciative to the bravery of the force," the statement said.

The academicians urged European politicians not to "beat the drum of war" and put a stop to their animosity against the Iranian people.

On Thursday, the European Parliament approved a resolution asking for more sanctions against Iranian people and organizations as well as adding the IRGC to the EU's list of terrorist organizations due to alleged abuses of human rights during

"European governments should be appreciative to the bravery of the IRGC."

recent riots.

The move has received condemnation and opprobrium from Iranian government and legislative officials, armed forces, and top military commanders.

Parliament speaker visits IRGC headquarters, warns against EU blacklisting

From Page 1 ▶ The move, though unbinding, elicited huge criticism from Iran. Officials, lawmakers, senior clerics, military officials, media personalities all fiercely reacted to the possibility of the EU designating the IRGC. All of them have said that Iran will strongly react to the move. Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said Friday that Iran will “certainly” deal with the Europeans “in a different way.”

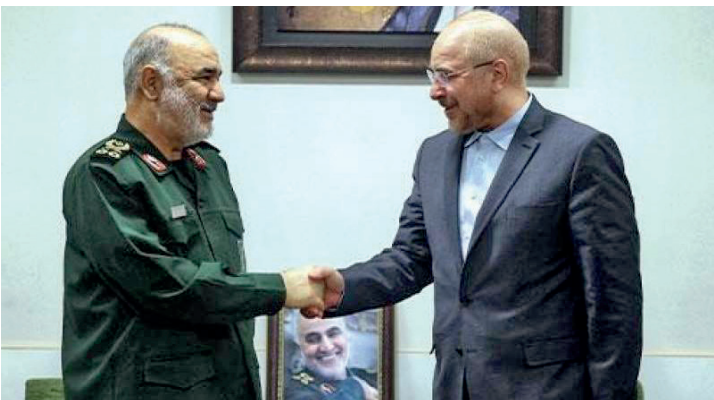
In the meeting with General Salami, Qalibaf said the parliament is ready to decisively respond to the EU in case the IRGC was blacklisted.

“The European Parliament should know that the proposal it presented cannot change the facts. ISIS was supported and equipped by the arrogant Western Front, and the one who fought terrorism and ended the presence of ISIS in the region is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. This is a truth that Europe cannot turn upside down, because all international organizations and honest people acknowledge it,” the speaker said, according to Iran’s official news agency IRNA.

He added, “On the other hand, the Europeans support terrorism today. The European Parliament today supports the group of Hypocrites who tortured and assassinated more than 17,000 dear people of Iran, from women and children to the old and young. If this action of Europe takes place, they will definitely be considered among the same terrorists and our behavior with them in the region will be the same.”

Qalibaf stated, “They should know that we are at a level of deterrence that neither potential threats nor actual threats are any threat to us. As they know, we are accountable to them, and if they do something, they will be hit hard.”

He continued, “Today, the European Council must decide whether to close the window of rationality and move towards the defense of terrorism or to make another decision. We in the Islamic Council are ready to deal firmly with any action that tries to harm



the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and distort the truth.”

After the meeting, General Salami advised the Europeans to refrain from repeating their mistakes.

“If it wasn’t for the efforts of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, especially the Quds Force and the leadership of Martyr Soleimani, the terrorist volcano created by the Americans would have engulfed the Europeans and the security that prevails in Europe today would have disappeared,” General Salami said, according to IRNA.

He added, “As Trump said, Obama was the creator of terrorism and created this phenomenon for the first time in Islamic lands. But this fire was on the edges of Europe. If it was not contained, it would cover all the geographical levels of Europe. But the habit of Europeans and Americans is that they always change the place of the executioner and the martyr, the oppressor and the oppressed.”

General Salami noted, “Europe was twice involved in a world war and today a new Europe has been formed on the ruins of the same past wars. Europe has not learned from its past mistakes and thinks that with such statements it can shake this huge army that is full of the power of faith, trust, power and will.”

He continued, “We are never worried about such threats or even acting on them, because as much as our enemies give us a chance to act, we act stronger. The IRGC is basically strong in action, those who make it possible for the IRGC to move, have worked

for the benefit of the IRGC. But we advise the Europeans not to repeat their past mistakes.”

General Salami pointed out that if the Europeans make a mistake, they must accept the consequences of their mistake.

Hamid Reza Moghaddam-Far, an advisor to the chief commander of the IRGC, has said that EU move puts European military forces under slap of the IRGC.

He said the resolution, if acted on by the European Council, will have “numerous implications and consequences” for the Europeans.

“Friends and foes alike agree that the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps is the world’s largest and most effective fighter against terrorist organizations and groups. In fact, the IRGC has dismantled every notorious terrorist organization created by the US and supported by Europe against different nations, ethnicities, religions and beliefs,” Moghaddam-Far wrote in an article published by Tasnim. “Dealing with Daesh terrorist group was the most recent and most visible example of the IRGC’s fight against terrorism; the Daesh that was created by the US and supported by Europe, was devouring the entire West Asia, and no Muslim, Christian, or Jewish followers were safe from this group’s evil acts, murder, crime, and horror. Neither the Arabs, nor the Persians, nor the Kurds, nor any other ethnic group was secure from their threats; however, the IRGC has confronted it and significantly reduced its devilish existence.”

He added, “Given enormous threat posed by Daesh and given

the fact that the entire world is now aware of it, many nations recognize that it was the IRGC and Haj Qassem Soleimani (the late commander of the IRGC’s Quds Force) who stood up to these terrorists. Now, if a society or parliament foolishly wants to label these anti-terrorism fighters as terrorists, what is actually happening would be demonstration of the real intention behind the use of a label by Europeans and Americans. The world will realize more than ever that these titles are only a tool in hands of some western politicians and they do not reflect a belief or truth. As a result, the labeling of the IRGC would demonstrate more than anything that the Europe and the US are against confronting terrorism rather than with the terrorism itself. Moreover, terrorism, in essence, is the result of the liberalism’s desire to exploit others.”

The advisor said, “Labeling the IRGC by Europeans changes nothing about the IRGC because, firstly, the IRGC has always been under pressure and the most severe sanctions from sponsors of terrorism, including the US and Europe. Secondly, the IRGC will continue to fight terrorism as it has in the past. The EU move would be yet another example of European stupidity, as they have labeled themselves as a “threat against fighting terrorism”. In other words, Europe will officially declares that its forces would be a direct threat to the IRGC; this would indicate a clear meaning in the military and strategic framework. It means that the IRGC will now consider the military forces of these European countries as a threat to nations and geography of the region, just like as Daesh and CENTCOM. Some European officials have stated that their parliament’s approach is emotional; however, I would like to emphasize that no emotion would be such stupid; this approach is pure stupidity. The Europeans want to put their military forces in the region under slap of the IRGC. Europeans can do this, but trying this one would not be harmless to them!”



Irani said, according to Fars News.

The top military official also said Iran has established command centers for the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

“We have formed three oceanic commands, including the Indian Ocean Command, the Pacific Ocean Command, and the Atlantic Ocean Command. Today we are present in the Indian and Atlantic oceans and soon we will be present in the Pacific Ocean. The equipment

that will join the Navy in the future is in line with the mission of these three commands,” Irani explained.

Dena is a Mowj-class warship that joined the Iranian Navy in June 2021. The military vessel is equipped with anti-ship cruise missiles, torpedoes and naval cannons, according to Tasnim.

The other vessel of the flotilla is Makran, a forward base ship weighing 121,000 tons.

The oil-tanker-turned-warship can carry five helicopters and is employed for providing logistical support for the combat warships.

The 86th flotilla is expected to break the record for the distance an Iranian flotilla has sailed in international waters. Last year, the 75th flotilla, including Sahand and Makran warships, set a new record of navigation for 250,000 kilometers after a trip to Saint Petersburg in Russia.



Parliament has “shot itself in the foot” while voting to call for the European Union and its member states to include the IRGC as a “terrorist organization.”

In a phone conversation with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, Amir Abdollahian sharply blasted the European Parliament’s “emotional, injudicious, inaccurate and unprofessional” conduct, which is at odds with political reason and decency.

SPORTS

Goalkeeper Tavasoli says CAFA tournament is ideal tune-up

From Page 1▶time the players are coming together,” she added.

The experienced Iran international goalie shared her view about the new coach of the national team.

“Ms Solyamani is one of the well-known and experienced women futsal coaches in Iran. She won the 2015 Asian Cup with the national team and is familiar with the condition of the international tournaments,”

“Most of the players who have been called to the national team by Ms Forouzan, are among the best of the super league. There is a good mixture of young talents and experienced star among them,” Tavasoli added.

Some experts have questioned the invitation of star players by the head coach of the women’s national team for the 2023 CAFA tournament, which is considered an easy tournament for the Iran national team.

Tavasoli defends the head coach’s decision, saying, “I agree that the CAFA tournament could be an opportunity for the younger players to experience playing at international tournament, but it could be the case in a normal condition. Don’t forget that there is more than one year that the national team have not participated in any tournaments and even there were no friendly matches for us. So, the current training camp and the 2023 CAFA can serve as a tune-up for the upcoming major competitions such as the Asian Cup.”

The 2023 CAFA Women’s Futsal Championship will be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from Jan. 25 to 31. Iran are the defending champions, having won the 2022 inaugural edition.

Iran futsal team are scheduled to face Kyrgyzstan on Jan. 27 in their opener.

Team Melli will also play Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on Jan. 28 and 30, respectively.

“Definitely Iran national team are expected to win the tournament again and the players and technical staff will do their best to win the trophy in Uzbekistan. However, we have a difficult task ahead because the host country has a very good team and will make a tough challenge for us,” the goalkeeper added.

The 2023 CAFA Women’s Futsal Championship will be the second edition of CAFA Women’s Futsal Championship, the annual international futsal championship organized by CAFA for the women’s national futsal teams of Central Asia. The tournament will be hosted in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Tractor, Gol Gohar share spoils: IPL

TEHRAN – Tractor and Gol Gohar football teams shared the spoils in a 2-2 draw in Matchday 16 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Saturday.

Kaveh Rezaei gave the host a lead just five minutes into the match but Amin Ghaseminejad leveled the score from the penalty spot in the 30th minute and Reza Shekari made the scoreboard 2-1 for Gol Gohar four minutes later.

Shortly after, Tractor put the visiting under pressure to equalize the match and Gol Gohar player Mehran Golzari scored an own goal.

Gol Gohar remained third with 29 points, six points behind leaders Persepolis.

Earlier in the day, Havadar were held to a 1-1 draw against Aluminum in Tehran.

Ezatollah Pourghaz found the back of Aluminum’s net from the penalty spot in the 24th minute and Mohammadrza Azadi equalized the match in the 62nd minute.

Iran to allow fans to attend league matches

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran Football Federation (IRIFF) president Mehdi Taj has said the football fans can attend the matches from the weekend.

The Iranian football fans are not allowed to attend the matches due to air pollution but Taj has said they can enter the stadiums this week.

“The supporters will be able to attend games and clubs must take necessary measures in this regard. We have a favorable opinion of the Iran’s Interior Ministry,” Taj said.

The Iranian fans have not been allowed to enter the stadiums over the past few years due to Covid-19 restrictions and air pollution except for a short period in between.

Now, they can watch their team’s matches from the stands, the IRIFF said.

Persepolis lead Iran Professional League (IPL), followed by Sepahan.

Sepahan forward Moghanlou on Sharjah’s radar

TEHRAN – Emirati football club Sharjah are reportedly going to sign Sepahan forward Shahriyar Moghanlou.

The Emirati side want to hire Moghanlou as a replacement for Senegalese forward Makhete Diop.

Ittihad Kalba, headed by Iranian coach Farhad Majidi, had previously shown interest to sign the 28-year-old striker in the January transfer window.

Sharjah are a star-studded team in the UAE Pro League, as the team sit top of the table.

Former Dortmund forward Pablo Alcacer and ex-Juventus midfielder Miralem Pjanic currently play for Sharjah.

Sepahan are a favorite to win the Iran league and it’s very unlikely that the transfer will happen.

France strong for Iran at IHF World Championship

TEHRAN – France started the third consecutive edition of the IHF Men’s World Championship with five wins in a row, beating Iran (41:29), as they are through to the quarter-finals at Poland/Sweden 2023.

After Spain’s win against Slovenia earlier, France secured their quarter-final berth, with the only question still in place being whether “Les Experts” would finish first or second in Group I of the main round at Poland/Sweden 2023.

The game against Iran was not of the utmost importance, as France could seal the first place with a win against Spain on Sunday, yet that did not mean that Guillaume Gille was primed to serve the game on a silver platter to the Asian side.

What Gille did, though, was to manage minutes for his players, leaving Nikola Karabatic out of the team entirely, for example, and creating opportunities for every player to feature on the court, readying them for the last part of the competition, the crunch clash against Spain and the others in the knockout phase.

As Iran are coached by Veselin Vujovic, renowned for his competitive spirit, the Asian side tried to take advantage of France’s setup, and for the first ten minutes, they managed to stay in the game, with both sides scoring seven times.

But that was just an illusion for Iran, who had nowhere near the depth and talent needed to confront France in a game at the IHF Men’s World Championship. First, the reigning Olympic champions used a 3:0 unanswered run, adding another 4:1 run a few minutes later.

With five wins in five games, France again looks like a top contender, sealing their 16th consecutive berth for the quarter-finals. On the other hand, Iran are still on the last place in the group and will face their last match in the competition on Sunday, when they face co-hosts Poland in Krakow.

Iranian warships to arrive at Brazilian port

TEHRAN – A flotilla of Iranian warships is expected to arrive at Brazil’s southeastern port city of Rio de Janeiro in the next few days.

The Iranian flotilla, comprised of Dena and Makran warships, set sail from south of Iran in early autumn with the purpose of circumnavigating the world, according to a Tasnim report.

The trip to Brazil appears to be part of a mission to the Panama Canal.

Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said nearly two weeks ago that Iran is planning to extend its area of operation to the Panama Canal that divides South and North America.

“So far, we have been present in all the strategic straits of the world and we have not been present in only two straits, in one of which we will be present this year and we are planning to be present in the Panama Canal,”

EU’s Borrell continues to work with Iran, U.S. on JCPOA: spokesman

TEHRAN – A senior spokesman for the European Union has said that Josep Borrell, the foreign policy chief of the bloc, continues to work with the partners to the talks in Vienna over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

In remarks to Iran’s official news agency IRNA, Peter Stano, the lead spokesperson for the external affairs of the European Union, underlined that the Vienna talks are separate from efforts to impose sanctions on Iran.

He was responding to a question on whether the imposition of sanctions on Iran by the EU amounted to a change in the EU’s approach toward the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of

Action (JCPOA).

“JCPOA is a separate process in which the High Representative of the European Union acts as a coordinator and coordinates between the participants,” he said, adding, “The JCPOA process is determined by the parties and participants, not by the coordinator who has the role of coordination and facilitation.”

He continued, “In this regard, the high representative continues to interact with each of the participants, including Iran and the United States.”

He also commented on media speculations over a possible listing of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in the Monday meeting of the European Council. “We never

comment on media speculations regarding confidential discussions between member states. Sanctions decisions are discussed confidentially and communicated only after approval,” he said.

Last week, Stano said the JCPOA talks are still ongoing, according to Fars News.

Talks over reviving the JCPOA have come to a standstill in recent months. They have been overshadowed by unrest in Iran since September.

Members of the European Union adopted on Thursday a resolution that called for designating the IRGC as a terrorist group.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian asserted on Thursday that the European

Export from Zanjan province increases 9%

TEHRAN- Export from Zanjan province rose nine percent in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2022), as compared to the same period of time in the previous year, a provincial official announced.

Ali Yeganeh-Fard, the head of the province's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, name raisins, lead, wire, cable, dairy products, dates, iron and copper wire, cardboard, rebar, concrete block, liner test paper, and transformer as the major products exported from the province.

Stating that Turkey and Iraq are the first and second export targets of Zanjan province, he continued: "We are trying to expand the export destination of Zanjan province to other countries."

As previously announced by Zeyn-ul-Abedin Ganj-Khanlou, the director-general of the province's customs department, the value of export from Zanjan province increased 33 percent in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22, 2022), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

He said that 136,000 tons of commodities worth over \$304 million were exported from the province in the six-month period, indicating



four percent drop in terms of weight.

He named zinc ingots, rebars, steel ingots, and transformers as the major exported items, and China, Iraq, Turkey, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the main export destinations.

The official further announced that 106,000 tons of goods valued at \$237 million were imported to the province in the first half of the present year, showing 46 percent and 13 percent growth in terms of value and weight, respectively.

He named wood pulp, paper, recycled cardboard, tobacco and its pulp as the main imported products and Turkey, Switzerland, the UAE and China as the major sources of imports in the six-month period.

More than 97,000 applicants registered in Ardebil National Housing Movement



TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 97,476 applicants have been registered in the National Housing Movement plan in Ardebil province, in the northwest of Iran.

Mahboub Heydari, the head of the province's Transport and Urban Development Department, said that of the mentioned figure, 33,885 applicants have been approved and 6,046 applicants have paid the initial amount.

Construction contracts have been arranged for 5,714 residential units in Ardebil province, and the number of units with partnership contracts with banks in the province is also 4,561 units, the official announced.

In early November 2022, a board member of the National Land and Housing Organization announced that about 57,000 hectares of land within the boundaries of the cities has been provided for the National Housing Movement plan.

Arsalan Maleki also said that the private sector owners in provinces with land shortages can participate in the National Housing Movement to provide land.

National Housing Movement to construct four million housing units in four years is one

of the major plans of the current government in the housing sector.

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

In early November, Hadi Abbasi-Asl, the deputy minister of transport and urban development, announced that currently, at least one million units of the National Housing Movement are under construction with average progress of about 30 percent.

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

The operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of the National Housing Movement began in early February 2022.

The ceremony to begin the mentioned operation and also to launch some development projects in the housing sector was attended by the former Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi.

Also, in late July, Qasemi inaugurated a project for the construction of the first group of affordable housing units for laborers under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

And on November 5, the deputy head of the Housing Foundation of Islamic Revolution announced that 195,000 units of the National Housing Movement are under construction in the rural areas, and stressed that the figure will reach 240,000 units by the eleventh Iranian calendar month Bahman (January 21, 2023).

rials (about \$394.7 million) to the country's Capital Market Stabilization and Development Fund (CMSDF) in the budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1402 (begins on March 21) to support small shareholders, Tasnim news agency reported on January 1.

As reported, the government has decided to supply the mentioned fund from the shares of state-owned companies to protect small shareholders against the risks of the capital market.

Also, in order to strengthen the companies active in the market, a part of their profit which is allocated to increasing their capital is going to be exempted from tax; this will encourage such companies to increase capital and expand their activities.

Regular container shipping line active from Iran's Chabahar to Indian ports

from page 1 ► Kabousi further said the shipping company is ready to launch a direct line from Oman to Chabahar port.

Back in May 2022, Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) announced that three direct container shipping lines were launched from Chabahar Port to Nhava Sheva and Kandla ports in India as well as Jebel Ali Port in United Arab Emirate.

Iran and India had previously launched shipping lines between Chabahar and the Indian ports of Mumbai, and Mundra.

The first shipping route between the two countries was put into operation in 2017 between Iran's Chabahar port and Mumbai.

In January 2019, Iran and India inaugurated the second direct



shipping route which passes through Mumbai, Mundra, Kandla, Chabahar, and finally Bandar Abbas in southern Iran.

India is using the mentioned shipping routes to transit goods to Afghanistan and Persian Gulf nations as well as the countries in

Central Asia.

Through Chabahar port India can bypass Pakistan and transport goods to Afghanistan and Central Asia, while Afghanistan can get linked to India via sea.

Iran has awarded India the project for installing and operating modern loading and unloading equipment including mobile harbor cranes in Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar.

The strategic Chabahar port in southeastern Iran is the only ocean port on the Makran coast and it has a special place in the country's economic affairs.

Back in September 2021, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called on Central Asian countries to benefit from Chabahar Port capacities for expanding their trade in the region.

Iran-China annual trade rises 7%

TEHRAN – The value of trade between Iran and China increased by seven percent in 2022 compared to the previous year, according to the data released by China's customs administration.

Based on China's customs data, the Islamic Republic and China traded \$15.795 billion worth of commodities in 2022, \$1.035 billion more than the figure for 2021, IRNA reported.

As reported, China's exports to Iran grew by 14 percent in the period under review compared to the preceding year to reach \$9.44 billion. The Asian country exported \$8.258 billion worth of goods to Iran in 2021.

The value of Iran's non-oil exports to China, however, registered a two-percent decrease in 2022, reaching \$6.355 billion. Iran exported \$6.502 billion worth of goods to China in 2021.

Iran's share of China's total global trade last year was only 0.25 percent. China's trade with the world reached \$6.308 trillion in 2022, of which \$3.593 trillion was the share of the country's exports and



\$2.715 trillion was related to imports. China's global trade grew by 4.4 percent last year.

Iran-China non-oil trade stood at \$14.8 billion in 2021, according to China's customs administration.

The value of trade between the two countries during 2021 declined by less than one percent in comparison to 2020 in which the figure was reported to be \$14.9 billion.

China is one of Iran's main trade partners that

has maintained strong trade ties with the Islamic Republic despite the strict U.S. sanctions.

Iran and China officially signed the document for 25-year comprehensive cooperation in March 2021.

The document was signed between Iran's former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Back in December 2022, Iran and China finalized 16 memorandums of understanding (MOU) under the framework of the two countries' strategic 25-year agreement.

The MOUs were signed in an Iran-China comprehensive cooperation program summit which was held in Tehran on December 13 in the presence of Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber and China's Vice Premier Hu Chunhua.

The summit was focused on four areas explored by four committees between the two countries with the aim of paving the way for the implementation of the 25-year agreement.

‘Iran has a special position in horticulture’

TEHRAN- Iran has a special position in the field of horticulture, according to the country's deputy agriculture minister for the horticulture affairs.

Mohammad-Mehdi Boroumandi also announced that the country's horticultural production has been more than 25.8 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21, 2022).

"This year, we have exported \$6.2 billion of agricultural products, of which \$3 billion were allocated to horticultural products", he added.



The official mentioned the renovation of gardens as one of the important programs of the ministry and said: "The capacity of agricultural production in the country is more

than this and should be increased."

Referring to the important role of farmers and gardeners in maintaining food security, he pointed out that apart from four tropical fruits including bananas, coconuts, mangoes and pineapples, the country is completely self-sufficient in providing other agricultural products.

Supporting producers is one of the duties of officials, and the Ministry of Agriculture is a pioneer in this regard, the deputy minister further highlighted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Boroumandi said the Agriculture Ministry is trying to manage production by identifying new export target markets.

"Production, which is more than consumption, can be included in the country's trade basket. In this regard, the Ministry of Agriculture is trying to experience an increase in production per surface unit by implementing regular programs", the official added.

TV manufacturing up 61% in 9 months on year

TEHRAN- Manufacturing of TV sets in Iran has risen 61 percent in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2022), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to the data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The ministry's data indicate that 1.43 million TV sets have been manufactured in the nine-month period of this year, while the figure was 886,000 in the same time span of the previous year.

Based on the data previously released by the ministry, 1,305,400 TV sets were manufactured in

the country during the past Iranian calendar year 1400, showing 3.6 percent growth year on year.

Manufacturing of home appliances in Iran rose 7.56 percent during the previous year from its preceding year.

According to the industry ministry's data, over 6,273,600 sets of large home appliances, including TV sets, refrigerators and freezers, washing machines, and air coolers were manufactured in 1400, while the figure was 5,832,400 in 1399.

Among the mentioned products, just air cooler

experienced a production drop, and production of the other items increased.

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

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

Over 20m tons of crude steel produced in Iran in 9 months

TEHRAN- Production of crude steel in Iran stood at 20.845 million tons in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2022), according to the data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The ministry's data indicate that the nine-month crude steel output has fallen two percent as compared to the production in the same period of time in the past year.

After the withdrawal of the United States from Iran's nuclear deal, the Islamic Republic has faced sanctions in various industries, including steel sector.

The United States has sanctioned entities and individuals associated with Iran's steel industry.

In January 2021, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) added twelve Iranian producers of steel and other metal products to the list of sanctions.

However, at that time, the U.S. experts said that the Islamic Republic of Iran had resisted the so-called U.S. maximum pressure policy for the past three years, and the Trump administration had failed to achieve any of its goals in the face of sanctions against Iran.

Also, those active in Iran's steel sector believed that sanctions against Iran which were in place for 40 years had nothing to do with the Iranian industry.

The latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA) shows

that Iran's crude steel output has increased 8.5 percent in the first 11 months of 2022, while the world steel output has fallen 3.7 percent in the said period.

Production of crude steel in Iran reached 27.9 million tons during the mentioned 11 months, as compared to 25.7 million tons in the first 11 months of 2021.

The WSA put the crude steel output by the world's top 64 producers at about 1.691 billion tons in the mentioned time span.

During the first 11 months of the current year, all of the world's top 10 steel producers except for Iran and India experienced a decline in their steel output, according to the WSA report.

Iran's monthly crude steel output stood at 2.9 million tons in November, registering a 3.9 percent rise compared to the figure for the same month in 2021.

The Islamic Republic of Iran maintained its place as the world's 10th biggest steel producer in the period under review.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

TEDPIX drops 31,500 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 31,566 points to 1.657 million on Saturday (the first day of Iranian calendar week).

As reported, over 14.683 billion securities worth 84.16 trillion rials (about \$210.4 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dropped 28,570 points, and the second market's index lost 46,812 points

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. 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).

Iranian government has allocated 150 trillion

In every community the police are considered to be the symbol of peace and security. There are few societies in which citizens are afraid of seeing the police, and this is rooted in the name of the police, which comes from the Greek word (polis) , which means city and civility.

A police officer is actually a law enforcement officer, but in the modern world, especially in recent years, some policemen's behavior towards citizens has been very harsh in violation of basic human rights.

Hidden violence by police forces in Western countries is far more than developing countries, including those in West Asia and even Africa. This may be related to the complexity of the nature of crime and the definition of criminal behavior as well as the police's view of these countries to humans as useful creature for industrial society.

One of the countries in which police commit lots of violence is Britain. In recent years there has been many news about it.

The name of the British police today is associated with violence, rape, and abuse. With a simple search on the internet, you can find the most harrowing stories of British police that look more like crime books.

Met collection of violence

Some instances of police violence are organized and some others are a result of the spirit of violence among the Metropolitan Police forces.

Today in England, a Metropolitan Police officer, even if he is off-duty, allows himself to handcuff a young girl for not complying with the restrictions of Corona, put her in his car, rape her and kill her!

That girl was none other than Sarah Everard who was killed in March 2021 and the police officer was none other than Wayne Couzens.

Another case in this regard is the case of David Carrick. He is a serving officer in London's Metropolitan Police who has admitted to 49 offenses, including 24 counts of rape over an 18-year period.

David Carrick appeared at Southwark Crown Court in the British capital on Jan 16, 2022 to plead guilty to four counts of rape, false imprisonment, and indecent assault relating to a 40-year-old woman in 2003, the UK's PA Media news agency reported.

According to CNN, on January 16, 2023, at the Old Bailey criminal court in London last month, Carrick admitted to 43 charges against 11 other women, including 20 counts of rape, between March 2004 and September 2020, according to PA.



Met Police: uniformed criminals

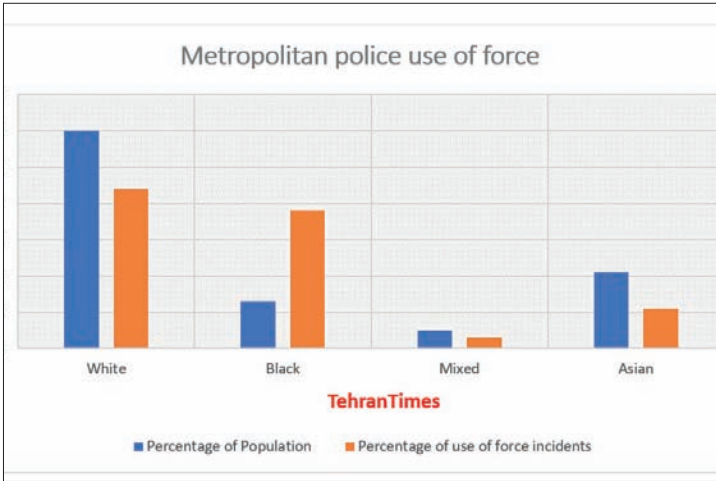
A series of recent scandals has shed light on what the UK police watchdog called a culture of misogyny and racism in London's police service.

The Metropolitan Police Service Commissioner Cressida Dick resigned from her post in 2022, after a damning review by the Independent Office for Police Conduct issued 15 recommendations "to change policing practice" in the country.

London's Metropolitan Police are now investigating as many as 1,000 sex offenses and domestic abuse claims involving approximately 800 of its officers, the force's Commissioner Mark Rowley admitted Monday.

"That's 1,000 cases to look at. Some of those will be things of no concern in the end when we look at them because it will be an argument overheard by neighbors where inquiries show there's nothing to be concerned about," Rowley said in an interview with UK media.

An institution 'in crisis'



Women's rights organizations called for an inquiry into the Met following Carrick's case.

UK domestic abuse charity Refuge called Carrick's crimes "utterly abhorrent."

"When a man who has been charged with 49 offenses, including 24 charges of rape, is a serving police officer, how can women and girls possibly be – or feel – safe," Refuge tweeted Monday.

"This is an institution in crisis. That Carrick's pattern of egregious behavior was known to the Met and they failed to act speaks more loudly than their empty promises to women," UK organization End Violence Against Women tweeted.

"Solidarity with the victims & all who are feeling the weight of the traumatic details being reported," it added.

The British Women's Equality Party tweeted: "The Met knew about the allegations for TWENTY years. They did nothing as a serial rapist abused his power. They are complicit. Misogyny will never be

stripped from the police without a nationwide, statutory inquiry."

The Fawcett Society, which campaigns for gender equality and women's rights, said on Twitter: "Any act of sexual violence is a disgrace. But it is particularly harmful when, yet again, these crimes have been perpetrated by a person who has additional responsibilities to keep the public safe."

killing Blacks and Asians

Along with women, the groups that have suffered the most from the British police are the Black people and those with Asian origin.

1,833 people have died in police custody or following police contact in the UK since 1990, British media reported on Sep. 27, 2022.

The killing of Chris Kaba has led to renewed calls for justice as Black people continue to be disproportionately targeted by police violence.

Father-to-be Chris Kaba, 24, was unarmed when he was shot through a car windscreen in Streatham Hill on 5 September 2022 by a Met Police officer.

Metropolitan Police officers are four times more likely to use force against Black people compared with the white population, new figures suggest.

The Met used force 62,000 times in 2017-18 with more than a third of incidents involving Black people.

Techniques such as verbal instructions and using firearms were recorded.

The Met Police said: "The proportionate use of force is essential in some circumstances to protect the public and often themselves from violence."

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott said the "disproportionate use of force is discriminatory".

Police forces in Britain have been required to keep a detailed record of each time an officer used force since April 1, 2017.

According to the data, a Black person in London is four times more likely than a white person to have force used against them by a Met Police officer, as a proportion of the population.

London's Black population at the last census was 1,088,447. In 2017-18 the Met used force 22,989 times against Black people.

Based on population figures, the use of force was equivalent to once for every 50 black people in Greater London and once for every 200 of the white population.

This is higher than in other police forces covering large urban areas such as Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

WORLD HEADLINES

No Leopard tanks for Ukraine as NATO allies fail to agree

The United States and its allies failed to agree on supplying coveted German battle tanks to Ukraine as Russia issued veiled threats the war could escalate in Europe.

NATO and defense leaders from about 50 countries met at the American Ramstein Air Base in Germany on Friday, the latest in a series of arms-pledging conferences since Russia invaded Ukraine 11 months ago.

European leaders at the meeting again pressed Germany to give the green light for the delivery of German-made Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine to drive back Moscow's forces – although no decision was made.

The failure to agree to provide the tanks may signal growing divisions within NATO over supplying such weapons.

Germany's defense minister Boris Pistorius denied Berlin was unilaterally blocking the delivery of the Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine but said his government was ready to move quickly on the issue if there were consensus among allies.

"There are good reasons for the deliveries and there are good reasons against, and in view of the entire situation of a war that has been ongoing for almost one year, all pros and cons must be weighed very carefully," he said, without elaborating on the reasons.

Pressure has been building on Berlin to provide tanks to Kyiv that Ukraine sees as key in the war against Russia.

Turkey cancels visit by Swedish minister as planned protests stoke tension

Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar said on Saturday that a planned visit next week by his Swedish counterpart to Ankara has been cancelled after Swedish authorities granted permission for protests in Stockholm.

The demonstrations planned in Stockholm for later on Saturday were aimed at Turkey and Sweden's efforts to join NATO, stoking tensions with Ankara whose approval is needed for the Nordic country to join the military alliance.

Organizers said around 500-600 people were expected to gather to protest against Sweden's NATO bid and show support for Kurds in a demonstration that has received a permit from the Stockholm Police.

Separately, an anti-immigration politician from the far-right fringe, Rasmus Paludan, planned to burn a copy of the Muslim holy book Quran near the Turkish embassy. A group of pro-Turkish demonstrators had also received a permit to gather outside the embassy.

"At this point, the visit of Swedish Defense Minister Pal Jonson to Turkey on January 27 has become meaningless. So, we canceled the visit," Akar said.

Jonson had planned to travel to Ankara at the

invitation of his Turkish counterpart as Stockholm hopes to nudge Turkey to ratify its bid to join NATO.

Jonson said separately he and Akar had met on Friday during a meeting of Western allies in Germany and had decided to postpone the planned meeting.

"Our relations with Türkiye are very important to Sweden, and we look forward to continuing the dialogue on common security and defence issues at a later date," he said on Twitter.

Palestinian man shot dead in occupied West Bank

A Palestinian man has been shot dead in the occupied West Bank in the latest incident of violence as it surges in the territory where the number of those killed by the Israeli army this month has risen to 18, including four children.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health said on Saturday that 42-year-old Tariq Maali was shot in the city of Ramallah, adding he was killed "after the occupation [Israeli forces] opened fire on him" near the Palestinian village of Kafr Nama.

The Israeli army released security camera footage that showed an individual running through the entrance gate of the Jewish Sde Efraim farm and being shot by an Israeli as he tries to advance further.

It added that the man "was neutralised" after attempting to stab an Israeli settler.

The killing follows intensified near-daily Israeli army raids that have persisted for close to a year under the banner of crushing limited Palestinian armed resistance.

On Thursday, Jawad Fareed Bawaqneh, a 57-year-old father of six and teacher at a local school, was killed in the Jenin refugee camp, local journalists told Al Jazeera. Adham Jabareen, a 28-year-old fighter with the Jenin Brigades armed resistance group, was also shot dead.

The inauguration in December of the most right-wing government in Israel's history, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, has sparked fears of a military escalation in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War.

The majority of the 18 Palestinians killed this year were shot dead by Israeli forces.

US sanctions on Chinese solar panels cripple its own green agenda and harm Americans

According to a recent South China Morning Post report citing the China Silicon Industry Association, last month, major Chinese solar panel makers Longi Green, TCL Zhonghuan, and Tongwei sliced their prices by as much as 27% on the back of cuts in raw material costs.

This is set to benefit the world and mainly Europe, as the continent diversifies its energy portfolio amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and attendant disruptions of the gas supply from Russia.



Thousands of people protested in Madrid Saturday against Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's leftist government in a rally held in a key election year that was backed by far-right party Vox.

OGPU: Ukrainian probe has not yet determined kamikaze drones originated from Iran

From page 1 ► what kind of components they are, their origin. According to the examinations, the origin of these drones and the manufacturer of the components will be established," the prosecutor said.

"How did this drone appear in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, why is it called 'Geran' and 'Geran-2', why is it so similar

to the 'Shahed-131', 'Shahed-136' and 'Mohajer-6'?"

"(In general), where are these drones being built, what are the delivery routes, who supplied them? The date and place of manufacture, what contracts were concluded, who concluded them – this is also very important during the judicial investigation, in the

course of establishing all the schemes," Ivan Chizhevsky emphasized.

The prosecutor added that Ukrainian experts and law enforcement officers are assisted by international partners. The Ukrainian investigation has not applied to Iran yet.

A Palestinian forced to demolish his house

From page 1 ► They said Mohammad Hussein Qanbar hired a bulldozer to demolish his 120-square-meter house in Ras al-Amoud neighborhood of East Jerusalem after he received a demolition order from the Israeli municipality under the pretext of

construction without a permit. Seven people lived in the house, they said, who have become homeless.

Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem say they are forced to build without a permit to accom-

modate their growing families because getting one is almost impossible from a racist Israeli municipality that discriminates between Jewish and Palestinian residents and supports a demographic balance in favor of Jews.

When getting a demolition order, Palestinians prefer to tear down their homes on their own because otherwise, the Israeli municipality will force them to pay extremely high costs and fines if its staff carries out the demolition.

US, China must understand each other "more fully": Kissinger

The United States and China must understand each other "more fully" and cultivate a relationship more compatible with peace and progress in the world, former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has said.

That leaders from both countries met recently in Bali and stated an intention to reverse the worrisome trend in the bilateral ties is a good sign, said Kissinger in his video remarks to the annual New Year gala of the China General Chamber of Commerce -- USA (CGCC-USA) held in New York on Wednesday evening.

The seasoned diplomat said he welcomes

"the decisions that have been made to foster dialogue in so many fields," adding, "China has made a number of practical steps in that direction."

"Each nation needs to understand the other more fully," said the 99-year-old veteran diplomat and strategist, who served under two U.S. presidents, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

"While working together, we can achieve great things, not just for our countries, but also for humanity," said Kissinger.

He noted that "China and the United States have different perceptions of culture and of

how to conduct themselves," and this "needs to be understood by both sides."

Kissinger also underscored the importance of using "intellectual, political, and historic visions" to achieve the desired relationship, adding he has "every hope and expectation that this process will lead to the results that the people all over the world expect."

Kissinger was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the CGCC-USA at Wednesday's event to recognize his achievements as a trailblazer and lifelong contributor to U.S.-China relations.

Sarein, home to numerous hot spas, prepares to launch tourist town



TEHRAN – The mountainous city of Sarein, which is home to numerous hot springs and spas, is getting prepared to launch a tourist town.

“We are planning to establish a vast tourist town in Sarein through a close partnership with the private investors,” the mayor of the northwestern Iranian city said on Thursday.

The tourist town will be embracing a hotel and amusement park and sports complex, and entertainment venues, among other amenities, Saheb-Ali Ram noted.

The tourist town is expected to play an essential role in the economic and tourism prosperity of Sarein, he added.

Sarein has areas that annually draw thousands of people from various parts of the country due to its lovely and lush environment.

Hot springs and geothermal waters can be found in the historic town, which is located in the province of Ardabil. These features are frequently located in picturesque settings that suit all types of travelers.

The town's hot springs, all of which have mineral origins, are its main draw, and it appears that they will continue to be this city's top tourist destinations forever.

Although the precise number of hot springs in this city is unknown, there certainly are more than ten of them in the area, making it one of the attractions with the fastest expansion rates in the world right now.

Geographically speaking, Sarein is situated west of Ardabil and is 1650 meters above sea level.

Recreational pier to be built in Bandar-e Anzali

TEHRAN – A recreational pier is planned to be constructed in the northern port city of Bandar-e Anzali, Gilan province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The construction of such piers could result in tourism prosperity and sustainable employment for the region, Vali Jahani explained on Saturday.

As one of the top travel destinations in Gilan, Bandar-e Anzali attracts many domestic and foreign tourists, which has made private and public sector investors welcome tourism projects there, the official added.

For centuries, Anzali has served as a gateway to Europe, connecting the economies of the East and West. Not surprisingly, the customs authority of Anzali is at least 300 years old.

Fishing is one of the leading occupations in Anzali, which is the main producer of caviar in the country. Rice cultivation and farming are the other traditional professions of the Anzali inhabitants.

Some historical attractions of the city include Pahlavi-era Mian Poshteh Palace which is now a military museum, Qajar-era (1785-1925) St. Mary Church, Anzali Clock Tower, which was originally a lighthouse, and the five-deck Mirza Kouchak Khan Cruise Ship.



Anzali Lagoon and Sorkhangel Wildlife Refuge are among the city's top natural attractions. Anzali Lagoon divides the city into two parts and is home to various indigenous and migrant birds and fish, and also draws many tourists because of its lotus flowers and water lilies.

Anzali wetland, neighboring the Caspian Sea, has long been a haven for nature lovers and birdwatchers. Covering some 20,000 hectares, the lagoon bears international importance as being a refuge for divers wintering water and shorebirds. It is also home to all-embracing reed beds, and submerged and floating vegetation. However, the wetland, like many other of its counterparts, is suffering from environmental pollution.

Meeting discusses Jameh mosque of Meybod



TEHRAN – On Friday, Tehran hosted a conference on the centuries-old Friday mosque of Meybod, which is named after the oasis city in central Iran.

Organized by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism, the meeting explored the development of the mosque over time and its relationship with the Meybod's history, CHTN reported on Saturday.

An archaeological survey conducted in the early 2000s revealed that the mudbrick mosque dates back to the first and the second centuries AH, the report said.

Moreover, the survey showed the mosque

was mostly thriving during the seventh and ninth centuries AH.

The terms “Jameh Mosque”, “Masjed-e Jameh” and “Friday Mosque” are used in Iran for a grand communal mosque where mandatory Friday prayers are/ were performed: the phrase is used in other Muslim countries but only in Iran it designate this purpose.

According to UNESCO, Meybod is a remarkable example of the viability and transmission of human beings' collective thoughts from different generations to the present one. “What is significant in the city of Meybod is the regularity in city planning. The anatomy and spatial structure of the city show original plans which conform with the old Iranian city planning.”

Yazd is usually 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.

Discover early example of Islamic architecture in southern Iran

From Page 1 ► They contained a courtyard with a well in the middle, three arcades running parallel to the qibla wall that made up the prayer hall, and one arcade enclosing the other three sides. At the center of the qibla wall, the mihrab was simply shaped like a rectangular niche.

A staircase led to the entrance to the northeastern wall's center, which faced Mecca. To the entrance's left was a minaret.

Three bays to the southwest served as the prayer hall's interior. Early in the ninth century, during the first phase of construction, the mihrab was just a small niche in the qibla wall.

Around the end of the first quarter of the ninth century, a second construction phase began. A bay was added to the sanctuary area at this time. The mosque's qibla wall was torn down, and the wall was rebuilt. The mihrab had a rectangular niche at its center



and a corresponding rectangular projection on the outside.

Another arcade was constructed around the courtyard's edge during this stage of the project. With this addition, the courtyard's thickness was reduced by one bay on all sides except the entrance

side, and the sanctuary was now five bays deep. The courtyard's two perpendicular sides now had double arcades.

A cistern was eventually built on the eastern corner of the courtyard following this second construction phase, and

restrooms were added to the side of the exterior east corner. The sanctuary was also expanded during this third construction phase.

Six short bays were added to the east, tying the new wall to the spot where the old wall was, and the four wall-to-wall existing bays parallel to the qibla wall were extended 11 meters to the southeast.

In the twelfth century, a small amount of restoration work was done in the mosque. It's also interesting to note that the numerous smaller mosques located at the location all have rectangular projections on the outside of their qibla walls, suggesting that their mihrabs were articulated similarly to the one at the larger Friday Mosque.

Siraf had a population of about 300,000 during the early Islamic era, and this fact shows that it was a prosperous town.

Hand-made knives, most popular souvenir of Zanjan

TEHRAN – Knives made by hand are one of the most famous souvenirs of the northwestern city of Zanjan.

Zanjan knives are considered one of the most authentic handicrafts of the region. Their reputation and fame extend far beyond the borders, with talented artisans working in this field.

During the Achaemenid period (c. 550–330 BC), Zanjan was a weapon-making hub. There are a number of factors contributing to the knife industry in Zanjan, including its geographic location, its role in various historical wars (both before and after the Islamic era), its proximity to adjacent provinces, its location at the center of Eastern and Western civilizations, and its proximity to the central plateau.

In addition to the availability of raw materials, Zanjan's rich mines of iron and copper also contributed to its prominence as a knife-making center.

However, there is little about the history of this field of handicrafts, but according to the historical documents as well as travelogues, it can be concluded that from the 17th century, Zanjan was a city where knives, swords, and

daggers were produced immensely and a lot of knives making workshops were installed.

Due to their design, cut, diversity, and durability, Zanjan knives have been the most successful among the handmade products in other cities.

The most important material for handmade knives is iron. The handle is made from materials such as elk horns, seashells, wood, fiber, or ivory. The knife makers usually carve their names into the blade. Gems, jewelry, filigree, pieces of seashells, and ivory are some of the ornate they add to their creations.

The most important tools used by the cutlers are hammers, sledgehammers, scissors, and kilns. To make a knife, first, the master heats the iron in the kiln. After it reaches the proper degree, it is forged into knife, sword, and dagger blades by the impact of the hammer. Then he skillfully creates the handle using materials like horns or ivory and attaches it to the blade. Finally, the blade is ground and chrome plated.

The knife makers of Zanjan usually carve their names into the blade. Gems, jewelry, filigree, pieces of seashells, and ivory are some



of the ornaments they add to their products. From small decorative knives that are used as key chains to large swords, a wide range of products are made in the workshops.

The handle provides a chance for the artistry of their makers, who try to add to their beauty and uniqueness as much as possible. Characteristics such as spring-assisted-like opening, high sharpness of the blade and very good grip are some of the traits of Zanjan knives.

However, nowadays the art of making handmade knives, which once flourished in Zanjan, is being fallen into oblivion.

Hamedan to stage major winter festival

TEHRAN – The ancient city of Hamedan is organizing a huge winter festival, scheduled to be held from February 13 to March 8.

“It would be the 13th edition of a winter festival to be held in Hamedan,” Ali Khaksar, Hamedan's deputy tourism chief, said on Saturday.

“We intend to hold a different event full of social joy and cheerfulness,” the official said.

There will be both snow-related and non-snow-related programs, as well as craft, souvenir, and culinary exhibitions, a pumpkin festival, health and beauty

activities, a coffee and chocolate exhibition, and a snowman-making competition, he explained.

Visitors will be offered discounts on souvenirs and handicrafts, tourism facilities, as well as accommodation, entertainment, and catering centers, he said.

Winter games, making snow sculptures, storytelling sessions, ski trips, puppet shows, and gastronomy events are other programs planned for the festival.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest



cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations, and there's a scattering of historical curiosities.

Sprawling on a high plain, Hamedan is graciously cool in

August but snow prone and freezing from December to March. In summer the air is often hazy, but on a rare, clear spring day there are impressive glimpses of snow-capped Alvand Kuh (3580m), sitting aloof above the ragged neocolonial cupolas of Imam Khomeini Sq.

It never falls short of offering cultural heritage sites to its visitors. Scenic natural landscapes, traditional restaurants, public gardens, colorful outdoor markets, and more importantly, its hospitable people make for an unexpected slice of the city.

Sassanid petroglyph of horseman discovered in Marvdasht

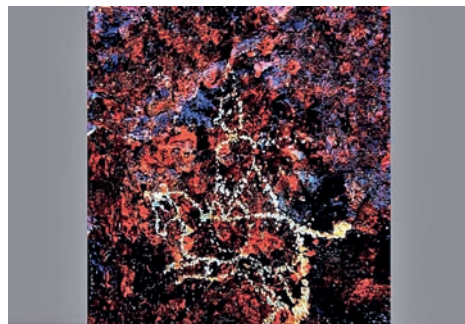
TEHRAN – Archaeologists have recently found an ancient rock drawing of a Sassanid-era (224–651) horseman in Marvdasht, southern Fars province, ILNA reported on Saturday.

In the northern rocks of the ancient city of Istakhr and four meters above the ground, the scratch engraving depicts a Sassanid rider with a wavy ribbon and a horse with four hooves, said Iranian archaeologist Abolhassan Atabaki.

Since there are very few petroglyphs left from the late Sassanid period, the discovery of this petroglyph is very significant and has study value despite its simplicity, he added.

Considering the technical aspects, this petroglyph exhibits Sassanid engraving characteristics, such as natural mobility, freedom of movement, and balanced composition, he mentioned.

In many ways, Iran under Sassanian rule witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance during Sassanid rule. In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was



encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

Of all the material remains of the era, only coins constitute a continuous chronological sequence throughout the whole period of the dynasty. Such Sassanian coins have the name of the king for whom they were struck inscribed in Pahlavi, which permits scholars to date them quite closely.

The legendary wealth of the Sassanian court is fully confirmed by the existence of more than one hundred examples of bowls or plates of precious metal known at present. One of the

finest examples is the silver plate with partial gilding in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The dynasty was destroyed by Arab invaders during a span from 637 to 651.

The ancient region, known as Pars (Fars), or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenid Empire founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC. Alexander the Great defeated the Achaemenian army at Arbela in 331 and burned Persepolis apparently as revenge against the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

Persis became part of the Seleucid kingdom in 312 after Alexander's death. The Parthian empire (247 BC– 224 CE) of the Arsacids (corresponding roughly to the modern Khorasan in Iran) replaced the Seleucids' rule in Persis during 170–138 BC. The Sasanid Empire (224 CE–651) had its capital at Istakhr. Not until the 18th century, under the Zand dynasty (1750–79) of southern Iran, did Fars again become the heart of an empire, with its capital at Shiraz.

From page 1 ► The Iranian official, for his part, said thanks to existing capacities, Iran and Nigeria have a good opportunity to develop their scientific cooperation and help each other.

Nigeria is considered one of the important countries in Africa. So, the Ministry of Science has decided to expand its cooperation with Nigeria in the fields related to science and technology, Dadashpour added.

Iran is planning to attract 250,000 international students and become a global hub, he said, adding: "In order to achieve the goal, we will organize workshops and exhibitions in addition to sending various delegations to other countries."

Students are the best ambassadors for the transfer of science, knowledge, and technology, and they can create unique opportunities for the future of the two countries, he highlighted.

"In order to benefit from the capacities of the two countries, it is necessary to sketch a roadmap, and forming a joint working group is of particular importance."

Houses of innovation and technology

In 2021, Iran inaugurated its first



Iran, Nigeria set up joint sci-tech working group

house of innovation and technology (IHIT) in Africa in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi.

The center serves as a base for the creation of innovative ideas, the commercialization of these ideas, and the export of Iranian knowledge-based products and services to the East African market.

The IHIT, by supporting innovative ideas, and holding technological and innovative events will be a platform for the development and promotion of Iranian knowledge-based companies, startups, and creative industries.

Trade with Africa

Aiming to develop trade with

Africa, Iran has opened eight trade centers in the countries of the continent.

"A network of eight business centers have been activated across Africa to provide a wide range of services to manufacturing and exporting companies that have a presence in the African market," Mohammad-Sadeq Qanadzadeh, an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), has said.

These centers are located in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Cameroon, Senegal, Nigeria, Algeria, and South Africa, and this network will be further expanded and completed by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

In June last year, TPO Head Ali-reza Peyman-Pak said the country is taking the necessary steps to increase annual trade exchanges with African countries to \$5 billion by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025–March 2026).

Peyman-Pak said the trade with the mentioned countries is expected to reach \$2.5 billion by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.

RAMSAR SITES IN IRAN

Part 47

One or two black storks (*Ciconia nigra*) often frequent the marshes during the summer months. There is at least one pair of barbery falcons (*Falco peregrinoides*) breeding in the area, and about 15 white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) occur in winter around the lakes, along with marsh harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*), imperial eagles (*Aquila heliaca*) and greater spotted eagles (*A. clanga*).

Despite the changes which have occurred at the Kamjan Marshes, the area continues to provide ideal feeding habitat to a wide variety of waterfowl, notably white stork, glossy ibis and black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*).

The marshes also constitute an important feeding area for large numbers of ducks which spend the day roosting on Lake Bakhtegan and Lake Tashk.

At least 220 species of birds have been recorded at the Bakhtegan wildlife refuge.

The mammalian fauna of the reserve includes wolf (*Canis lupus*), golden jackal (*Canis aureus*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*), caracal (*Lynx caracal*),

jungle cat (*Felis chaus*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), goitred gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*), Persian ibex (*Capra hircus aegagrus*) and wild sheep (*Ovis ammon*).

Only one species of fish has been recorded at the lake, *Aphanius sophiae*. It occurs throughout the lake and in the lower sections of the inflows.

Zooplankton at the lakes include the ciliate *Fabrea salina* and the foraminifera *Streblus beccarii*.

Flagellata probably constitute most of the nanoplankton. *Brachionus plicatilis* and *Hexarthra fennica* are the most typical rotifers in both lakes, although there are many other species present.

Crustaceans and copepods are abundant, their distribution showing a distinct correlation with salinity, while ostracods and nematodes form the bulk of the benthic fauna. Dominant species include *Artemia salina*, *Apocyclops dengizicus*, *Diaptomus salinus* and *Eucypris inflata*.

Current land use

Subsistence fishing in fishponds at Lake Tashk, livestock grazing at Kamjan Marshes and around the lakes, rice growing at Kamjan Marshes, and there are some nomadic tribes with their cattle, and small settlements with adjacent agricultural areas.

There are a few small settlements with some wheat, cotton, barley, sugar beet and fruit cultivation, and some cattle grazing at the steppes.

Factors adversely affecting ecology

Conversion of wetland to agricultural land, especially in the Kamjan Marshes, and expansion of the fishponds in Lake Tashk might be accelerated by the building of a paved road between the two lakes, as is currently proposed.

It would accelerate agricultural development and settlement, with unpredictable consequences for the wetland and the overall hydrology of the system.

It is also feared that with better accessibility to the western part of the lakes, poaching will increase. At the moment there is a little poaching going on.

A major drainage programme of the Kamjan Marshes to provide land for agriculture has destroyed much of the original marsh vegetation. As much of the water entering Lake Tashk flows through the Kamjan Marshes, this could have a profound effect on the quality of the water entering the lake.

The construction of a large water storage reservoir on the Kur River, Dorudsan Dam, in the 1970s and various irrigation projects in the upper reaches of the river have reduced the flow of water into the lakes.

Conservation measures taken

Lake Bakhtegan, Lake Tashk and the intervening hill ranges were first protected as the Bakhtegan protected region in 1968.

In the early 1970s this was upgraded to a wildlife refuge, and its size was then 327,820 ha, not including Kamjan Marshes nor Gumoon Springs.

The Ramsar site does include both the marshes and the springs, but it does not include the steppes between the lakes (together they form a large oxbow, each lake being half of the bow).

Conservation measures proposed

A Ramsar Monitoring Procedure Mission that visited the lakes and marshes in 1992 made several recommendations: to demarcate the borders of the site clearly with signs, review alternatives for the road through the wildlife refuge, see if there are possibilities to restore the marshes at the Gumoon springs, restore and manage the Kamjan Marshes as a buffer zone for the wildlife refuge, including establishing a game guard station at the marshes.

Furthermore, it has been recommended by the mission that hunting should be prohibited and that the use of fertilisers and pesticides should be restricted. During dry years the water supply to the lakes and marshes should be ensured.

Source: Ramsar.org

To be continued

TEHRAN – By implementing a subsidence rate monitoring plan, researchers at the National Cartographic Center identified 252 regions that are suffering from land subsidence.

Reports show that 98 percent of the subsidence is caused by excessive extraction of underground water and mismanagement of water resources.

Geologists call subsidence a "silent earthquake" because an earthquake is instantaneous and its effects are visible at the same time, but subsidence is the cause of environmental depletion and its impact appears gradually; which is getting a big threat in the country.

Land subsidence, a gradual settling or sudden sinking of the Earth's surface due to subsurface movement of earth materials is mainly caused by aquifer-system compaction, drainage, and decomposition of organic soils, underground mining, oil and gas extraction, hydro compaction, natural compaction, sinkholes, and thawing permafrost.

Subsidence results in significant economic losses in the form of structural damage and high maintenance costs. This affects roads and transportation networks, hydraulic infrastructure, sewage systems, buildings, and foundations. The total damage worldwide is estimated at billions of dollars annually.

With the spread of droughts and lack of proper water management, the gradual land subsidence has become a routine threat to the country.

When the amount of harvest is greater than the amount of nourishment of the underground aquifers, the earth moves downward and finally, the soil particles are compressed together, and in such a situation, the phenomenon of subsidence takes on another meaning; It means "death of aquifers".

The scope of this man-made phenomenon has

advanced to such an extent that researchers in this field describe it with words such as "cancer", "irreversible risk" and "death of the earth".

In order to give a perspective of the country's subsidence rate, the National Cartographic Center started a project in this field in 2016.

Morteza Seddiqi, an official with the Organization, told ISNA that using satellite data and images is one of the methods that have been implemented to check the rate of subsidence of the whole country.

"Based on the surveys carried out on these images, we have identified as many as 252 subsidence areas in the country."

Two main factors

In 2021, Gholam-Ali Jafarzadeh, the former head of the National Cartography Center, lamented that some 29 provinces are currently at risk of subsidence.

He named two factors of climate change and human intervention as the most important factors of land subsidence in the country and noted that it is expected that we take measures to reduce the pressure on the environment.

He added that 80 percent of the groundwater is withdrawn annually in Iran, which outpaces the global rate.

In the whole world, water resources withdrawal is between 3 to 20 percent, and when it reaches 40 to 60 percent it is considered problematic, and it will be a crisis when exceeding 60-80 percent, he noted.

Over the past decades, some of the aquifer levels dropped by 100 centimeters.

Inefficient irrigation methods in addition to digging illegal wells are the other main causes of groundwater extraction-induced subsidence, as out of 50,000 wells pumping underground water re-



sources in the capital, 30,000 are illegal.

It should be noted that over the next 40 years, the country's temperature will rise by 2.6 degrees on Celsius Scale, which will increase the country's need for more water resources.

Dealing with subsidence

The installation of smart meter systems on the water pumps and wells is an efficient measure in this regard.

The Ministry of Energy should take steps toward reducing groundwater exploitation, in addition to banning well construction as well as shutting down illegal wells in the sinking provinces.

It should also control agricultural products and prohibit the cultivation of water-consuming products in those provinces, and instead, introduce agricultural products which require a low amount of water.

The Ministry of Agriculture should cooperate to implement watershed management projects in order to increase the storage capacity of aquifers.

The Department of Environment is another responsible organization that must take more serious steps toward environmental assessment of land subsidence and its prevention techniques.

TEHRAN – Benevolent people and charities have allocated 4.5 trillion rials (about \$11.2 million) for building schools in the deprived province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

The figure is more than double compared with the 2.14 trillion rials allocated in the past year (March 2021–March 2022).

Over the past year and with the special attention of the officials, the budget for the renovation of schools in the province has grown by more than a hundred percent, IRNA quoted Meysam Lakzaei, the director general of the provincial de-

partment for development, renovation, and equipment of schools, as saying.

Moreover, the issue of public participation and the contribution of benefactors is also widely and comprehensively evident, he added.

The administration pays special attention to Sistan-Baluchestan, so in the past year it allocated 12 trillion rials to the expansion of educational spaces in the province, and the figure is expected to rise to 13.5 trillion rials for the current year, he explained.

More than 5 trillion rials of the budget has so far been allocated for the construction and renovation of schools, Lakzaei noted.

By December 21 (the end of the ninth Iranian calendar month), a number of 178 classrooms have been handed over to the Sistan-Baluchestan department of education for the use of students, he added.

"Some 1,800 other classrooms are being constructed in the province with the help of charities and benevolent people."

Also, more than one thousand classrooms have been inaugurated in the province this year at the cost of 43 trillion rials, the official said.

This year, in order for students to benefit from smart learning electronic equipment, 500 classrooms in the province were equipped by benevolent people, he concluded.

Half of the schools across Iran are built with the participation of benefactors, Mohammad Reza Jafari, CEO of the School-Building Donors Associa-

tion, has said.

About 40,000 donors are active and involved in building schools across the country, he stated, adding, over 49 percent of schools, amounting to 150,000 classrooms, in the country are built with the participation of school-building benefactors.

Construction of sports spaces, libraries, and developing smart schools are among the current needs in school construction, he highlighted.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Excessive use of renewable water in southeastern Iran worrisome

Excessive withdrawal of renewable water, equaling 123 percent of the current volume, in the southeastern province of Kerman, has raised great concerns while posing a serious threat to the life of residents and region's biodiversity.

"Currently, there are 5.5 billion cubic meters of renewable water in Kerman province, but 6.8 billion cubic meters equivalent to 123 percent of renewable water resources is being used," IRNA quoted Reza Jazinizadeh, the head of Kerman province's department of environment, as saying on Thursday.

In the [13]40s (falling on 1960s), concurrent with the establishment of the Ministry of Energy, renewable water resources measured at 90 million cubic meters, and some 50 million cubic meters out of this amount was withdrawn, Jazinizadeh explained.

برداشت ۱۲۳ درصد آبهای تجدیدپذیر در کرمان نگران کننده است

مدیرکل حفاظت محیط زیست استان کرمان گفت: برداشت ۱۲۳ درصد از آبهای تجدیدپذیر در این استان که حیات انسانی و جانوری را با تهدید جدی مواجه کرده، نگران کننده است.

وی تصریح کرد: در حال حاضر در استان کرمان ۵.۵ میلیارد متر مکعب آب تجدیدپذیر داریم که ۶.۸ میلیارد مترمکعب معادل ۱۲۳درصد آبهای تجدید پذیر برداشت و مورد استفاده قرار می گیرد.

رضا جزینی زاده روز پنجشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: در دهه ۱۳۴۰ با تشکیل وزارت نیرو در کشور میزان برداشت آب از سفره های زیرزمینی مورد بررسی قرار گرفت و مشخص شد که در کشور ۹۰ میلیون مترمکعب آب تجدید پذیر وجود دارد و از این میزان ۵۰ میلیون مترمکعب برداشت می شود.



Seagulls flocking to Bushehr for wintering

The shores of Bushehr province, southwestern Iran, are hosting seagulls coming mainly from Siberia to pass the winter months.

More than 120 species of migratory birds have been identified and observed so far in Bushehr.

