

Iranian missile technology progressing, defense minister says

TEHRAN – Iran's Defense Minister Mohamad Reza Ashtiani on Thursday insisted on the need to continuously upgrade military capabilities to counter threats, describing the missile industry as a crucial part of Iran's defensive strategy.

Brigadier General Ashtiani made the remarks during a meeting with the Defense Ministry's Aerospace Industries Organization staff.

Taking into account a variety of threats to the Islamic Republic, Ashtiani said, several types of missile defense systems are regarded as high priority in military strategy.

The minister also underlined the necessity for professional training and assistance for the armed services as well as update of missile systems.

He praised the Defense Ministry's performance in fending off new threats and asserted that a similar management approach could be used to solve other issues facing the nation.

General Ashtiani also stressed the requirement for creation of numerous domestic satellites for use in telecommunication, precision farming, solving water problems, and preparedness for disasters. ▶ Page 2

Report

Family support law: a matter of national willpower

By Mehdi Garshasbi

TEHRAN – Paying attention to the law on supporting families and the youth will pave the way for the development of the country and will also reduce the population crises, but the accurate and timely implementation of the law requires willpower both from people and officials.

According to the national center for monitoring population policies, from 2001 to 2015, the number of births has been increasing in the country, but after 2015, the number of births started to decrease with an almost steep slope.

In 2020, the number of births in the country (1,114,000) decreased by more than 29 percent compared to 2015 (1,570,000), a decrease of more than 450,000 births, which was unprecedented in the last few decades.

The number of births in the year 2021 (1,116,000) also shows an increase of about 2,000 compared to the year 2020.

Also, the rate of births from about 20 per thousand population in 2015 has reached its lowest level in the last 50 years with a significant decrease to 13.24 per thousand population in 2021.

The population growth rate reached 0.73 percent in 2020 and 0.68 percent in 2021 despite an increase of 2,000 births compared to 2020. ▶ Page 7

Persepolis crowned champions of Iran league

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team defeated Nassaji 4-0 on Thursday to win Iran Professional League (IPL) title for the eighth time.

Ali Nemati opened the scoring for the visiting team in Ghaemshahr's Stadium just two minutes into the match.

Nassaji were reduced to 10-man after their defender Mehrdad Abdi was sent off in the 15th minute after receiving his second yellow card. Saeid Sadeghi made the scoreboard 2-0 in the 28th minute.

Soroush Rafiei and Sina Sarlak scored two more goals for Persepolis in the 75th and 78th minutes, respectively with two long-range shoots.

Nassaji player Farzad Zamehran was shown a red card in the 81st minute.

In Kerman, Sepahan defeated Mes 2-1 and finished in second place. Milad Zakipour and Shahriar Moghanlou scored for the visiting team and Hassan Moradifar scored a consolation goal for relegated Mes in the dying moments of the match. ▶ Page 3



© File photo

Afghan-Iranian Treaty of 1973 Iran's water share from Hirmand undeniable: MP

Kajaki Dam on the Hirmand River in southern Afghanistan

By Mehran Shamsuddin

TEHRAN – Relations between Iran and Afghanistan soured in recent days after the Taliban refused to respect Iran's water rights in shared rivers.

The Taliban's long-time procrastination in releasing Iran's share from shared waters prompted Iranian President Raisi to issue a stern warning to Kabul, urging them to secure Iran's rights or risk tensions with Iran.

In a weekend trip to the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, President Raisi said, "I want to tell the rulers of Afghanistan not to consider my words as normal, but to take them very seriously; I warn the officials and rulers of Afghanistan to give the rights of the people and the

Iran, Pakistan govt. heads inaugurate border projects, stressing expansion of ties



Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif (L) shaking hands with President Ebrahim Raisi at a border point on Thursday, May 19, 2023.

region of Sistan and Baluchistan immediately."

Referring to some published

claims that the dam built on Helmand does not have much water or that part of it is sedi-

ments, he stated, "Our experts should be given permission to investigate this issue as soon as possible, if our experts confirm this, very well, there is no problem; we have no dispute about the lack of water, but if there is water, this right should be given to the people of Sistan and Baluchistan and we will not allow the rights of the people to be lost in any way."

The warning comes against a backdrop of severe drought hitting Sistan-Baluchistan province. Iranian officials said the lack of water in the province stems partly from Taliban's unwillingness to implement a decades-old agreement between Tehran and Kabul that requires Afghanistan to honor Iran's water rights. ▶ Page 3

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Tehran Papers

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

Transit routes will neutralize sanctions

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its editorial to the railway agreement between Iran and Russia and said: The truth is that the solution to ▶ Page 2

Three convicted of terrorist attack in Isfahan executed

TEHRAN- On Friday morning the Iranian judiciary hanged three individuals who had been found guilty of participating in a terrorist act that led to the death of three security personnel in central city of Isfahan last year.

Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi, and Saeed Yaghoobi were executed in the city of Isfahan, according to the Mizan news agency, which is connected to the judiciary.

They were found guilty of "moharebeh" (war against God) for killing three security guards — Ismail Cheraghi, Mohsen Hamidi, and Mohammad Karimi — on November 16, 2022, as a result of an armed terrorist attack on the Guard Square in the Khaneh Isfahan neighborhood.

With previous coordination among themselves, the attackers opened fire with the intention of murdering bystanders and police forces.

Several citizens and security personnel were hurt in the terrorist attack.

After the shooting the agents were arrested and the indictment was issued, Mizan reported.

Court hearings on the charges of six of the defendants in the case were held in Isfahan Province, the news agency added.

Based on the judgments issued by three of the defendants in the case, they were accused of using handgun on public roads, forming and managing a criminal group in a bid to disrupt national security as well as membership and cooperation with the terrorist MKO outfit. ▶ Page 2



Arab leaders pose for a family photo ahead of the Arab League summit in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, May 19, 2023.

Dynamic shifts in regional politics: Syrian president attends Arab League summit in Saudi Arabia

By Ali Karbalaee

TEHRAN – Over the past year, fluid developments have reshaped West Asia. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad addressed an Arab League Summit on Friday in Saudi Arabia, 12 years after Syria was suspended from the organization.

On Thursday, President al-Assad, accompanied by a high-ranking delegation, arrived in the Saudi port city of Jeddah. ▶ Page 5

Russia halts release of film on serial killer of sex workers in Iran

TEHRAN – Russian authorities have cut short the screening of the controversial movie "Holy Spider" just days after its release according to a statement made by the distributor last Tuesday.

The film had its Russian premiere on May 11 but less than a week later the Culture Ministry withdrew the film's distribution license, Anastasiya Kruglyakova, a representative of Exponenta Film, told AFP in written comments.

The ministry said that the release was canceled "due to the presence in the specified film of materials, containing information whose dissemination is prohibited by the legislation of the Russian Federation."

Danish-Iranian director Ali Abbasi made the film in 2022 based on a true story about a serial killer of sex workers in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad. ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

Transit routes will neutralize sanctions

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

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its editorial to the railway agreement between Iran and Russia and said: The truth is that the solution to neutralize the sanctions does not pass through negotiations with Europe and America, which are facing many internal challenges these days, but through interaction with neighbors. Rail and transit connections play an important role in this field. It is an undeniable issue that these relations are not based on isolation but are due to Iran's exclusive geographical position as well as now and future facts of the international system. Speeding up this process will mark a precious place for Iran in the future world order. It is necessary to achieve this goal by expanding transit routes with neighbors.

Etemad: Considerations about the Rasht-Astara railway

In a note, Etemad addressed the railway agreement between Iran and Russia. It wrote: The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is considered one of the most important international projects. The Rasht-Astara railway project as part of the INSTC that will connect Iran to Azerbaijan, Russia and then Europe once it is completed.

The newspaper mentions railway projects of Chabahar-Zahedan, Shiraz-Bushehr- Bandar Asalouye, Durud-Khorramabad and also Rasht-Anzali-Astara as four priority railway projects. Among these projects, the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway is very important, because this route, along with the two eastern corridors (Sarkhs and Incheborun), which are the communication bridge between Iran and Turkmenistan and the countries of the CIS region, can compensate for the Jolfa gap and lead to a more favorable connection for Russia. The construction of this railway line can provide connection to Anzali port and maritime communication with Russia, and this decision has been made in line with the North-South corridor, which is very hopeful.

Hamshahri: The difference between Hajj before and after the revolution

In its editorial, Hamshahri addressed the issue of Hajj. It wrote: Before the revolution, Hajj was not more than prayer, circumambulation, Sa'y and attendance at Mashar. But instantly, after the revolution, Hajj became a center of disavowal of polytheists. Imam Khomeini promoted Hajj with the political and moral mutation in the world.

To revive the religious capacities was basically the art of Imam Khomeini. It was not only in Hajj.

UN chief hails restoration of Iran-Saudi ties

TEHRAN- The agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia to reestablish diplomatic relationship after a seven-year break has been hailed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres as a "turning point" that ushers in a new era of positive exchanges in the West Asian region.

The comments were made by Guterres to Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the Iranian Foreign Minister, over the phone on Thursday night.

Tehran and Riyadh reached a Chinese-brokered agreement on March 10 to reestablish diplomatic ties and reopen embassies following days of strenuous discussions held in Beijing. The agreement followed several rounds of talks mediated by Baghdad and Muscat.

On April 6, Amir Abdollahian met in Beijing with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud for the first time in seven years, emphasizing the need to implement the China-brokered accord.

Both parties have praised the detente as having the ability to reduce tensions in the region.

Saudi Arabia broke diplomatic relations with Tehran in January 2016 when Iranian demonstrators stormed the Saudi embassy in Tehran, enraged over the Saudi government's execution of famous Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr.

Guterres also mentioned a conference on Afghanistan that the UN organized in the Qatari capital of Doha in early May. He asserted that everyone who attended the two-day meeting agreed that Afghanistan needed to form an inclusive government with the participation of all ethnic groups, fight terrorism, support and empower its economy, fight drug production and trafficking, and secure its borders.

Additionally, the UN chief complimented Iran once more for housing a tremendous number of

This was also the case with prayer and fasting. The prayer turned from being alone in the alter into a collective ritual that has social and political results. He extended the tears and mourning from the religious party to the anti-rebellion and anti-oppression. He changed empathy from being neighborly to helping the oppressed in the world.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Role of foreigners to deny Iran's water rights from Helmand

Arman-e-Emrooz analyzed the water dispute between Iran and Afghanistan. It wrote: While Sistan-Baluchistan province has been facing a serious shortage of water for a long time, the 13th government (sitting administration) has not yet been able to resolve the dispute between Tehran and Kabul regarding the Helmand water rights. In the last meeting, Raisi emphasized: "Iran's right to water from Helmand is an important issue, and he gave a special mission to the ministers of energy and foreign affairs and the special representative of the president for Afghanistan affairs to follow up this issue seriously." After this order, the President's Special Representative for Afghanistan affairs, Hassan Kazemi Qomi, said in an interview with one of Iran's TV: "Taliban officials have always emphasized the implementation of the 1973 Treaty between the two countries, but he blamed some experts for not fulfilling this agreement. Some specialists of the previous Afghan government who are working with the Taliban government and are still in contact with the former officials are preventing the implementation of the commitments made in the Helmand Treaty. These former Afghan officials are also aligned with foreigners."

Ham Mihan: America and the revival of JCPOA

In a commentary, Ham Mihan pointed to the possibility of revitalizing the JCPOA by quoting an expert who evaluated the connection between the American message to revive the JCPOA and the secret meeting of the Biden government with the Senate and wrote: "As it was officially declared, the senators in this meeting asked Biden to abandon appeasement and to deal more sharply with Iran, especially regarding actions in the Persian Gulf. Biden has also explained why he has pursued a policy of tolerance with Iran and is trying to reach an agreement, but he has given Israel the authority to deal with Iran so that he himself does not get involved with Iran. In the meantime, even figures like Bob Menendez, who are strongly pro-Israel and against Iran and the JCPOA, have also accepted that the "stick policy" should not be used with Iran."

Afghan refugees, highlighting the country's need for international aid in this respect.

He also expressed hope that the Ukraine war would end as soon as possible, pointing to the Istanbul meeting of senior officials to extend a deal allowing safe export of Ukraine's grain and agricultural fertilizers through the Black Sea.

A group of African heads of state recently developed a peace initiative that could help resolve the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

In addition, the UN secretary-general emphasized the need for a long-lasting cease-fire in Yemen and appreciated Tehran for playing a significant and positive role in the region.

For his part, Amir Abdollahian said that Iran has been sheltering millions of Afghan refugees and providing them with various services for decades.

He also praised the closed-door meeting on Afghanistan that took place in Qatar.

The Iranian foreign minister noted that managing such a large number of refugees needed help and attention from other countries.

The senior Iranian diplomat also voiced optimism for a speedy resolution to the Yemen conflict and ending blockade on the war-ravaged country.

Amir Abdollahian also emphasized Iran's adamant opposition to the conflict in Ukraine while expressing hope that the parties involved would return to the path of negotiation, put a stop to the fighting, and create a lasting peace.

The Iranian foreign minister and the UN chief also discussed the status of talks to resurrect the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and lift sanctions as well as Tehran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to resolve outstanding issues.

Three convicted of terrorist attack in Isfahan executed

From page 1 ► The judiciary news outlet highlighted that they had been in direct contact with MKO terrorists and had carried out the terrorist assault on the order of the cultish group based in Albania.

According to the evidence and records in the case, as well as the defendants' clear declarations, the gunshots carried out by these three persons resulted in the martyrdom of three security officers in Isfahan.

The other defendants in the case received jail sentences as well, and one of them was cleared of all accusations.

After the Supreme Court affirmed the verdicts, the executions took place.

Iran's enemies have always pinned the blame on Tehran for maintaining its own security by punishing those who disrupt the country's stability via ransacking and killing innocent people but they themselves violently crack down on those who hold peaceful protests.

Iranian officials have invariably announced that the country's stability and citizens' security are redlines and will not allow anyone or any country to violate them.

In the Isfahan case, they murdered security agents while they were trying to ease the tense situations, but bullets were their rewards.

When Iran holds murderers accountable, the so-called human rights activists claim that they were executed unfairly.

For example, rights groups purportedly said that they were subjected to torture, forced into televised confessions and denied due process.

Even the London-based Amnesty International popped up to say something about them. It said, "This is another example of the Iranian authorities' brazen disregard for the rights to life and fair trial."

All such bogus allegations are totally refuted by the relevant officials because they are found guilty in a fair court.

Iran's archenemy has emerged again in a friendly manner to lambaste the execution but forgot to fol-

Iranian missile technology progressing, defense minister says

From page 1 ► Iranian authorities have frequently emphasized that the nation would never negotiate on its defense capabilities and that it will not hesitate to bolster its military might, particularly its missile capability, which is only intended for defense.

In February 2018, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revo-

Tehran downplays U.S. worries over growing collaboration with neighbors



lution, called for measures to preserve and strengthen Iran's military capabilities, responding to foes who questioned the country's missile program.

The Leader mentioned that "without a moment of hesitation, the country must move to acquire whatever is necessary for defense, even if the whole world is opposed to it."

Iran dismisses links to people arrested in Azerbaijan

On Thursday, Kanaani also reacted to allegations by Azerbaijan that it had arrested a number of individuals with links to Iran, saying Iran didn't have any links to them.

Kanaani said Azerbaijan's security apparatus and prosecutor-general have been leveling "chain of accusations" against Iran.

"Unfortunately, the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been arresting and keeping its citizens in custody for some time on a charge and bogus



Three security guards — Ismail Cheraghi, Mohsen Hamidi, and Mohammad Karimi — were martyred on November 16, 2022, as a result of a terrorist attack on the Guard Square in the Khaneh Isfahan neighborhood.

low its own flaws about the people of color.

Robert Malley, the U.S. envoy for Iran, claimed in tweet on Thursday that his country stands with Iranians but it is the U.S. that is suffocating Iranian nation through illegitimate and inhumane sanctions.

After the death of a 22-year-old Iranian woman Mahsa Amini, foreign-backed protests erupted in Iran in mid-September.

She fainted at a police station in Tehran's capital and was confirmed dead three days later at a hospital.

According to an official investigation issued by Iran's forensic medicine, Amini died as a result of a chronic disease rather than suspected blows to the skull or other key bodily parts.

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allegation of links with Iranian institutions," he said in a statement, according to Tasnim.

He said Iran did not have any official or unofficial ties to the detained persons.

"The popular relationships between the citizens of the two countries are heartfelt, emotional, historical, religious and even family-based. The government of the Republic of Azerbaijan should not attribute such deep-rooted and historical bonds of its nationals to security issues or associate them with neighbors," Kanaani added.

Kanaani noted that every government has the inherent right to take action against the law-breaking citizens, but made it clear that Baku's move to arrest and imprison many citizens by making the allegation of connection with Iran is inadmissible and unacceptable.

The Republic of Azerbaijan's interior ministry, security service and the office of prosecutor general said in a joint statement on Tuesday that at least nine Azeri nationals have been arrested, suspected of being "linked to Iranian secret services and of plotting a coup and assassinations".

The statement gave nine names and said several other people had been arrested.

He said, "The relationships between the two countries are unbreakable, and we should not take any actions that are not in the interests of the two countries but are in the interests of the parties who want to harm those relations."

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The United States and the United Kingdom are among the nations whose espionage and propaganda networks, according to Iran's intelligence community, were used to incite violent demonstrations there.

Rioters went on a rampage, viciously assaulting security personnel and wreaking havoc on public property.

On February 5, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, pardoned or commuted the sentences of a huge number of inmates who had been detained during the riots.

All were included in the Leader's amnesty except terrorists and murderers.



Iran condemns G7 'baseless,' 'irrational' claim

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman also vehemently refuted a statement by the the Group of Seven advanced economies, urging them to stop participating in unlawful U.S. sanctions on Iran and stop leveling "baseless" accusations against the Islamic Republic.

In a statement released on May 13, the G7 finance ministers and central banker emphasized that they were concerned about "the risk of illicit financing coming from Iran."

Kanaani went on to add, "We strongly reject that part of the G7 finance ministers' statement that makes a wholly unfounded and irrational charge against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

He asked the small number of states that are "attempting to impose their wishes on others to stop their deplorable practice of accompanying and appeasing the illegal U.S. sanctions against the great Iranian nation, which violate the fundamental principles of international law and human rights."

The G7 countries should be held accountable for their flagrant violations of international law, Kanaani continued, rather than approving and participating in "unilateral and unfair positions" against the Iranian people, Kanaani noted.

The G7 is a political forum made up of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The European Union (EU) is classified as a "non-enumerated member."

Water Warning

From Page 1 ► Of course, the Iran-Afghanistan water disputes are older than the Taliban rule. The former U.S.-backed government of Afghanistan deliberately sought to withhold Iran's water share. With help from the U.S., the former Afghan regime built many dams on rivers that ultimately flow into Iran with the aim of diverting their waters to other dry Afghan regions. The Kajaki and Kamalkhan dams are a case in point.

Former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani once openly said that Kabul won't give water to Iran for free. "If you want water, then give us oil or things," Ghani said.

The Western-backed government of Kabul has gone but its legacy strangely lives on. The Taliban, which fought against the Americans for two decades, is now following in their footsteps in terms of not living up to Afghanistan's commitments regarding shared waters.

After President Raisi's warning, the Taliban, instead of pouring oil on troubled waters, issued a statement that further inflamed tensions because it claimed that due to low precipitation, there are now additional waters behind the controversial dams, something that Iran took with a pinch of salt.

The Iranian foreign ministry said in a statement that the Taliban have not abided by



The operation to transfer water from the Sea of Oman to the eastern provinces of Iran was launched with the order of President Raisi.

Afghanistan's obligations and not let Iranian experts to examine the drought claims.

"The declaration dated 18 May, 2023 by the Afghan side about the Helmand River water rights contains contradictory and incorrect information, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly rejects it. The Helmand Treaty signed between Iran and Afghanistan, dated February 20, 1973 has clearly and unambiguously specified the Iranian side's water rights from the Helmand River. This is a legal, objective and definite right, and Afghanistan is committed to providing the aforementioned right

and not taking any action, which fully or partly strips Iran of its water rights, under Article 5 of the Treaty," the statement said.

It added, "Although the Afghan rulers, in the past year and half, have repeatedly emphasized adherence to their obligations under the Treaty, in practice, they have failed to honor the obligations arising from the Treaty to provide the necessary cooperation in the release of the water flow and realization of Iran's water rights, and to allow Iran access to its water share."

The statement concluded, "Non-adherence to the Treaty and non-provision of Iran's Helmand water rights on the part of

Afghanistan and issuing political statements without practical action are not acceptable in any way. The Islamic Republic of Iran reserves the rights to take necessary measures and emphasizes the full responsibility of Afghanistan in this regard."

Iranian Energy Minister Ali Akbar Mehrabian said the Kajaki dam contains enough water and Taliban officials have acknowledged that.

"Based on the president's emphasis, we are obliged to ensure the rights of the people, and the issue of the Helmand River claim is seriously on the agenda as an example of the rights of the people of Iran," Mehrabian stated.

Iran's water share from Hirmand undeniable: MP

TEHRAN – An Iranian lawmaker has urged the Taliban to respect Iran's water rights from the Hirmand River otherwise they will have many things to lose.

Mojtaba Zolnour, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said no one can deny Iran its water rights and the Afghan must give Iran its water share.

"Iran has an agreement with Afghanistan, especially regarding the Hirmand watershed, and our rights have been registered since the past. According to this agreement, no one can deny Iran's rights on this matter, therefore, Afghans must secure Iran's rights," he said in remarks to Mehr News on Friday.

None of the past governments of Afghanistan from Hamed Karzai to Ashraf Ghani has ever denied Iran's water rights but they used to underline low precipitation and say that there was no water to flow into Iran, the lawmaker said.

He added, "The Islamic Republic is of the opinion that any amount of water in this watershed should be divided between the two countries in a certain amount, and if Iran's share of this watershed is reduced, Afghanistan's share should also be reduced."

Zolnour continued, "If this share of water does not enter our country, we will face problems in the east of Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchistan. And many issues will be affected by these conditions."

He said, "It is clear that if Iran's rights are not respected regarding this watershed, the environmental conditions and also the jobs of the region will suffer. Also, due to the fact that Sistan-Baluchistan has a hot and dry climate and is facing a lack of rainfall, this area will become a center of fine dust, which will definitely affect the entire country."

The MP warned, "Definitely, it is in the interest of the Afghans to properly secure this right for Iran. Because if the international agreements and agreements between the two countries that existed in the past are to be ignored and have no validity, they will also be the losers. We are not the only losers in this issue and they will also suffer in many issues, even more in some issues."

Iran's Raisi, Pakistan's Sharif inaugurate border projects

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday inaugurated the Mand-Pishin border market and the 100-MW Polan-Gabd electricity transmission line with the aim of expanding mutual ties, IRNA reported.

The inauguration ceremony of the mentioned projects was attended by senior officials from both sides including Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Power Minister Khurram Dastagir, and the country's Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb.

After the inauguration of the projects, Raisi and Shehbaz held talks at the Pishin-Mand border

crossing in Sistan-Baluchestan province to discuss the strengthening of trade cooperation. This was the third meeting between the heads of the two countries over the past year.

Speaking in this meeting, Raisi considered the construction of border markets and electricity exchange lines between Iran and Pakistan as another manifestation of the two counties' determination for strengthening their relations.

He said that six markets are planned to be launched on the border between Iran and Pakistan to help boost employment and trade between the two countries.

Stating that the level of trade relations

Afghan-Iranian Treaty of 1973

TEHRAN- The Helmand River is regulated by a precise legal framework, and in accordance with an agreement made between the two nations in 1973 and confirmed by their respective legislatures, Iran's water rights are distinctly defined and upheld by the Afghan government.

43% of Afghanistan, comprising the majority of the southern region, is drained by the Helmand River and its main tributary, the Arghandab.

It has a flow of around 140 m3/s on average, although it varies greatly yearly and seasonally because most of the water comes from the country's central mountain range melting snow.

The 1973 deal states that Afghanistan must yearly deliver 850 million cubic meters of water from the Helmand River to Iran.

The 1973 agreement follows those recommendations to supply Iran with an average 22 m3/s, and includes an additional 4 m3/s for "goodwill and brotherly relations".

Treaty also establishes a new Helmand Commission to administer the provisions of the agreement (Art. VIII).

Monthly flow deliveries are specified in Article II of the treaty for "normal water years", which is defined in Article 1(c) as a year with total flows upstream of Kajaki Dam at Dehrawud that are at least 5661 mcm between 1 October and the following 30 September.

Helmand Treaty is flexible in that in low flow years, provisions are made to reduce the flow allocated to Iran in proportion to their measured deviation from a normal year for any given month or months (Art. IV).

A major bone of disagreement between the two nations is Afghanistan's decades-long noncompliance with the agreement.

The Helmand River, Afghanistan's longest at 1,150 kilometers (690 miles), feeds the Hamun Lake in Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan region.

The region is primarily reliant on the lake, and officials believe it has faced significant problems due to a continuous lack of water.

The only agreement Afghanistan has that expressly deals with water allocations is the 1973 Helmand River Treaty.

between Iran and Pakistan is far from the desired point, he emphasized the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to develop relations with Pakistan in various commercial, industrial, agricultural, and science and technology sectors.

Raisi in his remarks, considered the presence of the prime minister of Pakistan and the accompanying delegation at the border with Iran as a sign of the stability and security in the Islamic Republic.

Sharif for his part expressed satisfaction with the inauguration of the projects, saying that in the history of Iran and Pakistan, the two nations have always enjoyed brotherly and friendly relations.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

IRAN IN FOCUS

MAY 20, 2023

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

Persepolis crowned champions of Iran league

From Page 1 ► Esteghlal thrashed Tractor 7-1 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Mehdi Ghaedi made a hat trick as well as goals from Abolfazl Jalali, Mohammadhossein Moradmamd, Arash Rezavand and Jafar Salmani.

Mohammad Ghanbari scored Tractor's sole goal.

Esteghlal finished in third place.

Naft Masjed Soleyman and Mes Kerman were also relegated for IPL.

Iran discover fate at 2024 Olympics qualification Round 3

TEHRAN – Asia's hopefuls moved a step closer to the Women's Olympic Football Tournament Paris 2024 following the conclusion of the Asian Qualifiers Round 2 official draw at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Thursday.

Divided into four pots according to their seeding, the 12 teams were drawn into three groups with only two spots available at Paris 2024.

Group A hosts Australia were drawn with Chinese Taipei, Philippines and Iran.

AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 winners China are the top seeds and Group B hosts with Korea Republic, Thailand and DPR Korea their challengers.

Group C will see Japan, Vietnam, hosts Uzbekistan and India battling to advance to the next stage of the Qualifiers.

Round 2, scheduled for October 23 to November 1, will see four teams – the three group winners and the best-ranked runners-up – progress to Round 3 to play two pairs of home and away matches, slated for February 24 and 28, 2024, with the eventual winners taking the two spots reserved for Asia in the Women's Olympic Football Tournament Paris 2024.

The 2020 Olympic edition in Tokyo saw hosts Japan exit the quarter-final stage against Sweden, while Australia finished fourth after losing a close bronze medal encounter to the U.S.

China PR won the silver medal in Atlanta 1996 with Japan following suit in London 2012.

Iranian taekwondo athlete Bozorgi receives four-year ban

TEHRAN – Iranian taekwondo practitioner Danial Bozorgi has been handed four-year ban after he tested positive for a banned substance.

Bozorgi tested positive for Anabolic Androgenic Steroids (AAS) in the Wuxi 2022 Grand Slam Champions Serie in April, where he won a silver medal in the men's -68kg weight category.

Another Iranian taekwondo athlete Reza Kalhor had been suspended for four years for using the same substance and in the same event Wuxi 2022 Grand Slam.

Anabolic steroids are synthetic substances that mimic the effects of testosterone, the male sex hormone. They are used to increase muscle size, strength, and performance and are commonly associated with athletic performance enhancement and bodybuilding.

Kazemi climbs Mt. Lhotse

TEHRAN – Iranian climber Rouhollah Kazemi successfully scaled Mt. Everest and Mt. Lhotse within 24 hours.

He is the first Iranian mountaineer who managed to climb Everest and Lhotse at the same time.

After climbing Everest and returning to Camp 4, this climber traversed towards Lhotse peak and was able to climb the peak.

Lhotse is the fourth highest mountain in the world at 8,516 meters (27,940 ft), after Mount Everest, K2, and Kangchenjunga.

Fan dies of heart attack in Iran

TEHRAN – A football fan died of a heart attack in Tabriz, northeast of Iran, while watching his favorite team Tractor suffered a shock defeat against Esteghlal on Thursday, local media reported.

Tractor lost to Esteghlal 7-1 in Iran Professional League (IPL) in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Tractor finished the 2022/23 season as the fourth team, while Esteghlal came third.

Persepolis won the title with 66 points, one point above Sepahan.

Iran is a football-mad country with millions of fans supporting their clubs.

Iran grouped with S. Korea at AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup 2024 Qualifiers

TEHRAN – The remaining eight teams discovered their challengers following the official draw ceremony for Round 2 of the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup Indonesia 2024 Qualifiers at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Thursday.

Each group will be played as a single round-robin league format in a centralized venue between September 16 to 24, 2023, with the Host Member Association to be determined at a later stage.

Four teams – the winners and runners-up of each group – will qualify for the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup Indonesia 2024, set to be held from April 7 to 20, 2024.

Group A saw 2009 champions Korea Republic drawn alongside Thailand, Iran and India while Group B will see Australia, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Philippines vying for places in the Finals.

The two group winners and runners-up will join the top three teams from the AFC U16 Women's Championship Thailand 2019 – defending champions Japan, finalists DPR Korea and third-placed China PR – and hosts Indonesia in the ninth edition of the tournament.

Draw Result

Group A: Korea Republic, Thailand, Iran, India

Group B: Australia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Philippines

Gorgan runners-up at WASL-West Asia

TEHRAN – Al Riyadi basketball team of Lebanon won the inaugural edition of the WASL-West Asia following a 114-100 conquest of Iran's Gorgan in Game 2 of the Final Wednesday night at the Nouhad Nawfal Sports Complex in Zouk Mikael.

Duop Reath led the way with 29 points and 6 rebounds, together with an assist, 2 steals, and a block as he proved why he's tagged as the club's 'missing piece.'

Gorgan, on the other hand, were led by the triple-double outing of Perry Petty with 29 points, 12 rebounds, and 12 assists in the crushing loss.

Behnam Yakhchali had 19 points and 9 rebounds. Antanas Udras made 17 points and 7 boards, while Sajjad Pazrofteh added 11 markers as the quartet carried the fight on a night Mohammad Jamshidi got held to only 6 points.

Now, Al Riyadi and Gorgan, together with third-placer Beirut Club, will all represent the West Asia League in the highly-awaited WASL Final 8 in June.

Mazandaran exports flowers, ornamental plants to Russia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan



TEHRAN- Mazandaran province, in the north of Iran, exports flowers and ornamental plants to Russia, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan, a provincial official announced.

Ehsan Abbaspour, the deputy head of the province's Agriculture Department for plant production improvement, said that 260 hectares of lands are under cut flower cultivation in the province.

33 idle mines revived in Hormozgan province in a year

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 33 idle mines were revived in Hormozgan province, in the south of Iran, during the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20), with a 48 percent rise as compared to the preceding year.

Khalil Qasemi, the head of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said that reviving the mentioned mines created direct jobs for 484 persons.

He also announced that the mineral reserve of the province rose 74 million tons in the previous year.

Reviving idle mines and mining units has been one of the most important programs of the current government, and with the measures taken, 682 idle mines across the country were revived and returned to the cycle of activity during the past two years.

Yazd province with 100 mines, Markazi with 97 mines, Isfahan with 51 mines, Hormozgan with 48 mines, Zanjan with 43 mines, and East Azarbaijan with 41 mines have the highest number of revived mines in the two-month period.

Also, Kerman province with 35 units, and Ardebil, Mazandaran, and Fars provinces, each with 25 units, have the highest number of revived mining units in the country over the past two years.

Back in January, Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Mohtashami-Pour said there are 12,000 mines across the country of which 5,000 are currently not active.

He noted that new mineral zones have also been identified in various provinces which are expected to add to the country's mineral reserves.

The official said several knowledge-based companies are currently active in the mining

Indonesia to sign trade agreement with Iran next week

TEHRAN-Jakarta and Tehran have concluded the final stage of negotiations on a bilateral trade agreement, the Indonesian Trade Ministry said on Wednesday.

The announcement came after the two sides finished a seventh round of talks, and the ministry said the governments could now proceed to sign the documents on the deal, which is called the Indonesia-Iran Preferential Trade Agreement (II-PTA), the Jakarta Post reported.

The ministry said Indonesia and Iran would sign the trade agreement during a visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Jakarta between May 22 and 24.

Indonesia has been looking to new markets to diversify its export options and thereby reduce its reliance on traditional trade partners, many of which have been affected by a weakened global economy and geopolitical risks.

The negotiations between Indonesia and Iran come at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions in many parts of the world.

The Trade Ministry noted that trade between Indonesia and Iran amounted to \$54.1 million

Iran has 17th place in the world in the production of flowers and ornamental plants, but it is ranked 107th in terms of export.

Considering the high potential and volume of import of flowers and ornamental plants by the Persian Gulf littoral states and Central Asian countries, in order to increase the share of Iran in the world markets, it is necessary to adopt effective and targeted policies in order to solve the problems in the way of production and export of flowers and ornamental plants.

As reported, it is possible for Iran to export more than one billion dollars of flowers and ornamental plants per year, and the officials of the Agriculture Ministry also emphasize the export capabilities of the country's flower and ornamental plant sector.

Although, the producers of this sector have problems and limitations, most of which are related to the ministries of energy and industry, which should be removed through adopting effective and targeted policies.



sector working on various projects including exploratory drones and survey cameras.

The deputy minister said up to 80 percent of the equipment and machinery used in the processing of minerals are currently manufactured inside the country.

The Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's program for reviving small mines was launched in late March 2019.

The most important goal of this program is to activate the country's mines, which will result in increased production and employment, especially in deprived areas.

In May 2022, Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Vajihollah Jafari said his organization, which is in charge of the mentioned program, defined 30 investment packages for continuing the implementation of the program in the Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Jafari noted that the priority for the allocation of the mentioned packages is to implement infrastructure projects that would help revive several mines together.

As such infrastructure projects progress, it is necessary to measure their effectiveness in reviving the country's idle mines, he added.

during the first three months of this year.

Last year, the bilateral trade value increased by more than 23 percent to \$257.2 million.

Motorcycles, vehicle parts, fatty acid industrial monocarboxylates and wood fiber are among the main goods shipped from Indonesia to Iran.

Meanwhile, major Iranian shipments to Indonesia include dates and grapes, carbonates and vegetable alkaloids, among many other products.

The ministry said Indonesia and Iran had also concluded negotiations on an article related to countertrade, which allows the two countries to pay for goods and services from the other side in kind rather than settling transactions with money.

This would allow trade between the two to continue despite possible difficulties in securing currency commonly used in international trade, such as US dollars.

In an interview conducted by the Tehran Times in last August, Indonesian Ambassador to Tehran Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro said Iran can use Indonesia as a hub for marketing its products in the ASEAN countries.

Raisi inaugurates numerous infrastructure projects in southeastern Iran

TEHRAN – In a one-day visit to the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province on Thursday, President Ebrahim Raisi inaugurated several infrastructure projects including 11 electricity projects and water supply lines to 155 rural areas.

As IRNA reported, President Raisi also ordered the beginning of the pipe-laying operation at a major project for the transferring of water from the Sea of Oman to the province with the aim of supplying water to the industrial sector in the region.

According to the head of the Sistan-Baluchestan Power Distribution Company, the electricity projects inaugurated by the president were in different sectors including construction, modification, and development of the electricity network.

“Construction and improvement of about 83 kilometers of electricity lines, installation of 26 transformers and a booster device were among the



inaugurated projects,” Mohammad Raisi said.

The official put the total investment made in the mentioned electricity projects at 410 billion rials (about \$774,681).

The water supply projects also went operational in 19 different cities of the province, according to Alireza Ghasemi, the head of Sistan-Baluchestan Water and Wastewater Company.

According to Ghasemi, the mentioned projects are going to

provide drinking water to 66,000 people via pipeline.

The total investment made in the said projects has amounted to 2,910 trillion rials (about \$5.5 million), Ghasemi said.

The pipe-laying operation of the project for transferring water from the Sea of Oman to the province was also another project that was started at the order of the president on Thursday.

Speaking to IRNA, Mansour Bijar, the deputy governor of the

Tehran, Moscow ink agreement to jointly purchase, build 20 vessels

TEHRAN- Iran and Russia signed an agreement on the purchase and building of 20 general cargo ships, IRNA reported.

The two sides agreed to establish a joint venture which is to be engage in the purchase and construction of vessels for cargo transportation through international transport corridors North-South and East-West.

During a phone conversation on Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin and President Ebrahim Raisi confirmed the intent to expand trade relations and economic cooperation between the countries. Therefore, an agreement on the purchase and construction of 20 vessels was signed.

Russia and Iran earlier announced their readiness to develop cooperation in shipbuilding with Iranian shipyards to build ships of large capacity and Russian shipyards to build cargo carriers. Russia also considers investing in seaports of Iran. The Iranian side, in its turn, offers using its seaports as hubs for Russian cargo including transit one.

North-South international transport corridor (ITC) is a 7,200-kilometre-long transport artery from St. Petersburg to ports in Iran and India. North-South ITC has a western and an eastern branch, both running across Iran. The western one foresees cargo transportation by road via Rasht, the eastern one – by railway. The end point

in Iran is the port of Bandar Abbas from which cargo can be delivered to India by sea. The western branch also crosses Azerbaijan, the eastern one – Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Besides, direct water transportation from Russia to Iran by the Caspian Sea is possible.

Iran, Russia sign customs agreement to facilitate trade, transit

The customs of Iran and Russia have signed a new agreement to facilitate trade and develop transit, IRNA reported.

The agreement was signed by Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mohammad Rezvani-Far and Head of the Russian Federal Customs Service (FCS) Ruslan Davydov in Tehran on Wednesday.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Rezvani-Far pointed out that the agreement is expected to provide the basis for the development of cooperation and an increase in the volume of trade between the two countries.

Ruslan Davydov, for his part, stressed facilitating and speeding up customs affairs and helping economic operators increase trade volume between the two countries.

He pointed to the green customs route established between the two countries as a way of enhancing the volume of trade between the two countries, adding that the increase in the number of goods exchanged in this corridor, including

Iran calls for establishing joint Islamic market among OIC members

TEHRAN – Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has stressed the need for establishing a joint Islamic market among the members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) over the next 10 years, the ICCIMA portal reported on Thursday.

Addressing a gathering of the heads of OIC member chambers of commerce on the sidelines of the “Russia - Islamic World: KazanForum 2023” in Russia, Gholam-Hossein Shafeie said: “An important issue

that has been discussed a lot in the past and the organization should pay attention to it in the current situation is the creation of a common Islamic market in the next 10 years, which can be achieved by concluding a free trade agreement among Islamic countries and removing tariff and non-tariff barriers.”

“Experts have worked on the Islamic market plan, and using the experiences and studies of these experts can definitely be a way forward,” he added.



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (1st R)

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which was formed in 1972, today has reached a position where, according to statistics, the

province said that the national project for desalination and transfer of water from the Sea of Oman is being implemented with a physical progress of 11.3 percent.

He estimated the investment made in the project to be about 60 trillion rials (about \$113.3 million).

The executive operations of this national project include a desalination center and its facilities, the water transmission pipelines with a total length of 718 kilometers, the implementation of the route and tunnel for the construction of three pipelines, and finally, the construction of a 1000-megawatt combined cycle power plant for energy supply.

The water desalination plant for the projects will have a capacity of 2.4 million cubic meters per day, and when completed, the pipeline will have the capacity to transfer 280 million cubic meters of water every year.

technological goods will lead to a rise in the volume of trade transactions.

Back in February, delegations from the customs of Iran and Russia exchanged views on ways to develop educational cooperation between the two sides, in a joint meeting in Tehran.

According to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, the meeting was held under the framework of a memorandum of understanding signed between the customs of the two countries.

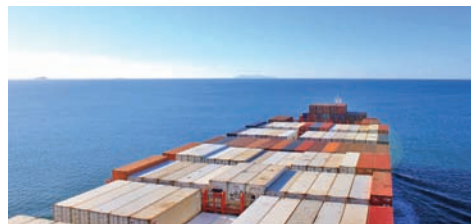
In that meeting, the attendees explored ways of using the educational, scientific, and specialized customs and commercial capacities of the two countries.

Also, in last November, representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration and the Federal Customs Service of Russia met in Tehran to discuss implementing a memorandum of understanding signed between the two bodies for battling smuggling and customs violations.

During the meeting, IRICA Deputy for Legal Affairs Farideh Zobeydi and her Russian counterpart Oleg Gubaydulin discussed ways of cooperation between the two sides regarding how to fight against smuggling and customs violations in line with the memorandum signed in this regard.

Issues related to organized crimes, drugs, money laundering, and smuggling were among the cases discussed in the meeting.

Iran exports non-oil goods worth \$320m to UAE in a month



TEHRAN- Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$320 million to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 20), the spokesman of Trade Development Committee of the Iranian House of Industry, Mining, and Trade announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that the monthly export indicates a 52-percent drop year on year.

The UAE was Iran's third export destination in the said month, while it was Iran's first source of import in the first month, through exporting non-oil goods valued at \$1,009 billion, with 30 percent growth year on year, he added.

Iran and the United Arab Emirates have agreed

to sign new memorandums of understanding (MOUs) on the avoidance of double taxation and facilitation of mutual investment.

The decision was made during a meeting between Iranian Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Ehsan Khandouzi and UAE Minister of State for Financial Affairs Mohamed bin Hadi Al Hussaini on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Board of Executive Directors in Jeddah on May 12.

During the meeting, the officials emphasized increasing cooperation in the fields of trade and foreign investment; in this regard, it was decided that appropriate measures should be implemented soon in order to sign agreements on facilitating foreign investment and avoidance of double taxation between the countries.

Pointing to the positive impact of the resumption of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia in the region, Al-Husseini said that the volume of trade between the two countries has increased about 40 times.

“This volume of trade in various fields indicates a natural and positive growth of relations and interactions between Iran and the UAE, and the role of the governments of the two sides is to encourage trade and facilitate it through agreements to avoid double taxation, and it is necessary to revise the existing agreements between the two countries,” he said.

Khandouzi for his part referred to the previous unfinished negotiations related to the drafting of a foreign investment agreement between the two sides, saying: “The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to cooperate in joint profitable projects, as well as cooperation for investing in other countries.”

At the end of this meeting, Khandouzi invited his Emirati counterpart to travel to Tehran as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the head of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the United Arab Emirates has said his country is seeking to become Iran's top trading partner in the region.

Dynamic shifts in regional politics: Syrian president attends Arab League summit in Saudi Arabia

From page 1 ► (where the 32nd summit was held on Friday), upon an official invitation by Saudi Arabia's King Salman.

Al-Assad was received by the deputy governor of Mecca region and Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit. The Syrian president was then escorted to the reception hall of the Royal terminal where the trio held brief talks.

Arab leaders and heads of delegations participating in the summit took part in a group photo before the start of Friday's opening session, with President al-Assad in the front row. It was an event that would have been unheard of just a year ago.

Opening the summit, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said, "we are pleased with the presence of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad at the Arab summit."

Bin Salman also expressed hope that Syria's return to the Arab League would contribute to achieving stability in the Arab world and resolving the challenges the region is facing.

For his turn, President al-Assad said the Arab world is facing a "historic moment" while hoping the summit would help bring an end to regional crises without foreign intervention.

He underlined the importance of joint-Arab action to face the occupying Israeli regime.

The Syrian leader pointed out that "there are many pressing matters at hands?, which are not enough for summits. They do start with the crimes of the Zionist entity that is rejected by the Arabs against the resistant Palestinian people." Noting that "this is where the vital role of the Arab League comes to play in discussing these issues and addressing them, provided that the implementation system [of the summit] is developed."

Upon arrival to the summit hall, al-Assad shook hands and held a conversation with the Qatari Emir. Doha has yet to normalize ties with Damascus.

Al-Assad has also used the trip to hold bilateral meetings with heads of neighboring states with the aim of strengthening ties in the face of the harsh U.S. sanctions.

Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal al-Miqdad had earlier confirmed the presence of al-Assad at the Jeddah summit, expressing "Syria's satisfaction with the atmosphere of the meetings that preceded it."

Al-Miqdad said, "we look forward to the Arab role being effective in helping the Syrian refugees return to their country, and there is no doubt that the reconstruction process will facilitate the return of



these refugees."

Since Syrian government forces managed to recapture almost all regions from foreign-backed militants and in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake earlier this year, there has been a flurry of talks and trips between al-Miqdad and his Arab counterparts to pave the way back for return of Damascus to the Arab League.

But it is difficult for the government to facilitate the return of countless nationals to their homes who have either been displaced internally or forced to leave the country. The war came at a high price. Syria's infrastructure has been destroyed. Vital services need to be restored all across the country. This is coupled with the occupation of some parts of the Syrian soil by foreign forces.

In 2011, the Arab League suspended Damascus. The suspension came in the aftermath of foreign-backed militancy and terrorists who infiltrated the country and went on to occupy large parts of its territory.

Syria's 12-year suspension was lifted earlier this month after a vote by Arab government delegates in Egypt. The decision was supported at the Cairo session.

Exactly who took the decision to suspend Syria (one of a handful of countries that founded the Arab League) in the first place is up for debate.

Experts argue that pressure from the United States and other Western powers led to Syria's removal in a bid to diminish support for the Palestinians, which Damascus has been a staunch supporter of.

Some members of the Arab League had reservations over the suspension, arguing the move went against the bloc's own rules and regulations.

In the time frame between Syria's suspension and its return

today, there have been so-called normalization deals between a few Arab governments and Israel.

On the other hand, before the outbreak of the war on Syria, Damascus had been a staunch supporter of the Palestinian resistance. It remains a key player in supporting the Palestinians, but during its focus on fighting foreign-backed militants and terrorism at home, the backing for the oppressed Palestinians was not as strong as it could have been.

The warming of ties between Syria and its Arab neighbors has been met with strong public opposition from Washington. It's a major blow for the U.S. who called on Saudi Arabia to prevent al-Assad from attending the Jeddah summit.

Despite some differences that remain between Saudi Arabia and Syria, Riyadh has indicated its willingness to distance itself from the U.S. and form a more independent foreign policy.

The Saudis have defied fierce U.S. objections on the resumption of diplomatic ties with Iran, Syria, engage more with China and coordinate with Russia on oil production.

The UAE has taken a step further by inviting al-Assad to the COP28 climate summit it is hosting later this year. This would be the first international summit the Syrian president could potentially attend, following a decade of war on his country.

There is now hope that the Arab League, instead of some members fighting against each other, will refocus on the key issue at hand which is the instability that Israel spreads across West Asia and real support for the oppressed Palestinians.

Some have returned on the right path, and the brutal Israeli crackdown on Palestinians was the highlight of a joint Arab

stance in the November 2022 summit in Algeria.

Others have realized that the war on Syria was based on the pretext that targeting the country was aimed at wiping out Palestine from the policies of Arab nations, as well as the unity of the Arab and Islamic world.

Algeria alluded to this at the last Arab League summit before handing over the rotating presidency of the bloc to Saudi Arabia.

Iraq, alongside Algeria, Lebanon and other Arab states who refrained from cutting off ties with the Syrian government understood that the Western-Israeli policy of undermining the security of Syria and its people also risked damage to the entire Arab security apparatus, and to their own security as well.

Today, the situation in Syria has been nearly stabilized, as government forces backed by Iran and Russia have dealt a heavy blow to the terrorist groups, and Damascus will regain its ability to control its security and the security of all its borders.

The meeting of the Arab foreign ministers on Wednesday in preparation for the Jeddah summit witnessed a welcome to Syria's return to the Arab League and the steps that were taken to strengthen relations.

In a meeting with his Saudi counterpart, al-Miqdad pointed out, "There are directives from the leaderships of the two countries that bilateral relations be at the level that the people of Syria and Saudi Arabia deserve."

He added, "We have the decision from the highest leaderships in Syria and Saudi Arabia to move towards progress and there is no turning back."

Now Arab policies are returning to strategic rationality.

demands, as the prime factor of erosion.

What the world witnesses now is the ultimate demise of the American financial system and the dollar, which in turn will in time severely limit the capacity of the U.S. "rules based" disorder to impose sanctions and war on others. The U.S. debt load is already well beyond effective management and unlike some other societies in the Middle East centuries ago there is no mechanism for periodic debt cancellation. The "pleonexia" or "wealth addiction" so rampant among Western elites has already led to vast corruption and to predatory and socially damaging practices which don't appear to have any hope of abatement. One of America's top three economists, Professor Michael Hudson, points out that in ancient Greek times the sage Socrates proposed that only non-wealthy managers ought to be appointed to govern society so that they would not become hostages to hubris and greed. But wealth addiction is very sticky and once wealth is acquired the maintenance and augmentation of it becomes an almost irresistible, primary

WORLD HEADLINES

Syria's Assad gets warm welcome at Arab summit

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad arrived in the Saudi port city of Jeddah on Friday to attend the Arab League summit.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was given a warm welcome, winning a hug from Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince at a meeting of leaders.

More than 11 years after Syria was suspended from the pan-Arab institution in the wake of the war in the country, the emerging consensus in Arab capitals today is that addressing Syria's problems requires engagement with Damascus.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy makes surprise visits to Saudi Arabia

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has made a surprise trip to Saudi Arabia, where the Arab League is hosting an annual summit.

Writing on Twitter on Friday, he said that he was "Beginning my first-ever visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to enhance bilateral relations and Ukraine's ties with the Arab world".

He said he would discuss "political prisoners in Crimea and temporarily occupied territories, the return of our people, peace formula [and] energy cooperation".

Saudi Arabia "plays a significant role, and we are ready to take our cooperation to a new level", Zelenskyy said.

China responds to Kissinger's Ukraine proposal

China has urged against Ukraine joining NATO, saying it would not improve security in the European region, after veteran US diplomat Henry Kissinger claimed membership would serve the interests of both Kiev and Moscow.

Asked about Kissinger's comments during a Thursday press briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin argued that Ukrainian NATO membership would only further inflame tensions.

"Ukraine should not become the frontier in a major power confrontation," he said, adding that "to strengthen or even expand military groups is not a viable way to ensure the security of a region. One country's security should not be achieved at the expense of the security of other countries."

In an interview with the Economist published on Wednesday, Kissinger said European powers were pursuing a "madly dangerous" strategy by keeping Kiev out of the US-led military bloc, insisting Ukraine must not "become a solitary state just looking out for itself." He claimed NATO membership would not only benefit Ukraine, but Russia as well.

"If I talked to [Russian President Vladimir] Putin, I would tell him that he, too, is safer with Ukraine in NATO," the 99-year-old added, saying the move would prevent Kiev from making rash "national decisions on territorial claims."

The Chinese spokesman went on to state that a "durable European security architecture" could only be created through dialogue. During a visit to Ukraine this week, special envoy Li Hui met with Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky, Foreign Minister Dmitry Kuleba and other senior officials to discuss Beijing's views on a diplomatic resolution to the conflict.

China's Xi presents development plans for Central Asia

Chinese President Xi Jinping has unveiled an ambitious plan for Central Asia's development that includes building infrastructure to boost trade and taking on a new leadership role in a region that has traditionally been a Russian sphere of influence.

China is ready to coordinate development strategies with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and promote the modernization of all, Xi said in an address to a China-Central Asia Summit in Xian, northwest China, on Friday.

"This summit has added new impetus to the development and revitalisation of the six counties and injected strong positive energy into regional peace and stability," Xi said later at a press conference with his Central Asian counterparts.

"We will jointly foster a new paradigm of deeply complementary and high-level win-win cooperation."

"China and Kazakhstan have an enduring friendship," Xi told Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

"That's a message that he reiterated to the other Central Asian leaders, a message of the friendship of cooperation of China being a reliable partner for the region," Washington said.

Xi told the other leaders that their development paths would be independently chosen and respected and that their sovereignty, security, independence and territorial integrity would be safeguarded.

Japan PM Kishida wants to abolish nuclear arms but build military

To promote his vision of a world without nuclear weapons, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida took G7 leaders to the spot in Hiroshima where an atomic bomb was used against a civilian population for the first time.

Kishida may also end up being the leader most singularly responsible for cementing Japan's turn away from decades of pacifism, as Tokyo embarks on a major military buildup with the backing of the United States' nuclear umbrella.

For the past 30 years the U.S. and its Western vassals literally have not done ANY public good, not even in their own countries. Above all, the West has not brought peace and prosperity, but only various wars and crises, and corruption and rot in Western societies. Some smart commentators have opined that the literal end of the West's ascent to world dominance over the past 500 years is finally ending as multipolarity takes hold.

American influence has for decades been wrapped around its misguided, immoral fealty to the "only democracy in the Middle East" which has been anything but a "democracy" for 75 years.

By Martin Love

The rare word "pleonexia" comes to mind. It means, simply, a psychiatric ailment of excessive, overweening greed that dominates the afflicted and determines most of what they are about, even as so-called "public servants" in government and who in fact rarely serve anyone but themselves.

Take for examples a few names among many: Barack Obama. Bill and Hillary Clinton. Nancy Pelosi. Joe Biden...and hundreds of other power brokers and politicians in the U.S. in recent decades. Even young Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez. These people and many others have become filthy rich or just rich during their political careers on salaries that are quite modest by Wall Street standards at least.

Ocasio-Cortez just a few years ago was a young 20-something bartender in New York City before she somehow managed to get elected to Congress as a young "progressive" leader. Obama was in the past a "community organizer" before he became President, and so on

with a variety of politicians. Ocasio-Cortez has dropped a number of her "progressive" postures and is now said to have amassed a small fortune of over \$4 million which must be the envy of over 98 percent of all humans worldwide. How so for her and all the others? In one word, they all succumbed to "corruption" as alleged, faux public servants.

Washington has few alleged allies left in a rapidly changing world that is fast moving to more balance and multipolarity.

The most dangerous corruption at the heart of American governance has long extended itself to Washington's fawning over Jewish power and Apartheid Israel. Part of this particular corruption is a

UNWTO unveils priorities for rural tourism development



The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has recently released a report that defines the status of rural tourism in its member states aimed at identifying the main challenges and opportunities in the path of rural tourism development.

In a May 17 statement, the UN body stressed that this report aims to identify significant challenges and opportunities related to tourism as a catalyst for rural development from a policy perspective.

The report also found that 59 percent of all member states see rural tourism as a priority, with an overwhelming 96 percent of member states expecting a brighter future for the sector in the coming years.

The potential benefits of tourism for rural areas include new employment opportunities, improved quality of life, and measures to counteract population decline. Protection and promotion of cultural heritage and protection of the environment have also been recognized by Member States as the main potential benefits of rural tourism.

Based on UNWTO research, the top three challenges related to realizing tourism potential for rural development includes deficiencies in roads, ports, airports, and other infrastructure that allow access to rural areas, which remains a challenge for the countries surveyed represents.

As mentioned by the UNWTO, the challenge is that the seasonality and competitiveness of agricultural products contribute to the depopulation of rural areas as they increase the instability of rural businesses, which impedes the maintenance of population and human resources.

Iron Age golden vessel on show at Rasht museum



TEHRAN – A rarely seen golden vessel, excavated in 2003 in northern Iran, has been put on show at the Rasht Museum of Anthropology in commemoration of International Museum Day.

The vessel dates some 3,000 years and it was excavated from the archaeological site of Toul, which lies an inter-mountain valley in the highlands of Talesh county, Gilan province's tourism chief said on Thursday.

Toul is a seasonal village where local people from the region take refuge from the summer heat and humidity of the coastal plain.

The ancient cemetery, the burials of which range in date from the early first millennium BC to the late Sasanian period, is located within the confines of the Toul village.

Several ancient graveyards of Toul were excavated by Iranian archaeologist Mohammad

Another challenge the organization sees is the lack of education and training, but also skills development in rural areas and the ability to attract and retain talent in the workforce.

Managing the impacts of natural resource degradation Restrictions on access to financial systems; limitations in the development of innovative tourism products in rural areas; limitations in data handling and digitization and knowledge management are among other issues that rural tourism faces, according to the report.

In order to help support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNWTO Member States noted the potential of rural tourism to advance SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

The report was presented during the 118th session of the UNWTO Executive Board in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, as part of the work of the UNWTO Tourism Rural Development Program, which aims to develop initiatives and programs for the growth of the sector and to monitor tourist destinations around the world.

The World Tourism Organization sees rural tourism as a type of activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle, culture, angling, and sightseeing. Such tourism also possesses characteristics such as low population density, a landscape dominated by agriculture and forestry, as well as traditional social structure and lifestyle.

The World Tourism Organization is the United Nations' agency responsible for promoting responsible, sustainable, and accessible tourism.

Glimpses of rural tourism in Iran

Having numerous pristine rural landscapes, picturesque villages, and natural gifts, Iran has many to offer to nature lovers. In addition, rural tourism development has the potential to support local communities and economies and create new opportunities for employment and income generation.

Reza Khalatbari on behalf of the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research and the local office of the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization in Rasht between 2002 and 2003.

Other findings included weapons in bronze and iron, grey ware or redware pottery vessels (bowls, jars, goblets, and jugs), beads, small pieces of jewelry in silver or iron, as well as a decorated gold vessel.

Almost all of Gilan's Iron Age cemeteries had a tradition of burying objects as funerary goods near the bodies. In most cases, these objects included: pottery, porcelain, metal objects, pottery and metal figurines, and metal weapons, including daggers, spears, axes, swords, maces, ornaments made of stone, metal, etc. It seems that they richly and plentifully stood in Associated with the degree of wealth or the social position of the person. This means that more valuable items are more likely to indicate that the deceased person was of higher social status.

Iron Age marks the final technological and cultural stage in the Stone –Bronze– Iron Age sequence. The date of the full Iron Age, in which this metal, for the most part, replaced bronze in implements and weapons, varied geographically, beginning in the Middle East and southeastern Europe about 1200 BC but in China not until about 600 BC, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Beijing museum to hold exhibit of relics from Iran, China and Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN – A selection of ancient relics from Iran, China, and Saudi Arabia is set to go on view at a Beijing museum, Iran's deputy tourism chief said on Thursday.

"Today, museums, in addition to showcasing treasures of civilizations, cultures and belongings of a nation, have a great role in the development of relations, the promotion of peace and friendship and cultural harmony between nations, which is referred to as public diplomacy," Ali Darabi stated.

A clear example of that is an exhibition



of relics from Iran, China, and Saudi Arabia, which will be held in Beijing in the fall of this year with the slogan "Culture and civilization of Iran and its impact on the Middle East," the official noted but did not provide further detail.

Earlier this year, the foreign ministers

of Iran and Saudi Arabia met in Beijing for the first time after the rival countries agreed to restore diplomatic ties in a deal brokered by China.

Officials said they would start reopening embassies in their respective countries and continue cooperation on security and economic issues.

The two neighbors agreed to restore diplomatic ties within two months in a landmark deal signed in China in March that ended a seven-year rift between Middle East powers.

Foreign tourists jump 315 percent y/y

TEHRAN – Iran's foreign tourist arrivals in 2022 rose 315 percent from a year earlier, as mentioned by the statistics bureau of the World Tourism Organization.

Data showed around 4.1 million tourists came to the country in 2022 while the Islamic Republic attracted 990,000 tourists in 2021, IRNA reported on Friday.

The rise of foreign tourist arrivals in 2022 was three times the global average growth in this field. Nevertheless, Iran's share in attracting foreign tourists is still small, and only 0.4% of all foreign tourist trips in 2022 have been made to Iran, the report said.

Published by Statista Research Department on May 15, the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide roughly doubled in 2022 compared to the previous year, after falling dramatically with the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Overall, Europe recorded the highest number of arrivals, with around 594.5 million arrivals in 2022. Although this number represented a significant



annual increase, the number of international arrivals in this region remained below pre-pandemic levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges for the global travel and tourism market in 2020 and 2021 as countries around the world implemented lockdowns and travel bans to curb the number of infections.

An estimated 62 million jobs were lost in the travel and tourism industry worldwide in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. Meanwhile, the share of the global travel and tourism

industry in the total gross domestic product in 2020 almost halved compared to the previous year due to the pandemic, then rose slightly in 2021.

According to a report released by the European Travel Commission, the global volume of inbound travelers is forecast to increase sharply in 2022 and further increase in 2023. Looking at the regional breakdown of global visitor growth in inbound tourism this year, the Asia-Pacific region is expected to see the highest annual growth in inbound tourism.

Impact of the pandemic on Iran tourism

Experts believe even before the pandemic, Iran's tourism was already grappling with some challenges, on top of those Western "media propaganda" aimed at scaring potential travelers away from the Islamic Republic. They say Iran is still somehow "unknown" to many potential travelers due to such a "media war."

Before the COVID pandemic, Iran's tourism had constantly been growing, reaching more than eight million visitors in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (started March 21, 2019). That surge, however, helped prejudices to become thick and thin.

However, Iran's trump card is that the country benefits from a wide variety of travel destinations ranging from seacoasts and lush green woods to towering mountains and harsh deserts. As a wallet-friendly destination with hospitable people, Iran has long been a desired destination for nature lovers, birdwatchers, powder chasers, culture devotees, pilgrims, museum-goers, foodies, adventurers, and medical travelers, to name a few.

Tourism minister attends tribal festival



TEHRAN – On Wednesday evening, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami attended the opening ceremony of a tribal festival in Yasuj, southwest Iran.

Nomads and exhibitors from 15 provinces take part in the three-day festival, which is underway in the capital of Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad province.

Speaking at the ceremony, Zarghami reminded that tribes people are a source of pride for the ancient country.

"Like other ethnic groups and nomads of the

country, tribes in Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad are a source of pride for our beloved country."

Moreover, the minister praised nomadic communities for their efforts to preserve their time-honored culture and identity.

"In this festival of nomadic culture, the beauty of the nomadic lifestyle has been well displayed, which deserves recognition."

"In the nomadic life, all family members, no matter young or elderly, responsibly take their roles to accomplish their routine migrations."

The most obvious responsibility in a nomad's culture is to respect elders, the minister added.

According to a local tourism official, the festival helps promote the southwest province and its capabilities in the field of nomadic tourism.

Tribe tourism, also known as ethno-tourism or ethnic tourism, provides the ground for potential sightseers to feel like indigenous people by living with a nomad or rural family or enjoying an independent stay.

Experts say this branch of tourism has

gained a lot of support and attention in the country over the past couple of years. Many tour operators believe that tribal regions could be deemed as the legacy of human authenticity in their novel cultural and human aspects.

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

Iran has a culturally diverse society dominated by a wide range of interethnic relations. Native speakers of Persian (Farsi language) are considered as the predominant ethnic generally of mixed ancestry, and the country has important Turkic, Kurd, and Arab elements in addition to the Lurs, Baloch, Bakhtiari, and other smaller minorities such as Armenians, Assyrians, and Jews.

Persians, Kurds, and speakers of other Indo-European languages in Iran are descendants of the Aryan tribes who began migrating from Central Asia into what is now Iran in the second millennium BC.

Soothing touch of petals: babies embrace ancient ritual

Narratives say rolling babies among the roses gives them joy and refreshment while keeping them untainted and free from diseases. The freshness of the petals saves the baby's skin, allowing them to stay happy.

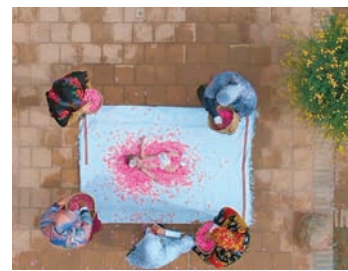
They say being soaked in the petals of very sweet-smelling kinds of flowers, best known as Mohammadi roses, should be observed during the first spring of babies' lives.

In spring, when the pink roses bloom in the area, when gardeners, people and tourists are getting ready for the rosewater distillation festival, commonly known as "Golab-giri", female members of the

families, mainly the baby's mother, grandmothers and aunts perform the Gol-Ghالتan ceremony.

Days before the ceremony, the women go to the rose gardens early in the morning and pick and collect the flowers while reciting poems and verses of the Quran. The petals are then separated and poured into a light, white cloth.

On the day of the ceremony, one of the grandmothers takes the baby to the bath. Baby's hands are sometimes painted with henna in some regions. As the baby is dried, he/she is placed among the flowers on the cloth, and petals are poured on



the babies, wishing them health and long life.

Women thereafter take four sides of the sheet and roll the baby among the petals while reciting religious songs and waving the sheet back and forth, believing the soul will be cleansed and the child will be kept healthy and fresh.

First Announcement

Shahrekord Cement Industries Company Shahrekord Cement Company's Export Clinker Sale's Announcement

Shahrekord Cement Industries Company (Private Joint Stock) intends to sell 300,000/ tons (in parts of 50,000 tons) of it's export cement clinker in 2023. Therefore, all competent companies having the ability to purchase and export the said amount, are hereby invited to get the auction documents from the company's address, located at No.4/6, Azadegan Lane, beside Tehran Clinic Hospital, Ghaem Magham Farahani Ave., Tehran, Postal Code: 1586735914 or through the **Company's website as:** <http://shahrekordcement.com>

The document should be sent to the mentioned address and delivered in the sealed envelope to Mr.Mohammad Ehsan Ghafoori in managing director's office until 25 May 2023 .

If you need more information, please contact us with Phone No. +98 21 88704400-2, Ext.137

Fax No: +98 21 88715415

E-Mail:info@shahrekordcement.com , E-Mail:nazari@shahrekordcement.com

Shahrekord Cement Industries Company

Family support law: a matter of national willpower

From page 1 ▶ Estimates show that due to the slight increase in births last year compared to 2020, the population growth rate this year will also decrease.

Also, as long as the fertility rate is below the replacement level, it is expected that the country will face a further decrease in the population growth rate in the coming years.

In Iran, about 10.5 percent of the population was over 60 years old in 2020. In 2050, the population over 60 years is forecast to increase to 33 percent.

National policies should be in line with the goal of population growth.

Also, about 7 percent of the population was over 65 years old in 2020. In 2030, the population over 65 years is forecast to increase to about 10 percent.

Considering the negative consequences of population decline in the lives of families and the negative effects of aging and population aging in the coming years, necessary measures should be taken to promote the culture and improve people's attitudes towards having children.

President Ebrahim Raisi has



urged all responsible bodies and organizations to adopt national policies in line with the goal of population growth.

All the institutions and organizations of the country are obliged to prepare their plans and programs within the framework of the population growth policy and follow up on their implementation seriously, he said, IRIB reported.

He referred to "population" as one of the important and key points in the 7th national development plan (2021-2026).

The president considered promoting the culture of marriage and reducing divorce and helping to solve the problem of infertility as some of the effective factors in increasing the population, which should be the priority of attention and action of all institutions.

In November last year, Raisi declared the "Law on Family and Youth Support" to the Judiciary for a 7-year implementation.

It was also declared to other ministries including the Health Ministry, the Interior Ministry, the Education Ministry, as well as the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs.

The plan stipulates health insurance for infertile couples, providing services and facilities to working women, providing health and nutrition support packages to mothers and children, educational opportunities for student mothers, providing livelihood support to families, and ongoing medical services to pregnant women.

The national budget bill for the current [Iranian calendar] calendar year, which began on March 21, has proposed 120 trillion rials (nearly \$480 million) to implement childbearing and family support plans in the country.

Also, as per the Law, children, and family allowance of all different groups of employees in the relevant institutions, the Armed

Forces, the Ministry of Intelligence, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, and also faculty members of universities and research institutions, judges, and retirees will increase by 50 to 100 percent.

The Law also describes the conditions for maternity leave. The duration of maternity leave was increased to 9 months with the payment of all salaries and related bonuses, and if the mother requests, up to two months of this leave can be used in the final months of pregnancy, which is 12 months for the birth of twins and multiples.

Couples who have their third child benefit from government incentives such as land, so that in cities with a population of fewer than 500,000 people and more, half of the land is allocated to the mother and another half to the father.

In cities with more than 500,000 populations, the land will be given to families with 3 or more children in new cities or nearby cities.

Over the [Iranian calendar] year 1410 (March 2031-March 2032), the elderly population will reach 13.5 million people, which is 14 percent of the country's population, and Iran will officially be an old country.

Currently, the elderly population is 9.2 million, which constitutes 7.10 percent of the country's population.

FAO implementing project to protect Bactrian camel in Iran

TEHRAN - The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is implementing a joint project to breed purebred Bactrian camel in Iran as part of efforts to protect the endangered mammal.

FAO has allocated \$350,000 for the implementation of the three-year project which will end next year, IRNA quoted Reza Aliyan, an official with the Ministry of Agriculture, as saying.

Based on the plan, cultural, promotional, and educational programs will be held for the breeding of Bactrian camels with the participation of tribespeople in the northwestern provinces of Ardabil, East Azarbaijan, and West Azarbaijan.



crops annually.

On March 29, FAO in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture launched an e-learning course, aiming to inspire practitioners to champion transformational dryland forest management strategies.

The course was entitled "The Transforming Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems: An Approach to Sustain and Develop Food Production in Drylands under Change".

Spearheaded by the Committee on Forestry Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems (COFO WG), the course was developed through the joint efforts and expertise of the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization of the Ministry of Agriculture and 15 other partners.

"When correctly implemented, agrosilvopastoral systems can ensure the sustainability of food production and livelihoods in these regions, while alleviating poverty and reducing the risk of conflict and disasters," said FAO Forestry Officer Fidaa F. Haddad.

Meanwhile, FAO has taken positive steps towards curbing the spread of red palm weevil (RPW), a highly destructive transboundary pest that can cause serious damage to date palm trees, leading to the death of the infested trees.

The outbreak and uncontrolled spread of the RPW pose a significant threat to the country's date palm trees industry and the livelihood of farmers who depend on it for income.

Dispatching two international experts to infested areas in Fars and Kerman Provinces has helped to assess the current situation and highlighted the need to bolster the current efforts to control the pest.

According to the latest FAO report, wheat production in Iran has increased by 28 percent in 2022, putting the country in 13th place among the world's top producers of strategic grain.

Iranian farmers produced some 13 million tons of wheat in 2022, 2.9 million tons more than the figure for the previous year, IRNA reported.

According to FAO, Iran was the world's 14th largest wheat producer in 2021.

The organization has also predicted that Iran will produce 13 million tons of wheat in 2023, which will not change compared to 2022.

Some \$350,000 has been allocated for the three-year project which will end next year.

There are about 200 Bactrian camels and some 200,000 one-humped camels in the country, he noted.

"We have come to the conclusion that we have enough population of hybrid camels in Semnan, Isfahan, Qom, and Qazvin provinces, but we should preserve and protect the pure breed."

The official said the Ministry of Agriculture is now working on a project to expand the cultivation of halophytes or plants that grow in salty conditions to help boost the breeding of camels in the country.

FAO has also launched other projects in the country in the field of agriculture.

The first technical cooperation program (TCP) between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture was launched with the aim of increasing the productivity of dryland farming in the northwest of the country.

Funded by FAO, the joint project is designed for targeted support of food security, sustainable agriculture, and rural development, IRNA reported.

Over the last 11 years, the average area under dryland farming in the country was about 5.45 million hectares, of which around 3.7 million hectares were under wheat cultivation.

Also, some one million hectares were planted with barley, 456,000 hectares were under chickpeas, 126,000 hectares were under lentils, 44,000 hectares were under oil seeds, and 84,000 hectares were under fodder, producing as much as six million tons of

Over 38,000 families apply for child adoption

TEHRAN - More than 38,000 Iranian families have applied for adopting children, Saeed Babaei, an official with the Welfare Organization, has said.

A total of 9,372 families applied for adoption in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2022-March 2023), he added.

"Taking the number of families applied for child adoption over the past three years, the number of adoption applicants exceeded 38,000.

Of course, out of this number, about 6,000 families have been blessed with adopted children in the last three years."

It is projected to take advantage of other methods for the children to leave nurseries and enter families, even temporarily, he pointed out.

"The priority is given to the faster entry of children into families in the form of adoption, temporary guardian, or host family, and the protocols for entering the family in these cases will gradually become easier.

The method for implementing the mentioned regulation is being reviewed and will be finalized in three months."

He went on to say that the Welfare Organization can temporarily entrust the orphaned children and teenagers who are introduced to the organization by the order of the judicial authority to the competent families until the final decision is made by the judicial authority.

"Currently, 616 care centers for children and teenagers are operating round the clock to care for 8,500 children and teenagers.

In addition, about 1,000 children are cared for in 33 nurseries across the country."

A total of 9,372 families applied for adoption in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2022-March 2023).

For adoption, criteria like mental health, the ability to take care of a child, no addiction, no criminal record, and bad reputation, as well as proper income must be achieved. The approach is the result of studying the adoption process in 10 countries around the world.

According to the Welfare Organization, the country's adoption and foster laws dated back to some 44 years ago were revised and modified in



2013.

Within the new law, kids could be adopted up to the age of 16 while the former law states that kids aged 12 or less could be adopted. In addition to families with no child now families with one kid and single women are able to apply for adoption.

The law formerly authorized adoption only for orphans while the new law permitted adoption for children with dysfunctional families as well in case the judge concludes that the new family is suitable for adoption.

Previously, the adoptive families were required to sign over one-third of their property to their child-to-be but some could not afford to do so and now the judge gets to decide how a family, depending on their financial status, should be treated.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran will defeat COVID-19, we believe: Chinese envoy

Chinese Ambassador in Iran, Chang Hua, has said he believes that Iran would overcome the crisis of coronavirus outbreak.

"We believe that by sending humanitarian aid, Iran will overcome the crisis," he said in a meeting with Mahmoud Reza Peyravi, secretary general of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, IRNA reported.

The envoy praised Iran's Red Crescent Society as the first organization affiliated with the Red Cross and the Red Crescent societies which sent humanitarian shipments of aid to the Chinese people.

سفیر چین: باور داریم ایران بر بحران کرونا غلبه خواهد کرد

سفیر جمهوری خلق چین در تهران ابراز امیدواری کرد ایران بر بحران شیوع ویروس کرونا غلبه خواهد کرد.

به گزارش ایرنا، چانگ هوا روز دوشنبه در حاشیه دیدار با محمودرضا پیروی دبیرکل جمعیت هلال احمر ایران گفت: ما باور داریم که با ارسال کمک های انساندوستانه از سوی دوستان دولت ایران از بحران این بیماری عبور خواهد کرد.

دیپلمات ارشد چین در ادامه ضمن قدردانی از جمعیت هلال احمر ایران به عنوان نخستین سازمان بشردوستانه عضو جمعیت های ملی صلیب سرخ و هلال احمر که محموله های کمک را برای مردم چین ارسال کرد، گفت: ما هم با شدت گرفتن ویروس کرونا در کنار ایران هستیم.



Paddy fields in northern Gilan province

Farmers are working in paddy fields in the northern province of Gilan, May 12, planting rice after the fields are plowed.

Planting season begins in mid-spring when the weather gets warm in the region.

TEHRAN TIMES



www.tehrantimes.com

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Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

MAY 20, 2023

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Allah will cover up on the day of resurrection the defects (faults) of the one who covers up the faults of the others in this world.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:25 Dawn: 3:17 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:57 (tomorrow)

What’s in Tehran art galleries

* Mehrdad Jafari is putting his latest paintings on view in an exhibition at Bavan Gallery.

Entitled “Ordinary Family, Strange Things”, the exhibit will run until June 5 at the gallery located at 7 Abdo off Lareztan St. off Motahhari Ave.

* Paintings by A. P. Hoshivar are on display in an exhibition at Maryam Fasihi Harandi Gallery.

The exhibit titled “Likely Guffaws, Forgotten Elegies” runs until June 2 at the gallery located at 11 Mashayekhi Alley, Varasteh St, off Darus St.

Photo

* Photos by Raufeh Rostami are on display in an exhibition at Richee 29 Gallery.

The exhibit titled “Mirror Box” runs until June 9 at the gallery located at 31 Aqabozorgi St., Elahieh Neighborhood.

* An exhibition of artworks in different media by Sindokht Rajabi, Sara Jahangirzadeh, Elnaz Delnava, Maedeh Salimi, Mehdi Afshar, Mina Ebrahimi and several other artists is underway at Ebteda Gallery.

Entitled “Decline of Time”, the exhibition will run until June 3 at the gallery located at 35 Farrokhi Alley, near Vali-e Asr Square.

* A group of artists, including Negar Qiamat, Ramtin Zad, Saeid Nodehi and Hossein Azadi, is currently showcasing their latest works in different media in an exhibition at Etemad Gallery.

The exhibition named “Birthing” will be running until May 23 at the gallery located at 25 Shirudi Alley, Mofatteh St., near Haft-e Tir Square.

Painting

* Paintings by Farshid Satiarvand are on display in an exhibition at Doost Gallery.

Entitled “Forgotten Ones”, the exhibit will be running until June 6 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 4, 4th St. off Eshqyar St., Khorramshahr Ave.

* An exhibition hanging works by Ali Khosravi is underway at Sohrab Gallery.

The exhibit named “Quarantine Dreams” will run until June 1 at the gallery located at 142 Somayyeh St.

* Paintings by Soheila Ahangari are currently on view in an exhibition at Aria Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “In the Vicinity of Garden” will be running until May 30 at the gallery located at No. 10 Zarrin Alley, near Beheshti St., Vali-e Asr Ave.

Multimedia

* Hanieh Khodbandelu and Arezu Zargar are showcasing a collection of their artworks in different media in an exhibition at Yafteh Gallery.

The exhibition named “The Scale of Nth Factor” will run until June 2 at the gallery located at 8 Taleqani Dead End, Yarmohammadi St. in the Darus Neighborhood.

* Artworks in various media by Kambiz Derambakhsh, Bahman Borujeni, Yazdan Sadi, Ramin Hafizi, Vida Jilanchi and Mahmud Maktabi are currently being shown in an exhibition at Saless Gallery.

Entitled “Caffeine”, the exhibit will be running until May 30 at the gallery that can be found at 148 Karim Khan Ave.

Russia halts release of film on serial killer of sex workers in Iran

From Page 1 ▶ “Holy Spider” was viewed by Iranian authorities as “an anti-Iranian film” following its premiere at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival, which gave the France-based Iranian star of the film, Zar Amir Ebrahimi, the best actress award.

In a published statement, the Cinema Organization of Iran also denounced the Cannes Film Festival for awarding the star of “Holy Spider”, calling their decision to acclaim the drama about a serial killer in Iran “an insulting and politically-motivated move.”

The organization said that the film “has insulted the beliefs and values of millions of Muslims and the large community of the Shia in the world,” calling it “a product of the confused mind of a Danish-Iranian person and financed by global arrogance.”

Producer Sol Bondy at Berlin-based One Two Films has said that “Holy Spider” was filmed in Jordan after Turkey prevented them from shooting the film in

A scene from “Holy Spider”.

the country.

Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has previously said that those persons inside

Iran who were involved in “Holy Spider” would face punishment for their collaboration in the production.

The serial killer story was also changed into a film titled “Killer Spider” by director Ebrahim Irajzad in Iran in 2021.

Iran celebrates 290th birthday of poet Magtymguly Pyragy

TEHRAN – The 290th birthday of Iranian-Turkmen poet Magtymguly Pyragy was celebrated on Thursday at his tomb located in Aq-Tuqai village, Golestan Province.

The Vice Minister of Culture of Turkmenistan, Nursakhet Shirimov, the executive secretary of the Turkmen National Commission for UNESCO, Chinar Rustemova, and a group of Golestan cultural officials attended the celebration.

In his brief speech, Shirimov thanked the people of Golestan Province for their hospitality and said, “Magtymguly's poetry presents patriotism and unity, and holding the celebration considerably helps expand the relations between Iran and Turkmenistan.”

Rustemova also said that on behalf of Turkmenistan President Serdar Berdimuhamedow and the people of the country, she expresses her thanks to Iran for organizing the birthday celebration.

“Although Magtymguly Pyragy is a Turkmen poet, he doesn't belong only to one nation, but he belongs to all the people of the world,” she added.

Magtymguly Pyragy, also spelled Makhtumqoli Faraghi, was a Turkmen spiritual leader, philosophical poet and Sufi who is considered to

This file photo shows people visiting the tomb of Magtymguly Pyragy in Aq-Tuqai village in Iran's Golestan Province.

be the father of Turkmen literature and the most famous figure in Turkmen literary history.

Born in C. 1733 in Hajjigowshan, a village near Gonbad-e Qabus in the modern-day province of Golestan, Iran, Magtymguly received his early education in the Persian and Arabic languages from his father, Dowletmammet Azady, a leading Turkmen scholar.

Magtymguly studied in various madrassahs, including Idris Baba Madrassah in the village of Gyzyt Ayak, Sirgazy Madrassah in Khiva and Gogeldas Madrassah in Bukhara.

John Scotney’s simple guides to Darwin’s Theory of Evolution published in Persian

TEHRAN – “Theory of Evolution: Simple Guides” by John Scotney has been published in Persian by Kargadan.

Mohammadreza Tavakkoli-Saberi is the translator of the book originally published by Kuperard in 2009.

Today the theory of evolution by natural selection and the science of genetics are the twin keys to our understanding of how life on earth came about.

Yet when an English naturalist called Charles Darwin first published his ideas in 1859 in a book called “On the Origin of Species” the world was horrified at the notion of a changing creation without the intervention of a Creator.

By contrast, when a few years

later an obscure Moravian monk, Gregor Mendel, published the results of his experiments in genetics the world failed to notice John Scotney's new book explains just what these two great men had discovered and follows the amazing development of this seminal idea from the decade when it turned the world on its head to the present time and the unraveling of the human genome.

It describes how the first dinosaur fossils were believed to be the bones of giants and how little by little the ongoing story of living creatures has been assembled until we can see the thread of life running from single-cell microorganisms to primates like ourselves, and why most ancient creatures died out and some survive to this day.

The Theory of Evolution conveys the excitement of this fundamental discovery and gives an insight into the way scientific inquiry and debate continue to shape our world.

John Scotney is an English lecturer, writer and broadcaster. After reading history at the University of Cambridge, he taught for two years at the University of Delhi in India.

Since returning to England, he has combined teaching with writing and producing for the BBC. He has taught at the University of Westminster and on courses accredited by the Universities of Manchester and Kent, and for San Diego University, California, he taught a summer school on the history of ideas, with particular relevance to science.

Iranian studies in German: Islamic period

Part 3

At the present time (1999), only a few German universities focus strongly on Iranian studies proper (history, culture, society, and languages) concerning the period from early Islam until the present time: the Department of Iranian Studies in Bamberg , the Oriental Department at the University of Tübingen (Heinz Gaube), the Oriental Department of Cologne (Monika Gronke), the University of Halle (Jürgen Paul), and the University of Göttingen (Philip G. Kreyenbroek, who deals particularly with modern Iranian languages and dialects).

At the departments of Iranian studies at the universities of Berlin (Free University, Maria Macuch) and Hamburg (Ronald Emmerick), the concentration is mainly on Middle and Old Iranian themes.

The “historical school” after Walther Hinz, Hans Roemer, and Bertold Spuler: Since 1950, a good number of scholars have been trained in the traditions of these three pioneers.

The following section can present only a short selection. Reference will be made only to scholars who, at some time, felt themselves to be close to the above-mentioned “school” or who still feel so.

Up to the 1980s, the history of events was a main goal of researchers along this line. Hinz' study on the early Safavids has been noted earlier; Spuler's monographic works, “Persia in the early Islamic period” (1952) and “The Mongols in Iran” (1968), should be mentioned here, and, last but not least, Roemer's contributions to the 6th volume of the Cambridge History of Iran, covering Persia's history from the 14th to the 18th

centuries for the first time.

One of the specific features of this school was its deep interest in administrative and institutional history.

In analogy to Minorsky's edition of the Tazkerat al-moluk, Hinz edited the 14th-century manual of fiscal administration, Resala-ye falakiya by Abdollah Kia Mazandarani.

Some of Hinz' pupils published similar manuals (Göyünc, Nabipour). Roemer had written his doctoral thesis on the Safavid Esmael II, and then went on to analyze the Timurid ensha' text of Abdollah Morvarid and inspired his pupils and friends to similar studies.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica.

To be continued.