

TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 100,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 44th year | No. 14477 | Wednesday | April 26, 2023 | Ordibehesht 6, 1402 | Shawwal 5, 1444

Interview **T** Any country that bet on foreign powers is in 'shock' now: Lebanese researcher

By Sondoss Al Asaad

TEHRAN - A high-ranking Hamas delegation visited Saudi Arabia for the first time since 2015. It was announced that the trip by Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas political bureau chief, is to perform Umrah, but political observers believe that it is in the context of the Iranian-Saudi rapprochement and ongoing regional reconciliations, especially after the release of a number of Palestinian detainees held by the Saudi kingdom.

Musa Abu Marzouk, former head of the Hamas political bureau, met Prince Turki al-Faisal in 1988 in Jeddah. However, the Saudi authorities' arrest of Hamas representative Muhammad al-Khudari and 60 others under the pretext of collecting funds to support the resistance worsened relations between the two parties.

Haniyeh's travel to the kingdom also coincided with the visit of Syrian ▶ Page 5

Iran, Syria discussing expansion of economic ties

TEHRAN- Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash arrived in Syria on Tuesday morning at the head of a high-ranking delegation and was welcomed by Syrian Economy and Foreign Trade Minister Mohammad Samer al-Khalil.

During the two-day stay in Syria, the two countries' officials are discussing the ways for the expansion of economic relations between the two countries.

Tehran, Damascus taking big steps to expand mutual trade

Bazrpash and Samer al-Khalil co-chair Iran-Syria Joint Economic Committee.

Emphasizing the strengthening of economic relations between Iran and Syria, the Iranian minister announced the talks between the officials of the two countries to expand

economic relations in the maritime and rail sectors, facilitate bank transactions and reduce free trade tariffs.

Talking to the reporters after visiting Samer al-Khalil, Bazrpash said about the goals of his two-day trip: "In this trip, the aim is to advance the agreements that were made in the past and lay the ground for new agreements in various fields." ▶ Page 4

Traditional medicine an opportunity for health tourism: official

TEHRAN - The Iranian traditional medicine provides an exceptional opportunity for the development of health tourism in the country, Arman Zargaran, a health ministry official, has said.

Health tourism is one of the important aspects of traditional medicine and there is very serious competition in the international arena to use this capacity, he added.

The Iranian traditional medicine as a valuable heritage of the country has a lot of potential in the field of tourism and international relations, he stressed.

"Traditional medicine is one of the subjects that is given serious attention at different levels in the countries of the world, because it is very important from the perspective of international organizations, such as the World Health Organization and UNESCO."

Iran is one of the few countries with traditional medicine in the world, he said, adding that it is considered a very important potential for the country in various fields of education, economy, science, and tourism. ▶ Page 7



Armenians' Martyrs Cemetery in Tabriz

Evidence of Holy Unity

Body of Christian martyr found after 38 years

By Faramarz Kuhpayeh

TEHRAN - After 38 years, an Assyrian soldier martyred in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s will be laid to rest in Eslamshahr, southern Tehran.

A funeral service will be held for the fallen soldier. The soldier, Jony Beth Oshana, was a conscript in the Iranian Army during the war, locally known as the Holy Defense. He was martyred in the east of the Tigris in a region known as the Badr Operation Field. Since then, his body has remained in

enemy territory, and in March 2023, Iran's search teams found his remains. His identity was confirmed through a DNA test.

But nothing is known about the current status of his family. A few days ago, the Association of Assyrians of Iran released a statement calling for any kind of information on the family of the fallen sol-

dier. "The name of this martyr is Jony Beth Oshana. After 38 years, the body of this martyr has been identified through DNA but the search team has not found any address for his family. So, in case you identified [the family] of this martyr, call the secretariat of this Association," the statement said, according to Vaten Emrooz newspaper.

The parents and all three brothers of Jony have died. One of the brothers was laid to rest abroad and another was buried in the Iranian city of Urmia.

Even the Association had no information on this family and it had no contact with the members of the family. The third brother converted to Islam in his final years and after his death, he was buried in Tehran's Behesht Zahra cemetery. A daughter of this one has been found and the funeral service will be coordinated with her. ▶ Page 3



A portrait showing Jony Beth Oshana wearing a conscription uniform belonging to the Iranian Army



Ayatollah Khamenei visiting members of the family of the fallen soldier in 1987.

Get enchanted by Isfahan's cultural delights

By Afshin Majlesi

A landmark cultural event is currently underway in Isfahan to pay a warm tribute to the ancient Iranian city widely known as the "half of the world".

This week-long celebration gives a chance to explore and immerse yourself in a city that is truly one of a kind. If you are a lover of history, architecture, and arts, then it is an event that you simply cannot miss.

For avid sightseers and cultural

heritage admirers, the event offers an opportunity to talk to many artisans who work here, underpinning its reputation as a living museum of traditional culture.

During the excursion, you may be struck by the intricate detail and breathtaking beauty of the tilework, frescos, and mosaics that adorn Isfahan's many buildings. These are not just decorative elements but are also a testament to the city's long history and cultural significance. ▶ Page 6

Iran's "This Side, Other Side" named best animation at Bridge of Peace festival

TEHRAN - The acclaimed Iranian movie "This Side, Other Side" has been picked as one of the three best animations at the Bridge of Peace Film Festival, an online event organized in Paris, France.

In this short animated movie, director Lida Fazli shows we are always so afraid of the other side, even though we are all the same. When a war rips their world apart, a little girl and lit-

tle boy from two sides come together to heal it with their magical crayon. But we all know that's just fantasy. Real wars are not so easy to stop; the damage is not so easy to fix.

The film has previously been showcased in dozens of international festivals and won several prizes, including the UNICEF Award at the 2020 Biennial of Animation Bratislava in Slovakia. ▶ Page 8

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Tehran Papers **T**

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

The end of the opposition unity circus

Ham Mihan analyzed the disputes between opposition groups based in western countries. It wrote: Hamed Esmailiyou's separation from the charter meeting is not the end of this union, but it can be a clear sign that this process has started and will continue unstoppably. ▶ Page 2

Iran FM visits Muscat

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abadollahian left Tehran for Muscat on Tuesday at the invitation of his Omani counterpart Badr Albusaidi.

The Iranian foreign ministry said Amir Abadollahian is leading a political delegation. He was set to meet senior Omani officials to discuss bilateral, regional, and international issues, according to the ministry.

The Iranian foreign minister will also take a tour to the Lebanese capital on Wednesday in a two-day visit that will include meetings with senior Lebanese officials, according to Lebanese news website El-Nashra.

In Beirut, Amir Abdollahian will meet with Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati, and Foreign Minister Abdullah Bu Habib on Thursday.

The visit comes after a flare-up between Israel and Lebanon. Israel committed aggression against southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip after Palestinian elements fired rocket at Israel from there. ▶ Page 3

Iran punishes individuals, firms in EU, UK as retaliation

TEHRAN - The Iranian Foreign Ministry has imposed sanctions against a number of individuals and organizations in the United Kingdom and the European Union as a retaliation to their newest sanctions on Iran.

In a statement released on Monday night, the ministry listed the individuals and organizations under new Iranian sanctions.

The sanctions were put in place in accordance with the decisions made by the relevant Iranian authorities and in response to actions taken by some EU and UK individuals and legal entities to support terrorist organizations and to incite and encourage acts of terrorism and violence against the Iranian people, the Foreign Ministry stated.

According to the statement, the people and organizations that have been sanctioned have meddled in the internal affairs of Iran and have incited violence and disturbance all throughout the nation. ▶ Page 2

Iran imposes retaliatory sanctions on EU, UK

TEHRAN PAPERS

The end of the opposition unity circus

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

From page 1 ▶ The failure of this union will cause great disappointment for the Iranians abroad who do not have strong political tendencies. For the first time they had thought the opposition was able to form a union.

The solidarity charter was a copy of two charters published in Czechoslovakia in the 1980s during the communist era. The charter that was published following the arrest of 19 members of an underground rock band and was spontaneously joined by elites and lawyers and totally more than 70 people is known as Charter 77. A charter that plays a significant role in the struggles of the Czechoslovak people. But the copying of the members of the Charter of Solidarity from Charter 77 (which was written in collaboration with Václav Havel who was Czech playwright, politician and author), neither in form nor in content, could have such a function. Therefore, it is rapidly being destroyed.

Vatan-e-Emrooz: Decline of Israeli regime's deterrence

In its editorial, Vatan-e-Emrooz discussed the decline of Israel's deterrence power. It wrote: With the strategy of "arming the West Bank" which has been repeatedly emphasized by Iran and the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, today the Palestinian youth living in the West Bank, and even the 1948 territories, are mostly attracted to the armed resistance. A clear example of armed resistance is the formation of Arin al-Aswad (Lions' Den).

This group, which includes motivated Palestinian youth in Nablus, is actually a new wave among Palestinians who have no other goal but to fight and do not want to enter the political categories of older groups. The members of Arin al-Aswad are the most popular youths among the Palestinian people these days, and the Zionist regime feels very threatened by them.

Sobh-e-No: 'Burn notice'

In a commentary, Sobh-e-No discussed the trend of the attitudes and behaviors of the Hamed Esmailiyoun group. It wrote: "Maybe if Hamed Esmailiyoun had listened to the people who advised him that politics is not a place for anger and revenge, he would not have faced this destiny and misery, because union between the hypocrites

(MKO/MEK) and the royalists is practically impossible and he has now become a puppet of the Israeli regime and the hypocrites for trade in the area of betrayal. The byway that falls through and the unstable personality of Esmailiyoun will eventually turn him into a "burn notice" who will be omitted when his expiration date is over.

Arman-e-Emrooz: The talisman of first step

In a commentary, Arman-e-Emrooz discussed the situation of interaction between Iran and the United States. It wrote: To publicize the exchange of prisoners in the media, or at least to declare its details, seems to cost the Biden government dearly, and for this reason, it seems that they are looking for another time to do this because they intend to free Iran's blocked money in return.

These suspicions have created this mindset that at this point in time, an improvement of relations between Iran and America is possible, but it has been spelled and none of them take the first step in this way. The spell that is also clearly defined in speeches and comments of the authorities of the parties and each of the parties considers the other to be the reason for lack of progress in the negotiations.

Kayhan: Criticism of the censorship of a big event

In an opinion piece in Kayhan, Hossein Shariatmadari criticized the media related to reformists for censoring the huge crowd at the Eid al-Fitr prayers. He wrote: The pointed huge event was unique from three angles - religious, professional and national. It also had an unimaginable importance. Therefore, the media under the management of reformists have not only ignored religious principles, but also ignored their patriotism and Iranian nationality and violated the well-known professional principles!

Siasat-e-Rooz:

In its editorial, Siasat-e-Rooz addressed the new Western sanctions against Iran. It wrote: The tactic of the West to repeat false claims and impose sanctions is not an authoritative approach; rather it originates from their chain of failures in domestic, regional, and global arenas, which is a clear document of decline of America and the rise of multilateralism without the role of the West.

Top commander says US and Israel numb against IRGC capabilities



Fadavi explained, the IRGC "creates a power that no evil power, like that of the Americans and the Zionists, can withstand it."

He added the Islamic Revolution cannot be protected just militarily and that the IRGC's primary duty is to safeguard the revolution on behalf of the Iranian people.

On Saturday, Iran commemorated the founding anniversary of the IRGC.

Nasser Kanaani, a spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, stated in a tweet on the occasion that the IRGC is a "powerful arm" that protects the Islamic Republic and its national interests while erasing the country's fiercest adversaries.

In the struggle against terrorist organizations present in the region, the IRGC has also made significant sacrifices.

The Iranian people have also benefited from it in difficult times like natural disasters.

Iran places high priority on evacuating citizens from Sudan

TEHRAN- Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Monday evening that it is working on appropriate plans to safely evacuate Iranian citizens from Sudan, where fighting has raged for more than a week between the army and a rival paramilitary group.

It said that from the start of the crisis in Sudan, the ministry has coordinated the necessary actions for the evacuation of Iranian people from Sudan.

The Foreign Ministry further stated that monitoring and dealing with the predicament and safety of Iranian expats considered a top concern.

Other nations have also hurried to evacuate



their people from Sudan, including Western, Arab, and Asian governments.

Since April 15, the country in northeastern Africa has seen violence between the military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

UN official promises to assist in easing Iran sanctions

TEHRAN - The United Nations is asking the Security Council to ease Western sanctions against Iran, a senior UN official said on Tuesday.

"Humanitarian agencies, and people like myself representing them everywhere in the world where there are sanctions, work very hard to mitigate the impact of those sanctions in humanitarian terms, and Iran is no different from anywhere else in that regard," Martin Griffiths, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, told a press conference in Tehran.

Although sanctions are implemented in various ways, he continued, "Our efforts to mitigate them do not differ regardless of whether it is Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, or any other country."

Griffiths said that the UN relief bodies seek frequent assistance through important member states to offer an exemption through the Security Council and through humanitarian operations.

"We diligently pursue the imple-



mentation of those exemptions," the UN official pointed out.

Griffiths further stated that UN agencies had brought medical and health supplies into Iran to ensure that they are useable and utilized by the people.

He went on to highlight that the UN bodies are committed to ensuring that sanctions do not prevent people who need humanitarian aid from accessing that kind of assistance.

Despite Iran's complete compli-

ance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the formal name for the 2015 nuclear deal, the United States under former president Donald Trump unilaterally exited the pact in May 2018 and re-imposed crushing sanctions on Iran.

Trump's so-called "maximum pressure" campaign did not succeed in achieving his intended goals, but the waves of sanctions had a severe impact on ordinary Iranians, especially many who were afflicted with life-threatening diseases.

The sanctions, maintained by the Biden administration, have limited the financial channels required to pay for essential foodstuffs and medication, damaging supply chains by restricting the number of suppliers willing to assist shipments of humanitarian items to the nation.

Iran has blasted the sanctions as "economic terrorism," "economic war," and "medical terrorism" on several occasions.

In other parts of his remarks, Griffiths also stated that he has addressed the capacities for bringing peace to Yemen.

He mentioned UN actions aimed at averting starvation in Yemen.

Griffiths added that the most crucial prerequisite for any help to Yemen is peace.

On the UN humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan, he confirmed that the nations are committed to assisting Afghans with \$4.6 billion.

The UN official noted that the Taliban was reminded of its obligations to women and girls.

Iran punishes individuals, firms in EU, UK as retaliation

Iran imposes retaliatory sanctions on EU, UK



from page 1 ▶ It also condemned the subjects of disseminating falsehoods and disinformation about Iran and helping escalate punitive sanctions against the nation, which Tehran regards as an example of "economic terrorism."

The Iranian Foreign Ministry condemned the European Union and the UK regime for supporting and facilitating the actions of these individuals and entities, calling their failure to counter their destructive measures a "breach of international commitments in the field of fighting terrorism."

The ministry maintained that the EU and UK most recent move to implement and escalate arbitrary sanctions against Iran is in direct violation of the fundamental norms of international law set forth in the UN Charter.

According to the statement, all relevant Iranian bodies will need to take into account the necessary steps to implement the sanctions, including denying the subjects Iranian visas, preventing their entry into Iranian territory, and freezing their bank accounts and other assets under the control of Iran.

The following is a list of people and organizations that the Iranian Foreign Ministry has sanctioned:

- A) European Union Individuals:
 1. Frank Haun, CEO of Kraus-Maffei Wegman Military Industries
 2. Flourian Seibel, CEO of Quantum-Systems
 3. Christoph Otten, Chairman of the ESG Board of Directors
 4. Ilana Cicurel, Member of the European Parliament (MEP)
 5. Dominique Attias from France
 6. Edward Lintner, former member of the German Parliament
 7. Martin Maria Otto Felix Patzelt, former member of the German Parliament
 8. Leo Dautzenberg, former member of the German Parliament
 9. Christoph De Vries from Germany
 10. Antonio Lopez Isturiz Whites, Member of the European Parliament (MEP)
 11. Uri Rosenthal from Netherlands
- Legal entities:
 1. German-Israeli Society, Deutsch-Israelische Gesellschaft
- B) UK Individuals:
 1. Alan Mendoza, Executive Director of the Henry Jackson Foundation UK
 2. Admiral Benjamin John Key, A commander at the British Navy
 3. Oliver Westmacott, President of AEGIS
 4. Michelle Russel, Head of the Security Industry Authority (SIA)
 5. John Tuckett, Chief of Immigration Services
 6. Laurence Taylor, Deputy Director of the UK

Counter-Terrorism Centre

Legal entities:

1. Royal Marine Air and Drone Center Culdrose (RNAS Culdrose)
2. National Security Support Authority (affiliated with 5MI)
3. Telecommunications Information Licensing Department

The European Union said Monday that it has sanctioned eight Iranians and a mobile telecommunications company over suspected human rights violations as part of its latest anti-Iran action.

The mobile network provider ArianTel was accused of providing the Iranian government with telecommunications monitoring technologies, and the Council of EU Ministers announced that it was banning the company.

The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), members of the Iranian parliament, and the IRGC Cooperative Foundation, which oversees the corps' investments, were also put to the EU's sanctions list.

Based on the EU Council, 211 Iranian people and 35 Iranian-related organizations are now subject to EU sanctions.

The measures include a travel restriction and a freeze on any assets they may have inside the EU.

If European businesses provide money to people subject to sanctions, they will also be subject to secondary measures.

Fresh sanctions were also issued by Britain on Monday on a number of Iranian officials, including four regional commanders of the IRGC.

Iran warns against UCMs humanitarian repercussions



The exclusion of any country undermines the principle of inclusiveness and may result in biased outcomes.

All countries, especially those directly affected by decisions made through multilateral mechanisms, should have an equal opportunity to participate, contribute, and be heard in the decision-making processes.

The integrity and effectiveness of multilateralism are undermined by the abuse of the UN system and selective application of international law, as well as the use of unilateralism, which poses a serious threat to international cooperation, peace, and security.

Unilateral coercive measures (UCMs), including their extraterritorial application, represent a concerning example of harmful unilateral acts that run counter to the fundamental principles of international law, the UN Charter, and basic human rights.

These illegal measures have far-reaching humanitarian consequences and can undermine diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving disputes and promoting cooperation.

Within this context, the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA, re-imposition of illegal unilateral sanctions on Iran,

its coercion of other countries to engage in these illegal actions, and defiance of the International Court of Justice's order are striking examples of how such harmful unilateral acts violate the UN Charter, undermine the UN system and threaten the multilateralism.

In its recent judgment on 30 March 2023 in the case concerning Certain Iranian Assets, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has declared that the United States has violated its international obligations to the Iranian people by imposing unilateral sanctions that are deemed illegal under international law. The ICJ's ruling is final and binding, requiring the US to comply with this decision.

In conclusion, Mr. President, collaboration should be the cornerstone of multilateralism, rather than confrontation. Collaborative approaches foster trust, build consensus, and promote sustainable solutions to global challenges. Through collaborative problem-solving and engagement with all parties, multilateralism can effectively address the challenges facing our world today.

In this context, diplomacy, dialogue, and negotiation should be the preferred means for resolving disputes among member states.

Evidence of Holy Unity

Body of Christian martyr found after 38 years

From Page 1 ▶ On January 1, 1987, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, visited the family of Oshana. An account of this visit has been recounted in the book "Christ in the Night of Qadr," which was published by the Sahba publishing house in 2018. The book narrates the meetings the Leader had with the families of Christian martyrs.

A funeral service will be held for the martyr in Tehran on Wednesday afternoon. Also, another funeral will be held on Friday during the Friday Prayer in Tehran. Then, a third funeral will be held at the St. Joseph Assyrian Catholic Cathedral in Tehran. Ultimately, the martyr will be laid to rest in Es-lamshahr.

The case of Oshana is another example of how Iranians of all hues would take up arms in defense of their country. Iran is a diverse country with many ethnic and religious minorities. Turks, Baluch, Kurds, Lurs, Bakhtiari, Arabs, Turkmens, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, and Sunnis have all defended Iran in terms of crises. During the Holy Defense years, 94 Christians, 11 Jews, 42 Zoroastrians, and 74 Armenians were martyred among others.

And this readiness to defend the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to this day. So far, the enemies have sought to sow division and discord among Iranians but they failed to drive a wedge between them.



Time for Palestine to be liberated: envoy



TEHRAN - Palestinian Ambassador to Iran Salam Zawawi said that the time has come for the oppressed Palestinian people to liberate themselves and achieve their independence.

In an interview with khamenei.ir, Zawawi said, "We, as a Palestinian people, always say we have no Eid, and our Eid is when we return [to Palestine]. However, we are trying by all means and all methods to deliver, through this blessed occasion, a word to the Islamic world: O Islamic world, O Arab world, O friends of the word of truth and O advocates of freedom. Look at the occupied Palestinian people for seven decades. Isn't it time for this

people to be liberated?"

She added, "We are the only occupied people languishing under occupation in 2023 after more than seven decades of occupation. We appeal to the Islamic world to rise up against the injustice of the Palestinian people," according to Al-Alam.

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, underlined the need for helping resistance elements inside Palestine in a meeting with a group of Iranian officials and ambassadors of Islamic countries on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr.

In the meeting, the Leader dedicated much of his speech to the issue of Palestine, saying that Israel is in a state of decline and has lost its power of deterrence.

He considered the issue of Palestine as one of the most fundamental issues of the Islamic world and pointed to the gradual decline of the usurping Zionist regime. "This decline, which began a few years ago, has accelerated now and the Islamic world must take advantage of this great opportunity," he said, according to khamenei.ir.

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out that the issue of Palestine not only Islamic, but also a humanitarian issue. Referring to the Quds Day gatherings and marches in non-Islamic countries, he said, "Anti-Zionist gatherings in the U.S. and European countries on Quds Day is the result of the increasing revelation of the crimes of the usurping Zionists."

He added that the presence of a number of Europeans in support of the Palestinian people is very important, especially in countries that are dependent on the Zionists.

The Leader also called for Islamic unity in the sermon he delivered at the Eid al-Fitr Prayer.

Zawawi said, "The Palestinian people, and the Palestinian state under occupation is incomplete with sovereignty, but we are a Palestinian state. We have more than 52 diplomatic missions in the Palestinian territories representing their countries among the Arab, Islamic and foreign countries inside Palestine. Among the gains of the struggle of the Palestinian people is their access to achieving their justice, fulfilling their word, and achieving their grievances with the recognition of the whole world and the United Nations at the head of this world by commemorating the Nakba Day in 1967, and we will commemorate the Nakba Day for the first time in the world on 15/05/2023 in their home in the United Nations. And they acknowledged that the Palestinian people are afflicted, raped, and occupied, and this is a victory for us, with the help of our brothers from the Arab and Islamic countries, our friends, and the free people of the whole world. God willing, the time has come for this oppressed people to liberate themselves and achieve their independence, the independence of the State of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. May God grant us and you prayer in Al-Aqsa Mosque."

Iran defense chief visits Moscow for quadrilateral meeting

TEHRAN - Iranian Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Ash-tiyani arrived in the Russian capital Moscow on Tuesday to take part in a joint meeting with counterparts from Russia, Turkey, and Syria.

Iran's official news agency IRNA said the meeting is aimed at normalizing relations between Turkey and Syria.

Negotiations to normalize relations between Damascus and Ankara first started on December 28, 2022 with the presence of the defense ministers of Russia, Syria and Turkey in Moscow. In that meeting, the parties agreed on the formation of a tripartite joint commission.

Following the negotiations, it was decided that these meetings would be held at the level of



foreign ministers, and direct negotiations between Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Bashar Assad, the presidents of Turkey and Syria, would also be on the agenda, Al Alam reported.

Earlier, Ankara announced that the Tuesday meeting would be held at the level of defense ministers and heads of intelligence agencies.

Earlier this month, deputy for-

eign ministers of Iran, Russia, Syria, and Turkey held a meeting in Moscow to discuss the next meeting of the foreign ministers. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov delivered the opening speech of the meeting, which was held at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Moscow talks will serve as a prelude to the upcoming meeting between the foreign ministers of the four countries, according to the Turkish Anadolu news agency.

Ali Asghar Khaji, senior advisor to the Iranian foreign minister for special political affairs, who had traveled to Moscow at the head of a delegation to attend the four-way meeting, met separately with the deputy foreign ministers of Russia, Syria, and Turkey.

Iran FM visits Muscat

From Page 1 ▶ Iran condemned the Israeli aggression. The spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry, Nasser Kanaani, said earlier this month that the Israeli attacks were in continuation of Israel's sacrilege of Al-Aqsa Mosque and its attack against Palestinian worshippers.

The Israeli attacks, Kanaani said, are a violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and also a flagrant violation of the principles of international law and the human rights of the oppressed Palestinian nation.

Kanaani called for an effective and deterring reaction by the international community to Is-

rael's aggressions.

After the flareup, the Iranian president and foreign minister held phone conversations with some counterparts in Islamic countries and the secretary general of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to urge an emergency meeting of the OIC.

Kanaani emphasized the need for Islamic governments to adopt a strong and coherent position in support of the oppressed Palestinian nation, prevent the repetition of the desecration of Al-Aqsa Mosque and stop the aggressive actions of the Zionist regime.



SPORTS

Azadi Stadium needs to be renovated

TEHRAN - Azadi Stadium, located in Tehran, needs to be renovated as soon as possible because the complex is outdated.

The complex was built in 1971 and has hosted numerous sporting events, including football matches, athletics competitions, and celebrations over the years.

However, due to its age and lack of maintenance, the stadium is in need of renovation. The facilities are outdated, and the infrastructure needs to be modernized to meet international standards. The seating and safety arrangements also require improvement.

On Sunday, during the match between Persepolis and Esteghlal in Tehran derby, a video went viral on social media in which some parts of the stage in the second floor collapsed.

However, Mahyar Askarian, CEO of Development and Maintenance of Sports Facilities, said there is no danger of falling off the stages.

"I have always said that the media should not create a sense of hopelessness and despair. In fact, the fans should not enter the stadium with worry and stress," Askarian said.

In recent years, there have been some efforts to renovate the Stadium. In 2019, the Iranian government announced plans to upgrade the stadium ahead of the 2022 World Cup. The renovation project is expected to cost around \$300 million and will involve the installation of a new roof, upgraded seating, and improved facilities.

The Azadi Stadium is in need of renovation to ensure that it remains a world-class sports venue. The planned renovation project is a step in the right direction and will help to improve the overall experience for fans and athletes alike.

Feyenoord's Jahanbakhsh calls out Mourinho

Feyenoord's Alireza Jahanbakhsh called out Mourinho and Roma players for their "over the top" celebrations after Thursday night's win.

The Iranian attacker spoke in a press conference appearance about the Giallorossi's post-match celebrations.

"One of the biggest disappointments for us was their reaction after the match," he said. "Especially the reaction of the players and what they said to our coach."

"I thought it was really useless. Even what Mourinho did seemed over the top to me. Our coach didn't say anything outrageous before the game."

"During the match we tried to stay calm. They also tried to put pressure on the referee. I thought every dubious play went in Roma's favor. I thought it was crazy, but as a player you can't do much. We tried to play good football. Unfortunately, we gave away the game."

Participating teams for 2023 CAFA confirmed

TEHRAN - The first ever CAFA Senior Championship will bring seven teams together in two countries.

Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan will host the competition from June 10 to 20.

Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Oman will take part in the first edition.

The teams will be divided in two groups. The teams drawn in group B will play their matches on 10,13 and 16 June. Group A matches will be played on 11, 14 and 17.

The final Match and match for the third place will be played on 20th in capital city of Uzbekistan.

The Draw Ceremony for the Competition will be held on Wednesday.

Footballer Shirchi dies during game

TEHRAN - Iranian young footballer Amirhossein Shirchi died of a cardiac arrest on Monday.

The 23-year-old player, a member of Babolsar football team, passed away in the seventh minute of the match against Naftogaz Gachsaran in the Iran football second tier league.

The player has had a type of heart disease, head of Babolsar football committee said.

Cardiac arrest is a medical emergency that occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating. It can happen to anyone, including athletes who are physically fit and active.

In football, cardiac arrest can be caused by various factors, such as underlying heart conditions, heat stroke, or traumatic injuries.

Paykan lose to Sport Center 1 at 2023 Asian Club Volleyball opener

TEHRAN - Paykan of Iran lost to Vietnamese team Sport Center 1 3-2 (25-22, 21-25, 25-18, 22-25, 15-10) in the 2023 Asian Women's Club Volleyball Championship opener on Tuesday.

Paykan will meet King Whale Taipei from Chinese Taipei and Japanese Hisamitsu Springs on Friday and Saturday, respectively.

The 2023 Asian Women's Club Volleyball Championship is the 23rd edition of the Asian Women's Club Volleyball Championship, an annual international women's volleyball club tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Volleyball Federation of Vietnam (VfV).

The tournament takes place in Vinh Phuc, Vietnam, from April 25 to May 2.

Ghalenoei finalizes deal to become Iran coach

TEHRAN - Amir Ghalenoei finalized his deal with Iran football federation on Tuesday.

Ghalenoei was named as Team Melli coach in March but his contract needed an administrative process. He will lead the National Team until the end of the 2023 AFC Asian Cup with an option to lead Team Melli in the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualification.

The 59-year-old coach is the most successful head coach in the Iranian Premier League history, winning five titles.

Of his five titles, three of them were with Esteghlal Football Club and two with Foolad Mobarakeh Sepahan Sport Club, known as Sepahan S.C..

He managed his nation from 2006 to 2007.

Ghalenoei replaced Carlos Queiroz in the national team.

Queiroz resigned from his position after Iran were eliminated from the 2022 FIFA World Cup in the group stage.

Iran to meet Nepal at 2024 AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup

TEHRAN - Iran will start the 2024 AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup qualification with a match against Nepal, slated for Wednesday.

Iran will also play Jordan in Group H on Sunday.

The competition will take place at the Prince Mohammed Stadium in Zarqa, Jordan.

The 2024 AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup qualification will determine the participating teams in the 2024 AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup final tournament.

A total of eight teams will qualify to play in the final tournament. The host country and the top three teams of the previous tournament in 2019 will qualify automatically, while the other four teams will be decided by qualification.

There will be two rounds of qualification matches, with the first round scheduled to be played between 22-30 April 2023, and the second round originally scheduled to be played between 16-24 September 2023.

Annual honey production in Ardebil province rises 23%



In addition to honey, beekeepers of Ardebil province have produced more than 140 kg of royal jelly, 23,216 kg of pollen, 145,442 kg of wax, 12,854 kg of propolis, and 121 grams of bee venom, which is often used medicinally.

The honey produced in Ardebil province is of high quality due to the migration of beekeepers to flower-rich areas, as well as the production of honey in the rich pastures of the mountains of the province.

Every year, about 300 tons of honey is exported from Ardebil province to Iraq, Turkey, Persian Gulf littoral states, and Malaysia.

Per capita consumption of honey in Ardebil is one kilogram, and the province's need is estimated at 1,250 tons.

Honey is one of the most important souvenirs of Ardebil.

The honey produced in Ardebil province, which is known as Sabalan honey, has been registered internationally and has a national and international reputation.

TEHRAN- Production of honey in Ardebil province, in the northwest of Iran, rose 23 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20), as compared to the previous year.

As reported, 9,036 tons of honey was produced in the province during the past year.

The total number of apiaries in this province is 3,357, the number of people working in these apiaries is 2,747, and the number of beekeepers in the province is 1,434.

National Housing Movement plan enjoys 50% progress in Damavand county

TEHRAN- The National Housing Movement plan enjoys 50 percent progress in Damavand county, in Tehran province, according to Khalil Mohabbat-Khah, the director-general of the province's Transport and Urban Development Department.

In mid-February, the official had said that the speed of implementation of projects in the National Housing Movement of Tehran province is high.

Mohabbat-Khah stated that the speed of implementation of projects in the National Housing Movement in different cities of Tehran province is very good and the physical progress in the cities of Robat-Karim, Shahriyar, Eslamshahr and Damavand is about 20-30 percent.

"The cooperation of builders and contractors has been very good in the implementation of these projects and we hope that we can see the completion of these projects as soon as possible", he added.

A large part of the National Housing Movement projects is being implemented in Tehran province, and according to the statistics, the progress of these projects has been good so far, and this has made the applicants able to have enough motivation to pay the required fund.

Two weeks ago, Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash said that lands have been given to 136,000 applicants for the construction of National Housing

Movement units.

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

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

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

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

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

Also, in July 2022, the minister inaugurated a project for the construction of the first group of affordable housing units for laborers under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

Commodities worth nearly \$712m traded at IME in a week



of steel, 175,000 tons of sponge iron, 60,600 tons of zinc, 13,335 tons of copper, 10,425 tons of aluminum, 500 tons of cast iron and 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate.

Furthermore, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 527,530 tons of commodities valued at more than \$245 million.

Commodities traded on this floor included 160,831 tons of bitumen, 137,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 102,349 tons of polymeric products, 58,000 tons of lube cut, 39,144 tons of chemicals, 23,320 tons of sulfur, 5,058 tons of base oil, 2,008 tons of petroleum products, 290 tons of gas feedstocks and 200 tons of insulation.

The IME also traded within the same week 70,677 tons of commodities on its side market.

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

TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) witnessed trade of 3,154,093 tons of commodities with a total trading value of nearly \$712 million, posting growths of 18 percent and 20 percent in volume and value of trades compared with the week before that.

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor trade of 2,555,886 tons of commodities worth nearly \$434 million.

On this floor the IME sold 1,327,505 tons of cement, 608,000 tons of iron ore, 423,871 tons

TEDPIX jumps 42,000 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 42,335 points to 2.368 million on Tuesday.

As reported, over 21.335 billion securities worth 164.25 trillion rials (about \$390.5 million) were traded at the TSE.

TEDPIX gained 145,000 points (six percent

growth) in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

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).

Iran, Syria discussing expansion of economic ties

From page 1 ▶ "There are high relations between the two countries, and Iran and Syria are at the highest level of political relations, but in the economic field, there is a lot of possibilities to develop ties, and we are trying to expand economic relations", the minister emphasized.

"The most important issues that we are following in the joint committee meeting today and tomorrow include the sea-oriented economy, which has good plans prepared, also in the rail sector, the alliance between Iran, Iraq, and Syria, and the



Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash (L) and Syrian Economy and Foreign Trade Minister Mohammad Samer al-Khalil.

revival and development of rail lines in the fields of cargo and passenger transit are considered", the chairman of the joint committee further announced on Tuesday.

Iran and Syria have been taking major steps for the expansion of their mutual trade ties. The two sides have exchanged numerous trade delegations and Iranian private companies are investing in various fields of the Syrian economy like providing construction materials especially cement and working on several reconstruction projects.

Over 1,500 companies to participate in Iran Oil Show 2023

TEHRAN- More than 1,500 Iranian and Foreign companies will participate in the 27th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2023), which will be held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds during May 17-20.

As reported, the international event will be participated by companies active in various sectors including upstream oil and gas sectors, exploration and production, as well as domestic manufacturers, knowledge-based companies, startups and other companies related to the oil industry, in addition to technology parks and universities.

"Oil Industry, Technological Production, Optimal Consumption" is the motto of this year's event.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has said that the oil and gas sector experienced a

growth of nine percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Oil Minister Javad Oji has recently said that a new record high will be reached in the country's oil export in the current Iranian calendar year.

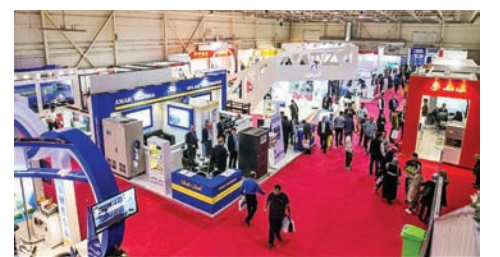
The country's oil export in 1401 was 83 million barrels more than that of 1400, and 190 million barrels more than the export in 1399, the minister announced.

Underlining that now oil export has reached the highest figure in the last two years, the official said, "Considering that the Oil Ministry is one of the main providers of the country's foreign currency; in the 13th government, despite the tightening of cruel sanctions, fortunately, thanks to the grace of God and the efforts of our colleagues in the country's oil and gas industries, there are good records in the field of exporting

crude oil, gas condensate, and petroleum and petrochemical products."

Despite the negative impacts of the U.S. sanctions, Iran has been ramping up its oil production and exports over the past few months.

In his remarks in November 2022, President Raisi highlighted the failure of the enemy's policy of maximum pressure, saying the country's oil export has reached the pre-sanction levels.



Russian high-ranking trade delegation to visit Tehran next month



Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji (R) and Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak

TEHRAN - A Russian high-ranking trade delegation will visit Tehran, concurrent with the 27th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2023), which will be held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds during May 17-20, Ahmad Asadzadeh, the Iranian deputy oil minister for international and commercial affairs, announced.

Referring to the telephone conversation between Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji and Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, who are the chairmen of Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee, on Sunday evening, the official said that the high-ranking delegation of Russia, headed by the deputy prime minister of this country, while participating in the B2B meetings of the two sides, will attend the official inauguration of Iran Oil Show.

As reported, Oji and Novak discussed expansion of economic ties between the two countries during their telephone conversation.

The two sides talked about cooperation in banking, transit, oil, gas and petrochemical sectors, as well as the travel of the Russian delegation to Tehran.

Considered holding joint meetings to review bilateral cooperation and participating in B2B meetings as the main goals of the Russian delegation's trip to Tehran, Asadzadeh stated that during these meetings, bilateral cooperation in the banking, transit, oil, gas and petrochemical sectors will be reviewed.

Pointing to the presence of high-ranking Russian officials, including Elvira Nabiullina, the governor of the

Central Bank of the Russian Federation, in the mentioned delegation, Asadzadeh said that some documents will be signed by both parties on the sidelines of B2B meetings between Iranian and Russian directors.

Iran and Russia signed four documents for cooperation in a variety of areas at the end of the two countries' 16th Joint Economic

Committee meeting in Russia last November.

The strategic document for the development of bilateral relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation was signed by Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji and Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, who co-chaired the meeting.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the event, Oji said that the Iranian Oil Ministry, as the body in charge of the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee, will not only take all the necessary measures to expand strategic cooperation between the two sides in the energy sector, but it will also support the cooperation between all Iranian and Russian ministries, organizations, institutions, and companies.

He underlined the need for establishing extensive banking cooperation between the two countries for creating a suitable and reliable payment mechanism in order to facilitate mutual trade and investment, as well as swapping energy carriers, especially gas, crude oil, and petroleum products.

The minister said that the expansion of cooperation between Iran and Russia will make international sanctions against the two countries ineffective.

Oji underlined the capacities of Iran and Russia in different areas and the sanctions targeting both countries, expressing hope that the signed MOUs and agreements in the meeting will lead to a positive expansion of economic relations between the two countries.

Iran and Russia also signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on transit cooperation last week.

The MOU on tripartite cooperation between the Iran Transportation Development Fund, the International Coordinating Council on Trans-Eurasian Transportation (CCTT), and the Economic Development Center of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was signed in Moscow.

This memorandum of understanding was inked in the presence of Iran's Ambassador in Russia Kazem Jalali, Russian Deputy Transport Minister Dmitry Zverev, Head of Iran Transport Development Fund Davoud Danesh-Jafari, Director-General of the Business Center for Economic Development Center of the CIS (BC CIS) Vadim Ganin, and Secretary-General of International Coordination Council on Trans-Eurasian Transportation (CCTT) Gennady Bessonov.

Based on this MOU, the signatory parties cooperate with each other to increase trade, transit and storage of goods along international corridors, especially the North-South corridor.

The signatories of this memorandum also emphasized the exchange of information, carrying out joint projects, and exchange of specialized delegations to achieve these goals.

Earlier this month, during a meeting between Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash and a visiting Russian delegation headed by Igor Yevgenyevich Levitin, a senior aide to the president of the Russian Federation, the two sides emphasized the necessity to boost the transit of commodities through the Caspian Sea.

During the meeting, held at the place of the Iranian Transport and Urban Development Ministry in Tehran on Sunday evening, the two countries emphasized the development of cooperation in the air, sea, rail, and road sectors and "multimodal transportation".

In the mentioned meeting, the Iranian minister considered the development of transportation cooperation between the two countries to be beneficial for both sides and said while the maritime trade between the ports of the two countries has a very long history, the use of the capacity of the active ports of the two countries in the Caspian Sea can be considered for new cooperation.

The senior aide to the president of the Russian Federation, for his part, summarized the expert meetings and the visit of the Russian delegation to the Rasht-Astara railway route and called for the development of transportation cooperation in all areas.

It should be also mentioned that Iran and Russia reached an agreement last year for reviving the idle section of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) in Iran for expanding transit ties.

The first Russian freight train arrived at Iran's Sarakhs railway station in Khorasan-Razavi province on the border with Turkmenistan last July to officially launch the eastern section of the INSTC.

The Russian train was allowed into the Iranian border in a ceremony attended by First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber along with transport, oil, industry, and agriculture ministers as well as the vice president for science and technology.

The second Russian transit cargo for India entered Iran also from the northeastern Sarakhs border in October.

Iran and Russia are also cooperating in the maritime sector to use the Caspian Sea to shorten the transit route from Russia to India.

Any country that bet on foreign powers is in 'shock' now: Lebanese researcher

'Bahraini opposition and its leaders have proven to be an exceptional example of patience and awareness'



Bahraini political opposition leaders, activists, bloggers, and human rights defenders imprisoned for their roles in the 2011 pro-democracy protests.

From page 1 ► Foreign Minister Faisal Al-Miqdad, after a decade, to Riyadh and also President Bashar Al-Assad's reception of the Saudi Foreign Minister in Damascus.

In fact, Hamas is a strategic regional player, particularly toward the issues pertaining Palestine. It is an integral part of the axis of resistance and has close relations with Iran.

As for Riyadh, it has apparently realized that the Americans cannot be relied upon. This, of course, cannot be separated from the growing role of Iran, Russia and China. Therefore, Saudi Arabia is making every effort to mend its differences with neighboring states and regional powers.

Unquestionably, this greatly frightens the Zionist enemy and makes it nervous. This was acknowledged by the Hebrew channel, Kan, that said, "The rapprochement with Damascus and Sana'a is a cause for concern." These developments as a whole - provided that Riyadh adheres to its rationality - once again confirms the fall of the so-called "Abraham Accords". It also means the victory of the resistance movement and the blood of martyrs, led by Hajj Qassem Soleimani.

Meanwhile, social media activists and political analysts have widely mocked the visit of the notorious Shah's son, Reza Pahlavi, to the temporary occupation entity. His father was loyal to the West and never took into account the interests of his people, in contrast to the Islamic republic, which has strengthened Iran's role and capabilities after the Pahlavi family looted public funds and property.

To delve more into the connotations of the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement, especially on Bahrain, Lebanese journalist - an expert on Bahraini affairs - has interviewed Lebanese political researcher Dr. Bilal Lakkis.

Following is the text of the interview:

"The Saudi side has comprehended the need to move out from the stage of 'reaction' to the stage of 'political maturity'."

First of all, would you like to put us in the atmosphere that paved the way for the Saudi-Iran rapprochement?

Well, the motives for this convergence are multiple; these vary in their significance and priorities. In examining

these motives, it is necessary to examine which of the two parties - currently - is most in need of the other, but the most important thing is that there are two parties who have found that it is necessary to restore bilateral ties. First, there are intrinsic motives for both Iran & Saudi Arabia, and external motives (international and regional). What is meant by intrinsic motives is how each party recognizes the interest in this rapprochement. Secondly, with regard to external motives, and with regard to Iran in particular, I believe that - in the past years - there were internal political currents inside Iran whose main concern was bettering Iran's relations with the West, in addition to the nuclear file. As for the era of the current president, Sayyed Ibrahim Raisi, the priority is rapprochement with the regional neighbours, specifically with the (Persian) Gulf states. For this reason, we have witnessed Tehran showing - in the past two years - its willingness to open up to the Saudi side, restore relations & dialogue it.

"What made the Bahrainis distinguished has been their godly, faithful, striving, courageous, wise, patient and balanced leadership."

What about the Saudi side?

For its turn, the Saudi side was not responsive at first. However, Mohammed bin Salman - especially after the experiments - made sure that his options have seriously failed in all arenas. We remember very well that his speech was hostile to Iran, and that he was in favor of moving the war to Iran. MBS has realized that his foreign policy needed to be reformulated. Therefore, the mere occurrence of this transformation affirms MBS's failures that requires crossing through one corridor and introducing a new political & diplomatic discourse, just as he has brought about so-called 'reforms' within the Saudi community - socially & culturally - in terms of breaking traditional norms. What I mean that he seeks to show himself as a "Man of Arab and Islamic consensus," especially after his image was shaken due to the reckless policies.

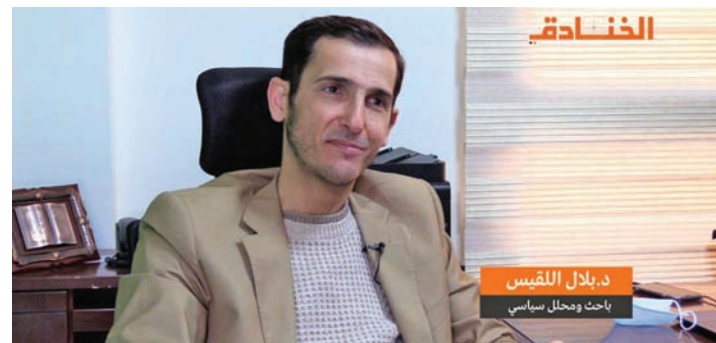
Well, how the idea of China's mediation in Iran-Saudi tensions surfaced?

MBS has realized that there was only one way to bring about this change, i.e. through

the economic track. I believe that the fragile Saudi economy - which is based on oil - requires ensuring security in the region, and this cannot be achieved by relying on the Americans. Relying on the US means the continuation of tension with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and as a result, tension in the (Persian) Gulf region. So, the Saudi side has found it necessary to reconcile with Tehran and reduce tensions. From here came the option to seek help from the Chinese side, since China is a strategic power.

To what extent would this move impact other regional matters?

The Iranian side has been ready for this moment right from the beginning, and has repeatedly warned the Sau-



Lebanese political researcher Dr. Bilal Lakkis

di side for its wrong approach. This openness of the Saudi side to its Iranian counterpart has categorically resulted in a truce with Yemen, reconciliation with Syria, and openness to the Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey & Qatar. Nor is it necessary to mention that the Saudi side has comprehended the need to move out from the stage of "reaction" to the stage of "political maturity". Indisputably, the Saudi side is closely observing the international changes. It has realized that its focus on conflicts is not in its interest, but rather in its interest to benefit from China's economic growth that requires Saudi oil in the future. The Saudi side has found that it is in its interest to diversify its international relations and not to rely on the American side alone. What is meant is that the Saudis are trying to ensure maximum benefit from any climb of the Chinese / Russian / Iranian triple while in parallel maintaining its good relations with the American side. This principle is typically followed by "middle power" countries to preserve their balances and interests, meaning that it is in their interest not to take sides over the other in light of the rapid & unexpected developments.

Doesn't it bother Washington or threaten the rule of MBS?

In my opinion, this approach does not bother the American side. Yes, Washington is annoyed by the Saudi-Chinese strategic rapprochement, but that is not a shift that amounts - according to Washington - to the power after he

has fortified - during the past two years - the pillars of his rule and secured them. On the other hand, MBS has brought about a measured & tangible rapprochement with his fellow people - especially the youth category - in what is known today as "openness" and the decline of Wahhabist influence in the Saudi arena. Consequently, I believe that any American attempt to overthrow Mohammed bin Salman is not in its interest, because that would mean the fall of the entire Saudi entity. The Saudi side is good at its role & performs it rationally, and it will not take any step to provoke Washington, such as establishing security relations with the Chinese side. Yes, it may conduct arms purchase deals with China - but secretly and unannounced. The American considers that the decline in its hegemony in the region can only be compensated for by strengthening its security role. Apparently, the American side is not anxious of China's economic presence because it chiefly relies on its security interests.

Currently, how is this trend reflected on regional issues?

This trend has undoubtedly reflected in the region, and it depends on the extent of its acceleration / deceleration. The mere announcement of the reopening of embassies

has created a state of reassurance among the peoples of the region. On the other hand, this rapprochement has only disturbed some gamblers who bet on the Americans and the Israelis, including the Bahraini regime. In the Lebanese case, for example, many bet on the eradication of Hezbollah resistance by force, then they were shocked by the French efforts to dialogue with it, then by the Iranian-Saudi & the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement, and the preparation of the climate for the election of Suleiman Franjeh as Lebanon's President. Indeed, everyone who bet on the foreign powers and the West - in my opinion - is in "shock" right now. Most importantly, all the reasons for the alleged "Shiite-Sunni" concern have vanished. The intensity of the Arab-Iranian "turmoil" has mitigated into a commendable disturbance within the temporary occupation entity. Besides, the Palestinian resistance factions are growing stronger, thus obstructing the path of normalization. This path has also embarrassed the Bahraini regime, which took refuge in the occupation entity to protect its security from what it calls the "Iranian threat", and has thus invalidated this claim. This convergence will undoubtedly be reflected in the foreseeable future.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

Biden announces 2024 reelection campaign

President Joe Biden announced he's running for reelection in 2024, setting the stage for a potential rematch against his predecessor, Donald Trump.

In a video released Tuesday, Biden framed next year's contest as a fight against Republican extremism, implicitly arguing he needed more time to fully realize his vow to restore the nation's character.

Biden joins a 2024 race that has so far been dominated on the Republican side by Trump, who launched his third bid for the White House in November.

No major Democratic challengers are expected to emerge against Biden, and only two candidates are currently in the race: self-help guru Marianne Williamson and anti-vaccine and environmental activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Only about half of Democrats think President Biden should run again in 2024, a poll shows, but a large majority say they'd be likely to support him if he became the nominee.

The poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that 26% of Americans overall want to see Biden run again - a slight recovery from the 22% who said that in January. Forty-seven percent of Democrats say they want him to run, also up slightly from only 37% who said that in January.

Despite the reluctance of many Democrats to see Biden run for another term, 78% of them say they approve of the job he's doing as president. And a total of 81% of Democrats say they would at least probably support Biden in a general election if he is the nominee - 41% say they definitely would and 40% say they probably would.

Moscow threatens to use nuclear weapons 1st in case of enemy aggression

Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev said on Tuesday Moscow may use nuclear weapons first in case of any aggression against it or its allies.

Opponents should not underestimate Russia's determination, said Medvedev, who also served as the Russian president between 2008 and 2012, during an educational marathon in Moscow called "Knowledge," a platform for open discussions between young people and government representatives.

When asked about climate change, Medvedev responded, "Do you really care about the climate to such an extent? In my opinion, this is nothing compared to the prospect of being at the epicenter of an explosion with a temperature of 5,000 Kelvin (scale). Is there such a prospect today? (Unfortunately,) yes. And it is growing every day for well-known reasons," he said.

The modern world is "sick," and a world war is possible, but it can still be avoided, he believed.

Swedish FM announces expulsion of five Russian diplomats

Sweden has declared five Russian diplomats *persona non grata*, Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom said on Tuesday.

"Sweden is expelling five Russian diplomats," Billstrom said in an interview with the SVT television channel.

Citing Billstrom, Western media said that Stockholm made the decision because of the diplomats' actions which were inconsistent with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

The Swedish Foreign Ministry summoned Russian Ambassador Viktor Tatarintsev to notify him of the decision.

US-backed Venezuelan opposition figure expelled by neighbor

Colombia has expelled US-backed Venezuelan opposition figure Juan Guaido, who had attempted to attend an international conference in Bogota. The critic of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro had earlier crossed into Colombia from his home country in defiance of a court-imposed travel ban.

The Colombian Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that Guaido had arrived in an "irregular manner." It added that immigration officials had taken the politician to El Dorado International Airport in Bogota so he could board a US-bound plane.

Guaido confirmed that he had been forced to leave for the US and condemned the way that Colombian authorities had treated him. "Because of the direct threats to my family and my daughters from the Maduro regime, which have spread to Colombia, I am taking this flight," he wrote on Twitter, promising to "continue to fight."

Ukraine given Afghanistan-style warning by US - Politico

The White House has given Ukraine the same warning it delivered to the US-backed regime in Afghanistan in 2021, Politico reported on Monday, citing anonymous sources in President Joe Biden's administration.

According to the outlet, Washington has urged Kiev not to spread its troops too thin or overextend its ambitions. This is what Biden reportedly told Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at some point, before the US pulled out of Afghanistan and the Taliban took over the country.

The warning came in the context of US fears that the "ever-imminent counteroffensive" by Kiev's forces might fall far short of expectations, leaving Biden open to criticism from both hawks and doves, at home and in Europe.

Politico originally reported that Ukraine had suffered 100,000 troops killed over the past 14 months, later editing that to refer to total casualties, including the wounded and missing. Many of Kiev's top soldiers were "either sidelined or exhausted," the outlet said, having gone through "historic amounts" of weapons and ammunition even the West's "prodigious output" could not keep pace with.

BDS welcomes Oslo's decision not to trade from illegal Israeli settlements

The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) National Committee (BNC), the largest coalition leading the global BDS movement for freedom, justice and equality, warmly welcomed the decision by Norway's capital, Oslo, not to trade in goods and services from illegal Israeli settlements.

Oslo city council announced that it will not trade in goods and services produced in areas that are illegally occupied in violation of international law. Its procurement policy will exclude companies that directly or indirectly contribute to Israel's illegal settlement enterprise - a war crime under international law.

"Following the Barcelona mayor's suspension of ties with apartheid Israel, this Oslo city council decision rejects complicity and promotes human rights. We call on cities worldwide to sever ties with apartheid Israel to support the Palestinian quest for freedom, justice, and equality," BNC said in a tweet.

It saluted what it described as "the tireless work" of Norwegian grassroots groups, trade unions and parties that have made it possible.

Get enchanted by Isfahan's cultural delights



From Page 1 ► In addition to the cultural offerings of the festival, you may have a chance to experience local dishes such as Biryani, Kaleh-Joosh, Khoresh-e Mast, which are a blend of different culinary cultures.

"Long Live Isfahan" has been adopted as the motto of the cultural week, which is observed from

April 23 to 29, according to Sayyed Mohammad Sajjadzadeh who is the secretary of the annual event.

The weeklong celebrations embrace some 200 programs that touch upon Isfahan's hospitable people, identity, literature, culture, arts, poetry readings, arts, cuisine, architecture, music, handicrafts, and traditional sports, Sajjadzadeh said earlier this month.

Isfahan has long been nicknamed as Nesfe-Jahan which is translated into "half of the world", suggesting that seeing it is equivalent to seeing half of the world. Experts believe that the profusion of tree-lined boulevards, Persian gardens, and important Islamic buildings give Isfahan a visual appeal that is unmatched by any other Iranian city.

Monitoring scheme to help safeguard archeological hill

TEHRAN – Alborz province's tourism directorate has recently installed a monitoring system for Tepe Ozbaki aimed at helping safeguard the millennia-old archaeological hill.

One of the pillars of the monitoring system is scheduled photos to be taken from specific perspectives, a provincial tourism official said.

"The most important part of the work at this stage will be monitoring the amount of erosion in different weather conditions," the official explained.

Situated near Nazarabad, some 80 km west of Tehran, the archaeological site has yielded cultural relics dating from the first half of the 7th millennium to the first half of the first millennium BC, i.e. the Medes period.

Experts believe that the discovery of certain objects on the hill indicates some kind of commercial links to Susa in the Khuzestan region, southwest Iran.

The discovery of objects such as tablets, statuettes, and 'jagged' earthenware in the hill indicates some kind of a commercial link between Susa in Khuzestan and this in Tehran province, according to senior Iranian archaeologist Yousef Majidzadeh who has led excavations at Ozbaki, Qabristan and Jiroft hills.

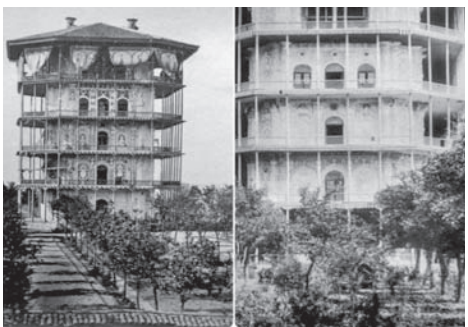
According to the available data, the first well-documented evidence of human habitation



on the Iranian Plateau was found in several excavated cave and rock shelters, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran, dating to the Middle Palaeolithic or Mousterian period (c. 100,000 BC).

From the Caspian in the northwest to Baluchestan in the southeast, the Iranian plateau extends for close to 2,000 km. The land encompasses the greater part of Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan west of the Indus River, containing some 3,700,000 square kilometers. Despite being called a "plateau", it is far from flat but contains several mountain ranges, the highest peak being Damavand in the Alborz mountain range at 5610 m, and the Dasht-e Loot east of Kerman in Central Iran, falling below 300 m.

Gilan to restore destroyed monuments



TEHRAN - The tourism directorate of Gilan plans to revive and restore a number of the destroyed historical buildings across the northern province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

In different periods, many buildings have been constructed and then destroyed over time for a variety of reasons across the province, Vali Jahani explained on Tuesday.

However, the province's cultural heritage department will collaborate with the private owners if they wish to renovate and revitalize these historical monuments, the official added.

The restoration of historical structures keeps alive the time-honored traditions and revives citizens' memories, he noted.

It also could lead to tourism prosperity in the region, he mentioned.

Gilan is well-known for its rich Iron Age cemeteries such as Marlik that have been excavated over the past century. It was once within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenian, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE. The subsequent Arab conquest of Iran led to the rise of many local dynasties, and Gilan acquired an independent status that continued until 1567.

Sophisticated Rasht, the capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

UNESCO sites at a glance

Tsingy de Bemaraha Strict Nature Reserve

Tsingy de Bemaraha Strict Nature Reserve comprises karstic landscapes and limestone uplands cut into impressive 'tsingy' peaks and a 'forest' of limestone needles, the spectacular canyon of the Manambolo River, rolling hills and high peaks. The undisturbed forests, lakes and mangrove swamps are the habitat for rare and endangered lemurs and birds.

The Reserve offers a wide variety of

geomorphological structures. It is a veritable cathedral of limestone and offers one of the most spectacular natural landscapes of the Grand Island and even of the world. The western part of the plateau presents a very dissected or 'lapiezée' relief, most of which is covered by a dense, dry and deciduous forest. In its eastern part, the forest is interspersed by savannas.

The Tsingy de Bemaraha is considered a centre for endemism by its wealth of faunal and floral species.

TEHRAN – Yazd province, whose capital is a UNESCO World Heritage, pursues a scheme to lure more travelers from China.

"We have launched a series of familiarization tours for Chinese travel marketers and tour operators in a bid to attract more travelers from China," CHTN quoted the deputy provincial tourism chief as saying on Monday.

"Effective measures have been taken to attract the attention of Chinese tourists..." Homa Khorshidi said.

"Yazd is a destination for the Chinese nationals, and our arrangement is aimed to encourage that [tourism] flow," the official said.

"Careful planning for the presence of Chinese tourists is one of the measures that can be very effective in promoting tourism in Yazd province," she explained.

The historical core of Yazd is chockful of mudbrick houses, bazaars, public bathhouses, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and centuries-old gardens. From the divine point of view, the city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

In July 2017, the historical core of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Yazd is regularly referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost



Yazd hopes to lure Chinese travelers

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

Apart from its wonderful natural and cultural sites, the central Iranian province has long been a prime destination for spiritual tourism in the lunar month of Muharram when thousands of locals eagerly commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS) and his loyal companions, slain in 680 CE

at Karbala in modern-day Iraq.

Holidaymakers may attend mourning ceremonies, such as Nakhli-Gardani or Nakhli-Bardari, which is a symbolic representation of the Imam's coffin, resembling an Imam's funeral; Tazieh, a passionate play inspired by historical and religious narrations; and Sineh-Zani [beating the chest].

Such religious ceremonies are traditionally attended by many domestic travelers as well as people from France, Germany, Belgium, China, Turkey, Russia, the Netherlands, Brazil, Switzerland,

Italy, New Zealand, Spain, the UK, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Romania, Australia, and Thailand, to name a few.

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

Yazd Water Museum is a must-see destination for the ones interested to know about the brave men who built such underground aqueducts in the past. Located in a restored mansion with a visible qanat running underneath, the museum offers its visitors a fascinating glimpse into the hidden world of qanats through a series of photographs, exhibits, and architectural drawings. It represents nearly 2000 years of unique irrigation structure that has been in operation, yet describes the drilling of mother wells and associated underground water networks stretched to the ancient city.

Meeting discusses Bastam's global registration challenges

TEHRAN – On Monday, during a meeting in Semnan, obstacles and solutions were discussed for incorporating Bastam historical complex into the World Heritage list, Mehr reported.

The ancient complex is situated in Bastam, which is located near Shahroud in the north-central province.

The participants also discussed ways to prepare and speed up the World Heritage listing process for the historical complex, the report added.

Back in June, Semnan's governor announced that Iran is preparing to put forward the Bastam historical complex as a candidate for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list.

It has long been one of the most important and special requests of the region's people to register the complex globally, he said.

It is estimated that the global registration of the

Bastam historical complex will require 300 billion rials (\$600,000) of budget, he added.

However, several special working groups should be formed to expedite the process, he mentioned.

Bastam historical complex includes the holy shrine of Mohammad Ibn Jafar Sadegh (AS), Bayazid Bastami tomb, Bayazid Monastery, Bayazid Mosque, Eljaito Iwan, Ghazan Dome, Jame Mosque, Kashaneh Tower, and Shahrokhieh School, which were built in different eras from Seljuk era (1037-1194) to Qajar period (1789-1925).

The prominent Persian mystic Bayazid Bastami lived in the historical city of Bastam, which is located six kilometers north of Shahroud. The monastery was a simple place where he studied and prayed.

Ghazan Khan, the 13th-century ruler of Ilkhanate in Iran, is buried in the Ghazan Dome, which is a square building of 7.5 height and a dome covered

with turquoise tiles.

Jame Mosque is another building from the complex with a beautiful plastered altar that was restored during the Qajar period.

Kashaneh Tower is a tower connected to the Jame Mosque. It has a cellar that is connected to the top of the tower through a staircase that runs through the interior wall of the tower. The outer covering of the building has collapsed but the lower covering (the current dome) is untouched.

Shahrokhieh School has been built for the use of seminary students with 28 rooms on two floors.

The school also has a very interesting plan and about 28 rooms on two floors, which have been built for the use of students of religious sciences.

The school has a mosque, an iwan, and a zurkhaneh, a special traditional place where men practice heroic sports.

Iran, China deputy tourism ministers meet in Beijing

TEHRAN –Iran's deputy tourism minister Ali Darabi and China's Vice Minister for Culture and Tourism Li Qun met in Beijing on Monday.

Ways to expand tourism and cultural heritage relations between the two countries were discussed during the meeting, IRNA reported.

Iranian-Chinese relations have a long history believed to be developed by the means of the Silk Road... and it has remained stable to this day, Darabi said.

As tourism interactions and cooperation between the two nations increase, many other work areas will also benefit, he added.

For his part, Li said that there should be a greater level of cooperation between Iran and China since both countries have ancient and historical civilizations.

The Islamic Republic's readiness

to host an exhibition of Chinese museum objects in Iran is also appreciated, as such events can enhance cultural diplomacy, he mentioned.

Last week, Iran's deputy tourism minister Ali-Asghar Shalbafian announced that tourism relations between Iran and China are to be strengthened and facilitated by the governments of both countries.

In addition to their many similarities, the people of Iran and China have a long history of relations dating back 2500 years, he said.

They have been in touch since ancient times, as the Silk Road has served as a symbol of cooperation between the two countries, and now, the governments of the two countries are attempting to strengthen their relations, he added.

As part of its efforts to increase the number of tourists from China,

the Iranian government has always been concerned with facilitating the entry of tourists, he noted.

In this regard, the Iranian government has voluntarily exempted Chinese tourists from visa requirements, he mentioned.

Home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, with historical and urban settlements dating back to 7000 BC, Iran seeks to attract more foreign travelers, and in particular, vacationers from China.

In 2020, Tehran's ex-ambassador to Beijing said Iran was seeking to become a tourist destination for millions of potential travelers from China as the two countries are working on a 25-year comprehensive cooperation plan that includes boosting relations in the field of tourism.

Speaking in the TV program, Mehdi Safari reminded some 200

million Chinese tourists to visit different countries annually, adding "According to this agreement Iran will become one of the tourist destinations for Chinese travelers so that Iran can attract one to two million Chinese tourists to the country."

"This will create a transformation in Iran's tourism industry and will create jobs and a large market for the handicrafts industry of the country," he expanded.

Although the Islamic Republic waived the visa requirement for Chinese nationals willing to visit the country in 2019, it was a unilateral measure, because Iranian tourists visiting China still need visas.

Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran is expecting to increase the number of tourism arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million by 2025.

Qom's old bazaar turns into tourist destination

TEHRAN –A once abandoned bazaar in the central province of Qom has turned into a beautiful tourist destination after being fully restored, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Before the restoration, many of the market's businesses were looking to sell their shops because they did not have many customers, so last year, measures were taken to improve the old Safavid-era bazaar, Alireza Arjmandi explained on Tuesday.

Due to the fact that there are still old handicrafts in this bazaar, it can be considered a heritage attraction as well as a place where travelers can buy souvenirs and handicrafts

from Qom, he added.

The place is also attractive to tourists because there are many forgotten handicrafts available, he noted.

Situated adjacent to salt-covered deserts, golden dunes, running sands, and jagged mountains, Qom is home to the shrine of Hazrat-e Masumeh (SA) and major religious madrasas (schools).

Apart from sightseers and pilgrims who visit Qom to pay homage, it is also a top destination for Shia scholars and students who come from across the world to learn Islamic studies at its madrasas and browse through eminent religious bookshops.

One of the most visited natural spots of Qom is Hoz-e Soltan. It is an eye-catching salt lake in the middle of the desert. The visitors could easily walk in the shallow parts and enjoy the shapes created by the salt, however, the center of the lake could be dangerous, as it is muddy and could easily trap people.

In Iranian culture, bazaars have been traditional public spaces in Iranian cities with great contributions to commercial activities in urban life meanwhile their extended activities can be traced to social, cultural, political, and religious roles.

Most mazes and passages offer certain commodities such as carpets, metalwork, toys, clothing, jewelry,

kitchen appliances, traditional spices, herbal remedies, and natural perfumes. One can also bump into colorful grocery stores, bookbinders, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, tobaccoists, tailors, flag sellers, broadcloth sellers, carpenters, shoemakers, and knife-makers.

Several divided carpet sections across the bazaar enable visitors to watch or buy hand-woven Persian carpets and rugs with different knot densities and other features. From another point of view, bazaars are also synonyms for foods, with their unmissable colorful stalls of vegetables, herbs, and spices. Yet, most of these ingredients might be mysterious to a foreign eye.

TEHRAN – The Sixth Forum of Rectors of Russian and Iranian Universities will be held on April 27 at the University of Lomonosov, Moscow.

The event is organized in order to expand and deepen international cooperation in scientific, research, and academic fields between the top universities of the two countries, ISNA reported.

The event is an opportunity to exchange views on cooperation in the field of student exchange and hold joint educational courses and research programs.

In August 2022, Mohammad Javad Salmanpour, the deputy head of the Organization for Student Affairs, and Dmitry Kalinichenko, head of the Russian Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and the International Humanitarian Cooperation, met in Tehran.

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

Salmanpour, for his part, said that most of the Russian students in Iran are studying without a scholarship mostly in the fields of Persian language and literature, linguistics, etc., and the Islamic Republic welcomes the increasing number of foreign students in these fields.

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

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

According to unofficial statistics,



Moscow to host rectors of Iranian, Russian universities

more than 300,000 Iranian students study abroad.

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

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

Reviewing the status of universities worldwide shows that the number of Iranian universities has increased in nearly all subject rankings.

At the beginning of its formation, rating systems provided a comprehensive view of institutions and evaluated them from all aspects and as a whole. But in the past few years, many of these systems evaluate and rank institutions in various scientific fields.

This new ranking method has emerged to meet the needs of users who seek to know the position of an institution in a special field.

Some of these systems evaluate broad scientific fields such as

humanities and social sciences, technical and engineering, and medicine, and others measure special fields such as chemistry, mathematics, artificial intelligence, anthropology, and nursing in institutions.

A total of 94,406 foreign students from 91 countries are studying in Iranian universities, according to statistics released in the Iranian year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022).

One of the policies of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology is to try to promote diversity in the admission of international students, ILNA quoted deputy science minister Hashem Dadashpour as saying.

In other words, "admitting from all countries and sending only to top universities," he added.

The number of Iranian universities has increased in nearly all world subject rankings.

"We are determined and try to admit students from all nationalities, although, in line with the goals and strategic policies of higher education, we have priority over the countries of origin for admitting students."

"Now we have students from 91 nationalities in the country's universities, some of them are from European and American countries," Dadashpour said.

Traditional medicine an opportunity for health tourism: official



From page 1 ► Iran ranks fourth worldwide in the production of science in the field of traditional medicine, and the remarkable achievement will improve in the coming years, Nafiseh Hosseini Yekta, the director of the health ministry's Persian medicine office, has announced.

Over 17,000 books have so far been published about Persian traditional medicine, which has been recognized by the World Health Organization, she noted.

Iranian traditional medicine strongly focuses on prioritizing health maintenance and disease prevention over treatment.

It is one of the most ancient forms of traditional medicine. It is grounded in the concept of four senses of humor: phlegm (Balgham), blood (Dam), yellow bile (Safra'), and black bile (Sauda'). The concept of the four senses of humor is based on the teachings of Rhazes and Avicenna in an elaborate medical system.

So far, about 30,000 plant species have been identified in the world, with Iran's share of about 8,000 species which is more than the whole of species found in Europe.

The per capita consumption of medicinal plants in Iran is about one kilogram of dried plants, in other words, 83,000 tons of medicinal plants worth 12 trillion rials (around \$4 million) are consumed in the country, while in Europe this amount is 900 grams and in the United States is 2.5 kilograms.

The 6th National Festival and Exhibition of Medicinal Plants, Natural Products, and Ira-

nian Traditional Medicine was held in Tehran on November 1 to 4, 2022.

The event introduced technological and scientific achievements of knowledge-based and creative companies in the field of medicinal plants.

It also created a reliable bridge between people who are active in the ecosystem of medicinal plants and traditional medicine.

It hosted knowledge-based companies, investors, research and technology funds, creative and innovation houses, banks, and venture capital funds in order to provide a path for development in the country.

More than 70 creative companies and a number of innovative houses presented their capabilities and products at the festival.

Iran hosted some 11 million medical tourists from different countries during the past Iranian calendar year 1401 which ended on March 20, an official with the Ministry of Health has said.

The number of international patients in hospitals is approximately one percent today, a trend that is increasing as it earns the country more money than any other source, Soleyman Heidari explained on Friday.

However, the capacity is expected to increase to 20 percent by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025), he mentioned.

Moreover, the health tourism infrastructure in the country is developing, which leads to an increase more medical tourists, he added.

Iranian traditional medicine strongly focuses on prioritizing health maintenance and disease prevention over treatment.

No malaria deaths recorded in past eight months

TEHRAN – A Health Ministry official has said that not a single death due to malaria were reported in the country over the past eight months.

"Over the past eight months, we have faced a four-fold increase in the incidence of malaria in the country, but fortunately, there have been no cases of death or local transmission of this disease," Abdorreza Mir-Oliyae said.

The endemic areas of malaria in Iran include the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province as well as the southern provinces of Hormozgan and Kerman, he added, ISNA reported.

In areas of Sistan-Baluchestan that share a border with Pakistan, one of the factors of the increase in the disease can be the increase in traffic through the unofficial border crossing, he explained.

"Another reason was the occurrence of floods in some states of Pakistan, and following this incident, the growth of malaria is not far from expected in the susceptible region."

Malaria is a mosquito-borne infectious disease that affects humans and other animals; the disease is most commonly spread by an infected female Anopheles mosquito. The mosquito bite introduces the parasites from the mosquito's saliva into a person's blood.

It causes symptoms that typically include fever, tiredness, vomiting, and headaches. In severe cases, it can cause yellow skin, seizures, coma, or death. Symptoms usually begin ten to fifteen days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

If a country passes three years with no indig-

enous cases, the World Health Organization will grant it a certificate of malaria eradication.

There are about six species of Anopheles mosquitoes in Iran, of which there are no more than two or three species, which are actively involved in disease transmission in the south and southeast, and the rest are in the northern Zagros, from which there is no malaria transmission.

Although the most common route of transmission of malaria is mosquito bites, in rare cases there is a possibility of transmission through the use of shared syringes among injecting drug users.

If a country passes three years with no indigenous cases, the World Health Organization will grant it a certificate of malaria eradication.

According to WHO 2017 malaria report, the incidence rate of malaria in Iran has decreased significantly from 12,000 people in 2000 to 57 in 2017.

Between 2000 and 2014, the number of malaria-related deaths fell by 40 percent worldwide, from an estimated 743,000 to 446,000.

There are 20 countries in the world that are



moving towards the elimination of malaria; in the Eastern Mediterranean region, Iran is at the forefront.

The World Health Organization has confirmed that measles and rubella have been eradicated in Iran, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said on Monday.

This success was achieved for the country in a situation where many European countries have not yet received approval from the World Health Organization regarding the eradication of measles and rubella, but the Islamic Republic of Iran has succeeded in eradicating these two diseases, he added, ISNA reported.

Measles is potentially a deadly disease. Severe complications include pneumonia, diarrhea, blindness, and encephalitis (brain swelling).

Most people who get rubella usually have a mild illness, with symptoms that can include a low-grade fever, sore throat, and a rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body.

ENGLISH IN USE

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'Salt particles raising from Lake Urmia contained by 80%'

Salt particles raising from the catchment basin of Lake Urmia has been contained by nearly 80 percent, Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the provincial department for the Lake Urmia restoration program at West Azarbaijan has said.

In cooperation with the Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization, some saplings and shrubs have been planted in the catchment basin of Lake Urmia to slow down the wind giving rise to salt particles since past three years, which cost 600 billion rials (nearly \$14 million), Sarkhosh said.

He went on to say that the major salt particle hotspots in the West Azarbaijan province include Jabal Kandi village in Urmia County, Saporgha, Urmia, Chooanloo and Miandoab, which are highly contained by planting vegetation, ISNA reported on Saturday.

According to the law, agricultural development around the lake's basin is banned, and investigation results demonstrated that no land seized illegally for the agricultural development, he highlighted.

کنترل ۸۰ درصد ریزگردهای نمکی دریاچه ارومیه

مدیر دفتر استانی ستاد احیای دریاچه ارومیه در آذربایجان غربی گفت: نزدیک به ۸۰ درصد از ریزگردهای نمکی حوضه آبریز دریاچه ارومیه کنترل شده است.

فرهاد سرخوش در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایسنا با اشاره به اینکه حجم آب ورودی به دریاچه ارومیه باعث مرطوب شدن نمک‌های سطح دریاچه و کنترل ریزگردهای نمکی آن می‌شود افزود: خارج از بستر دریاچه ارومیه و در حوضه آبریز با همکاری منابع طبیعی و کاشت نهال و درختچه‌ها ریزگردهای نمکی کنترل می‌شود که از سال ۹۳ تا ۹۶ در این راستا ۶۰ میلیارد تومان هزینه شده است.

وی با بیان اینکه کانون بحرانی ریزگرد در آذربایجان غربی خاطر نشان کرد: کانون بحرانی ریزگرد در استان شامل منطقه جبل کندی در ۴۵ کیلومتری ارومیه، منطقه سپورغان ارومیه، چوپان لو سلماس، و میاندوآب است که با نهال کاری تا حدود زیادی از این ریزگردها مهار شده‌اند. طبق مصوبه دولت توسعه اراضی کشاورزی در حوضه آبریز دریاچه ارومیه ممنوع است و با بررسی‌های انجام شده در حوضه آبریز دریاچه نیز هیچ توسعه‌ای انجام نشده است.



APRIL 26, 2023

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The elderly are the sources of mercy and divine blessing.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:02 Evening: 19:05 Dawn: 3:46 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:17 (tomorrow)

Collections of Persian art in Japan



Tabard of a feudal lord, front. Silk with silver and gold threads: ht. 99 cm. 16th century, Kashan. Kodaiji Temple, Kyoto.

Part 2

The most interesting of the artifacts stored there since the 8th century include exotic objects brought back from China by Japanese monks, dignitaries, and envoys.

Some of these artifacts traveled to China, Korea, and Japan from Persia, Central Asia, and India along the Silk Routes, the system of trade routes linking East Asia with the western world.

The most important such pieces among the Shosoin relics are various types of glass vessels of Sassanid derivation, some with cut decoration or applied coil decoration.

Especially noteworthy is a white glass bowl with circular facets. A similar bowl (repaired) of 8.1 cm height was excavated from the tumulus of Emperor Ankan (late 6th century) in Osaka.

Additionally, a few fragments of glass bowls with similar cut decoration were excavated from the archeological sites in Kyoto and Fukuoka in Kyushu.

Some of these bowls, rather than being post-Sassanid imitations of Persian wares, may actually have been produced in Persia during the Sassanid period and brought to Japan via the Silk Roads.

A bowl with similar cut decoration found in Gilan Province, now in the National Museum of Iran (Muza-ye Iran-e Bastan), Tehran, tends to substantiate this hypothesis both by the cutting technique and the style of circular decoration.

In addition to the cut glass bowl of the Shosoin, there is a pear-shaped ewer with a handle, the form of which is of Sassanid origin; it can be compared with ewers discovered in Gilan and Qazvin and kept at the National Museum of Iran.

The chemical composition of these Shosoin vessels and the bowl fragments is of alkaline-lime, with or without lead, according to Beta-ray backscattering examination.

Among the metalwork in the Shosoin, the two items most noteworthy morphologically are of elongated, eight-lobed shape; they can be compared to a silver cup of similar shape (said to have been found in Qazvin) in the national Museum of Iran.

Sassanid silver pieces with elliptical and multi-lobed shape spread extensively throughout

Eurasia; and the prototype of these multi-lobed glass and metal vessels apparently goes back to the Sassanid period, though the provenance of some pieces is either Tang China or Central Asia.

The eight-lobed gilt bronze cup in the Shosoin, based on florescent X-ray analysis, is presumably a local imitation. Nevertheless, it is still an important indication of the intercultural communication between East and West.

An important textile in the Shosoin is a fragment of silk brocade depicting confronted equestrians shooting lions set within a pearl roundel.

This textile pattern that was originated in the Sassanid empire and diffused westwards to Europe and eastwards to China and Japan.

Kodaiji Temple: Commerce of the early modern period (before and during the Tokugawa shogunate, 1603-1867) is represented by a 16th-century Persian silk kilim in Kodaiji Temple, Kyoto, as well as by Persian and Indian carpets preserved in the Tokugawa Museum, Nagoya.

These presumably had been presented to the daimyo, the feudal lords. Frequent trade with Western countries such as Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands during the 15th-17th centuries brought to Japan a number of exotic commodities such as glass and woolen products.

These objects are assumed to have been either items of tribute or gifts presented to the rulers and high-ranking officials.

The 16th-century kilim at Kodaiji Temple was later tailored into a tabard (jinbaori, a sleeveless coat worn over armor by the samurai); for Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537?-98), one of the most powerful lords of Japan during the feudal age, in whose memory Kodaiji was built in 1605.

During the age of the Japanese civil wars (1467-1568) many of the daimyos wore a tabard made of imported woolen fabric in bright colors and showy patterns.

In Hideyoshi's case, the tabard was tailored from a Safavid silk kilim partly brocaded with silver and gold threads. The tabard is characterized by the designs of mythological beasts such as dragons, a variety of birds, animal combat scenes, and lion-masks.

Interestingly, this tabard is closely related in its patterns, color scheme, and weaving density to the recently acquired silk kilim, formally called the Figdor kilim (Kashan, 2nd half of the 16th cent.), in the Miho Museum.

Their common features lead us to assume that both were woven in the same court workshop in Kashan during the Safavid dynasty. The tabard and the Figdor kilim are associated with another piece, the Sanguszko Kerman carpet of the late 16th century, which is one of the masterpieces of Persian carpet weaving.

These three pieces share the design repertoire of a Chinese dragon, phoenix, and qilin (an auspicious horned animal in Chinese mythology) along with the representation of animals in combat.

The Sanguszko carpet, once owned by the Polish royal family, is now in the Miho Museum collection.

The Kyoto preservation associations: Persian carpets figure among the decorations of the 32 float-carts (yamaboko) which are paraded in the traditional (since 892) July Gion Festival in Kyoto, which is associated with Yasaka Shrine.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica.
To be continued.

Iran's "This Side, Other Side" named best animation at Bridge of Peace festival

From Page 1 ▶ The war drama "The Blizzard of Souls" by Latvian director Dzintars Dreibeigs won the special jury prize.

The film follows Arturs who finds some consolation in joining the army after losing his mother and his home. However, war is nothing like he imagined.

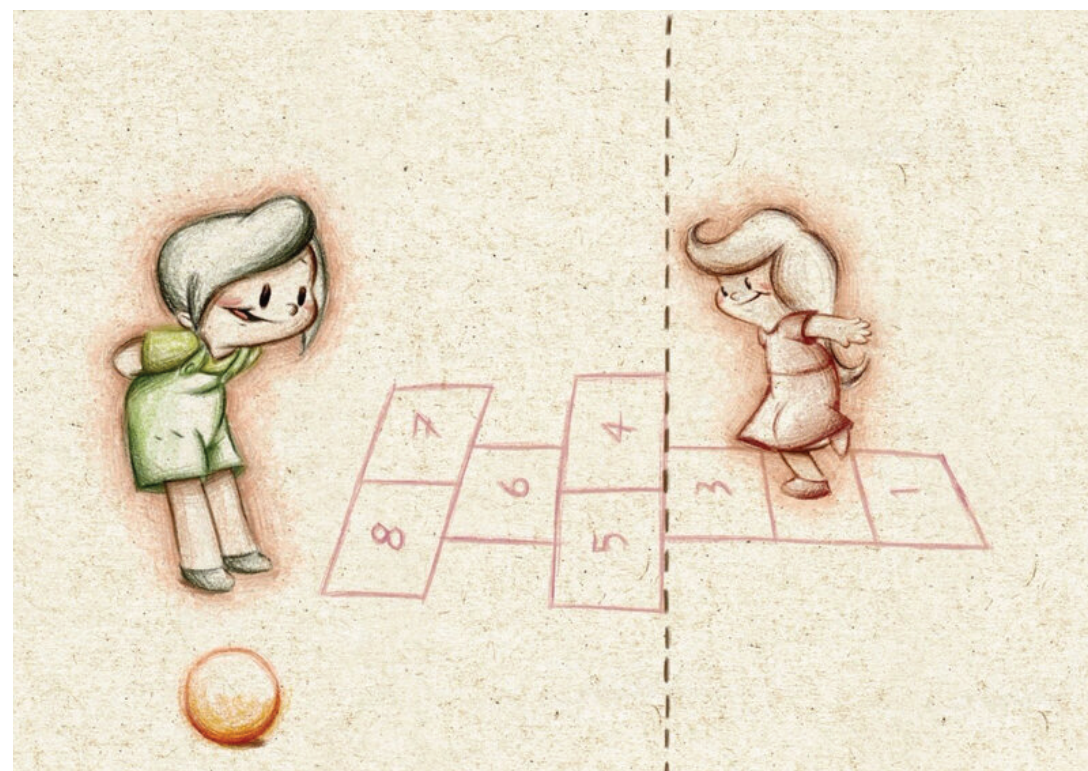
"The Blizzard of Souls" was also awarded as one of the two best feature films at the festival. The other one was "Reveille" by American director Michael Akkerman.

This film shows a group of American soldiers and their wounded German prisoners in November 1943 who are forced to confront their mutual humanity after taking cover together following a skirmish in central Italy.

"A Soldier", a short war film by Nikesha Limbu from the UK, won the audience award.

The award for best documentary was given to "The Third and Fourth Generation" by Lukas Zund from Switzerland.

In this film, deaconess sister Silvia lately has been driving to the place where her grandfather was chief of a Nazi concentration camp. Her looking into her family history and her childhood trauma lead her



"This Side, Other Side" by Iranian director Lida Fazli.

to a turning point in the celibate woman's life.

Dozens of films were also awarded in different categories at the Bridge of Peace Film Festival.

The organizers say the festival was established "to focus the audience's attention on the pressing problems of humanity, in order to seek and find an answer to the question of how to live in

a world without wars, without oppression, how to learn to respect the traditions and culture of other peoples, how to preserve nature and its diversity for new generations."

Tehran exhibit showcases Persian editions of Theodor Seuss Geisel Award winners



A poster for an exhibition in Tehran showcasing a collection of Persian editions of the books honored with the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award.

TEHRAN – An exhibition underway in Tehran is showcasing a collection of Persian editions of the books honored with the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award.

Established in 2004 by the American Library Association (ALA), the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award is given annually to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished American

book for beginning readers published in English in the United States during the preceding year.

The award is named for the world-renowned children's author, Theodor Geisel.

The exhibition opened on Monday at the central library of Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults – Kanoon and will run until May 21.

Among the books on view at the showcase is "The Watermelon Seed Board" by the author and illustrator Greg Pizzoli.

In this book, which won the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award in 2014, the crocodile loves watermelon, but what will happen when his greatest fear of swallowing a watermelon seed comes to pass? Will vines sprout out his ears? Will his skin turn pink? Only one thing is certain: his wild imagination will have kids laughing out loud and begging for another read.

The Persian translation of this book by Sheida Ranjbar has been published by Porteqal Publishing House.

The exhibition is also displaying the Persian translation of Dan Santat's "The Cookie Fiasco" by Anahita Hazrati.

The book tells the story of Hippo, Croc and the Squirrels, which are determined to have equal cookies for all! But how? There are only three cookies... and four of them! They need to act fast before nervous Hippo breaks all the cookies into crumbs!

"Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!" has also been selected for the exhibition.

Released by Disney-Hyperion in 2003, it is Mo Willems' first book for children. The plot is about a bus driver who has to leave so he asks the reader to not allow the Pigeon to drive the bus. Kanoon is the publisher of the Persian edition translated by Zahra Ahmadi.

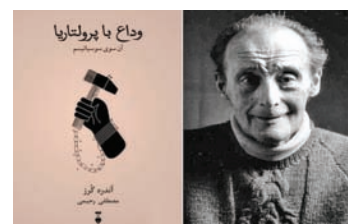
Each of the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award winners receives a bronze medal in recognition of their literary and artistic achievements that demonstrate creativity and imagination to engage children in reading.

"Farewell to the Working Class" at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – "Farewell to the Working Class: An Essay on Post-Industrial Socialism" by André Gorz has been published in Persian.

Now is the publisher of the Persian edition of the essay first published in 1980. It was translated into Persian by Mostafa Rahimi.

Gorz argues that changes in the role of the work and labor process in the closing decades of the twentieth century have, once and for all,



A combination photo shows André Gorz and the front cover of the Persian edition of his essay "Farewell to the Working Class."

weakened the power of skilled industrial workers.

Their place has been taken, says Gorz, by social movements such as the women's movement and the green movement, and all those who refuse to accept the work ethic so fundamental to early capitalist societies.

Provocative and heretical, "Farewell to the Working Class" is a classic study of labor and

unemployment in the post-industrial world.

Gorz was one of Europe's leading thinkers on politics. He is the author of several books including "Ecology as Politics" and "Paths to Paradise".

He was a main theorist in the New Left movement, inspired by the young Marx, discussions of humanism and alienation, and the liberation of humanity.

As Time Goes On, the History of the Conflict Is Being Forgotten

An interview with Leila Khujasteh

"Habib Battalion's Favorite" is the documentary biography of General Mahmoud Moradi, one of the commanders of the 27th Muhammad Rasulullah Division. The primary research for this book was done by Raheleh Qaraei and it's written by Leila Khujasteh Rad.

The author recounted the days of the Islamic revolution and Mahmoud's long presence in the fronts. Habib's battalion forces loved Mahmoud and his humor and he was their favorite.

What is the subject of your story in "Habib Battalion's Favorite"? Is this story based on reality?

This book deals with the life of Martyr Mahmoud Moradi. The story is written in a narrative and fully documented form, based on interviews conducted with the family, friends and comrades of the martyr.

What challenges did you encounter when composing this book's prose?

Since I was not in charge of conducting

the interview, I received the data and used it to describe the martyr's life. This style of narrative writing removes the writing from the news mode and gives the book about actual people's lives more concrete and sweeter details.

The holy defense era's third generation audience uses the holy defense memoirs as one of their most valuable cognitive resources today. Is having a huge number of them required?

Basically, anything that is truer to life is lovely, especially if it is based on beliefs that are patriotic. Regarding the rise in the number of martyrs' writings, it should be noted that it is a meager tribute to their immense sacrifices, and that much more work needs to be done to transform them into masterpieces that can be featured in television programs, movies, or documentaries about the heroic defense. In any case, as time goes on, the history of the conflict is being forgotten, and these works contribute to the effort to preserve this period in memory.



Are you satisfied with the result of your efforts for "Habib Battalion's Favorite"?

I really do like "Habib Battalion's Favorite" and it is my latest work in the field of authoring. I was completely satisfied with the result.