

Raisi Expected to Visit Saudi Arabia

▶ Page 3

Activity of armed groups opposing Iran in Iraq is illegal: PM

TEHRAN – Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Sudani has said that the activity of the Iranian armed Kurdish groups in Iraq runs counter to Iraqi laws.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, Sudani said these groups have long been residing in Iraq as refugees but their armed activity against Iran is illegal.

“Their presence as armed people with a military camp and under military training or their entry into Iran’s territory and carrying out armed actions is completely rejected according to the text of the Iraqi constitution,” the Iraqi prime minister said, according to Fars News.

He added, “It is problematic that these groups enter Iran’s territory to carry out armed operations, then return to Iraq’s territory, because firstly, the Iraqi constitution does not allow hostile actions against neighboring countries from Iraqi territory, and secondly, we must ensure the security of our borders. And it is not reasonable for Iraq’s borders to be open for operations against neighboring countries. This issue causes Iran to carry out operations against military camps inside Iraqi territory as a response.” ▶ Page 3

No reliable data about fate of Ahmad Motevaselian, companions: IRGC

TEHRAN– Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif, spokesman for the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), asserted on Monday that certain media misunderstood the remarks made by IRGC chief Major General Hossein Salami regarding the status of Motevaselian and his companions.

Sharif noted that there has been no reliable information regarding his condition and fate.

During his Nowruz meetings with the families of Motevaselian and his three associates who went missing in northern Lebanon in 1982, General Salami used the term “martyr” regarding the Iranian military attaché.

He declared Motevaselian, Mohsen Mousavi, the charge d’affaires at the Iranian Embassy in Beirut, Taghi Rastegar Moghaddam, an employee, and Kazem Akhavan, a photographer for IRNA, as martyrs.

General Salami honored Motevaselian as the “first Iranian martyr” in the liberation of al-Quds and the occupied Palestinian territories, stating the continuous fight against the apartheid Israeli regime is the great Iranian military commander’s magnificent legacy. ▶ Page 2

Iran return to beach soccer ranking top 10

TEHRAN – Iran moved up four places at the Beach Soccer Worldwide ranking.

Iran claimed the title of the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup in late March. Japan, the competition’s finalists, also reached the fourth position of the ranking.

Thailand, who made it into the quarterfinals of Asian Cup, had the highest climb of the ranking climbing 45 positions to reach a place in the top 50.

After having won the South American showdown, Brazil took the first place from Portugal. Runner-ups Argentina have climbed six positions to now sit 13th while third-placed Colombia moved up 10 places and are now in the top 20.

The return of a man who was said must go



© Reuters

By Ali Karbalaee

TEHRAN – The warming of ties between Syria and Arab states has won global attention. Syria was suspended from the Arab League in 2011 amidst the eruption of war in the country.

The rapprochements come as the United States is losing its influence in the region. Back in 2011, Washington had major sway on Arab states but as the dynamics in West Asia change and Syria emerged triumphant over foreign-backed terrorists, some Arab states

are taking matters into their own hands, despite the anger of Washington.

Now, reports have surfaced that Saudi Arabia is planning to invite Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to the Arab League summit that Riyadh will be hosting next month. ▶ Page 5

A joint chamber of commerce to be established between Iran, Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN– A board member of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture said that a joint chamber of commerce will be established between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Pointing out that the private sector has started the necessary planning for economic interaction with Saudi Arabia, Keyvan Kashefi said: “Soon,

with the follow-up of the ICCIMA, a joint chamber of commerce between Iran and Saudi Arabia will be set up.”

He called the normalization of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia the main political and economic issue of the country in the last month and said the private sector welcomes this con-

structive and positive interaction.

The ICCIMA board member further considered this political decision, the results of which were very positive on the country’s economy, to be a useful mechanism and expressed hope that these positive interactions with different countries will continue. ▶ Page 4

WFP releases annual report on Iran

TEHRAN – The World Food Program has released its 2022 report on Iran based on Interim Country Strategic Plan (2018-2023).

Iran was one of the most affected countries by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic gradually abated and restrictions were lifted by mid-2022, the country continued to struggle with its severe negative socio-economic impacts, the report said.

In mid-2022, the Government decided to cut subsidies from staple food items. As a result, the prices of meat and poultry, dairy products and cooking oil increased fourfold overnight.

Inflation and increased prices of basic food commodities combined with local currency devaluation and reduced job opportunities due to a stagnating economy have significantly reduced purchasing power of vulnerable groups including refugees.

Against this backdrop and despite the tightening of trade restrictions and external barriers, WFP Iran succeeded in ▶ Page 7



© IRNA / Adel Bakhtdadi

Funeral procession for military advisor Milad Heidari

A funeral procession was held on Monday afternoon for Milad Heidrai, an IRGC military advisor who was martyred in an Israeli air strike on Syria on Friday. Heidari was laid to rest in the cemetery of the Khordad 15 Martyrs in Qarchak county about 30 km southeast of Tehran. A large number of people, military and local officials attended the ceremony.

Persepolis ranks Iran’s most visited World Heritage site

TEHRAN – Persepolis, which was once the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire (c. 550-330 BC), has been crowned Iran’s most popular UNESCO site this Noruz, according to an annual ranking by the ministry of cultural heritage and tourism.

“A total of 261,049 people toured Persepolis during the Noruz holidays (which officially started on March 21),” IRNA quoted an official in charge of Iran’s World Heritage sites as saying on Monday.

Imam Square of Isfahan, Fin Garden of Kashan, and Fars province’s Pasargadae attracted a higher number of visitors to UNESCO sites after Persepolis, Reza Sameh explained.

World Heritage sites in the provinces of Fars, Isfahan, Kerman, Kermanshah, and Khorasan Razavi attracted 521,912, 437,223, 153,504, 134,208, and 133,259 visitors respectively, the official added.

This year official Noruz holidays started on

March 21 for four days after New Year’s Eve, but schools and many shops remained closed until the day after Sizdah Be-dar on April 2.

Persepolis, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy), was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. The highly impressive site is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz. ▶ 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.

People are the key to change

Most of country’s newspapers at the first working day of the press in the new calendar year devoted their first headline to the economic issues and change that were addressed in the Nowruz speech of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. ▶ Page 2

Iran appoints new ambassador to Azerbaijan: report

TEHRAN – Iran has decided to appoint a new ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan amid soaring tensions between the two neighboring countries.

Tasnim reported that Mojtaba Demirchiloo will replace Seyed Abbas Mousavi as Iran’s envoy to the South Caucasus nation.

Demirchiloo used to serve as Iran’s ambassador to Kazakhstan.

Mousavi has been serving as the envoy to Baku for three years.

Over the last days, tensions resurfaced between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan over a range of issues, including Baku warming up to Tel Aviv. ▶ Page 3

Raisi calls on Muslim leaders to unite Islamic states

TEHRAN– Ebrahim Raisi, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, has argued that Muslim leaders worldwide should work to promote unity among the Islamic ummah’s member states.

According to a Monday report by Yemeni TV channel Al Masirah, Raisi made the remarks in a letter he had sent to Mahdi al-Mashat, the President of the Supreme Political Council of Yemen, to express his congratulations on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. ▶ Page 2

International section of Tehran Quran exhibition opens

TEHRAN – The international section of the 30th edition of the International Holy Quran Exhibition opened on Monday at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

The opening ceremony of the exhibit was attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaili and a group of cultural figures.

Artworks representing Quran verses and teachings and rare manuscripts of some Islamic books are on view at the showcase, which is organized every year during the month of Ramadan.

Artists from 21 countries, including India, Pakistan, Tunisia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Algeria, Indonesia, Kenya, Oman and Malaysia, have been invited to attend the exhibition, which will be running until April 18, the organizers announced.

The artists are scheduled to hold workshops and put their artworks on view at the exhibition. ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

People are the key to change

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

from page 1 ► In its editorial the Hamshahri newspaper wrote about "change". It said: Change is the extract and identity of the revolution. Change means mutation and jihadi movement but this important event can not be done except through the people; that is, the people of faith. This is the truth that our people are the people of faith. They have proven that they are spiritual people after forty years. The most important sign is their resistance and the most important argument is the complexity of hostilities. But the most important problem is about officials who have failed to pave the ground for people's involvement in achieving success. Democracy is not only about ballot box. If our officials allow the miracle of the Imam's revolution, which is essentially religious democracy, to come to fruition, we will see how historical transformations will take place in this land in favor of the people and in the path of justice."

Farahikhtegan: Avoiding bipolarity in the issue of hijab

In a report, Farhikhtegan discussed the issue of hijab and the plans of the enemy and how to face it. It is clear that that the anti-Iran currents have detailed and undeniable planning for a social challenge like hijab and are trying to turn it into deep divisions between the people as well as between people and the government. But what needs transformation is how to face this social challenge inside the country. This means that officials are obligated to rectify certain policies and provide solutions to address social bipolarity. In one sentence, they should consider themselves obliged to prevent the realization of the plot by the enemies in this field by managing and preventing destructive internal factors in the social environment.

Shargh: Baku's red language

In a commentary, Shargh discussed the relations between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan and wrote about the evil complicity of Baku and the Zionist regime against Tehran. The newspaper said: "Repeated warnings, the opening of the Iranian Consulate in Qapan city of Sivnik province of Armenia, the holding of the IRGC maneuver in Aras and recently the maneuver of Iranian fighters in the border areas of Azerbaijan are among the manifestations that indicate that Tehran can no longer

act as an impartial observer towards the Republic of Azerbaijan. Of course, these actions of Tehran do not necessarily mean the creation of tension or the possibility of war with Baku, but the Islamic Republic of Iran, while respecting all its neighbors, must also warn that it does not compromise with any regional or extra-regional actors in terms of realizing national interests and security."

Kayhan: Slogan of the year

In its editorial, Kayhan addressed the slogan of the year with a particular focus on economic issues. It wrote: "The wise emphasis of the Supreme Leader of the revolution on this issue on the one hand shows the role and importance of the economy in advancing the country's goals; and on the other hand, it shows there is a lot of work left unfulfilled in economic areas, which despite all the emphases, naming and warnings, and despite all the efforts and significant measures taken in some areas, as expected and should be" the goals have not been realized.

Iran: Promises of Economy Minister

In its editorial, written by the Minister of Economy, the state-run Iran newspaper pointed to the slogan of the year and economic issues. In the note, Khanduzi wrote that last year was the year of rail laying and expressed his hope that the results will be shown this year. «We believe that we need a support plan in the field of food security for the people and we have prepared a written proposal. In the field of banking and monetary developments, we believe that it is not possible to get out of the current situation without revolutionary measures."

Vatan Emrouz: List of hostilities with Iran

In a commentary Vatan Emrouz listed some of the hostilities and conspiracies of the West against the Islamic Republic of Iran over the last forty-four years and wrote: "We have witnessed the sending of misleading and purposeful signals. It is broadcasted by enemies and their propaganda speakers with the aim of deceiving public opinion! For example, some Western officials - whose inherent confrontation with the Islamic Republic system reached its peak during the riots in the fall of 1401 - claim that their intention is not to overthrow the system."

Raisi calls on Muslim leaders to unite Islamic states

from page 1 ► Raisi underlined in the message that Ramadan is the month of independence from material concerns.

As well as for all Muslims and those who are following the path of truth, he wished for progress and development for Yemen as well.

The Iranian president also stated that lead-

ers of Islamic nations should strive for unity and integration in the Islamic ummah by leaning on Quranic teachings and subscribing to the spirituality that Ramadan brings.

President Raisi said that Muslims should make Islam proud throughout the world by working together and taking coordinated action.

No reliable data about fate of Ahmad Motevaselian, companions: IRGC

from page 1 ► On July 4, 1982, the four men were captured by the Israeli-affiliated Lebanese Phalangist militia at the Barbara road-block in northern Lebanon and later given over to the Mossad, the Israel spy agency.

There have been various reports regarding their whereabouts over the previous 41 years.

While some insist that they are still alive and incarcerated in Israeli jails, others argue they had been slain by the militia group.

Education Minister resigns over delayed salary payment

TEHRAN- Yousef Noori, the Iranian Minister of Education, resigned on Monday in the wake of public dissatisfaction over the failure to pay the wage of contractual teachers on time at the end of the previous Persian year in March.

On Monday, Noori's resignation was accepted by President Ebrahim Raisi.

Reza Morad Sahraee, the current chancellor of Farhangian University, has been chosen by the president to serve as the interim education minister.

Contractual teachers are incensed at the Education Ministry's subpar performance after it failed to pay the wages at the conclusion of the Persian calendar year.



We will never let Israeli terrorism go unanswered: government

TEHRAN- Tehran on Sunday promised retaliation for Tel Aviv's latest atrocity which had resulted in the assassination of two Iranian military advisors in Israeli air-strikes on Syria, saying that the usurper regime's terrorist activities "will not go unanswered."

Government spokesperson Ali Bahadori Jahromi remarked on Twitter that the Tel Aviv regime is using terror to deflect public attention away from its domestic difficulties.

"The Zionist regime and other terrorist states have the habit of carrying out terrorist acts abroad at critical times in order to deflect public attention and not let the depth of their domestic problems be revealed," Bahadori Jahromi wrote, adding, "Terrorist acts will not go unanswered."

Milad Heidari and Meqdad Mehqani, two IRGC military advisers, were martyred during Israel's aircraft attacks on Damascus' suburbs on Friday.

As a 32-year-old father of two children, Heidari came from Kurdistan Province. He was a resident of Qarchak County in Tehran.

Mehqani, 31, passed away from injuries received in the Israeli attack. He came from Golestan Province. He is survived by a two-year-old son.

Iran, Russia, Damascus review political, international developments surrounding Syria

TEHRAN- Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Ayman Sousan and Iranian senior adviser to foreign minister for special political affairs Ali Asghar Khaji have discussed the most recent topics pertaining to bilateral relations as well as political and global events surrounding Syria.

On Monday, Khaji, who is leading an Iranian delegation to Moscow for a four-party meeting on normalizing ties between Ankara and Damascus, met and spoke with Sousan.

The involved parties include Russia, Iran, Syria, and Turkey.

The two parties spoke about recent bilateral relations as well as regional and global developments in Syria during the meeting.

Khaji highlighted the commitment of Iran to keep supporting the dialogues for the



Israeli airstrikes that killed people in Syria occurred at a time when there were widespread protests against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's now-delayed plans to restructure the judiciary.

These plans would deteriorate the Supreme Court, reduce judicial oversight of policymaking, and give the ruling Likud party more power.

The Israeli regime, identified as one of the principal sponsors of terrorist organizations supporting President Bashar al-As-

sad's government since foreign-backed militancy flared in Syria in early 2011, often breaches Syrian sovereignty and conducts strikes in the Arab country.

In most cases, residential structures are targeted. Israeli strikes often target military sites, particularly those of the Hezbollah resistance movement, which has played an important role in assisting the Syrian army in its struggle against foreign-backed terrorists.

Israel typically remains quiet on

the strikes. Damascus has consistently criticized Israel's assaults at the UN and urged the Security Council to intervene to stop Tel Aviv's aggressions. Yet, the calls have been ignored.

Iran continues to support the Arab nation with an advisory mission, assisting it in fending against foreign-sponsored terrorism.

Syria's victory against the Daesh terrorist group in 2017 was made possible through Tehran's advisory role.



political settlement of disputes between Damascus and Ankara while welcoming the new developments in international relations and bolstering stability in addition to security in Syria.

For his part, Sousan stressed the neces-

sity of enhancing collaboration between Iran and Syria.

On Monday in Moscow, Khaji also met with Mikhail Bogdanov, the special envoy of the Russian president for Middle East and Africa.

The most recent events in Syria and the region were discussed by the two parties during the meeting.

The parties offered their backing for the restoration of normal relations between Syria and Turkey within the framework of quadrilateral meetings and based on international law and regulations as well as good neighborliness.

They emphasized the need to remedy the current disputes between Damascus and Ankara through a diplomatic resolution and political dialogues.

A new chapter begins in the region: Middle East Eye

TEHRAN - In a commentary posted on Middle East Eye website, it is said that after years of bitter hostilities and escalating crises between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the era of diplomacy and wisdom has now arrived.

Following is an excerpt of the article:

News of the normalization of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia came as a surprise to international observers. The enmity between the Middle East rivals has been among the most persistent and dangerous in the region.

The March agreement came after two years of negotiations between Riyadh and Tehran in Baghdad, and Chinese President Xi Jinping played an important role in concluding the deal in Beijing. As part of the ensuing trilateral statement, Saudi Arabia and Iran agreed to implement a 2001 security cooperation agreement and a 1998 deal bolstering economic, cultural and technological ties.

This is based on an agreement the two countries reached in the mid-1990s that remained in effect until 2005.

Riyadh was concerned about Tehran exporting Shiism and supporting Saudi Arabia's Shia minority, and about demonstrations by Iranian pilgrims threatening the security of the annual Hajj ceremony.

For its part, Tehran was con-

cerned about Saudi Arabia supporting the Sunni minority in Iran and spreading Wahhabi fundamentalism. The bilateral security pact greatly reduced anxieties in both governments over interference in each other's internal affairs.

Unfortunately, the agreements collapsed in August 2005. Iran restarted its nuclear enrichment program, the UN Security Council adopted resolutions sanctioning Iran, and Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud - by now the king of Saudi Arabia - repeatedly exhorted the U.S. to "cut off the head of the snake" by launching military strikes to destroy Iran's nuclear program.

Then, in January 2016, Saudi Arabia executed a prominent Shia cleric, Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, along with 46 other Shia dissidents. Nimr's execution triggered protests in front of Saudi Arabia's embassy in Tehran.

The proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia escalated in Yemen. Iran supported Syrian President Bashar al-Assad against internal and external efforts to overthrow him. Assad's efforts to normalize his regime have made considerable progress during the past year.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia welcomed former U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, and supported reinstating economic sanctions on Iran - only to see it now enriching uranium to

near weapons-grade levels.

The upshot of these developments was a lose-lose for both Riyadh and Tehran, demonstrating that their confrontation would have no winner. The recent agreement in Beijing shows that Iran's conservative government, led by President Ebrahim Raisi, has restored relations with Saudi Arabia based on the two agreements formulated years before.

Saudi Arabia and Iran should join forces to foster cooperation against weapons of mass destruction, extremism and terrorism.

The distrust between Tehran and Riyadh is both deep and serious. Both governments, however, have committed to observe the principles of the UN Charter, including respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. This is necessary, but not sufficient on its own. The agreement must be supplemented with additional commitments to ensure sustainable, friendly relations between Tehran and Riyadh.

As the most powerful regional and Islamic states, they should commit to regarding each other's security as an integral part of their own; put an end to illusions

about "regional hegemony" and work to create a system of cooperation and collective security among the eight countries bordering the Persian Gulf; and convert their unhealthy competition in crisis-ridden countries such as Yemen, Syria and Iraq into a constructive partnership.

In addition, they should join forces to foster effective regional and international cooperation against weapons of mass destruction, extremism and terrorism; treat the members of their religious minorities as full citizens; and work to de-escalate tensions between Washington and Tehran.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council secretary, Ali Shamkhani, just held talks with the crown prince of Abu Dhabi. Qatar and Oman have been actively mediating to revive the Iran nuclear deal and secure the exchange of prisoners between Iran and the U.S. Iran's deputy foreign minister recently visited Oman, and China is planning to host an unprecedented summit later this year, attended by Iran and its six Arab neighbors in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

After years of bitter hostilities and escalating crises in the region, the era of diplomacy and wisdom has now arrived. It is time for Iran, Iraq and other Persian Gulf states to embrace and cooperate, to collectively create a powerful region.

Raisi expected to visit Saudi Arabia

By Mehran Shamsuddin

TEHRAN – The Iranian-Saudi normalization train is moving so fast that it could soon take Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Saudi Arabia.

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber said Monday that President Raisi has accepted an invitation from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz to pay a visit to Saudi Arabia.

"King Salman has invited the president, and there has been a positive response to this invitation, and hopefully good things will happen," Mokhber said.

"The main strategies of Mr. Raisi since the first day he was elected as the president have been to improve relations with the countries of the region," he added.

Iran's affirmative answer to the Saudi invitation is the latest in the fast-paced normalization trend that started on March 10, when Iran and Saudi Arabia signed a Chinese-brokered deal in Beijing to restore their relations in a period of two months. According to the joint statement put out by Iran, Saudi Arabia, and China, "The three countries announce that an agreement has been reached between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran, that includes an agreement to resume diplomatic relations between them and re-open their embassies and missions within a period not exceeding two months, and the agreement includes their affirmation of the respect for the sovereignty of states and the non-interference in internal affairs of states."

The statement added, "They also agreed that the ministers of foreign affairs of both countries shall meet to implement this, arrange for the return of their ambassadors, and discuss means of enhancing bilateral relations."

Since then, Iranian and Saudi officials have been in close contact to follow up on the Beijing agreement. A little more than a week after the March 10 agreement, the Saudi king



sent a letter to President Raisi in which he welcomed the agreement and invited Raisi to visit Riyadh. He also called for strong economic and regional cooperation. In response, Raisi welcomed the invitation and stressed Iran's readiness to expand cooperation.

Also, the foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia spoke by phone more than once to hash out the details of the agreement. Their latest call was on Sunday. In this telephone conversation, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan discussed arrangements for their agreed-upon meeting.

Amir Abdollahian expressed pleasure with the positive trend of ties between Tehran and Riyadh and underlined the Islamic Republic's resolve to expand its policy of neighborliness. During the phone conversation, the two top diplomats also discussed the latest state of the Iran-Saudi Arabia agreement and their upcoming meeting.

Bin Farhan stressed the need for Iranian and Saudi officials to keep in touch and described the current measures of the two sides as positive and satisfactory. Amir Abdollahian and bin Farhan agreed to meet each other in the coming days.

The pace of Iranian-Saudi rapprochement is quite fast with the two countries moving from tension to normalization in a matter of few weeks.

Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic ties with Iran in 2016 after its diplomatic missions in Tehran and Mashhad were stormed by angry Iranian protesters in the wake of the Saudi execution of a Shiite cleric. Since April 2021, Tehran and Riyadh have been engaged in negotiations facilitated by Iraq and Oman to patch up their ties. These talks culminated in the Chinese-brokered deal.

Although Saudi Arabia and Iran have been engaged in security-oriented talks, the improvement in their relations is stretching beyond the security and diplomatic spheres. A board member of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture said that a joint chamber of commerce will be established between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Pointing out that the private sector has started the necessary planning for economic interaction with Saudi Arabia, Keyvan Kashefi said, "Soon, with the follow-up of the IC-CIMA, a joint chamber of commerce between Iran and Saudi Arabia will be set up."

He called the normalization of

relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia the main political and economic issue of the country in the last month and said the private sector welcomes this constructive and positive interaction.

Underlining that Iran and Saudi Arabia are two big and important countries in the region, Kashefi said political and economic cooperation between the two countries is the basis for stability in the region.

"Saudi Arabia is one of the few countries in the region with which we do not have a joint chamber of commerce, the official said, adding, "With the follow-up of the Iran Chamber, a joint chamber of commerce between the two countries will soon be established, and it will be a useful step to advance the economic goals of Iran and Saudi Arabia."

"Also, we plan to start the exchange of trade delegations immediately after the reopening of the embassies and the deployment of the ambassadors of the two countries", he added.

According to Kashfi, there are many fields, including oil, gas, petrochemicals, and knowledge-based, for cooperation between the two countries, and these capacities should be used.

Activity of armed groups opposing Iran in Iraq is illegal: PM

From Page 1 ► The prime minister noted, "Attacking any country is unacceptable, and we do not allow the use of Iraqi soil to attack neighboring countries, this is in accordance with the constitution and a moral duty, and for us this is completely established."

Responding to a question on Iran-Iraq ties, Sudani considered Iran as a neighbor that supported Iraq's political process after 2003 and has good relations with all Iraqi groups.

Sudani denied the existence of any intervention and guardianship of Iranians in the stages of government formation and its difficult negotiations.

The Iraqi prime minister also referred to the recent agreement between Tehran and Riyadh to resume diplomatic relations, describing it as important.

"This agreement will contribute to the sta-



bility of the region and economic development and growth can only be realized in the atmosphere of cooperation between the countries of the region," he added.

Iran and Saudi Arabia has agreed in principle to restore their diplomatic ties. They signed a joint statement with China in this regard on March 10.

The foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia

are planning to meet in the coming days. They spoke over the phone on Sunday to discuss arrangements for this meeting.

"In a telephone conversation with his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has expressed pleasure with the positive trend of ties between Tehran and Riyadh and underlined the Islamic Republic's resolve to expand its policy of neighborliness. During the phone conversation, the two top diplomats also discussed the latest state of the Iran-Saudi Arabia agreement and their upcoming meeting," the Iranian foreign ministry said.

Bin Farhan stressed the need for Iranian and Saudi officials to keep in touch and described the current measures of the two sides as positive and satisfactory. Amir Abdollahian and bin Farhan agreed to meet each other in the coming days, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.



statements, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Kanaani described the statements of the Zionist regime's foreign minister regarding the formation of a "united anti-Iranian front," as well as the statements of the foreign minister of Azerbaijan regarding the content of the talks and a "new stage of

strategic partnership" between Azerbaijan and the Zionist regime as an implicit approval of the anti-Iran orientation of their cooperation, demanding an explanation from the Azeri authorities in this regard.

Also, Iran handed Azerbaijan a note of protest over "media immorality" on the part of Baku.

APRIL 4, 2023

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Iran to participate in four-nation football tournament

TEHRAN – Iran national football team will reportedly take part at the four-nation football tournament.

The tournament will be held in June, Varzesh3.com reported. The tournament will bring Iran, Russia, Uzbekistan and Iraq together.

Team Melli played two friendly matches with Russia and Kenya in Tehran in late March.

Iran, headed by Amir Ghalenoei, will participate in the event as part of preparation for the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

Ghoddos to part company with Brentford

TEHRAN – Iranian footballer Saman Ghoddos is playing for his future at Brentford –that is if he can get on the pitch.

The Bees chased the Iran international midfielder for 16 months before signing him –initially on loan– in September 2020, BBC reported.

He joined permanently the following January and his contract expires this summer, although there is an option for another year.

However, despite playing his part as the Bees were promoted from the Championship in 2021, he has struggled for game time in the top flight.

Ghoddos has only started four of Brentford's 65 Premier League games – none this season.

And, given that he has only made two late substitute appearances in the league in 2023, and the Bees have several midfielders, his chances of being kept on appear slim.

Iran learn fate at 2023 AFC U17 Asian Cup

TEHRAN – The stage is set for a thrilling AFC U17 Asian Cup Thailand 2023 following the official draw on Thursday.

The 16 teams were divided into four groups for the June 15-July 2 tournament, which will see the top four sides seal their places in the FIFA U17 World Cup Peru 2023 in November.

Hosts Thailand, champions in 1998, will have Malaysia, Laos and Yemen for company, the-afc.com reported.

Two-time champions Korea Republic were drawn with Iran, Afghanistan, Qatar in an exciting Group B, with Iran and Qatar having won the title once each previously.

Tajikistan, the 2018 runners-up, will face a challenging Group C with Australia, Saudi Arabia and China PR drawn – both two-time winners – with them.

Japan, the 2018 champions and three-time winners, will face India, Vietnam and Uzbekistan in Group D.

The Groups

Group A: Thailand, Yemen, Malaysia, Laos

Group B: Korea Republic, Iran, Afghanistan, Qatar

Group C: Tajikistan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, China PR

Group D: Japan, India, Vietnam, Uzbekistan

Iranian teams discover rivals at FIVB Volleyball U19, U21 Worlds

TEHRAN – The Drawing of Lots for the U21 men and U19 men volleyball teams were held in Lausanne, Switzerland on Friday.

The Drawing of Lots for the men's edition of the U21 World Championship, alongside the men's U19 World Championships, were held in Lausanne.

The Men's U19 World Championship will be staged in San Juan, Argentina from Aug. 2 to 11. The 20 teams participating in the pool phase were divided in four round-robin groups of five:

Pool A: Argentina (host), Egypt, United States, Serbia, Costa Rica

Pool B: Bulgaria, India, Japan, France, Slovenia

Pool C: Iran, Nigeria, Columbia, Puerto Rico, Korea

Pool D: Italy, Brazil, Belgium, Mexico, Chile

The best four teams from each pool will qualify for the Round of 16, while the rest will continue in the playoffs for the distribution of the places from 17th to 20th.

Also, the Men's U21 World Championship will be held in Manama, Bahrain from July 7 to 11, 2023, where they were split into four round-robin pools of four:

Pool A: Bahrain (host), Iran, Thailand, Tunisia

Pool B: Italy, Brazil, Egypt, Mexico

Pool C: Poland, Bulgaria, Canada, India

Pool D: Argentina, Belgium, Czech, United States

The top two teams from each pool will advance to round-robin pools E and F of the second phase, while the rest will move to pools G and H to continue the battles for classification from eighth to 16th.

The winners and runners-up of pools E and F will progress to the semifinals and eventually determine the medalists.

Barkhordari seizes silver at 2022 World Taekwondo Grand Slam

TEHRAN – Mehran Barkhordari of Iran claimed a silver medal at the 2022 World Taekwondo Grand Slam in Wuxi, China.

Barkhordari lost to his Uzbek rival 2-0 in the final bout of the –80kg.

Arian Salimi had won a gold in the +80kg, while Danial Bozorgi won a silver medal in the –68kg and Reza Kalhor seized the bronze in the wright class.

The fourth edition of the Grand Slam was originally due to be held in 2022 only to be postponed to this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tehran derby to be held on April 23

TEHRAN – Tehran derby between Persepolis and Esteghlal football teams will be held on April 23.

The match will take place in Tehran's Azadi Stadium. Persepolis and Esteghlal are both favorites to win the title in Iran Professional League and the match will be decisive.

Sepahan leads the table with 49 points, followed by Esteghlal (46) and Persepolis (45).

Gholizadeh sidelined for one month

TEHRAN – Iran national football team's winger Ali Gholizadeh will miss a month after surgery to repair a meniscus injury to his knee.

He suffered the injury in the friendly match against Russia last week.

Gholizadeh missed the friendly match against Kenya, where Iran defeated the African team 2-1.

The 27-year-old forward plays for Turkey's Super Lig club Kasimpasa on loan from Belgian First Division A club Charleroi.

Tayebi scores as Palma lose to Barca

TEHRAN – Mallorca Palma lost to Barca 5-1 in the Copa del Rey semifinals.

Iran international forward Hossein Tayebi scored his team's only goal in this match.

Carlos Ortiz, Catela, Ferrao (two goals) and Pito scored for Barca in this match.

Barca captain Sergio Lozano suffered a knee injury with less than a minute to go and had to leave the court in tears.

500 ha of lands equipped with modern irrigation systems in North Khorasan

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 500 hectares of lands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems in North Khorasan province, in the northeast of Iran, in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Ebrahim Seyedi, the director of water and soil as well as technical-engineering affairs of the province's Agriculture Department, put the fund for the implementation of projects to establish modern irrigation systems in the farmlands of the province at 330 billion rials (about \$702,000) in the previous year.

According to the project manager of Iranian Agriculture Ministry's smart irrigation systems development program, the purpose of implementing this plan is to increase the productivity and sustainability of water and soil resources in the country to ensure the sustainable production of agricultural products.

Fariborz Abbasi, who is the head of the Agriculture Ministry's Water and Soil Department, has said in smart agriculture human intervention in irrigation management



and planning is minimized by using new technologies," he explained.

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

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

Pruning season starts in Takestan vineyards



TEHRAN- Pruning season began in the vineyards of Takestan county, in Qazvin province.

Pruning of vineyards starts in mid-March when the vineyard gardeners of Takestan spend busy days.

Of course, there are different types of pruning, and most gardeners in Iran do this in the traditional way, which is necessary to learn new methods of pruning.

Out of about 32,000 hectares of vineyards in the province, 26,500 hectares are located in Takestan county.

Takestan is the second largest grape producer and the first producer of raisins in the country.

Some 70 percent of the grapes produced in this city are dried to be raisins, which, in addition to domestic consumption, are exported to Iraq, Russia, Persian Gulf littoral states, and some other countries in Central Asia and Europe.

"Takestan" literally means "Vineyard".

Solar power plants with 5 KW capacity to be built for low-income groups

TEHRAN- The head of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) announced the construction of 110,000 solar power plants with a capacity of five kilowatts (KW) for low-income groups in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21).

Mahmoud Kamani also announced that the tender for the construction of solar power plants with the capacity of 2,200 megawatts, left over from the plan for the construction of solar power plants with 4,000 megawatts capacity in the past year, will be also held this year.

Regarding the follow-up of the construction of renewable power plants in the new year, the official said that a plan for the construction of renewable power plants was announced by the minister of energy at the beginning of the 13th government, and in 1401 (past Iranian year), the necessary preparations for the implementation of this plan have been followed up and some measures have been taken in this due.

In early February, the official had announced that the capacity of Iran's renewable power plants reached 1,020 megawatts (MW) with the 10-MW Pasargad Solar Farm of Damghan coming into operation.

Making the remarks on the sidelines of inaugurating the mentioned solar farms in Damghan County, in central Semnan province, Kamani said: "This power plant has a special feature as it can generate electricity from the reflection of sunlight. This feature makes its generation efficiency higher, which means it will have a 40-percent increase in efficiency".

"It is hoped that by setting up other



renewable power plants, we will soon be able to implement the 10,000-MW renewable power plant program", the head of SATBA stated.

Iranian Energy Ministry has put it on the agenda to add 10,000 MW to the capacity of the country's renewable power plants by the end of the current government's administration (August 2025).

Considering the fact that the country's renewable power generation capacity stood at about 800 MW when the current government took office in August 2021, the mentioned increase in renewable energy capacity would mean a 13-fold rise.

Back in January 2022, the Energy Ministry and some of the country's private contractors signed memorandums of understanding (MOU) for cooperation in the construction of new renewable power plants across Iran.

Renewables, including hydropower, account for nearly seven percent of the country's total energy generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

A joint chamber of commerce to be established between Iran, Saudi Arabia

From page 1 ► Pointing out that Iran and Saudi Arabia are two big and important countries in the region, Kashefi said political and economic cooperation between the two countries is the basis for stability in the region.

"Saudi Arabia is one of the few countries in the region with which we do not have a joint chamber of commerce, the official said, adding, "With the follow-up of the Iran Chamber, a joint chamber of commerce between the two countries will soon be established, and it will be a useful step to advance the economic goals of Iran and Saudi Arabia."

"Also, we plan to start the exchange of trade delegations immediately after the reopening of the embassies and the deployment of the ambassadors of the two countries", he added.

According to Kashfi, there are many fields, including oil, gas, petrochemicals, and knowledge-based, for cooperation between the two countries, and these capacities should be used.

Tehran and Riyadh reached an agreement in early March to resume diplomatic relations after years of hostility. The talks were brokered by China.

According to the National,



Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that his country is ready to support a follow-up process between Saudi Arabia and Iran to restore diplomatic relations.

Xi's comments came in a phone call with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, state media CCTV reported.

The crown prince told Xi of the importance of the strategic relations between the two

countries and that he appreciated Chinese efforts to develop relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, said the kingdom's official state media SPA.

"During the call, they reviewed aspects of the partnership between the kingdom and China, and joint coordination efforts to enhance cooperation between the two countries in various fields," SPA said.

Iranian Foreign Minister

Hossein Amir Abdollahian has said like Saudi Arabia his country also intends to invite the Saudi king to visit Iran.

Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz has sent an invitation letter to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi asking him to pay a visit to Riyadh.

"We will also send a similar invitation to the King of Saudi Arabia," Amir Abdollahian told Al Jazeera on March 27.

Iran-Iraq annual trade increases 20%



TEHRAN- The value of trade between Iran and Iraq increased by 20 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20), Head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce Yahya Ale-Es'haq announced.

Putting the two countries' annual trade value at \$9 billion in the previous year, Ale-Es'haq said that the neighbors are determined to develop economic relations, as in the past, and believe that they should achieve the planned goals.

The head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce further anticipated that the value of trade between the two sides will also rise in the current year.

Considering Iran's vast export capacity and Iraq's large market for Iranian goods, both sides want to expand the volume of bilateral economic exchanges.

Iran and Iraq have set a target of \$20 billion in annual trade, and businessmen and authorities of both countries are determined to meet that target, Ale-Es'haq has previously emphasized.

"In general, Iran and Iraq have agreed to improve relations and change the monetary and banking conditions so that the central banks of the two countries will ease the current situation and solve the problems," he has stated.

Iran and Iraq signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on economic cooperation back in January 2021, at the end

of the fourth meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee.

According to the chairman of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce, despite all events that are happening in the region, the relationship between the two countries of Iran and Iraq is on an upward trajectory.

The current administration of Iran under President Raisi has shown great interest in broadening and enhancing trade and economic ties with neighboring states, Ale Es'haq has emphasized.

TEDPIX rises 11,000 points on Monday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 11,235 points to 2.89 million on Monday.

As reported, over 17.92 billion securities worth 124.037 trillion rials (about \$264 million) were traded at the TSE.

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).

The head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) mentioned the measures taken by this organization in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (which ended on March 20) and explained the priorities and key plans of the SEO in 1402.

In a message on the occasion of the New Year, Majid Eshqi wrote:

In 1401, one of the main goals of SEO was to protect the rights of investors and restore their confidence in the capital market. In this regard, various programs were targeted and implemented: (1) Development and

improvement of intelligent monitoring systems in market sectors and financial institutions, (2) Payment of interest through the comprehensive customer information system of Sejam, including annual and annual profits, so that small shareholders can ensure that they receive their profits at the lowest cost, (3) Launching new investment instruments, including certificates of deposit of gold bullion, crude oil and gas condensate, so that small shareholders can invest in basic and relatively inflation-proof assets in small amounts, (4) Diversification of investment funds to cover the tastes and needs of a wider range of retail investors, (5) A jump in the licensing of financial institutions with the aim of improving the competitive environment and increasing the quality of customer service, (6) Building trust through the promotion of the Capital Market Stabilization Fund's status and introducing the shareholder portfolio insurance plan for retail investors, (7) Improving market micro-structures such as increasing the range of volatility with the aim of smoothing the market flow, and (8) Issuing new guidelines for corporate governance in order to protect the rights of shareholders by



publishers. Today, we can say with pleasure that the trust of small shareholders has been significantly restored as a fundamental step towards popularizing the economy.

In addition to the above actions, the Securities and Exchange Organization has always tried to lay the ground for the continuation of sustainable growth and increase the efficiency of the capital market by carrying out structural reforms.

World Bank's forecast of GDP in Kyrgyzstan has not come true: expert

TEHRAN- In April 2022, the World Bank predicted a slowdown in the Kyrgyz economy due to the situation in Ukraine. However, the forecast turned out to be erroneous – the country's GDP not only did not decrease, but, on the contrary, rose significantly. Expert Denis Berdakov commented on these data to our editorial board yesterday (March 28), vesti.kg published last week.

"Indeed, a year ago, the World Bank predicted a decline in GDP by 5% and inflation of 18% in Kyrgyzstan. But at the end of 2022, we saw that the forecast was, to put it mildly, erroneous. In fact, our GDP growth was 7%, and if we take into account the "shadow economy", then we can say that the growth is under 9%. Inflation in our commodity items, as in other countries, was observed, but in general it does not reach 18% unambiguously. At the same time, we also

see an acceleration of investments, and from very different countries: These are Turkey, Russia, and China," he said.

The expert believes that the authorities of the republic have seriously taken up the collection of taxes and customs duties. Thanks to improved administration, digitalization and the fight against corruption, a lot has been brought out of the shadows.



The return of a man who was said must go

Arab states restoring ties with Syria

From page 1 ► According to Reuters, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud will travel to Damascus in the coming weeks to hand al-Assad a formal invitation to attend the summit scheduled for May 19.

The two sides are already in talks to reopen their respective embassies.

The Syrian government has yet to comment and it remains to be seen whether al-Assad will accept the invitation.

The news agency also cited a source as saying discussions for a visit by Prince Faisal Al Saud to Damascus or by Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal al-Mekdad to Riyadh were postponed because of the earthquakes that hit Turkey and Syria in February.

The news comes on the backdrop of al-Miqdad's trip to Cairo where he held talks with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry.

The trip is the first by a Syrian official to Egypt since the war on Syria in 2011. The two diplomats discussed bilateral ties as well as regional developments.

The visit comes about a month after Shoukry visited Damascus to meet top officials.

That followed President al-Assad and his wife's trip to the United Arab Emirates after an official invitation by Abu Dhabi.

Over the past several months other Arab countries have also made moves to restore their diplomatic ties with Damascus, drawing the anger of Washington.

Despite strong opposition from the U.S., some Arab

governments have realized that attempts to isolate Syria is not a solution.

The Syrian government has previously stated its condition to return to the Arab League, saying it won't be of much significance if wide differences between Damascus and its neighbors in the region remain.

Syrian officials have long maintained that before returning to the 22-member bloc, disputes and misunderstandings between Damascus and other sides must be settled first.

This may explain the flurry of bilateral meetings over the past few months – or according to some sources over the past year – to pave the way for Syria's return.

The main issue of dispute is how Syrian government forces have been dealing with foreign-backed militants during some ten years of war on the country.

The same Arab states, now restoring diplomatic ties, had previously set conditions for the country's return to the Arab League such as an end to Syrian government forces' operations against militants, which like the West, they described them as "rebels", and likewise labelled the war on Syria as a "civil war".

Since the first day that violence erupted in Syria, the government has been calling on any Syrian militants to lay down their arms and join the political process.

From one province to another many Syrian nationals did exactly that.

However, this will not apply to foreign terrorists who have travelled to the country and

occupied Syrian provinces, killed hundreds of thousands, and displaced millions of others. Damascus has declared them as a red line.

The Syrian government vowed to liberate the country's soil from the terrorists and dismissed any demands from Arab states.

The former British Ambassador to Syria, Peter Ford, has countered the U.S. and other Western power's narrative that Damascus had waged war on its own people, arguing that the government had every "legitimate" right to take security measures and put an end to the presence of foreign-backed terrorists.

Ford says there was no such thing as a "civil war", adding "the government was dealing with terrorists".

Damascus has been successful in liberating most of the country from terrorists who were supplied weapons, logistical support and other forms of help from outside powers, in particular the CIA and the Israeli regime.

The northern province of Idlib is the only region left occupied by terrorists. Ford says it is no surprise that "civilians, not just in Idlib, but during the ten-year war, fled [militant] occupied areas to government-controlled areas", not the other way round.

The U.S., under the pretext of fighting Daesh, still keeps occupying the oil rich parts of Eastern and North Eastern regions, pillaging the country's natural riches in a bid to prevent the government from restoring vital services and humanitarian

aid to the nation.

Damascus is also strongly opposed to the incursions and presence of Turkish forces in the country's north.

Despite Syria's suspension from the Arab League, Damascus had always retained the support of Arab nations like Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen, while many reports cited other members as voicing their opposition to the decision.

While many Arab politicians have been calling for Syria's return to the Arab world by arguing how Damascus played an important role, the country's return to the Arab League may be considered symbolic. It does reflect the change in the regional approach towards the foreign-waged war on the country.

It also comes during an era as Israel has been increasingly violating Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity by waging attacks on civilian infrastructure and military bases.

Syrian officials have accused Israel of coordinating with terror cells still operating in the country and have vowed to respond to the attacks.

Analysts say the timing for Damascus to take revenge against Israel is not ripe at the moment as the country is still recovering from a decade-long war that was supported by many Western and regional countries who poured vast amounts of weapons and money to militants.

In the meantime, experts say Damascus is taking the right path by forging warmer and closer ties with regional states.

Some of these states are the same ones that once supported the militants who maimed a countless number of civilians.

As many analysts have noted, the same Arab states would have taken the same security measures as Damascus did, had such a vast number of terrorists occupied their countries and maimed their civilians.

The warming of ties between Syria and its regional Arab neighbors is a slap in the face for Israel.

The regime had pinned its hopes on some of these same Arab states that have normalized ties with the occupying entity to join its campaign to weaken Syria after its victory over terrorist groups.

The facts on the ground suggest the opposite, with Arab states distancing themselves from Israel and forging closer ties with Damascus.

This, for now, is a victory for Syria against Israel.

When the time is right, Syrian officials say the country will take revenge for Israel's repeated attacks on its soil.

Cruz's stunt shows sanctions, meddling cornerstone of US foreign policy: Think tank

A US think tank has slammed a bid by a far-right Republican senator to call for sanctions on Argentine officials as yet "another expression of a dangerous addiction to sanctions and meddling" that remains a cornerstone of US foreign policy.

Hours prior to US President Joe Biden's meeting last week with his Argentinian counterpart, Alberto Fernandez, the hawkish Texas Senator Ted Cruz introduced a bill that seeks to impose sanctions on a number of Argentine officials associated with the ruling center-left administration, Quincy Institute reported Monday in its online magazine Responsible Statecraft.

According to the report, among those targeted in the legislation is Argentina's former president (2007-2015) and current vice president Cristina Fernandez de Kircher, noting that Cruz described Kirchner in the bill as a "deeply corrupt politician who has undermined Argentina's rule of law and political institutions".

The hawkish US lawmaker also accused the Argentinian official of "undermining American security interests in Latin America by placing Argentina's institutions at the service of what he called Iran's terrorism



campaign," the report added.

It noted that Republican Congresswoman Maria Elvira Salazar of Florida, who chairs the House subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, will lead the anti-Argentine effort in the US House of Representatives and reportedly intends to introduce a similar bill in the lower chamber.

The report further stated that while the passage of the bill appears unlikely, the legislative move will please other hawkish American lawmakers "who hold Latin America's leftist governments in deep contempt."

The Argentinian president, meanwhile, dismissed Cruz's legislative play as insignificant, calling the Texas senator a

"marginal figure".

While blasting the legislative stunt by the Texas senator as another indicator of Washington's "unhealthy addiction" to sanctions and foreign interference, the magazine insisted that such efforts remain the "cornerstone of the US establishment's foreign policy thinking when it comes to perceived adversaries abroad."

Successive US administrations have always resorted to the policy of imposing brutal sanctions on countries that refuse to be subservient to Washington's self-serving playbook. In Latin America, Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua have for years faced American sanctions and political meddling.

Iran, China, North Korea and Russia, meanwhile, continue to top the list of US sanctions. These countries have in recent years successfully tried to bolster cooperation in different spheres in order to neutralize the impact of US sanctions.

(Source: Press TV)

WORLD HEADLINES

Egypt's el-Sisi visits Saudi Arabia amid financial pressure

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has met Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the kingdom's Red Sea city of Jeddah as Cairo tries to navigate through an acute financial crisis.

The two leaders met on Monday to discuss joint cooperation and regional developments, Saudi state-run SPA news agency reported. El-Sisi arrived in Saudi Arabia on Sunday.

Other Saudi and Egyptian officials, including Saudi national security adviser Musaad bin Mohammed al-Aiban and Egypt's intelligence chief Abbas Kamel, attended the meeting, it added.

Saudi Arabia has been providing substantial financial support to keep the Egyptian economy afloat and has repeatedly come to Cairo's aid since el-Sisi took power after leading the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi in 2013.

Finland to become full member of NATO on Tuesday

Finland will become a full-fledged member of NATO on Tuesday and its flag will be raised at the alliance's headquarters, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said Monday.

Speaking to reporters ahead of the two-day meeting of NATO foreign ministers, Stoltenberg said the bloc was looking forward to a "historic week" and stated that Finland will be a "full-fledged member of the alliance as of tomorrow."

He further said that NATO would "raise the Finnish flag for the first time here at NATO headquarters" at an official ceremony.

NATO foreign ministers will first meet Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba at a reunion of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, Stoltenberg said.

After the war, NATO must "put in place arrangements so that Ukraine can deter future aggression and history does not repeat itself," he added.

Türkiye condemns US, Southern Cyprus deal

The Turkish Foreign Ministry on Sunday condemned the deal between the US and Greek Cypriot Administration that is "encouraging Greek Cypriot side's

armament."

"We condemn the signing of an agreement between the National Guard of the State of New Jersey and the Ministry of Defense of the Greek Cypriot Administration (GCA) within the framework of the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program, under the scope of the U.S. Department of Defense, following the GCA's inclusion in this program last October," the ministry said in a statement.

Türkiye supports the statement made by the Foreign Ministry of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) on this issue, it added.

"The U.S., disrupted the balance on the island of Cyprus to the detriment of the Turkish Cypriots in 2022 by lifting the arms embargo on the GCA. These last steps are also encouraging the Greek Cypriot side's armament.

"We call on the U.S. to reconsider this policy, which in no way serves the stability of the region, and to contribute to a just, lasting and sustainable settlement of the Cyprus issue," the statement read.

Rudeineh condemns Israel's killing of two Palestinians in Nablus

Presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh condemned the crime committed by the Israeli occupation forces in the city of Nablus, which resulted in the killing of two young men, Mohammad Junaidi Abu Bakr and Muhammad Nasser Said al-Hallaq.

Abu Rudeineh said that the continuation of the Israeli occupation authorities' unilateral measures of settlement, killings and incursions into the blessed Aqsa Mosque confirm that they are striving to escalate the situation, tense the atmosphere and drag the region into a spiral of violence and instability.

3 killed in 3 shootings in southern France

At least three people were killed and several others injured in three shootings in southern France on Sunday night, news channel BFMTV reported citing police sources.

The three shootings took place in the city of Marseille. The first was in the Le Castellans neighborhood, resulting in two deaths; the second was in the Les Aygalades neighborhood; and the third was in the city's second arrondissement, killing one. Several injuries were also recorded, with three in critical condition.

A police investigation is now underway, BFMTV reported

The French football association's nightmare: Dates and a glass of water



Paris Saint-Germain fans have criticized the French Football Federation's decision not to stop matches to allow Muslim players to break their fast during the holy month of Ramadan.

And the French federation has banned French league referees and lower ranks from stopping matches involving Muslim players, and the federation has threatened its referees with harsh sanctions for failing to follow its instructions.

Persepolis ranks Iran's most visited World Heritage site



From Page 1 ► Also known as Takht-e Jamshid, Persepolis ranks among the archaeological sites, which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art.

Majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne and reception rooms, and dependencies have made that 13-ha ensemble one of the world's greatest archaeological sites.

Construction of its immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire's king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall ("Hundred-Column Hall").

The terrace is a grandiose architectural creation, with its double flight of access stairs,

walls covered by sculpted friezes at various levels, monumental gateways, gigantic sculpted winged bulls, and remains of large halls.

By carefully engineering lighter roofs and using wooden lintels, the Achaemenid architects were able to use a minimal number of astonishingly slender columns to support open-area roofs. Columns were topped with elaborate capitals; typical was the double-bull capital where, resting on double volutes, the forequarters of two kneeling bulls, placed back-to-back, extend their coupled necks and their twin heads directly under the intersections of the beams of the ceiling.

Narratives say that Persepolis was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as revenge against the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

Noruz holidays draw travelers to lesser-known province



TEHRAN – Tourist attractions across the southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province attracted over 700,000 visitors during the Iranian new year holidays (Noruz), the provincial tourism chief has said.

A total of 736,169 people visited historical sites

and natural sights throughout the province during the mentioned period, Saeid Talebipour said on Monday.

The lesser-known province is home to various nomads and is a top destination for those interested in visiting in person the nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

Many tourists from all over the world tend to observe the lifestyle of these hardworking people and spend a few days watching activities such as milking, yogurt making, buttering, oiling, woolen, carpeting, and much more. Many Iranian and foreign tourists are interested in sleeping in nomadic black tents.

UNESCO sites at a glance

Joya de Ceren Archaeological Site

Joya de Ceren was a pre-Hispanic farming community that, like Pompeii and Herculaneum in Italy, was buried under an eruption of the Laguna Caldera volcano c. CE 600. Because of the exceptional condition of the remains, they provide an insight into the daily lives of the Central American populations who worked the land at that time.

Not long afterwards, it was destroyed by the eruption of the Loma Caldera. The site was discovered during the construction of grain-storage silos in 1976 when a clay-built structure was exposed by a bulldozer. Excavations were resumed in 1989 and have been continuing since that time.

The circumstances of the volcanic event led to the remarkable preservation of architecture and the artefacts of ancient inhabitants in their

original positions of storage and use, forming a time capsule of unprecedented scientific value that can be appreciated in present times.

Underneath the layers of volcanic ash, the best-preserved example of a prehispanic village in Mesoamerica can be found, with architectural remains, grouped into compounds that include civic, religious and household buildings.

To date, a total of 18 structures have been identified and 10 have been completely or partially excavated. All structures are made of earth and important features like thatch roofs and artefacts found in situ have been recovered.

The excavated structures include a large community (public) building on the side of a plaza, two houses of habitation that were part of domiciles, three storehouses, one kitchen, and a sweat bath.



TEHRAN – Among terrifying places to travel might initially appear to be the desolate deserts. On the Iranian plateau, however, there has been a growing allure for flocked there.

For nature enthusiasts, the trump card of Iran's Kerman region, maybe a trip out to Kaluts to see the eerily barren land situated within the UNESCO-registered Lut Desert.

Giant dunes, shifting sands, salt plains, wind-hewn Kaluts, meteorite fields, and rocky terrain provide an epic journey of breathtaking beauty and wilderness through the massive harsh desert.

Also known as Dasht-e Lut, the desert is a top destination for those who are in search of new adventures; outstanding scenery and unparalleled serenity are probably tops on the list.

An absolute must, recommended

A trip out to Kaluts in eerily barren land



by travel guides, giant Kaluts are best seen at sunrise or sunset due to the dramatically changing colors.

Out here in the Lut Desert, nothing grows at all, and dramatic erosional features known as Kaluts are the

main magnetism.

Be sure to spend a few hours wandering around, climbing, and exploring this utterly unique natural phenomenon.

The Lut Desert is one of the hottest and driest places on Earth in the summer, so take caution and avoid being outside during prime time. You'll require a jacket during the winter.

Seven years of satellite temperature data analyzed by NASA show that the Lut Desert is one of the hottest places on Earth.

Between June and October, this arid subtropical area is swept by strong winds, which transport sediment and cause erosion on a colossal scale.

Guided tours are the safest way to get out there and camp overnight in the desert under an enchanting sea of stars.

3.5m sea trips recorded in Hormozgan during Noruz

TEHRAN –Over 3.5 million maritime trips have been recorded in the southern province of Hormozgan during the Persian new year holidays, a local tourism official has said.

Noruz travelers made a total of 3,649,688 sea trips from and to the islands of the province, Hossein Abbasnejad explained on Monday.

The Islamic Republic has launched projects to take advantage of southern coasts to make the best use of its maritime tourism potential using developing hospitality infrastructures, diversifying sea routes, and drawing private sector investors. According to official data, some 45 offshore terminals are operating on the northern and southern coasts of the country.

Experts say that the boom in maritime tourism can pave the way for Iran to meet its ambitious target of attracting 20 million annual tourists by 2025 as it also keeps an eye on tourism developments in the Caspian Sea in the north.

With widening facilities in the free zones of Chabahar, Kish and Qeshm — each home to tens of tourist destinations — they would be able to

draw sightseers all year round, not just during the wintertime.

Bordering the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman on the south and bounded by Bushehr and Fars provinces on the west and northwest, Kerman on the east and northeast, and Sistan-Baluchestan on the southeast, Hormozgan is widely renowned for having incredible culture and heritage, stunning sceneries, and above all its warm and hospitable people.

It embraces arrays of islands among which Kish, Hormuz, Hengam, and Qeshm are the most popular ones and top tourist destinations in the southernmost parts of the country.

Over the past couple of decades, the coral Kish Island has become a beach resort where visitors can swim, shop, and sample a laid-back and relatively liberated local lifestyle. It is home to free-trade-zone status, with ever-growing hotels, shopping centers, apartment blocks, and retail complexes.

Hormuz, which is mostly barren and hilly, attracts many tourists through its colorful



mountains, silver sand shores, and great local people.

Hengam Island has scenery shores, serene sunsets, and kind natives, which can attract travelers who enjoy a relaxing trip by spending time on this tranquil island.

Qeshm Island is heaven for eco-tourists as it embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines. The island also features geologically eye-catching canyons, hills, caves, and valleys, most of which are protected as part of the UNESCO-tagged Qeshm Island Geopark, itself a haven for nature lovers.

Mazandaran hosts 10m Noruz travelers

TEHRAN – Over 10 million people paid visits to tourist attractions of Mazandaran province during the New Year (Noruz) holidays, which ended on April 2, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Historical and natural sights across the province attracted a total of 10,149,854 travelers to the northern Iranian province during the time mentioned, Sadeq Barzegar said on Monday.

Moreover, the vacationers made over 19 million overnight stays



at authorized and unauthorized accommodation centers within the province, the official added.

Throughout the year, Mazandaran hosts millions of tourists from all parts of the country due to its many

natural sights, such as the forest and the sea.

Sandwiched between the towering Alborz mountain range and the Caspian Sea, Mazandaran has a rich yet turbulent history. An early civilization flourished at the beginning of the first millennium BC in Mazandaran (Tabarestan).

Its insecure eastern and southeastern borders were crossed by Mongol invaders in the 13th and 14th centuries. Cossacks attacked the region in 1668 but were

repulsed. It was ceded to the Russian Empire by a treaty in 1723, but the Russians were never secure in their occupation. The area was restored to Iran under the Qajar dynasty.

The northern section of the region consists of lowland alongside the Caspian and upland along the northern slopes of the Alborz Mountains. Marshy backlands dominate the coastal plain, and extensive gravel fans fringe the mountains. The climate is permanently subtropical and humid, with very hot summers.

Ferdowsi Mausoleum named Khorasan Razavi's most-visited site

TEHRAN –Ferdowsi Mausoleum in the city of Tus, northeastern Khorasan Razavi province, received the topmost number of visitors amongst the cultural heritage museums and sites of the province during the two-week New Year (Noruz) holidays, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Some 150,000 people visited the garden-mausoleum of the illustrious Persian poet during the holidays, which ended on April 2, Seyyed Javad Mousavi explained on Monday.

The garden-mausoleum of Ferdowsi is located in Tus, near the provincial capital of Mashhad, which is one of the top tourist attractions of the country. Tus has been the birthplace of some important cultural and scientific Iranian figures in



the past centuries.

Many Iranians regard Ferdowsi as the greatest of their poets. Down through the centuries, they

have continued to read and listen to recitations from his masterwork, the Shahnameh.

Tus and its historical gates, citadel and ramparts were registered on the National Heritage list in 1996.

The capital city of Mashhad is home to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam, which attracts thousands of pilgrims from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries, and even across the globe.

Dozens of five-star hotels and hostels are dotted around the holy shrine. The metropolis has the highest concentration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces a variety of cultural and historical sites that are generally crowded.

Over 2.2 million people toured attractions in South Khorasan

TEHRAN – More than 2.2 million visitors toured tourist attractions within South Khorasan province.

"A total of 2,269,914 people paid visits to tourist attractions of the province from March 8 to 30," the provincial tourism official said on Sunday.

More than 790,000 overnight stays have been registered across

the province during the mentioned period, the official stated.

Located in eastern Iran, South Khorasan is home to many historical and natural attractions, such as Birjand Castle, Dragon Cave, Furg Citadel, and Poland Desert.

The province is also known for its famous rugs, as well as its saffron and barberry, which are produced in

almost all parts of the province.

Usually, domestic tourism experiences a boom during the Persian new year holiday (Noruz) as numerous Iranian citizens opt for traveling instead of staying at home.

Iran seeks to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas,



mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Gereh Chini: laying cut wood fragments on surface

TEHRAN – The traditional art of Gereh Chini, literally meaning arranging the knots, is the knowhow of laying finely cut pieces of wood on a surface based on a specific design.

Geometric knots that are beautifully and rhythmically repeated are considered an essential part of Gereh. The beginning of Gereh Chini has not been dated exactly, but the Seljuk era (1037–1194) is known to be the first time this craft was used

and Isfahan is its birthplace. Safavid era (1501–1736) is known to be the time Gereh flourished, according to Visit Iran, the official travel guide to the country.

For Gereh Chini, pieces of wood are used in their raw color and no paint is added. According to masters of this art, the plane tree is the best wood to make Gereh. However, wood from other trees such as walnut, beech, almond, silverberry,

zelkova, pear, and jujube are also used to make structures such as doors of shrines, pulpits, doors, and windows, frames, tableaux, dividers, covers for tables and many other decorative objects.

In the art of Gereh Chini, the Gereh or knot is, in fact, intersections of pieces of woods that have been attached by locking in each other and create delicate designs. The finer the wood pieces, the more valuable the product.

TEHRAN - The Islamic Republic of Iran pursues a policy of sustainable development in science and technology with a forward-looking view of humans and the environment, deputy science minister Peyman Salehi has said.

“In this regard, we welcome the interaction and exchange of science and technology with all interested countries and consider science diplomacy as one of the key tools of international cooperation,” he added, IRNA reported.

He made the remarks addressing the 26th session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) which was held from March 27 – 31 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The United Nations can play an important role in the field of technology transfer. In fact, the political will of countries, especially developed countries, helps developing countries to face the challenges ahead, especially in the possible future pandemics, and achieve the goals of sustainable development, he highlighted.

CSTD is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the United Nations focal point for science, technology, and innovation (STI) for development, in analyzing how STI, including information and communications technologies (ICTs), serve as enablers of the 2030 Agenda.

It acts as a forum for strategic



Iran pursues science diplomacy based on environmental protection

planning, sharing lessons learned and best practices, providing foresight about critical trends in STI in key sectors of the economy, the environment, and society, and drawing attention to emerging and disruptive technologies.

The twenty-sixth session was held with the themes of technology and

innovation for cleaner and more productive and competitive production; and ensuring safe water and sanitation for all: a solution by science, technology, and innovation.

Since ancient times, Iran has been famous for its significant contribution to science and technology. Fortunately, after the Islamic revolution,

much attention was paid to paving the way through large investments in the fields of science, technology, and innovation in Iran, Salehi stressed.

Science diplomacy is the use of scientific collaborations among nations to address common problems and build constructive international partnerships.

The share of Iranian articles with international participation has had significant growth of 209 percent during an eight-year period (2013-2020), becoming the Islamic world's leading country in science diplomacy, according to the Scopus International Citation Database.

Since ancient times, Iran has been famous for its significant contribution to science and technology.

Salehi said in September 2022 that over the past year, 18 articles published by Iranian researchers have been cited by Scopus International Citation Database, compared with a total of 101 during the past 40 years.

Some \$55m paid for knowledge-based projects

TEHRAN - The Innovation and Prosperity Fund has paid a total of 27.8 trillion rials (nearly \$55 million) to support knowledge-based companies over the last [Iranian calendar] year (March 2022-March 2023), IRNA reported.

According to the latest statistics, a total of 8,046 knowledge-based companies are operating in the country.

The number of knowledge-based companies in biotechnology, agriculture, and food industries is 362, in advanced pharmaceuticals is 480, in advanced materials (chemistry and polymer) is 1130, and in advanced machinery and equipment is 1721.

Moreover, 326 companies are operating in the field of medical equipment, 1821 companies in electricity and electronics, 1778 companies in information technology, 397 companies in commercialization, and 31 companies in creative industries and humanities.

In line with the law enforced on May 24, 2022, knowledge-based production is a priority of the government so the plan for promoting knowledge-based products has progressed well so far.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei designated the current Iranian calendar year, which started on March 21, 2022, as the year of “Production: Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating.”

Over the past couple of years, the concept of a ‘knowledge-based company’ has changed to a

‘knowledge-based society’, meaning that supporting knowledge-based companies will lead to many social and economic advantages for the public.

The Leader reemphasized the importance of boosting domestic production, as he had done in past years, saying the reason he placed so much emphasis on production was “because it boosts economic growth, it creates employment, it reduces inflation, it increases per capita income and it improves public welfare.”

To this end, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has executed and supported several projects toward the goal of boosting knowledge-based production.

According to the latest statistics, a total of 8,046 knowledge-based companies are operating in the country.

Moreover, the development of an innovation ecosystem is on the agenda, according to which 65 houses of innovation have been set up across the country.

The country's progressing process of development has accelerated with the emphasis on the formation



of the technology and innovation ecosystem and the approval of laws for supporting knowledge-based companies and boosting Iran-made products.

Today, we are witnessing the positive effects of adopting the approach in the economy, culture, and daily life of people.

the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy has reported that the sales of knowledge-based companies in the fiscal year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022) hit 4,000 trillion rials (about \$8 billion) compared to the fiscal year 1399, an increase of 86 percent year on year.

Improving the scientific level of society, achieving high global rankings in the number of scientific articles, references, and patenting, reducing the illiteracy rate, and increasing the number of university courses and students are only a part of the achievements after the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

travel to the field resumed fully after almost two years of remote work.

WFP continued to play an active role in the interagency fora such as the United Nations Country Team, the Regional Response Plan (RRP), the Interagency Cash Working Group, and the Livelihood Working Group.

WFP also continued its fruitful cooperation with its partners, including the Bureau for Alien and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA), UNHCR, IRCS, and international NGOs such as Relief International and NRC, across different forums and scopes.



packs to its cooperating partner, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), in March 2022 for distribution to the communities.

Following the ease of COVID-19 movement restrictions in May, in-person office attendance and

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Precipitation forecast to reach above normal in next 3 months

The country is predicted to receive above normal rainfall over the next three months (February 20-May 21), head of the climatological research institute affiliated to Iran's Meteorological Organization (IMO) has said.

The whole country will meet normal and above normal rainfalls, the northern parts will receive above normal rainfall while southern provinces will receive normal to lower-than-normal rainfall, IRNA quoted Iman Babaeian as saying on Sunday.

This month, northern and eastern provinces will receive rain above normal averages, while in the first month of spring precipitation will be at normal amounts across the country, he noted, adding, during the second month of spring rainfall will reach its peak.

بارش های کشور در سه ماه پیش رو بیش از نرمال است

رئیس پژوهشکده اقلیم شناسی سازمان هواشناسی گفت: پیش بینی ها نشان می دهد میزان بارش در کشور در سه ماهه پیش رو (اسفند ۹۷، فروردین و اردیبهشت ۹۸) در حد نرمال و متعادل به بیش از نرمال خواهد بود.

ایمان باباییان روز یکشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: مجموع بارش ها در سطح کشور نرمال و متعادل به بیشتر از نرمال است اما در نیمه شمالی، بیشتر از نرمال و در نیمه جنوبی در محدوده نرمال تا کمتر از نرمال خواهد بود.

وی اظهار داشت: بارش ها در اسفندماه ۹۷ در نیمه شمالی و شرقی بیشتر از نرمال است، در فروردین ماه ۹۸ نیز بارش ها در محدوده نرمال و برای اردیبهشت بیشتر از نرمال پیش بینی شده است.

The importance of earthquake insurance

Part 2

Planning measures such as selecting appropriate locations to avoid hazardous areas are often neglected in regulations and standard guidelines.

There are many areas with high population densities, which are also indicators of very high earthquake activity. The cities with such situations might be mentioned as Tehran in Iran, Istanbul in Turkey, Tokyo and Osaka in Japan, Mexico City in Mexico, and Beijing in China.

In such areas with the exposure of population and assets, the insurance industry is facing a big challenge; This makes it even more important to get an objective picture of exposure.

By accurately determining the exposure, the most appropriate preventive measures can be implemented; For example, in actual insurance premium calculations, capital accumulation controls, or strengthening of buildings and land use restrictions.

Earthquake insurance is generally done as a supplement to traditional fire insurance coverage. Substantial deductibles to limit compensation and damage accumulation are prerequisites for earthquake risk insurability.

Compared to windstorms, earthquakes (like floods) have only reached a low level of insurance penetration globally. In particular, poorer countries need a large increase in earthquake insurance in order to reduce the financial effects of earthquakes and accelerate reconstruction. To help make this happen, “Munich Re” has been working on a global earthquake risk model since 2007.

A comprehensive risk model for the country provides the possibility of estimating the loss potentials and the benefits of damage prevention measures and ultimately increasing the ability to be insured. Such an initiative has not existed before, especially in developing countries.

Parametric insurance

The rapid increase in the impact and damage of natural disasters in recent decades on economies, especially in vulnerable regions, prompts stakeholders to promote innovative solutions that involve risk transfer.

Determining the maximum possible losses for earthquake events in areas with high seismicity potential is very important, especially in the urban area with the highest population concentration and thus the highest exposure.

Parametric insurance has the potential to be used as a tool for innovation in the insurance industry. The increasing challenges related to the vulnerability of human societies and their assets against natural disasters cannot usually be dealt with by active insurance.

The need to increase the resilience of vulnerable communities against natural disasters can be answered with parametric insurance (or index-based insurance).

Parametric insurance policies are products that are paid when an earthquake meets or exceeds the intensity of the insured ground shaking at a specified location and the insured suffers damage.

This insurance is usually paid within 30 days after an event. Parametric insurance usually includes extensive coverage so that payments can be used to cover property replacement, repair costs, business expenses, lost income, employee benefits, and expenses, or any other expenses the policyholder may

incur following a disaster.

To prove the damage, a simple confirmation of the amount of the damage, signed by the insured's agent after agreeing to the conditions and finalizing the price, is mandatory.

The main features of this insurance are that the compensation is fast and cash is paid immediately. Moreover, in case of occurrence, payment is guaranteed.

Earthquake risk is covered by this type of insurance in countries such as Turkey, Mexico, and Chile, and recently in Greece, which shows significant damage history with the impact of this risk and efforts to reduce the vulnerability of society.

In 2011, the World Bank introduced a program called the “Global Parametric Insurance Facility” aimed at supporting parametric insurance and created a financial instrument to promote it.

The Caribbean Disaster Risk Insurance Facility established parametric insurance policies to help Caribbean countries in 2007 limit financial losses from natural disasters.

Since 2015, the first flight delay insurance in China has been offered as a parametric insurance that pays up to 300 Yuan (40 USD). In 2017, European firm “Swiss Re” created parametric insurance that the reinsurer called “the first hurricane warning insurance product for businesses operating in Hong Kong.”

AXA also ensures customers against emerging climate risks by creating a global parameters division. For developing countries with a lack of resources that have problems in the financing process of responding to natural disasters, the participation of the private sector is also an important solution.

Despite the advantages of this product, the demand for parametric insurance products is still lower than expected. It seems that the low probability and at the same time the complexity of these types of risks are the reasons for the low demand for the parametric insurance product.

For risks with low probability and high impact - in the case of most natural disasters - the process of disaster risk management is to focus on the coordination of several areas of regional and national risks and to create innovative insurance products.

This may be achieved with parametric insurance. Parametric insurance is increasingly needed as a tool to cover damages caused by various natural disasters.

The future of earthquake insurance

In January 1994, when the Northridge earthquake, an M6.7 earthquake, struck Southern California and caused \$26.4 billion in damage, the insurance industry ended up paying out more than it had collected in the earthquake.

Insurance premiums in the last 30 years, while no insurance company has gone bankrupt, some have come very close to bankruptcy. In order to recover their financial strength and better prepare for the next earthquake, most insurers began to limit their exposure to earthquakes.

In addition, most insurers asked for both rate increases and increases in deductibles from the current 10 percent to 15 percent or more.

This started a crisis that in mid-1996 threatened the life of the state's housing market and halted the state's recovery from recession. Don't forget that Earthquake insurance is a new earthquake insurance product. Concluded



People welcome Karaj tulip festival

The ninth edition of the Karaj tulip festival opened to the public on Thursday, March 30, and will run until April 9.

Over 200,000 tulip bulbs in around 3,800 colors have been planted in the flower garden of Chamran Park in the city of Karaj with the display of a flower carpet measuring 2,700 square meters.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Best way to defend Islam, is to practice Islam.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times» Noon:12:07

Evening: 18:46

Dawn: 4:20 (tomorrow)

Sunrise: 5:46 (tomorrow)

Seljuk literature

Part 4

With their capital, Sharvan (Shervan), in the lands of the eastern Caucasus, the Sharvanshah dynasty also always maintained its independence from the Great Seljuks.

As they deemed themselves to be descendants of the Iranian Bahram Chobin the Sharvanshah gave preference to Persian letters with a certain zeal, and the first half of the 12th century was a flourishing period for this dynasty which had such eminent men of letters as Khaqani and Falaki at its service.

The rich circle of men of letters who flourished in this geographical-cultural milieu included above all a prestigious group of three personalities linked together by a master-disciple relationship.

Khaqani of Sharvan (b. 1126) was a pupil of the poet Abul Ala of Ganja (d. 1159), to whom he dedicated satirical attacks in his masnavi, Tohfat al-Eraqayn.

It is presumed that Khaqani was the master in turn of Mojir ad-Din of Baylaqan with whom he had exchanged poisonous and scurrilous satires.

Khaqani had a great influence on the development of the Persian qasida and played a fundamental role in characterizing the poetic output of this region.

A panegyrist at the court of Manuchehr II at Sharvan and later with the Ildeguzids at Tabriz, he was often in search of new patrons and undertook many journeys for this purpose.

Asir ad-Din of Akhsikat (d. ca. 1174), and the already-mentioned Mojir ad-Din of Baylaqan (d. 1178) belong to the same cultural context; both were active in the courts of other regions along with countless minor poets whose collections have not survived.

Nezami of Ganja (d. 1208-9), one of the literary geniuses of the period, was also linked to the Ildeguzids while keeping a distance from court life and defending his own artistic freedom.

He passed his entire life in Transcaucasia and he was on good terms with Ildeguz, Pahlavan Mohammad and Qezel Arslan. In fact the poem Khosrow o Shirin was dedicated to Pahlavan Mohammad and Qezel Arslan.

Other literary figures of great importance in this region also included the multi-faceted Falaki of Sharvan (d. sometime between 1122 and 1160), panegyrists of Manuchehr II Sharvanshah and the court astronomer, Zahir of Faryab (1155-1201), an erudite poet, learned in the sciences and specially in astronomy who, after spending his youth roaming from court to court as a panegyrist (at Nishapur, at Isfahan, and in Mazandaran), finally found himself an acceptable position with the Ildeguzids in Azerbaijan.

As well as his qasidas, often compared to those of his great contemporaries, Anwari and Khaqani, he is also attributed with an astrological treatise in which he criticized a prognostic drawn up by Anwari that later proved to be incorrect.

The geographical closeness of the territories subject to the Ildeguzids and those under the Sharvanshah encouraged the flow of intellectuals and poets from one court to the other.

It is also possible to speak of a certain similarity of inspiration and of style between the poets born and educated in these areas, to the point of defining them as belonging to the 'Azerbaijan school'.

The complexity of the language and of the compositional techniques, the originality and multiplicity of the themes, the presence of Persian archaisms and, at the same time, a wide range of borrowings from Arabic vocabulary are among the stylistic features which are common to poets in this cultural context compared with other contemporaries closer to the Khorasani style.

It should be remembered that many writers in the Seljuk period did not always enjoy good fortune in a single court but, through ambition or necessity, had to seek protection and economic support from different sovereigns and cannot therefore be linked in a definitive manner to one dynasty or another.

Emblematic within this category is the case of Osman Mokhtari of Ghazna (ca. 1074-1119) who began his literary career in the Ghaznavid court.

Unable to find a suitable place in the court of Masud III, he went first to Lahore, then to Balkh, and finally to Kerman where he served for three years as a panegyrist at the court of the Seljuk prince Moezz ad-Din Arslan Shah Qavordi, which he then left to return to Ghazna to Masud III.

The latter named him malek al-sho'ara, but the ascent of Bahramshah saw him in exile once again at the Qarakhanid court in Samarqand where he composed various poems in praise of Qelich Tamghach Khan.

During his wanderings he sent various panegyrics to notables of the time, pursuing his restless search for a suitable patron. For example, he dedicated his most important philosophical masnavi, Honar-nama, to the Ismaili governor of Tabas, Esmail Gilaki.

The complexity of his poetic corpus is shown by the fact that his divan is traditionally subdivided into Ghaznaviyyat, Kermaniyyat and Samarqandiyyat: each of these sections comprises the panegyrics dedicated to the various sovereigns and to the personalities in their entourages, while a fourth section contains those compositions which cannot be catalogued according to patron.

It all provides interesting evidence of the sense of fluidity of the territorial, cultural and ideological borders with which the intellectuals of the time were prepared to live their professional lives.

Genres of Poetry: An aristocratic feudal environment such as that of the 11th and 12th centuries implies a type of literature characterized by fixed genres and by a code of forms and themes; despite this the Seljuk period was one of considerable enrichment of the repertory of contents and images, especially in poetry, and there was a clear evolution in the literary genres and canonical forms of writing.

The qasida was widely used and with very important results despite the sense of weariness and the critical attitude professed by the authors themselves towards this form of poetic expression.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued.

International section of Tehran Quran exhibition opens

From Page 1 ► Representatives of Iran's Al-Mustafa International University, Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly, the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought and several other Islamic centers are participating in the exhibition to brief visitors about their missions.

Culture ministers from seven countries will visit the exhibit and memorandums of understanding will be signed during their sojourn in Tehran.

Several world-celebrated Quran reciters have been invited to perform in different sessions planned by the organizers.

The exhibition will be hosting several competitions on Quranic issues for children as distinguished Quran scholars from across the world have been invited to deliver speeches.

The exhibition was inaugurated on Saturday by President Ebrahim Raisi, who honored a group of top Quran activists with prizes.

Rare copies of the Nahj ul-Balagha, a collection of the sermons, letters and short



A woman visits the 30th International Holy Quran Exhibition at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla on April 2, 2023.

sayings of Imam Ali (AS), and the Sahifeh Sajjadih, a collection of prayers attributed to Imam Sajjad (AS), the fourth Imam of the Shia,

are on display at the exhibition.

The exhibition is scheduled to hold a series of international webinars on the latest studies on

the Quran and Islamic topics.

Publishers from several countries are showcasing their latest offerings on the Quran.

Iran's "Motherless" named best Asian film at Bengaluru festival



Amir Aqai acts in a scene from "Motherless".

TEHRAN – Iranian drama "Motherless" has been selected as one of the two best films of the Asian competition at the Bengaluru International Film Festival in India.

Written and directed by Seyyed Morteza Fatemi, the film is about Amir-Ali and Marjan, an educated, middle-aged couple, who lead a quiet life. When Marjan insists on renting a womb and a surrogate mother enters their

life, unintentionally they go through different tests and face moral dilemmas.

It was named best film at the 21st Dhaka International Film Festival in Bangladesh.

The winners of the Bengaluru International Film Festival were announced last week as "Before, Now & Then" by Indonesian director Kamila Andini won the other award for best film in the Asian competition.

In this film, Nana, a gentle, beautiful young woman, escapes a violent anti-communist purge. Afterwards she lives comfortably as the second wife of a rich Sundanese man but her past re-emerges in her dreams.

The award for second best film was given to "Sand" by Visakesa Chandrasekaram from Sri Lanka.

The follows a former rebel who returns home from military detention searching for his missing lover whose plight was yet to be

revealed by the rebel's soothsaying mother.

"A Tale of Two Sisters" by Bangladeshi director Akram Khan and "Viraatapura Viraagi" by Indian filmmaker B. S. Lingadevaru won the awards for third best film.

"A Tale of Two Sisters" tells the story of Rahela and Saleha, two daughters of a peasant family in a Bengal village, who marry two sons from another peasant family at a young age. Accidentally, the irony of fate changes the course of their lives. In 1971, during the Bangladesh Liberation War against Pakistan, his own house seems to become a battlefield. The two sisters Rahela and Saleha become helpless.

"Viratapura Viragi" is a biopic about Hanagal Sri Kumar Shivayogi, an Indian saint and the founder of All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha.

"In" by Badiger Devendra from India was awarded the special jury mention.

"The Big Black Bird" swoops down upon Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – German writer Stefanie Hofler's family story "The Big Black Bird" has been published in Persian by Fatemi.

Leila Maktabifard is the translator of the book originally published in 2018.

This title is an outstanding showcase for author Stefanie Hofler's writing talent, describing with great tenderness and poignancy the experiences of two brothers in the days that followed their mother's death.

"The Big Black Bird" is a gentle take on bereavement, showing how fourteen-year-old Ben, six-year-old Karl and their father each deal with grief, through flashbacks to the past as well as their ongoing interactions with the people around them.

The book is full of poetic



A combination photo shows writer Stefanie Hofler and the front cover of the Persian edition of her story "The Big Black Bird".

language and striking imagery, with blackbirds and feathers as recurring motifs, reflecting the lost mother's deep love of nature.

In addition to the devastating

account of the brothers' immediate experiences of losing their mother, there are numerous scenes that give us insights into her love for life, her sense of

independence and the wonder, magic and sparkle she bestowed upon those around her.

These shared memories and lessons continue to shape the family's life and enable them to move on and find a way of living with their grief.

This is a truly wonderful book, beautiful in style and profoundly human and uplifting.

Hofler was born in 1978 and studied German, English and Scandinavian language and literature in Freiburg and Dundee.

Her debut "Mein Sommer mit Mucks" was nominated for the German Children's Literature Award, and she received the Luchs des Jahres prize for her 2017 novel "Der Tanz der Tiefseequalle". She lives with her family in a small town in the Black Forest.

A successful example of a great teamwork

A review session for the book "Memory Writing in the Local Context of the Sacred Defense"

As IBNA reported, in the presence of general Abbas Bayrami, and Writers and publishing activists such as Ali Asghar Jafari, Muhammadreza Sangari, Mohsen Shahrezaei and Masumeh Ramhormozi, a review session was held for the book "Memory Writing in the Local Context of the Sacred Defense".

At the beginning of the session, Ali Asghar Jafari said that the progress of the Sacred Defense Literature Organization is due to the efforts of many people who have done good cultural work for the organization these years, such as Professor Babaei, Professor Foroughi, Professor Hesam.

He stated that recent events have shown that some of our eighties and nineties need to be given more information and children and adults from these generation the sequence of our civilization must be determined for the new generation, and a major part of our

history lies in the Sacred Defense.

According to Jafari, we can only do impressive works in the field of the Sacred Defense through literature.

Mohsen Shahrezaei said that from 2013 until now, when the Memory Council of the Organization of Literature and History of the Sacred Defense decided to launch a series of educational workshops across the country with the aim of training new writers, many young writers were trained.

Every workshop that was held, one person added an article to complete it and with the conditions of the day. In this book, there are seven workshops, which were given by 11 people, all of whom were pamphlet veterans and writers whose names are given in the book.

Shahrezaei pointed that memory is a living being and this living being is being renewed day by day.

He also added that "Memory Writing in



the Local Context of the Sacred Defense" is an example of successful teamwork and if we refer to history, we have very strong teamwork in Iran. This book is a highly successful example with a mix of young and old authors.

Mohsen Shahrezaei mentioned that biosphere means ecosystem and it is rightly defined here; That is, how memory writing has been formed in this ecosystem and how this growth should be formed.