

# TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 100,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 45th year | No. 14503 | Sunday | May 28, 2023 | Khordad 7, 1402 | Dhi Al Qada 8, 1444

## Report **T** Europe protests on the rise as Ukraine war drags on

By Ali Karbalaee

TEHRAN - People take to the streets in Spain and Italy as protests show no sign of abating in Western Europe.

Western Europe is seeing a sharp rise in protests and strikes as workers complain that the cost of living is strongly outweighing their income. The energy crisis that resulted from the Ukraine war is to the blame.

In Italy people have marched through the streets of the capital Rome to demand better working conditions as well as an increase of 300 euros in their monthly salary. They are also demanding the government raise the minimum wage to ten euros per hour.

Footage shows people marching with flags, banners, and signs that read "Work to live, not live to work".

The protesters have blamed the government's policies towards the Ukraine war, calling for a peaceful solution to the crisis. The conflict erupted in February last year after Russia, citing the U.S.-led NATO ▶ Page 5

## Tehran refutes Zelensky's claims, call them 'worthless'

TEHRAN - The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Saturday denounced the "groundless and worthless" accusations made by the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky against Tehran, calling them a political ploy meant to deflect public opinion.

Nasser Kanaani argued such a political show with unsubstantiated charges is useless.

In a televised speech on Wednesday, Zelensky accused Iran of giving Russia drones for the conflict in Ukraine.

Zelensky also urged Iran to avoid siding with the "evil" Russian government and participating in their "terror" campaign.

Kanaani said that Tehran has consistently stated its opposition to the conflict in Ukraine and its continuance as well as its sympathy for the suffering and plight of the Ukrainian people.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran stresses the need for a political solution to end the war in Ukraine in the shortest time possible and is prepared to contribute to such a solution," the spokesman stressed.

Kanaani went on to add, "The repetition of the Ukrainian president's bogus claims against the Islamic Republic of Iran is to the accompaniment of the propaganda and media warfare that the anti-Iran axis has waged against the Iranian government and nation, and takes place with the purpose of attracting more arms and financial supports from the Western countries." ▶ Page 2

## Iran beach soccer into ANOC World Games 2023

TEHRAN - Iran defeated Japan 4-3 Friday night and sealed qualification for the 2023 World Beach Games.

Moslem Mesigar were on target two times and Mohammad Moradi and Mohammadali Mokhtari scored a goal each for Team Melli.

Takuya Akaguma scored twice and Takaaki Oba netted one goal for Japan.

The Iranians were overjoyed after the game, as after demonstrating unity and togetherness throughout the match, they reaped the rewards by defeating a strong Japanese side.

Iran will face the UAE in the final match on Saturday.

The 2023 World Beach Games, officially known as the 2023 ANOC World Beach Games and colloquially as Bali 2023, will be held in Bali, Indonesia from Aug. 5 to 12.

# Spirit of Alliance

In meeting with OPEC secretary general, Raisi calls for members unity



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) and OPEC Secretary General Haitham Al Ghais (L) meet in Tehran on Saturday, May 27, 2023.

▶ Page 4

## Clashes erupt at Iran-Afghanistan border, one Iranian martyred

TEHRAN - On Saturday, the Iranian border police and Taliban troops engaged in an exchange of fire in a border region in Iran's east.

An Iranian border guard lost his life and two others were injured, police said in an official statement.

As a result, Abrisham Bridge (Silk Bridge), the busiest border between Iran and Afghanistan, has been closed.

According to reports, the border clashes took place in the Makaki region near the Kang districts in Afghanistan's Nimruz province.

The region lies near Zabol in Iran's south-eastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

The cause of the clash is still unknown.

A senior Iranian police officer put the blame on the Taliban forces for the incident.

Qassem Rezaei said Taliban forces started shooting at the Sasoli police station about 10 o'clock on Saturday morning in violation of conventions.

He added, "They were faced with fierce reaction by (Iranian) border guards."

Rezaei said Afghan troops used different kinds of weapons. ▶ Page 2

## Long-term voyages show Iran's naval might: Navy chief

TEHRAN- Rear Admiral Shahram Irani has asserted that Iran's Navy developed its might through completing lengthy voyages.

On Friday, Rear Admiral Irani stated that the Navy now plays a different function than it did in the past and would play a significant part in the global arena.

Iran's 86th flotilla, which had started its ocean-going mission in September 2022, reached home in the current month.

The Navy chief said despite the enemy's menacing trinity of threat, conspiracy, and sanctions, the Iranians did not retreat.

The adversary should be aware that Iranians would not accept isolation and are impossible to sanction, he remarked, adding Iran's Navy will be present wherever it deems necessary.

The flotilla successfully completed its historic circumnavigation of the world for the first time in the country's history. It returned to the southern port of Bandar Abbas on May 20. It was welcomed by Iran's military and civilian officials. ▶ Page 2

## New offshore, onshore hydrocarbon exploration operations underway: NIOC

TEHRAN - The managing director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has said vast exploration operations are underway on 140,000 square kilometers of offshore and onshore hydrocarbon reserves to discover new deposits, Shana reported.

"Domestic firms, including the National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC), NIOC's Exploration Department, and the Oil Industry

Research Institute of Iran, have joined hands to discover new oil and gas deposits across the country," Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr told reporters on Friday.

Khojasteh-Mehr made the remarks in his speech during a ceremony to commemorate the 115th anniversary of Iran's first oil exploration in Masjed Soleyman, southwestern province of Khuzestan.

NIOC has a 100-year vision for exploration, he said, underlining, "We are determined to carry out maximum exploration operations in order to discover and maintain the country's reserves."

Early studies have been highly promising, indicating that there are still a large number of untapped resources in the country, especially in the oil-rich Khuzestan Province, he added. ▶ Page 4

## Dune diving and star gazing: reveling in the enigmatic beauty of Iranian deserts

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - From hiking through colossal dunes of polychromatic sand to gazing at the stars on a flawlessly clear night, a desert vacation may be a unique life experience.

Many people may imagine it as a vast emptiness, but as you delve into these out-of-this-world destinations, you'll discover a great jumble of sandstone pinnacles, tabular mountains, unique wildlife and even ancient cultures. When it comes to arts, the golden

hue of a desert may be a photographer's paradise.

The Iranian deserts are among the most mesmerizing destinations for nature lovers. From the salty, white dunes of Dasht-e Kavir in central Iran to the vast Lut Desert in the southeast, these barren landscapes may amaze any adventurer.

Absolute silence, huge dunes, shifting sands, salt flats, wind-carved Kaluts, meteorite fields, and rocky terrain offer an epic

journey of breathtaking beauty and wilderness across those vast harsh deserts. However, that utter silence is shattered by motorists driving a variety of 4WD cars.

In addition, they offer some of the most breathtaking sunsets and sunrises in the world. The wide, open landscapes and clear skies make for an unforgettable experience, whether you're watching the horizon change from the top of a sand dune or within the walls of a historic oasis. ▶ Page 6



## Heads of Iran's diplomatic representative offices meet

The meeting of the heads of the diplomatic representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran abroad under the title of "The Emerging World Order: The Role-Playing of the Islamic Republic of Iran" was held on Saturday, May 27, 2023, in the presence of Javad Oji, Minister of Oil, and Hossein Dehghan, Advisor to the Commander-in-Chief of Defense Industries, in the main building of the Foreign Ministry.

### Tehran Papers **T**

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

### The return of the West to the Sultan channel

The Farhikhtegan newspaper commented on the West's policy towards Iran through Oman's mediation. Referring to the West's failure in overthrowing the Islamic Republic of Iran, ▶ Page 2

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TEHRAN PAPERS

The return of the West to the Sultan channel

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

The Farhikhtegan newspaper commented on the West's policy towards Iran through Oman's mediation. Referring to the West's failure in overthrowing the Islamic Republic of Iran, the newspaper reported that the West has returned to Oman for mediation. The unexpected release of an Iranian citizen and his exchange with a Belgian prisoner in Iran had many similarities to exchanges during the signing of the JCPOA. The fact that this happened through Oman's mediation, which has a long history of mediating between Iran and Western countries, is another reason for the high similarity of this exchange with other cases. Considering that the Sultan of Oman is also visiting Iran, it is not unlikely that the reason for all these events is a possible and hidden progress in Iran's negotiations with the West. If this hypothesis is true, there is no reason for the Western party to retreat from its hostile policy towards Iran. Although Western countries have repeatedly announced that the JCPOA became irrelevant after the U.S. quit it, all evidence suggests that different events will happen compared to what the Western countries were seeking.

Etamad: We ourselves gave cement!

Etamad pointed to the issue of Iran's water rights from the Helmand River and stated: "The Taliban, who have their own place even in the government of Ashraf Ghani, had a full understanding of international law, foreign relations, and diplomatic language, and emphasized adherence and good relations between the two countries. Unfortunately, our seemingly soft policies have led us astray and we have become trapped in the throat of Helmand. Because of Iran's negligence towards the construction process of the Kamal Khan dam, to the extent that even the overflow of the dam was diverted through canals to arid lands in Afghanistan. We must admit that we are currently facing a severe water shortage and thirst in Sistan-Baluchestan these days, as during the construction of the Kamal Khan and Kajaki dams during Ashraf Ghani's government, all the materials, including cement, were provided from Sistan-Baluchestan. Therefore, at that time, instead of easily providing the materials, we should have prevented any deviation in dam construction and make the

country to comply with international environmental laws and conventions."

Javan: Temptations of the last year of parliament

Javan addressed the issue of the last year of the parliament and stated: "Despite the fact that significant actions have been taken in the eleventh parliament, there are still major tasks that need to be completed before the end of its term. It is natural that some of these actions, if completed, will endanger the interests of a spectrum of power and wealth owners, and we should not expect these powerful individuals to easily give up. They may even try to influence public opinion through media and advertising tools regarding these decisions, and this is where the greatest struggle of parliamentarians begins. Perhaps they should resist the temptations of the "last year" and make the right decisions. In this case, whether they will remain in Baharestan or serve in another position, they have succeeded in this great struggle."

Sobh-e No: Asadollahi freedom may herald Europe's return to realism

Sobh-e No analyzed Asadollahi's freedom and wrote: Oman has always played an intermediary role in Iran's relations with some countries in recent years. Mediation on issues between Iran and the United States, including the exchange of prisoners to hosting three rounds of talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia last year, which ultimately led to an agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia to resume diplomatic relations, has been an example of these efforts. After the Tehran-Riyadh agreement, now the media report on Muscat's efforts to increase Iran-Egypt relations. In this regard, diplomatic sources on June 2, told that Al-Arabi Al-Jadeed newspaper that Haitham bin Tariq, the Sultan of Oman, had discussed with the President of Egypt about Tehran-Cairo relations in his recent visit to Cairo. The published news also suggests that the Sultan of Oman is scheduled to travel to Iran on Sunday. We have to wait for the political and diplomatic results of the Sultan of Oman's official's trip to Iran.

The behavior of Europeans in releasing Iranian diplomats was exactly opposite to their positions in the second half of last year, which was unrealistic and emotional. Some signs, such as Asadollahi's release, should be seen within the framework of the failure of the European "overthrow project" and their realism.

U.S. 'terribly wrong' to be in Persian Gulf, IRGC Navy chief tells U.S.

TEHRAN- The U.S. military's presence in the Persian Gulf on the pretext of safeguarding the important maritime region has been bluntly rejected by the chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy.

Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said the U.S. and other countries do not need to be present in the strategically important waterway since only Iran and other regional nations will be able to maintain the security of the Persian Gulf.

"You are terribly wrong to be here in our region," Tangsiri said during an official event in the city of Dezful in the southwestern province of Khuzestan.

He declared, "If we yield to the enemy, it will unquestionably rule us, and we have no alternative but to stand and resist, which is the road to our country's success."

Tangsiri also praised the city for its outstanding resistance during the Iraqi invasion of the country in the 1980s.

Based on the remarks of Tangsiri, who referred to Dezful as a representation of resiliency and invincibility, "during the eight years of the Sacred Defense, we demonstrated to the world that we did not and would not submit to duress."

Iran refers to resistance against the invading Saddam Army as Sacred Defense.

Tangsiri also emphasized the function of the national media in stymieing propaganda from the enemy.

"We resolutely secure the Persian Gulf, and the media must participate in this security and



reflect the capabilities of the IRGC Navy and the Army so that the world understands that the security of the Persian Gulf does not need foreigners," Tangsiri remarked.

He went on to add, "We stand firmly against the enemy and will defend the honor and dignity of the Iranian nation."

The Persian Gulf — which spans some 251,000 square kilometers — is bounded by the Arvand River in the north, which forms the frontier between Iran and Iraq, and the Strait of Hormuz in the south, which links the Persian Gulf to the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean.

The inland sea is an international trade route linking regional countries to open seas.

Iran has made it plain that it views U.S. military ships loitering in the Persian Gulf waters as a danger to its national security as well as a cause of unrest and instability in the region.

The Islamic Republic has frequently pledged to respond forcefully to any hostile action taken by Washington that jeopardizes the safety of the crucial waterway.

Clashes erupt at Iran-Afghanistan border, one Iranian martyred

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Iran, Afghanistan review ties and water rights

Also, in a meeting with Taliban Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Saturday, Iran's Special Representative for Afghanistan Hassan Kazemi Qomi addressed the Islamic Republic's water rights from the Helmand River as well as ties between Iran and Afghanistan.

After the meeting, senior Taliban diplomat Hafiz Zia Ahmad tweeted that the Special Representative of Iran's President for Afghanistan had met and spoken with the foreign minister of the Taliban government.

According to Zia, Kazemi Qomi submitted a report and spoke on behalf of Iran during a conference on Afghanistan in Doha.

For his part, Muttaqi praised Iran's participation in the Doha meeting about the issues that arose regarding the Afghan prisoners.

He also urged the use of communication and understanding to resolve problems and challenges between the two countries.

Iran has been complaining that the Taliban refuses to release Iran's share of water from the Helmand River.

Last week, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi warned the Taliban over violating Iran's water rights, urging them to respect the relevant treaty regulating the use of shared waters.

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 region of Sistan and Baluch-



istan immediately."

Referring to some published claims that the dam built on Helmand does not have much water or that part of it is sediments, 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."

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Thursday that Iran will not recognize the Taliban, insisting on an inclusive government in Afghanistan.

"We will not recognize the current rulers of Afghanistan and insist on the need to establish an

inclusive government in Afghanistan," Amir Abdollahian told.

He added, "The Taliban is part of the reality of Afghanistan but not all of Afghanistan."

"Afghanistan is an important issue for us. We are displeased that an inclusive government has not been formed in Afghanistan and we have announced this to the current rulers of Afghanistan," the foreign minister explained.

The foreign minister went on to say that Iran has long borders with Afghanistan and "there is no option other than interaction between the two countries."

Based on the 1973 treaty Iran should annually receive 820 million cubic meters of water from the Helmand River.

Afghanistan has redirected the course of the river and built dams

on its path. The move has caused the Hamoun wetland in the border province of Sistan-Baluchestan province to dry up. The lives of a large percentage of the people in the neighborhood is dependent on the river. It is a source of drinking water and irrigation. The livelihood of fishermen is also dependent on the lake.

Since coming to power in summer of 2022, the Taliban has promised to honor Iran's water rights from the Helmand River. However, until this date it has refused to do so.

The Helmand River is the longest watercourse in Afghanistan. It originates from the Hindu Kush Mountains, west of Kabul, and flows in an arc southwest until it empties out into the Hamoun wetland in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan Province.

Long-term voyages show Iran's naval might: Navy chief

From page 1 The flotilla, comprised of a domestically-manufactured Dena destroyer and Makran forward base ship, set sail from Iran's southern port of Bandar Abbas on September 20, 2022. It anchored at Oman's Salalah harbor on the 236th day of its journey.

The flotilla broke the record for the distance an Iranian flotilla has sailed in international waters.

It sailed across the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic oceans without needing assistance from the land for the first time in Iran's naval history.

The flotilla traveled 63,000 kilometers and four times crossed the

equator. The flotilla's "360 degrees" mission included the deployment of Iranian vessels to the Antarctic as one of its key objectives.

Iranian parliamentarians praised the 86th naval fleet, saying the Navy is a source of national pride.

The Navy brought great honor to the nation both during the 8-year imposed war against the country and for years afterwards, 220 lawmakers said in a statement on Tuesday.

"The Navy is a source of pride for the honorable nation of Iran," they



added.

The parliamentarians pointed out that Iranian naval troops have demonstrated via their tremendous effort that they fully compre-

hend the directives of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, who underlined, "Don't be satisfied with the status quo and move forward."

Tehran refutes Zelensky's claims, call them 'worthless'

From page 1 The spokesman said that political accusations and machinations against Iran would not alter the facts of the conflict in Ukraine and that Iran is ready to move on with constructive negotiations with Ukraine.

"The fact that the Ukrainian side dodges the

expert negotiations with the Iranian side in order to discuss the claims reveals that they [Ukraine's claims] are groundless and that there are specific political objectives and motives behind such accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran," Kanaani concluded.

Tehran has repeatedly and vehemently denied Western allegations that it provided weapons and drones to Russia for use against Ukraine, asserting that Tehran and Moscow have long-standing defense cooperation and that Tehran seeks a peaceful resolution to the conflict through negotiations and diplomacy.

Iranian missiles deliberately limited to 2,000 km: deputy defense minister

TEHRAN- Iran's deputy defense minister has said that despite the country's capacity to increase the range of its missiles, the Leader has ordered that it should be limited to 2,000 kilometers.

In a televised interview on Friday night, Deputy Defense Minister Brigadier General Mahdi Farahi stated that Iran has the technological capability to boost the range of its missiles to over 2,000 kilometers.

"The Defense Ministry obeys the country's major policies and orders of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, which is why it has limited the range of missiles to 2,000 kilometers although it is able to manufacture missiles with longer ranges," the Defense Ministry official stated.

The general went on to say that the precision-guided Kheibar

(Khoramshahr 4) missile, which was unveiled on Thursday, can hit targets with a margin of error of minus 30 meters at a distance of 2,000 kilometers.

Based on the remarks of the deputy minister, the new missile could be ready for launch in less than 15 minutes and could store its liquid fuel for three years.

He added that there is a 12-minute delay between the missile launch and the attack.

Iran's ballistic missile capabilities underwent a considerable improvement with the Kheibar launch, showing the nation's dedication to bolstering its defense and deterrence capability.

Officials in Iran have always maintained that their nation's military might is only for self-defense.

The Iranian Defense Ministry unveiled the 2000-km precision guided Kheibar missile on Thursday morning.

The projectile, powered by liquid fuel, is able to carry a 1,500 kg warhead.

The missile was unveiled on the 41st anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr.

It has an extended range, advanced guidance and control system.

Such projectiles, classified among the Khorramshahr missiles, have an impressive strategic and tactical capabilities. They are known for their unique guidance and control system during the mid-flight phase.

Upon entry into the atmosphere the missile deactivates its guidance system, providing it with a complete immunity against electronic warfare attacks.

Due to its advanced control system, Kheibar's warhead does not require the typical thin-wing arrangement, which in turn allows the missile to pack up a heavier explosive load, according to Press TV.

The high speed at which the warhead makes impact with the designated target prevents enemy air defense systems from detecting, tracking, and taking action to shoot down the missile.

Moreover, its powerful engine enables the missile to reach speeds of 16 Mach outside the atmosphere and 8 Mach within the atmosphere.

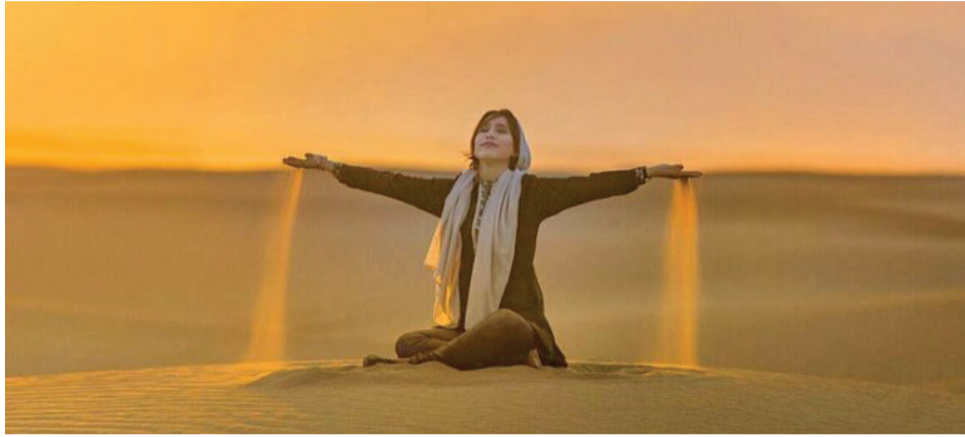
Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani said the missile sends the message that "we are fully committed to defending our country and the achievements of the Islamic Revolution."







## Dune diving and star gazing: reveling in the enigmatic beauty of Iranian deserts



From Page 1 ▶ Moreover, visitors may find diverse flora and fauna that can only survive in these extreme conditions. Some of the unique species found in these deserts include hyenas, gazelles, sand cats, and desert foxes, as well as rare plants such as spiky bushes and Tamarix trees that form one of the most iconic landscapes in the heart of wilderness.

Voyagers may also discover a wealth of history and traditions preserved by local communities over the centuries. Ancient citadels, water reservoirs, and caravanserais that once served as important trade routes for traders and travelers can be found on the

argins of Iranian deserts.

One of the best ways to experience the beauty and diversity of the Iranian deserts is to join a guided tour or adventure trip. Guided tours offer a chance to see hidden corners of the desert region while learning about the traditions and cultures of the local tribes.

Many tour guides believe that Iranian deserts offer a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. The unique landscape, rich history, and fascinating cultural traditions make for an unforgettable experience that visitors will remember for years to come.

## New handicraft hubs gain national status

TEHRAN – Two villages and a city have been designated as national handicraft hubs in Iran, CHTN reported on Saturday.

Kondazi and Tang-e Chogan, both in the southern province of Fars were registered as national villages of handicrafts, while Khesht, also in Fars province, was named a national city of handicrafts, the report added.

The value of Iran's handicraft exports stood at \$400 million during the first ten months of the Iranian calendar year 1401 (Mar. 21, 2022 – Jan. 20, 2023), the deputy tourism minister said in February.

Compared with the same period a year earlier, the figure represents some 30 percent growth, Jalali said.

"The Islamic Republic exported \$400 million worth of handicrafts during the first ten months of the current year, which shows a 30-percent increase year on year."

Iran exported some \$320 million worth of handicrafts during the past Iranian year (1400), the official stated.

The Islamic Republic has the most cities and towns registered with the World Crafts Council (WCC), followed by China with seven, Chile with four, and India with three designated ones.

The WCC-Asia-Pacific Region designated



Shiraz, Malayer, Zanjan, and the village of Qasemabad in January 2020, bringing the total number of craft cities and towns in Iran from 10 to 14. Shiraz has been dubbed "the world city of [various] handicrafts."

Malayer became a center for woodcarving and carved wood furniture on a global scale. The designation "world city of filigree" was given to Zanjan. The village of Qasemabad, which is renowned throughout the country for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a major handicrafts center on an international scale.

Ceramics, porcelain, handwoven clothing, jewelry, and semi-precious stones are among Iranian handicrafts traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., and the Persian Gulf coastal states, to name a few.

## UNESCO sites at a glance



### Kakadu National Park

Kakadu National Park is a living cultural landscape with exceptional natural and cultural values. Kakadu has been home to Aboriginal people for more than 50,000 years, and many of the park's extensive rock art sites date back thousands of years.

Kakadu's rock art provides a window into human civilization in the days before the last ice age. Detailed paintings reveal insights into hunting and gathering practices, social structure, and ritual ceremonies of Indigenous societies from the Pleistocene Epoch until the present.

The largest national park in Australia and one of the largest in the world's tropics, Ka-

kadu preserves the greatest variety of ecosystems on the Australian continent including extensive areas of savanna woodlands, open forest, floodplains, mangroves, tidal mudflats, coastal areas, and monsoon forests.

The park also has a huge diversity of flora and is one of the least impacted areas of the northern part of the Australian continent. Its spectacular scenery includes landscapes of arresting beauty, with escarpments up to 330 meters high extending in a jagged and unbroken line for hundreds of kilometers.

The hunting-and-gathering tradition demonstrated in the art and archaeological record is a living anthropological tradition that continues today, which is rare for hunting-and-gathering societies worldwide. Australian and global comparisons indicate that the large number and diversity of features of anthropological, art, and archaeological sites (many of which include all three site types), and the quality of preservation, are exceptional.

Many of the art and archaeological sites of the park are thousands of years old, showing a continuous temporal span of the hunting and gathering tradition from the Pleistocene Era until the present. While these sites exhibit great diversity, both in space and through time, the overwhelming picture is also one of continuous cultural development.

# Iran's Aras Geopark gains global recognition

TEHRAN –The addition of Iran's Aras Geopark to the UNESCO Global Geoparks network has been endorsed, UNESCO's official website has announced.

UNESCO's Executive Board approved the addition of 18 geoparks from across the world including Iran's Aras Geopark to the global network on Thursday.

This brings the total number of geoparks to 195 in 48 countries.

Situated in East Azarbaijan province, Aras Geopark covers an area of about 1670 square kilometers, sprawling across the whole Jolfa county. The topography is generally extremely steep and forms astonishing landscapes so the highest point in the Jolfa region is the Kiyamaki mount with 3347 meters and the lowest points include the northern boundary and the Aras



River valley with 720 to 390 meters.

The property has an appropriate geo-tourism attraction, because of its mountainous landscapes, outcropping of different sedimentary and igneous rocks, diversity in tectonic structures, semi-cold and semi-arid climate, and diverse

flora and fauna.

The Aras River forms the northern boundary of the geopark, serving as the dividing line between Iran, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. According to UNESCO within the geopark's region, there are three designated protected areas. The area's conservation efforts are significantly

influenced by its rich wildlife variety and the existence of endangered species like the Caucasian Black Grouse, Red Deer, Armenian Ram, and Leopard.

The UNESCO Global Geopark label was created in 2015. It recognizes geological heritage of international significance. Geoparks serve local communities by combining the conservation of their significant geological heritage with public outreach and a sustainable approach to development.

Experts say geoparks usually promote awareness of geological hazards, including volcanoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis and many help prepare disaster mitigation strategies with local communities. Moreover, they yield records of past climate changes and are indicators of current climate changes as well.

## Alborz holds potential to become industrial tourism destination

TEHRAN –Alborz province holds considerable potential to become an industrial tourism hub of the country, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Alborz holds immense potential for the development of industrial tourism, as it boasts over 3,500 production and industrial facilities, Shahram Ali-Mohammadi explained on Saturday.

In addition to highly desirable tourist attractions in the fields of agritourism and nature tourism, Alborz could also offer industrial tourism experiences, the official added.

The presence of industrial and manufacturing towns, as well as being home to famous national brands, makes the province a favorable place for boosting industrial tourism, he noted.

The presence of diverse food-related industrial factories such as chocolate, pasta,

flour, and beverage production across the province represents an excellent opportunity to organize industrial tourism tours for those keen to learn about the production process, he mentioned.

Industrial tourism is one of the newest additions to the large family of tourism types. It is one of the growing sub-sectors, and it attracts many companies to explore it further.

After the industrial revolution, industries around the globe started flourishing. People got more interested in how products are made, especially in particular details such as the manufacturing process, material sourcing, and specifics regarding operational logistics. That is why many experts refer to industrial tourism as one of the oldest forms of tourism, but it is starting to become popular nowadays.



Alborz province is surrounded by Mazandaran, Tehran, Markazi, and Qazvin provinces. Its name is driven by the Alborz Mountains. A significant part of the mountains is located in the northern part of the province.

Historical resources and documents as well as archeological studies indicate that Alborz has a rich culture dating back to pre-historic times.

## Iranian, Afghan handicrafts in joint exhibition

TEHRAN – An exhibition featuring selected works by Iranian and Afghan artisans is currently underway in Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi province.

Named "Sense of Neighborhood", the exhibit showcases needlework, personal ornaments, woodwork, carved stones, and paintings, to name a few, Mehr reported.

Organized by Khorasan Razavi's tourism directorate in close collaboration with the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, the exhibition runs from May 24 to May 28, the report



said.

Needlework (Souzan-douzi in Persian) is the art of drawing images on plain fabrics by sewing delicate stitches using a needle and colorful yarns. They are mainly used to embellish women's clothes; however, such works are applied to decorate

bracelets, necklaces, bags, and scarves.

According to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Iran has the most cities and towns registered with the World Crafts Council (WCC), followed by China with seven, Chile with four, and India with three designated ones.

The WCC-Asia-Pacific Region designated Shiraz, Malayer, Zanjan, and the village of Qasemabad in January 2020, bringing the total number of craft cities and towns in Iran from 10 to 14. Shiraz has been dubbed "the world city of [various] handicrafts."

Malayer became a center for woodcarving and carved wood furniture on a global scale. The designation "world city of filigree" was given to Zanjan. The village of Qasemabad, which is renowned throughout the country for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a major handicrafts center on an international scale.

Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the United States, and the coastal states of the Persian Gulf are among the countries that traditionally import ceramics, porcelain, hand-woven clothing, personal jewelry, and semi-precious stones from Iran.

## Woodturners in Malayer to exhibit skills



TEHRAN – Tens of Iranian woodturners and proficient carpenters will showcase their skills at a sales exhibit in the near fu-

ture.

The exhibit will be held in Malayer, which is a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture, from June 29 to July 7, ISNA reported.

Located in Hamedan province, Malayer is home to over 4,000 furniture workshops in which more than 8,000 wood masters and some 25,000 crafters are engaged.

Registered by the World Crafts Council - Asia-Pacific Region (WCC-APR), Malayer is top on the list for those who are interested in wooden furniture.

Artisans of the ancient city use the wood of

beech, walnut, and sycamore to make various products, such as traditional, classic, steel, and sofa furniture. Their other products are dining tables, desks, all kinds of chairs, beds, and decorative objects.

Although the arts have been practiced in Malayer for a long time, it has been around half a century since they prospered in the region.

Currently, more than 60 percent of Iran's furniture and woodcarving products are reportedly made in Malayer and shipped to various Iranian cities or exported to Central Asian countries, Persian Gulf countries, Turkey, and Iraq, among others.

## Cultural heritage photo festival underway in eastern Iran

TEHRAN – South Khorasan is hosting a photo festival dedicated to the cultural heritage of the eastern province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Some 64 photographers from across the country have participated in the festival, which will run until Monday, Hadi Shahverdi

explained on Saturday.

The festival aims at promoting the region as a tourist destination as well as introducing its tourist attractions, historical sites, and natural sights, the official added.

Located in eastern Iran, South

Khorasan is home to many historical and natural attractions, such as Birjand Castle, Dragon Cave, Furg Citadel, and Polond Desert.

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



the province.

# Over 500 companies attending Iran Health expo

TEHRAN - The 24th International Exhibition of Iran Health opened at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Sunday and will run until Tuesday.

More than 500 companies, including 390 domestic companies and 110 companies from China, Russia, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, South Korea, India, Australia, Japan, Pakistan, and Taiwan are participating in the exhibition.

The number of domestic companies in this year's exhibition has increased by 30 percent compared to the previous year, and the number of foreign companies has increased by 60 percent.

Meanwhile, more than 100 knowledge-based companies are present and participating in this year's medical equipment exhibition.

## Companies from 13 countries are participating in the exhibition.

Artificial intelligence, modern technologies for operating rooms, human resources, marketing and sales, and medical equipment are discussed in conferences and workshops on the sidelines of the exhibition.

Iran expects to increase the exports of medicine to around \$200 million in the current year that started on March 21, from some \$60 million last year.

"The increase in drug production



is supported by stable supply for exports, and our forecast for exports in the current year is \$200 million," IRNA quoted Heidar Mohammadi, the head of the Food and Drug Administration, as saying.

Currently, the production of medicine, medical equipment, and powdered milk is supported by subsidies. So, their exports were very limited, but it is hoped that their exports will increase next year, he explained.

Referring to the shortage of 100 drug items in the country, he said: "Currently, nearly one and a half percent of the country's pharmaceutical need is imported. Along with domestic production, it is done as soon as the domestic production meets the demand."

According to Food and Drug Administration, some \$60 million worth of medicine was exported in the calendar year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022).

The figure was about \$180 million in the year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019). The country imports some \$1 billion of drugs per year.

A total of 227 knowledge-based firms are supplying medical equipment for health centers across the country, according to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

Iranian-made pharmaceuticals are currently exported to Canada, Japan, and Europe, Faramarz Ekhteraei, chairman of the Iranian Pharmaceutical Industries Syndicate said, emphasizing that 72 percent of the country's pharmaceutical raw materials are domestically produced.

Some 40 percent of the country's total pharmaceutical exports are biotechnology products, a member of the board of directors of the Association of Manufacturers and Exporters of Medical Biotechnology Products said.

Iran's biotechnology products are exported to European, Asian, and Latin American countries, and Iran's technology can compete with other countries in this field, he further highlighted.

The export revenue of medicinal plants is estimated at \$700 million, the caretaker of the Vice Presidency

for Science and Technology, Rouhollah Dehghani, has said.

He made the remarks at the 6th National Festival and Exhibition of Medicinal Plants, Natural Products, and Iranian Traditional Medicine which was held in Tehran from November 1 to 4, 2022.

Stating that out of 2,500 medicinal plants, 1,800 of them are endemic to Iran, he emphasized that Iran with its own strong history of traditional medicine and a rich ecosystem of medicinal plants has a huge opportunity for increasing share in the national and global market.

The export revenue of medicinal plants is \$700 million. However, it should be increased considering the high potential of the country, he said.

Stating that half of the country's export revenue is related to saffron, he highlighted that this amount is not significant compared to the turnover of this industry in the world.

According to the document approved by the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, it is predicted that there is at least \$3 billion of capacity in the country in this field, and it can reach \$15 billion by focusing on the peripheral technologies, he noted.

He went on to say that in recent years, it has shown that people's approach to complementary medicine to herbal products is increasing drastically.

In this regard, the biggest support measure for knowledge-based companies is market building, in which we can develop domestic and foreign markets, he also suggested.

## Relief Foundation committed to creating half a million jobs



TEHRAN - The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation is committed to creating some 500,000 jobs for financially-struggling families in the current Iranian calendar year that started on March 21.

The Foundation succeeded in creating some 420,000 job opportunities in the past year, Morteza Firouzabadi, an official with the Foundation, said.

About 220 trillion rials (some \$440 million) were allocated for job creation projects, which is equivalent to 89 percent of the approved budget, he noted.

Last year, some 113,000 people received skill training services, a 3-fold increase compared to the preceding year, Firouzabadi said, adding that for the first time, a special skill training program for teenagers and students has been launched and eight thousand people benefited from these training services.

"Due to the fact that transportation services are

part of high-paying and stable jobs for job seekers, a thousand tractors were handed over to job seekers."

"Last year, we promised to provide 40,000 solar panels for job seekers, of which 20,000 were provided. This year, we plan to provide them with another 40,000 solar panels in addition to providing the 20,000 solar panels remaining from last year."

In March, a total of 23,000 apartments were delivered to low-income families across the country.

The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has constructed the apartments. President Ebrahim Raisi handed over three apartments, IRNA reported.

A total of 25 trillion rials (nearly \$50 million) has been proposed to provide housing for the underprivileged in the budget bill for the current [Iranian calendar] year (started March 21).

The Foundation also plans to build 360,000 houses over the next four years.

The project will start next year and 90,000 houses will be built for the deprived annually, 60,000 of which will be built in cities and 30,000 in villages.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Mostazafan Foundation and Housing Foundation regarding the construction of 10,000 housing units in villages and cities with less than 25,000 populations.

Another memorandum of understanding has been inked with the Basij and Housing Foundation to build 40,000 houses.

In October 2022, Morteza Bakhtiari, head of the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, said more than 900,000 job opportunities were created for financially-struggling individuals during the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021).

"During the sixth development plan, we were required to create 350,000 jobs, however, we managed to create more than 900,000 job opportunities for the target community, and a significant number of clients became self-sufficient and no longer receive support," Bakhtiari added.

From March to October 2022, more than 180,000 job opportunities have been launched and 134,000 employment plans are in the process of receiving loans, he stated.

He went on to note that 6,000 elites, 52,000 school students, and about 730,000 college students are under the support of the foundation, which can guarantee the future of the country in various fields of science and technology.

Moreover, about 50,000 cases of skill training have been provided to clients, he added.

The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has launched 3,285 projects to support job seekers over the first five months of the past Iranian calendar year.

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## COVID-19 takes lowest toll on foreign nationals in Iran

Iran had the lowest coronavirus cases and mortality among refugees and foreign nationals compared to the population it is hosting, Mehdi Mahmoudi, Director of Citizens and Immigrants Affairs of the Ministry of Interior has said.

Referring to the measures taken for non-Iranian citizens during the pandemic, he said that since the very beginning, when the country became infected with the disease, the community of foreign nationals in our country was no exception to this issue, and prevention programs and necessary measures have been taken for this group.

"We identified foreign nationals in need and tried to provide them with livelihood assistance, as well as health packages and self-protective items needed to prevent the infection," he explained.

## ایران کمترین تلفات کرونا اتباع خارجی را داشته‌است

مهدی محمودی مدیرکل امور اتباع و مهاجرین وزارت کشور گفت در خصوص ابتلا به بیماری کرونا در بین اتباع خارجی، ایران کمترین ابتلا و کمترین تلفات را نسبت به جمعیت داشته‌است.

او در گفت‌وگو با ایلنا درباره اقدامات صورت گرفته برای اتباع غیرایرانی در ایام کرونا گفت: از همان ابتدا که کشور درگیر این بیماری شد، جامعه اتباع خارجی هم در کشور ما مستثنی از این موضوع نبود و برنامه‌های پیشگیری و تمهیدات لازم نیز برای این گروه نیز در نظر گرفته شده است. اتباع غیرایرانی که نیازمند بودند را شناسایی کرده و تلاش کردیم از نظر معیشتی به این گروه نیز کمک‌هایی صورت بگیرد و همچنین بسته‌های بهداشتی و اقلام مورد نیاز پیشگیری از بیماری کرونا در چندین نوبت به آنها ارائه شده است.

## Iran calls ECO for promoting primary healthcare

TEHRAN - The Iranian deputy health minister has called member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) for upgrading and strengthening existing systems and restructuring processes to promote universal health coverage (PHC).

Considering that the issue of health is the most important factor of sustainable economic-social development, especially when communicable and non-communicable diseases have increased in different countries of the world as well as ECO member countries, it can be seen as a common responsibility for all countries, Mohammad-Hossein Niknam said.

He made the remarks at the 5th meeting of the Ministers of Health of the ECO member states within the framework of the 76th session of the World Health Assembly, which was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on May 21-30.

## Creating a joint network in the pharmaceutical industry, vaccines, and medical equipment is essential.

In order to successfully carry out this responsibility, the continued cooperation of ECO member countries to improve the health situation in their countries and exchange experiences and lessons learned from the recent Covid-19 pandemic will create a resilient infrastructure of primary health care (PHC), he highlighted.

Considering that the joint cooperation between ECO member countries in the field of health is a main element for the growth of the national economy of the countries, creating a joint network in the pharmaceutical industry, vaccines, and medical equipment is essential, Niknam stressed.

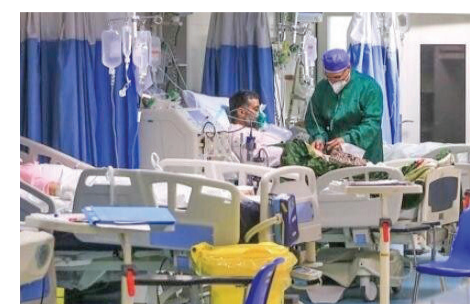
Addressing the World Health Assembly on May 24, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said the only way to ensure the global health goals, including "saving people and ensuring health for all" is to increase opportunities for meaningful international collaboration and partnership.

"The World Health Organization recently declared the end of Covid-19 as a global health emergency. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for the tireless efforts of all the dedicated health workers involved in responding to this pandemic."

He went on to say that the right to enjoy health and enjoy the highest health standards should be available to everyone without distinction of race, religion, political opinions, or economic and social conditions.

Equitable, unimpeded, and timely access to health products and medical countermeasures is critical in public health emergencies.

Unilateral coercive measures, as acknowledged in the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on his visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran, negatively affect the right to health of people under sanctions.



"Regional and subregional cooperation can play an important role in promoting health for all. Health-focused subregional initiatives, such as the G5 cooperation program in our region, can help improve the resilience of health systems."

The Group of Five cooperation program was designed and initiated by the Islamic Republic of Iran with the participation of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and the World Health Organization, and Tajikistan as observers. This subregional group is a unique example of South-South cooperation in the field of health, the minister stressed.

"We are happy to share our subregional joint health achievements with other regions and countries."

The 26th G5 High-Level Experts Meeting on Health Cooperation and the 1st Healthcare Leadership and Governance Training Program was held in Tehran from May 6-10.

G5 countries (Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, plus the World Health Organization) took part in the meeting with the theme of "Joint Work for Solving Joint Health Problems."

Iran initiated the establishment of the G5 in 2005 to promote subregional cooperation in health among the countries.

Syed Jaffar Hussain, the World Health Organization Representative and Head of Mission in Iran, has appreciated the country for its efforts to enhance health security in the region.

The WHO representative also thanked Iran for holding the 26th G5 High-Level Experts Meeting on Health Cooperation and the 1st Healthcare Leadership and Governance Training Program, IRNA reported.

In June 2021, al-Mandhari said the Islamic Republic of Iran is a role model for primary health care.

For the past four decades, its PHC network has aimed to ensure that people have timely access to affordable, accessible, and acceptable essential health services, he explained.

During the seventy-sixth World Health Assembly, a series of strategic roundtables are being held. During these sessions, WHA delegates, partner agencies, representatives of civil society, and WHO experts will discuss current and future priorities for public health issues of global importance.

The World Health Assembly is the decision-making body of WHO. It is attended by delegations from all WHO Member States and focuses on a specific health agenda prepared by the Executive Board. The main functions of the World Health Assembly are to determine the policies of the Organization, appoint the Director-General, supervise financial policies, and review and approve the proposed program budget. The Health Assembly is held annually in Geneva, Switzerland.



## Spectacular dunes in central Iran

Saghand, located in the central Yazd province, is one of the spectacular deserts of Iran, full of sand dunes.

Known as Rig-e Zarin (the golden sand), Saghand has special flora and fauna. Turmeric and thorn bushes and animals such as foxes and rabbits are parts of this rich wildlife.

