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Op-ed



Five factors that lead to Erdogan win

By Azar Mahdavan

TEHRAN- Finally, after many twists and turns, the 2023 elections in Turkey ended with a victory for Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the unbeatable politician of Ankara, who will once again be hosted by the Bestepe palace for the next five years.

This round of presidential elections in Turkey has been the most unpredictable and tense one in the history of the country.

In this round of competition, we have practically witnessed a deep rift in Turkish society and politics and a confrontation between two different political discourses, namely Islamism and secularism.

However, it was somewhat unthinkable that Erdogan, this veteran Turkish politician, would be defeated. The reason for this is that despite all the economic crises and hardships of the post-earthquake Turkey, the president of the country is still considered a popular political figure in the country.

But the main question is what factors have been influential in Erdogan's victory and Kilicdaroglu's defeat? ► Page 5

Iranian army urges Taliban to respect border regulations

TEHRAN- A top Iranian commander warned on Sunday that if Afghanistan fails to observe international norms and the values of good neighborliness, the Islamic Republic will change its approach.

Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari, Commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Force, issued the warning a day after Afghan Taliban fighters launched an aggressive offensive across Iran's southern border, sparking a robust response from Iranian border guards.

General Heidari issued the warning during a visit to the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

"If the neighboring state respects international border regulations, we will observe the principles of good neighborliness in return and display mutual respect," the top commander added.

The commander emphasized that if the neighbors disobey international laws, Iran would adopt a different course of action toward them.

He also said that the Iranian Army's Ground Forces had sole control of the regions along the border with Afghanistan.

An Iranian border guard was killed and two civilians wounded during the exchange of gunfire on Saturday. The shooting was triggered by the Afghan sides. The interim Taliban government said an Afghan border guard was also killed. ► Page 2

Iran-Oman negotiations should be continued until a tangible result is achieved: Leader

New Chapter

Iran, Oman share similar views on regional security, cooperation: Raisi

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi says Iran and Oman share similar views on how to strengthen regional security, peace, and prosperity.

Speaking at a gathering of top Iranian and Omani delegations in Tehran on Sunday at the presence Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman, Raisi stressed that the strong relationship between the two nations is the result of shared strategy to promote regional convergence.

Based on Raisi's remarks, relations between Tehran and Muscat have improved on all fronts, extending from commerce to investment.

Raisi said that there is a potential for closer collaboration between the two nations in areas of energy, trade, communications, defense, and security, as well as in shipping of goods by land and sea. ► Page 2

Tehran, Muscat ink economic, energy co-op documents

TEHRAN - Aiming to expand economic ties, Iran and Oman have signed four co-operation documents in various areas including energy, investment, and free zones during the official visit of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said to Tehran.

The document on the energy sector was signed on Sunday by Iran's Oil Minister Javad Oji and Omani Minister of Energy and Minerals Salim bin Nasser al-Aufi.

The two countries also signed three other documents to cooperate in the economic, investment, and free zones sectors.

Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandozai and Secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council Hojatollah Abdolmaleki signed the mentioned documents with the ministers of economy and commerce of Oman. ► Page 4

Tehran Papers



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

To what extent does the Taliban play to the tune of America?

In its editorial, Kayhan addressed the recent tensions with the Taliban. It said: We will not abandon the main enemy. The favorable opinion of America, Britain and Israel - behind the scenes of the operation ► Page 2

From Inside



- Raisi felicitates Erdogan on presidential win **P2**
- Afghan border guards received a response: minister **P3**
- Intl. stone exhibition running in Tehran **P4**
- Tourism minister calls on ambassadors to fight Iranophobia **P6**
- Iranian universities advance in world's highly cited institutes **P7**
- Vincent Van Gogh comes to life in Iranian play "Butterfly and Yoke" **P8**

Foreign Ministry lays ground for easy departure of pilgrims to Hajj

TEHRAN- The Foreign Ministry has made efforts to make it easier for Iranian pilgrims to travel to Mecca for the Hajj pilgrimage, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian underscored on Monday.

The foreign minister made the remarks as officials from the Hajj and Pilgrimage organization and the Foreign Ministry held a joint meeting to exchange views the issues related to the pilgrims of Baitullah Al-Haram in 1402 (2023).

The meeting was also attended by Seyyed Abdul Fattah Nawab, the Leader's representative for Hajj and Pilgrimage;

Seyed Abbas Hosseini, the head of the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization; and the senior managers of the organization. The participants discussed the status of registration and sending pilgrims to Baitullah Al-Haram and they expressed satisfaction with the arrangements.

"The Deputy Consular and Iranian Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has used all its facilities to facilitate the affairs of Hajj and the pilgrims of the Two Holy Mosques," Amir Abdollahian stated. ► Page 2

Report



F-16's to Ukraine: "NATO playing with fire"

By Ali Karbalaee

TEHRAN - Russia says NATO members are "playing with fire" in their pledge to supply Ukraine with F-16 warplanes.

NATO alleges that the fighter jets will help Ukraine's counter-offensive to recapture territory from Russia.

Kyiv says the counter offensive will begin any moment now.

A Ukrainian official expressed hope the first F-16 will arrive by October.

An American official says the warplanes could arrive by the end of the year, which has raised eyebrows on how the jets will be used. ► Page 5

Iran to unveil hypersonic missile 'soon'

TEHRAN - A top commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced on Monday that Iran will unveil a hypersonic ballistic missile in the near future.

"The hypersonic missile has passed its tests and will be unveiled soon," Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the IRGC's Aerospace Division, said on Monday, Press TV reported.

Hajizadeh added that the new missile is capable of bypassing all air defense missile systems and targeting the enemy's anti-missile systems.

The IRGC commander described the development of the missile as a "great leap in the field of missiles."

"The hypersonic missile has a high speed (around 12-13 Mach) and can maneuver both in and out of the Earth's atmosphere," Hajizadeh said.



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Iraq national security advisor in Tehran for border talks

TEHRAN - Qassem Al-Araji, the Iraqi national security advisor, arrived in Tehran on Monday for talks over border security.

"Under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, the National Security Adviser is heading to Tehran at the head of a security delegation to discuss measures to secure the borders between Iraq and Iran," Al-Araji said in a statement on Facebook. ► Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

To what extent does the Taliban play to the tune of America?

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

In its editorial, Kayhan addressed the recent tensions with the Taliban. It said: We will not abandon the main enemy. The favorable opinion of America, Britain and Israel – behind the scenes of the operation room against Iran – is to destabilize the region and to push the neighboring countries in a conflict with each other, while our strategy has been friendship, cooperation and synergy between countries. The Islamic Republic's preference in asserting its rights and ensuring its security is dialogue and interaction, and it has implemented this strategic model with any other government (except the illegitimate Zionist regime). But Iran did not hesitate to discipline the aggressor where it was necessary to assert the right and to ensure security, whether it was Saddam, or terrorist groups in Syria's Deir ez-Zor and Iraqi Koy Sanjaq and Erbil, or American and British thieves in the case of oil tankers and trespassing drones. Our powerful forces, in most of these cases, have completed the operations with accurate and effective targeting.

The logic of deterrence is that any evil should be responded immediately and relatively. This important mission should be strengthened by increasing intelligence and satellite and drone observations on the border of Sistan-Baluchestan and through operational defense systems. Mutual respect is the theory of good neighborliness and if a neighbor commits malevolence or hosts evils, it will break the respect of the neighbor and will be responsible for its consequences.

Hamshahri: Taliban is the puppet

In its editorial, Hamshahri wrote about the issue of Taliban. It said: The current tensions with the Taliban have been formed outside of the group's will. They are under the influence of political and geopolitical developments in the region. Therefore, the Taliban is a dependent variable that has shaped these tensions by acting as a proxy. To find the roots of these tensions, we must pay attention to the international actors in the region who are looking for tension in the region and are trying to disrupt the geopolitical order of the region.

One side of these tensions are the United States and England, and at the opposite sides of this conflict are the countries of Russia, China, and Iran. Currently, the Americans are creating tension to disrupt the 3-nation alliance of Iran, China, and Russia, and the Taliban has the necessary component to create tension in the region. In other words, the level of tensions and the current lev-

el of play in the region is beyond the level of the Taliban. The main issue is that the hegemons are trying to prevent the collapse of the unipolar system and creation of a multipolar world by creating tension in the region to the detriment of Russia, China and Iran.

Ham Mihan: Sultan carries an important message

In a note, Ham Mihan discussed the Sultan of Oman's trip to Tehran by analyzing the views of an expert. It said: "It is expected that new events will happen during this trip, and in recent months, the diplomatic communication between us and Oman on the one hand and between the Western countries and Oman on the other have shown it is a positive trend of events." Although the Sultanate of Oman always pursues its activity with a quiet diplomacy and communicates with others at the level of leaders, signs show that Oman has seriously launched the mediation and probably the Sultan of Oman has entered our country with new messages. A few days ago, we saw the release of an Iranian diplomat from Belgium and a Belgian citizen from Iran, and this happened with the efforts and support of the Sultanate of Oman.

Sobh-e-No: Haitham's political moves in Tehran

In a report, Sobh-e-No discussed the Sultan of Oman's visit and its aims. It wrote: One of the issues that can be considered during the negotiations between the Omani and Iranian authorities is the resolution of the war in Ukraine. It is for several months that Muscat has hosted meetings in this regard as Oman is trying to bring this issue to a conclusion with its mediatory role. On the other side of the mediation of Omanis is promoting conversation with Putin and they are trying to consult in this regard.

Nuclear negotiations are perhaps the most important goals of the presence of Omanis in Tehran, because in every period of Iran's negotiations with the American authorities, the role of the Omanis has been clearly seen, and they are exercising their mediation role well in this area without creating controversy. Of course, in the last six months, the Sultan of Oman's trip to Iran was postponed three times, and it seems that by releasing the Iranian diplomat captured in Belgium with one of the prisoners of this country, Oman intended to come to Tehran with an accomplished agenda and use its own initiative to bring the nuclear case to fruition with a more specific approach.

Raisi felicitates Erdogan on presidential win

TEHRAN- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Monday congratulated Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his re-election win, calling it a tribute to the Turkish people's enduring confidence in their leader.

Raisi expressed optimism in his message that Erdogan's new term will see more improvement in ties between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey.

The president noted that the relationship between the two neighboring countries are based on strong historical, cultural, religious bonds as well as good neighborliness, mutual respect, and shared interests.

In his message Raisi also noted that the tight collaboration between Iran and Turkey will create even "more favorable conditions" for fostering regional peace, stability, and prosperity.

Erdogan declared victory in the historic run-

off election on Sunday and congratulated Turkish citizens for electing him to lead the nation for the ensuing five years.

On top of a bus in his native Istanbul neighborhood, Erdogan promised his followers, "We will rule the country for the next five years. God willing, we will be deserving of your trust."

"It is not just us who won, Turkey won," he declared, calling it one of the most important elections in Turkish history.

The runoff election was held since neither Erdogan nor his rival Kemal Kilicdaroglu received the majority of votes needed to win the election outright.

Erdogan defeated Kilicdaroglu with more over 52% of the vote after nearly all of the ballots had been tallied on Sunday evening, according to official media.

assassinate various individuals," the official stated.

The Ministry of Intelligence said last week that it had taken down a network connected to a foreign intelligence service.

The ministry stated that the network monitored individuals who had access to sensitive material or were in charge of various positions in the nation's sensitive organizations.

Iranian army urges Taliban to respect border regulations

From page 1 ► Late on Sunday, Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi reacted to the recent border clashes between Iran and Afghanistan, saying that the clashes came to an end after Iran responded to the Afghan side.

"These clashes were brief, the necessary response was given to the Afghan border guards, and now there is no problem for traffic at the border point," Vahidi said, according to IRNA. "There was a shooting by the Afghan border guards, and naturally, they were responded to appropriately."

He added, "The conflicts were later resolved and negotiations were held with the Taliban side."

Vahidi continued, "Currently, we do not have any problems and the border point is open for traffic and is in peace."

Tensions have recently escalated between Iran and Afghanistan over water rights and border clashes. On Saturday, the Iranian border police and Taliban troops engaged in an exchange of fire in a border region east of Iran.

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. Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Tehran's special envoy for Afghanistan, has said Iran just receives 4 percent of the water.

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.

Iranian analysts are saying that the Taliban is not thankful to Iran which has been supporting Afghanistan for more than four decades.

Iran has been hosting millions of Afghan refugees since the Soviet Union invaded the country in late 1979. Iran has been home to the Afghans despite the fact that it is under unprecedented U.S. economic pressure

On Thursday, prior to the border clash, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said that

Tehran, Muscat share similar views on regional security, cooperation: Raisi

From page 1 ►

Sultan Haitham says Oman, Iran should cooperate more

Sultan Haitham, for his part, emphasized the substantial improvement in Tehran-Muscat relations and said that since the Iranian president's visit to Muscat in May of last year, both parties have been able to double mutual trade exchanges.

He noted that the two nations should work harder to establish a level of collaboration in proportionate to their capacities.

During Raisi's significant trip to Muscat last year Iran and Oman signed 12 cooperation documents and memorandums of understanding to advance collaboration in a variety of sectors.

Additionally on Sunday, representatives from Iran and Oman signed four accords to advance their mutual cooperation in the areas of free zones, energy, and economy.

The visit of Sultan Haitham to Tehran represents a crucial turning point for the two regional allies, opening new doors for closer diplomatic collaboration and better communication.

Oman has traditionally been acting as a mediator between the West and Iran.

Oman, which is called the Switzerland of the Middle East, has assisted in the release of a number of dual nationals and foreign citizens between Iran and the West, particularly between Iran and the United States.

In the build-up to a nuclear agreement that was concluded in July 2015, Oman also served as an intermediary between Tehran and the United States.

"Iran-Oman ties progressed to stage of investment"

At another meeting of senior Iranian and Omani officials in Tehran, Raisi made the comment that Tehran and Muscat now are collaborating on investment initiatives rather than just



basic trade.

The president added that common viewpoints and similar approaches toward the region along with proper capacities can broaden cooperation to regional levels.

VP calls for closer economic ties commensurate to political ones

During a welcoming ceremony for the Sultan of Oman at Tehran's International Mehrabad Airport on Sunday afternoon, Vice President Mohammad Mokhber suggested that Iran and Oman should intensify their economic and commercial links to a level equal to their strong political ties.

Mokhber said the Omani Sultan's visit to Tehran is beneficial for both countries. However, he said the biggest challenge to promoting commercial ties is financial system due to the illegal U.S. secondary sanctions.

Meanwhile, the Omani Sultan stated that he would explore measures to remove barriers to bilateral trade.

Sultan Haitham underscored the need for stronger economic cooperation and joint investment, noting that once the difficulties and financial barriers have been eliminated, the interchange of goods and commercial cooperation between Oman and Iran will be expedited.

Amir Abdollahian says Oman has always played positive role in the region

During a joint news conference with his Oma-

ni counterpart Sayyid Badr Albusaidi in Tehran late on Sunday, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the Foreign Minister of Iran, praised Oman for its good influence on the West Asia region.

Amir Abdollahian stated that Oman has always played a helpful role in regional and global affairs.

He stated that for sure, the Sultanate of Oman has a special position for Iran.

Albusaidi, for his part, asserted that the Sultan of Oman visit to Iran can usher in a new era in bilateral ties.

He emphasized that the strategy taken by the Iranian president to enhance ties with neighbors had received the approval of the Sultan of Oman during his Tehran visit.

On the invitation of Raisi, the Sultan of Oman visited Tehran on Sunday and Monday. He was accompanied by a leading high-ranking delegation.

Raisi welcomed the Sultan of Oman and his accompanying delegation during a formal reception ceremony at the Saadabad Palace in northern Tehran.

The invitation to Sultan Haitham was extended as part of the Raisi administration's policy of deepening relations with regional countries.

Sultan Haitham concluded his two-day visit to Iran and left Tehran for Muscat on Monday morning after meeting Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

In his meeting with Sultan Haitham, Ayatollah Khamenei described the relations between Iran and Oman, long-standing, deep-rooted, and good. "We believe that the expansion of bilateral relations in all fields is beneficial for both countries," he added, according to khamenei.ir.

The Leader also referred to the negotiations that have taken place between the Iranian and Omani sides. "The important thing is that these negotiations should be followed up seriously until tangible results are achieved, and eventually relations should be expanded," he said.

Foreign Ministry lays ground for easy departure of pilgrims to Hajj

From page 1 ► The Al-Haram Mosque in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina are the two holiest mosques in Islam. Both are located in the Hejazi area of Saudi Arabia.

The top diplomat also stated that "the consular section of the Foreign Ministry is present and active in Jeddah, Mecca, and Medina."

Amir Abdollahian also expressed hope that this year's Hajj will be

performed in peace and grandeur with the assistance of Saudi Arabian authorities.

During the meeting, the Leader's representative for Hajj and Pilgrimage voiced expectations from the Foreign Ministry, citing the existing links between Tehran and Riyadh as well as the necessity to give special attention to pilgrims' concerns during the Hajj period.



Terrorist team linked to Israel busted in northwest Iran

TEHRAN – According to a Judiciary official in Iran, 14 members of a "terrorist team" connected to Israel have been detained in West Azarbaijan Province, northwest Iran.

Based on the official's information, the terrorists were trying to identify and then assassinate certain individuals.

"14 members linked to Israel have been arrested as they were seeking to identify and

New chapter

Iran-Oman negotiations should be continued until a tangible result is achieved: Leader



By Sadegh Fereydounabadi

TEHRAN – Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, received on Monday morning Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman. The meeting indicated a new trend in Iran-Oman relations.

Sultan Haitham concluded his two-day visit to Iran and left Tehran for Muscat on Monday morning after meeting Ayatollah Khamenei. In Tehran, he met with Iranian President Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi and First-Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, who saw off the Sultan at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport.

Heading a large politico-economic delegation, Sultan Haitham arrived in Tehran on Sunday. His visit gave new momentum to Iran-Oman relations, which have already been strong and historical.

In his meeting with Sultan Haitham, Ayatollah Khamenei described the relations between Iran and Oman, long-standing, deep-rooted, and good. “We

believe that the expansion of bilateral relations in all fields is beneficial for both countries,” he added, according to khamenei.ir.

The Leader also referred to the negotiations that have taken place between the Iranian and Omani sides. “The important thing is that these negotiations should be followed up seriously until tangible results are achieved, and eventually relations should be expanded,” he said.

He further stressed the importance of the increasing cooperation between Oman and Iran, due to the fact that both countries share the very important Strait of Hormuz waterway.

Relations between Tehran and Oman have already been good as manifested by the historic role Oman played in mediating between Iran and the U.S. in the run-up to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Oman also played a mediatory role in many other Iran-related

issues. But the bilateral relations have not been at the same level as the diplomatic interactions. And Sultan Haitham's visit seems to have also addressed this lacuna.

Of course, Oman still plays its traditional mediatory role. During the meeting with the Leader, the Sultan of Oman pointed to Egypt's willingness to resume relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. In response to this, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that Iran welcomes this position and has no problems in this regard.

With regard to the Sultan of Oman's satisfaction with the restoration of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution stated, “These matters are the result of the good policy of Mr. Raeisi's administration to expand and strengthen relations with Iran's neighbors and other countries in the region.”

Ayatollah Khamenei also expressed hope that with the expansion of relations between

the Islamic governments, the Islamic nation will regain its glory and greatness. He added that bringing the potentials and capacities of the Islamic countries together will benefit all Islamic nations, countries and states.

During this meeting, which was also attended by the Iranian president, Ebrahim Raisi, the Sultan of Oman, Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, expressed great satisfaction at meeting with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. He underlined that Oman's policy is to expand ties with its neighbors, in particular with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

“During the negotiations in Tehran, opinions were exchanged and various fields of cooperation were discussed. We hope that with the continuation of these talks, the relations between the two countries will expand even further than before and that its practical results will become evident for both sides,” he added.

Iraq national security advisor in Tehran for border talks

From Page 1 ▶ Earlier this week, he had travelled to Sulaymaniyah on orders from Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Sudani to review measures related to the implementation of a security agreement between Iran and Iraq regarding border security.

“Under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, the National Security Advisor went to Sulaymaniyah Governorate at the head of a security delegation to discuss the procedures of the security agreement between Iraq and Iran,” the office of Al-Araji said in a statement.

The visit came after Iran issued a warning to the Iraqi government to implement the security agreement signed between Tehran and Baghdad regarding border security.

A senior commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has said Iraq has made a commitment to disarm and drive out anti-Iranian militants operating in the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

“We are waiting for the Iraqi government to keep its promises, and we have given them a chance to get rid of the terrorists. Otherwise, and if nothing is done, the IRGC strikes would continue,” Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour, commander of the IRGC Ground Force, stated last week.

Before his trip to Sulaymaniyah, Al-Araji met the Iranian military attaché in Baghdad to discuss border issues. “We discussed with the Iranian military attaché in Baghdad measures to enhance security and the responsibility of the two countries in securing the borders, and we discussed security files and issues of common interest, in a way that achieves security and stability in the region,” the Iraqi national security advisor said on Twitter.

In Tehran, Al-Araji met with Ali Akbar Ahmadian, the new secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council. Ahmadian told the visiting Iraqi official that Iran expect Baghdad to expel counter-revolutionary elements from

Iran in accordance with the Iran-Iraq security agreement.

“We expect the Iraqi government to guarantee the security of this country's borders with Iran as soon as possible while ending the presence of anti-revolutionary elements in this country within the framework of this agreement,” Ahmadian told Al-Araji.

Ahmadian described the recent security agreement, which is the result of months of dialogue and joint efforts of the relevant institutions of the two countries, as a very appropriate and strategic measure and emphasized on the strict implementation of its provisions.

Al-Araji, for his part, underlined Iraq's commitment to the security agreement. “I have come to meet you with a high-ranking delegation and emphasize Iraq's adherence to the agreement recently signed between the two countries,” he said.

Afghan border guards received a response: minister

TEHRAN – Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi late on Sunday reacted to the recent border clashes between Iran and Afghanistan, saying that the clashes came to an end after Iran responded to the Afghan side.

“These clashes were brief, the necessary response was given to the Afghan border guards, and now there is no problem for traffic at the border point,” Vahidi said, according to IRNA. “There was a shooting by the Afghan border guards, and naturally, they were responded to appropriately.”

He added, “The conflicts were later resolved and negotiations were held with the Taliban side.”

Vahidi continued, “Currently, we do not have any problems and the border point is open for traffic and is in peace.”

The interior minister also pointed to Iran's water share of the Helmand River, saying that “previously, various officials



have spoken about the Helmand River's water share. Therefore, we are waiting for a joint team to be formed together with the Taliban and the Iranian experts to investigate the water situation in the region's dams and the current situation of Helmand with regard to Iran's water share.”

He added, “If there was water in the dams, the Taliban side should give Iran's share, and if not, this issue should be clarified for us because our experts believe that there is water in these dams.”

Vahidi stated, “Meanwhile, the Taliban side says that there is no water in Helmand. However, the

formation of a joint committee is foreseen by Iran, and this committee should be formed and visit the said place.”

Tensions have recently escalated between Iran and Afghanistan over water rights and border clashes. On Saturday, the Iranian border police and Taliban troops engaged in an exchange of fire in a border region east of Iran.

The clashes came amid tensions about Iran's water rights. An Iranian lawmaker has called on the Taliban to abandon its use of language of threat vis-à-vis Iran and resort to diplomacy when it comes to Iran's water rights.

The lawmaker, Fada Hossein Maleki, who is a member of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said differences between Iran and Afghanistan can be solved through diplomacy.

In remarks to IRNA, Maleki said, “We expect the Taliban to pay attention to the historical relations between the two nations of Iran

and Afghanistan and to know that Iran has stood by Afghanistan in all situations. They should not use inappropriate language to address us. Some of the videos published on the internet show our border guards talking to the Taliban and they [the Taliban] use threatening language, which is not correct at all and is outside of international norms.”

Maleki, also a former Iranian ambassador to Afghanistan, said Iran expects the Taliban to respect Iran's water share from the Helmand River, which has been at the center of tensions between Tehran and Kabul in recent days. “The demand of Iran, our nation and government from Afghanistan is that the treaty related to Iran's share of Helmand be implemented as soon as possible. The Taliban should pay attention to the international treaty regarding Helmand's water share and good neighborliness,” the lawmaker added.

SPORTS

Ashkan Khorshidi chosen to officiate Tehran derby

TEHRAN – Ashkan Khorshidi will take charge of Wednesday's Tehran derby between Persepolis and Esteghlal.

He will be assisted by Alireza Ildorom and Hossein Zahiri in the match, while Mohammadhossein Torabian has been named fourth official.

League champions Persepolis will play Esteghlal in 2022/23 Hazfi Cup final in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Esteghlal and Persepolis have met each other 100 times. Both teams have won 26 matches each and 48 matches ended in draw.

Iran's NPC can support the Asian countries: Majid Rashed



TEHRAN – Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) President Majid Rashed hailed Iran as one of the most developed National Paralympic Committees (NPCs) in the region and said the West Asian country can support the other Asian countries to develop in this field.

During the final day of the 30th Executive Board meeting of the Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) held in Tehran's Paralympic Committee headquarters, Rashed, Ghafoor Karegari, head of the National Paralympic Committee (NPC), and Chief Executive Officer of the APC Tarek Souei attended a press conference.

“Iran is one of the leading countries in term of the Paralympic Movement in Asia. A lot of progress has been made by the Iranian athletes in Asia and the world over the past years. Iran has good fundamental and structure and is one of the best in the field of Paralympic Movement in Asia.

In response to a question whether APC has a plan for greater participation of Iran in APC, he said, “This is my second trip to Iran in one year. The first time I was here to attend Iran's 15th Paralympic Day celebration and I have to say Iran is a leading country in the Paralympic Movement. Iran's NPC, under leadership of Mahmoud Khosravi Vafa, earned many achievements and now Ghafoor Karegari continues the policy. Iran has excellent athletes and referees who can achieve good results in the upcoming competitions. As the ambassadors of APC, we must always play our role. Iran has already members in APC and will have more in the future.”

Rashed is optimistic about the upcoming Asian Para Games, which will be held in Guangzhou, China.

“The first edition of the Asian Para Games was held in 2010 in Guangzhou, China. Two more editions were held in 2014 (Incheon) and 2018 (Jakarta) and we want to organize a better Games in the fourth edition in Hangzhou, China. The fifth edition will take place in Nagoya, Japan. Qatar and Saudi Arabia will also host the 2030, 2034 editions. The Para athletes are hungry to participate in the competitions and I am sure we will see more athletes in Hangzhou,” he added.

Asked him about the holding Asian Para Winter Games for the first time, Rashed said, “I traveled to Iran in last year's Autumn and visited Tochal ski resort in the north of Tehran. Iran can submit its proposal for hosting the first edition and we are thinking about the holding the first edition of the Games,” the APC president said.

Karegari also said the Iranian Para athletes are well-prepared to partake in Hangzhou.

“First of all, I would like to extend a very

warm welcome to all of you. A total of 218 athletes have so far secured their places in the Games in 18 events and there is a possibility we compete with more athletes in the edition. We will send the athletes who have more chance of winning medals in the Games,” Karegari said.

Iran finished third in the Indonesia 2018 Asian Para Games medal table after winning 51 gold medals, 42 silvers and 43 bronzes.

Iran learn fate at WAFF U23 Championship

TEHRAN – Iran discovered its rivals at the West Asia U23 Championship.

The Iranian team has been drawn in Group B along with Syria and Palestine.

Iraq, the UAE and Jordan are drawn in Group A, while Group C included Lebanon, Yemen and Oman.

Matches will be played from June 12 to 20 in Iraqi cities Baghdad and Karbala.

Group winners and the best runner-up will advance to the semifinals.

The West Asian Football Federation (WAFF) founded in 2001, is a regional sub-confederation of football, governed under the Asian Football Confederation, for nations in Western Asia. The WAFF consists of 12 member associations.

Mirzaeian top goalscorer of 2023 CAFA U23

TEHRAN – Reza Mirzaeian of Iran claimed the top goalscorer award of the 2023 CAFA U-23 Championship.

Mirzaeian scored six goals in the tournament held in Tajikistan.

Iran came second with nine points, one point behind champion Uzbekistan.

Iran lost to Uzbekistan and defeated Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan in the competition.

The tournament brought Tajikistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan together.

The Central Asian Football Association (CAFA) is one of five regional bodies of governance in association football in Asia.

Iran to host Asian Men's Volleyball Championship in August

TEHRAN – The 22nd edition of the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship will be held in the Iranian capital, Tehran, from Aug. 19 to 26, with the participation of 18 teams.

The draw for the competition took place on March 16, and the 18 participating teams were divided into six groups.

In the group stage, teams will compete against each other, and at the end of this stage, the top two teams from each group (a total of 12 teams) will advance to the playoffs. The group winners will face the second-placed teams from other groups, determined by a draw.

The Iranian team have been grouped with Hong Kong and Iraq. If Iran's volleyballers defeat their rivals during the knockout stage, the team will qualify among the top four teams.

If the Japanese top their group and win in the direct elimination match, they will reach the semi-finals, while the remaining two semi-finalists will be determined by two more competitions between the winners of the knockout stage.

Group A: Iran, Hong Kong, Iraq

Group B: Japan, Uzbekistan, Thailand

Group C: China, Kazakhstan, Indonesia

Group D: Chinese Taipei, Bahrain, Mongolia

Group E: Qatar, India, Afghanistan

Group F: Pakistan, South Korea, Bangladesh

20,000 National Housing Movement units to be completed in Isfahan by next March

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 20,000 units of the National Housing Movement Plan will be completed and delivered to the applicants in Isfahan province by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2024).

Alireza Qari-e Quran, the head of the province's Transport and Urban Development Department, said that these units have already received construction permits.

The acting head of the National Land and Housing Organization has announced the preparation of 22,000 hectares of land for the implementation of the National Housing Movement Plan across the country.

Arsalan Maleki said that the organization has 727 preparatory projects in the operational stages in the country, of which 680 projects with an area of 22,000 hectares belong to the National Housing Movement Plan.

The most preparation projects in the country are underway in Isfahan province and the most physical progress of these projects (about 65 percent) is in Zanjan province, he added.

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

According to the plan, out of these four million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and



800,000 units in villages, some of these units are currently being constructed after providing lands and preparing the necessary conditions.

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

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

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

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

this year's slogan and control liquidity and reduce inflation, and said strengthening the capital market to finance companies will greatly boost production.

The current Iranian calendar year 1402 (began on March 21) is named "Inflation Control, Production Growth".

While emphasizing the potential of the capital market to realize this year's slogan, Mohsen Abbaslou said: "The year 1402 has been named by the Leader as the year of Inflation Control, Production Growth and without a doubt, directing liquidity towards the capital market is one of the best ways to control liquidity and reduce inflation."

In addition, the strengthening of the capital market will also help the financing of companies and facilitating the financing of manufacturing companies will itself lead to the prosperity of production because the capital market is the only market that will not cause inflation when liquidity enters it; while, the entrance of liquidity into the commodity, currency, car and housing markets leads to the escalation of inflation, the expert said, adding, "Of course, directing liquidity to the capital market and controlling this liquidity will depend on strengthening investors' trust in this market and stability in rules and regulations and decisions".

According to Abbaslou, the capital market is a transparent market and the capacities of this market can be used to increase transparency in other areas as well. The most appropriate way to eliminate rent-seeking, brokerage, and corruption, and increase transparency in the markets is to use the capacities of the commodity exchange.

In late October 2022, Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) unveiled a comprehensive support package to encourage activities in the capital market as shareholders were getting reluctant to invest in the market.

As announced by the SEO Office of Public Relations, one of the major measures considered in this package is the insurance of shareholders' capital and dividends over the next year.

The comprehensive support package of the capital market, which was designed in late October and has been reviewed by the country's economic authorities, was put in effect since October 29.

Tehran, Muscat ink economic, energy co-op documents

From page 1 ► According to Khandouzi, under the framework of the document signed in the investment sector, the two countries are going to establish a joint investment committee based on which they will introduce parties so that the investment projects, whether in Oman or in Iran, will be approved by this joint committee and will be implemented quickly.

"Also, an agreement for supporting investors has been agreed upon by the two sides, which will be signed by both parties after going through the procedures in the Omani parliament," the minister said.

Mentioning the prospects of economic relations between the two countries in the future, he said: "Considering that after the visit of President Raisi to Muscat last year, the volume of business exchanges between Iran and Oman increased significantly, the evidence indicates that the coming months and next year will also witness an increase in trade



Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi (R) and Omani Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion Qais Mohammed Al Yousef sign co-op documents in Tehran on Sunday.

relations between the two countries."

"Our agreement with our Omani counterparts is for the relations between the two countries to enter a phase of joint investments in addition to completing the current trade ties, which will create a much more lasting economic link in the

long term," Khandouzi noted.

Earlier this month, a Joint Iran-Oman Business Forum was held at the place of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) in a bid to boost trade exchange between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Oman.

Intl. stone exhibition running in Tehran

TEHRAN - The 13th International Stone Exhibition of Iran kicked off at Shahr-e-Aftab Exhibition Center near the capital Tehran on Monday.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by senior officials including Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Mohtashampour and MP Mostafa Taheri.

As reported, over 110 Iranian companies along with counterparts from six different countries namely China, Russia, India, Italy, Turkey, and Greece are

showcasing their latest products and achievements in this five-day exhibition.

The exhibition covers three main areas including mining machinery and equipment, consumables, and minerals processing.

Currently, there are more than 6,000 mining and decorative stone processing units active across Iran, which have provided employment for about 600,000 people.

On average, 10 to 11 million tons of decorative

stones are mined in the country annually; however, the production rate has never exceeded 15 million tons.

Although the majority of the products of this industry are sold inside the country, this sector also brings the country an average of 300 to 350 million dollars in revenues every year.

According to the Head of the Iran Stone Association Bahram Shakouri, this industry has the potential to achieve five billion in annual exports.

Commodities worth over \$642m traded at IME in a week

TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) witnessed trade of 2,865,574 tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$642 million on its physical market.

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor trade of 2,432,157 tons of commodities valued at more than \$440 million.

On this floor the IME sold 1,277,040 tons of cement, 600,000 tons of iron ore, 383,992 tons of steel, 158,600 tons of sponge iron, 8,890 tons of copper, 7,300 tons of aluminum, 875 tons of zinc, 500 tons of cast iron and 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate.

Based on this report, the exchange saw trade of 400 kg of saffron on its agricultural trading floor.

Furthermore, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings

of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 420,051 tons of commodities worth nearly \$194 million.

Commodities traded on this floor included 158,301 tons of bitumen, 97,028 tons of polymeric products, 73,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 39,702 tons of chemicals, 27,000 tons of lube cut, 21,200 tons of sulfur, 3,967 tons of base oil, 500 tons of petroleum products, 230 tons of feedstocks and 200 tons of insulation.

IME is one of 4 major stock markets of Iran

The IME also traded within the same week 13,365 tons of commodities on its side market.

As previously reported, during the past Iranian calendar month (ended on May 21), the IME witnessed trade of 13,429,985 tons of commodities and 1,075 vehicles with a total trading value of almost \$3 billion



on its physical market, registering growths of 21.7 percent in value and 17.5 percent in volume of trades compared with the month before that.

The exchange saw on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor, trade of 1,777,910 tons of commodities valued at nearly \$860 million.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 509,402 tons of bitumen, 421,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 418,260 tons of polymeric products, 184,000 tons of lube cut, 179,693 tons of chemicals, 37,840 tons of sulfur, 19,876 tons of oil, 12,098 tons of petroleum products, 1,670 tons of insulation, 1,000 tons of slop wax

TEDPIX gains 18,000 points on Monday



TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 18,381 points to 2.275 million on Monday.

As reported, over 11.138 billion securities worth 91.247 trillion rials (about \$217 million) were traded at the TSE.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

A member of the Iranian Parliament's Planning and Budget Committee has said that a prosperous future is expected for the stock market by using modern financial instruments.

Mohammadreza Mirtajedini said shareholders need to invest indirectly in the capital market using financial instruments such as investment funds before directly entering the market.

Pointing out that education is a necessity for people who want to enter the market, Mirtajedini said: "With the help of investment funds and with a long-term view, shareholders can inject their capital into the market to bring the country's production to the required prosperity."

"In general, good measures have been taken or are being taken by the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) to protect the shareholders and their capital, among which we can mention the implementation of the stock insurance plan," the official noted.

"By using modern financial instruments in the capital market, we can envision a prosperous future for the market and witness the re-entry of liquidity to the stock market," he added.

Also, a capital market expert stated that directing liquidity towards the capital market will be one of the best solutions to materialize

Number of Iran's commercial attachés in target markets to reach 30 by Mar. 2024

TEHRAN - The number of Iran's commercial attachés in the country's trade partners is going to increase to 30 by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2024), an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

According to Mohammad Rajabnejad, the head of TPO's Department of Commercial Attachés and Trade Centers, based on the TPO plans for the current year, the number of commercial attachés and trade centers should increase significantly by

the yearend.

TPO is taking the necessary measures for sending attachés to Indonesia, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Shanghai, China, Nigeria and Eastern European countries including Poland and Serbia in the coming months, the official said.

"Iran's commercial attaché will be stationed in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by next week. Also, two attachés for Brazil and Uzbekistan are about to be dispatched," he added.

The official noted that his organization is also making preparations to send a business advisor to Saudi Arabia.

Rajabnejad further noted that the number of Iran's trade centers in foreign countries has also increased significantly over the past two years, so that currently Iran has trade centers in 40 different countries around the world.

"Two new centers will also be opened, soon," he added.

Non-oil goods worth over \$6.5b exported from Khuzestan in a year

TEHRAN- Non-oil commodities worth \$6.584 billion were exported from Khuzestan province, in the southwest of Iran, during the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20), an official with the customs department of the province announced.

Behrouz Qareh-Beygi put the weight of exported commodities at 17.55 million tons, with a seven-percent growth year on year.

He named petrochemicals, agricultural products, steel, constructional materials, mechanical and electronic devices, food and fishery as the main exported items, and the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, China, Southeast Asia, Turkey, Russia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan as the major export destinations.

The official further announced that 18.021 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$10.677 billion were imported to the province in the previous year, with a 12-percent drop in weight, while a five-percent rise in value, as compared to the preceding year.

As announced by the spokesman of Trade Development Committee of the Iranian House of Industry, Mining, and Trade, the value of Iran's non-oil export rose 10 percent in the past year.

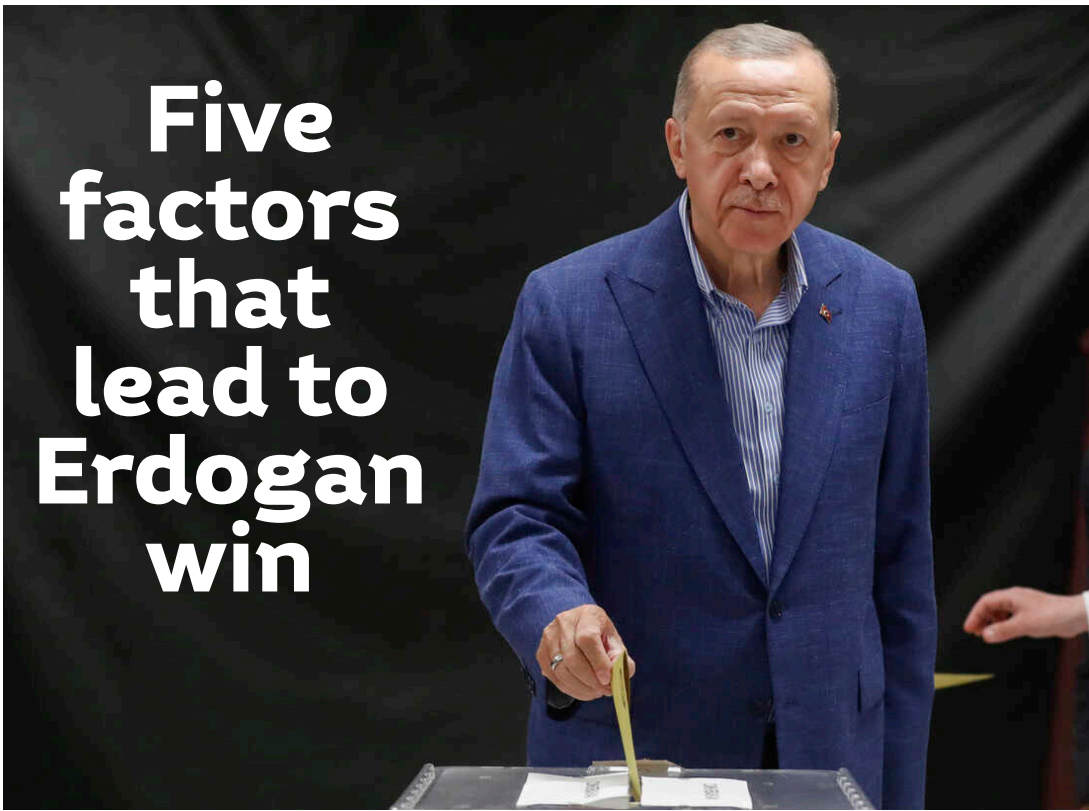
Ruhollah Latifi said that 122.056 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$53.166 billion were exported in the previous year.

China with the purchase of \$14.584 billion of commodities (no change), Iraq with \$10.238 billion (15 percent growth), Turkey with \$7.459 billion (23 percent growth), the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

with \$5.767 billion (28 percent growth), and India with \$2.146 billion (18 percent growth) were the first five export destinations of Iranian goods in 1401, the official stated.

Latifi further announced that 37.18 million tons of non-oil commodities valued at \$59.655 billion were imported to the country during the past year, with a 10 percent drop in weight, and a 13 percent rise in worth, year on year.

The UAE with sales of \$18.395 billion (11 percent growth), China with \$15.744 billion (24 percent growth), Turkey with \$6.99 billion (15 percent growth), India with \$2.019 billion (80 percent growth), and Germany with \$2.019 billion (five percent growth), were the first five countries supplying goods to Iran in 1401, he stated.



From page 1 ► First of all, it should be said that if this round of victory for Erdogan was hard-won and this year's elections were pushed to the second round it was not due to an increase in Kilicdaroglu's popularity, but rather because of economic recession and managerail weakness in handling the earthquake that hit the country in February.

But the most important reason for Kilicdaroglu's defeat against Erdogan again is his alliance with opposition leaders known as "National Alliance". Differences in approach and perspective among six opposing parties in this alliance were one of the most important factors in people's distrust towards Kilicdaroglu as a presidential candidate of the alliance. Because it was predicted that on election day there would be severe differences of opinion among these parties on how to manage the country, resulting in social conditions returning not towards development and progress but to pre-Erdogan Turkey. The silence of Ms. Meral Aksener, the leader of the Good Party, as a member of the National Alliance after the first round of elections showed a deep tremor within the alliance, which was enough to make National Alliance supporters also disappointed about a vicotry by Kilicdaroglu.

The second reason can be examined in the attention of people to the issue

of survival and security regarding the economy; Erdogan's critics, including parties and journalists, have tried to question Erdogan's management and his team's approach to the economy by resorting to attack and criticism in the past two years, in order to provide a platform for his defeat in the elections. They were able to attract a significant percentage of the society, but this was not enough for Erdogan's defeat. Because the issue that Erdogan was able to instill in public opinion was the importance of security and survival of the country against external threats. When Ankara officials linked the elections to the issue of survival and said that these elections were related to the country's survival, they insilled this fear among public that if Erdogan and his affiliated party were defeated, there is a possibility of endangering stability and security of the country, as well as ending Turkey's survival. Erdogan's victory shows that despite people's dissatisfaction with the country's economic conditions, security is by far the most important component for Turkish people.

The third reason is Erdogan's continued popularity among Islamist and traditionalist groups; this group has great importance for Erdogan and is actually his most important asset for continuing his political life. For this reason, in recent years, Erdogan has made every effort to have this Islamic group on his side. Therefore, a significant

part of Erdogan's speeches are always focused on topics that interest this group. For example, at the end of his speeches, Erdogan always prays "Oh God! Do not let our minarets be without adhan (call for prayer) and our country without a flag" This is exactly what creates patriotism and Islamic devotion among traditionalist groups. This group who suffered many hardships due to their religious beliefs and observance of hijab during previous periods and see Erdogan as their savior and prefer him to remain as their leader in Turkey's current situation.

In the midst of it all, the progress made in the industrial sector during the reign of the Justice and Development Party should not be forgotten as the fourth factor in Erdogan's victory. For example, the production and export of Bayraktar drones and the all-around support of the current Turkish government for Baykar Company are considered a national honor for Turkey. This issue was like a winning card that media close to Erdogan focused on in recent years to create a nationalist sentiment that these advancements would not be achieved with another party coming to power. Additionally, Haluk Bayraktar, CEO of Baykar company, always expressed concern about the possibility of Erdogan leaving and his impact on his company's operations.

However, one can analyze the reason

for Erdogan's victory in his foreign policy approach; Erdogan prioritized a policy based on balance with regional and Western governments as part of his strategic policies. Despite having established favorable relations with European governments, Turkey's president also paid attention to his country's relations with regional governments in the Persian Gulf area.

Erdogan's only mistake in foreign policy was to destroy relationship with Syria and trying to heal the rift several months before the elections. But this issue did not affect his vote count. Of course, Erdogan did not miss an opportunity to criticize his opponents by resuming Ankara's relations with Abu Dhabi and Riyadh. Ankara's efforts as an influential player in the Russia-Ukraine war and his mediation for grain agreements have also been among Erdogan's foreign policy acheivements over the past two years. Perhaps some of Erdogan's regional policies and approaches were not favored by other governments, but this type of policy has been popular and desirable for Turkish citizens.

It must be said that the biggest error of Ekrem Imamoglu was in his candidacy. Erdogan knew well that if his rival was Imamoglu, he could defeat him. That's why before the elections, every time he addressed him in his speeches, he said, "Oh, Ekrem Imamoglu, if you're telling the truth, be a presidential candidate yourself."

Erdogan is still recognized as a charismatic political figure in Turkish society and global community, and although Imamoglu tried to defeat him by forming alliances with other parties and creating a front against Erdogan, he has not yet achieved the same political credibility as Erdogan. Imamoglu fell for the deception of polls conducted by Turkish and foreign election institutions and became excited about the premature prediction of "certain victory" and entered the election campaign while having previously experienced defeat against Erdogan. Perhaps that's why these days in Turkey he is called "a man who doesn't get tired of losing."

Considering the issues mentioned above, it can be said that finally Erdogan was able to secure his victory in the election round by obtaining Sinan Ogan's support, a representative of the ATA coalition (in the first round of elections), to once again enter the Presidential Palace with a six-horse carriage.

offensive to recapture land from Russia in eastern and southern Ukraine.

The counter-offensive has been delayed and over the past several months it has been billed as a spring counter-offensive.

As summer approaches, Ukrainian officials say it could start in the following days or weeks, but Yuri Sak, an adviser to the Ukrainian Defense Ministry, has said that Kyiv hopes to receive the first F-16's by October which will be in the Autumn.

U.S. Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall admitted the delivery of F-16s to Ukraine will take "several months at best". He also said "several months" is relatively quick, since it usually takes over two years to train a new American pilot on such an aircraft.

Those remarks have raised more questions than answers as "several months at best" has been labeled as vague and could mean by the end of the year.

Ukraine's allies have yet to offer any public statements on which country will provide the jets, how many, and when.

Training on the U.S.-made jets will take place in Europe while other U.S. officials have estimated the speediest time needed for training and delivery of F-16s at 18 months.

In essence, the Pentagon is seeking to drag this war out as long as possible, with Ukraine being used as a proxy, and Europe paying the price.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in an interview with Russian media on Sunday that Western countries are waging their war against Russia in all domains.

The transfer of the U.S. warplanes had to come with a specific pledge from Kyiv.

Biden said he had received a "flat assurance" from President Zelensky that he would not use the F-16 fighter jets to attack Russian territory.

Western governments have been very careful in sending any arms shipments that could strike into Russian territory out of fear of getting involved in a war with Russia.

At the same time, they have become increasingly wary of leaving their own countries undefended by giving away too much military equipment to Ukraine.

WORLD HEADLINES

‘Nuclear weapons for everyone’ who joins Belarus and Russia, says Lukashenko

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, promised nuclear weapons to any nation that joined Russia and Belarus.

The comment came just days after the Belarusian leader confirmed the transfer of Russian nuclear weapons to his country. Putin has periodically hinted at a nuclear escalation since the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, dramatically increasing tensions with the United States and the West.

“It’s very simple. You have to join the union between Belarus and Russia, and that’s it: There will be nuclear weapons for everyone,” Lukashenko said in a comment aired Sunday night on Russian state TV.

“I think it’s possible,” Lukashenko added, saying that he was expressing his own view. “We need to strategically understand that we have a unique chance to unite.”

Lukashneko made the comment in response to earlier remarks by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev during a summit in Moscow on Wednesday.

Tokayev said at the forum of the Eurasian Economic Union in Moscow Wednesday that Belarus and Russia enjoy a close relationship where “even nuclear weapons are shared between the two.”

S. Arabia executes 2 Bahraini men; Amnesty called trial ‘grossly unfair’

Saudi Arabia said it executed two Bahraini men on Monday after being convicted of belonging to a militant group wanting to destabilize the two Mideast kingdoms. Amnesty International had criticized their trial as being “grossly unfair.”

The Saudi Interior Ministry’s announcement, carried by the state-run Saudi Press Agency, identified the men as Jaafar Sultan and Sadeq Thamer.

Last year, Amnesty said the men were detained in May 2015 and held incommunicado for three-and-a-half months.

The Saudi statement said that the Specialized Criminal Court convicted the two men of belonging to a militant group — headed by a man wanted by the Bahrani authorities — spreading chaos and smuggling explosives to be used inside Saudi Arabia. The statement did not identify the group or their leader.

Amnesty, however, had criticized their October 2021 trial and conviction, adding they also had faced charges for “participation in anti-government protests in Bahrain.”

Japan puts missile defense on alert as N.Korea warns of satellite launch

Japan put its ballistic missile defenses on alert on Monday and warned that it would shoot down any projectile that threatened its territory after North Korea notified Japan of a satellite launch between May 31 and June 11.

North Korea says it has completed its first military spy satellite and leader Kim Jong Un has approved final preparations for the launch.

Analysts say the satellite is part of a surveillance technology programme, that includes drones, aimed at improving nuclear-armed North Korea’s ability to strike targets in the event of war.

“We will take destructive measures against ballistic and other missiles that are confirmed to land in our territory,” Japan’s defense ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said it would use its Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) or Patriot Missile PAC-3 to destroy a North Korea missile.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters that any North Korean missile launch would be a serious violation of UN Security Council resolutions condemning its nuclear and missile activity.

UN agencies warn of starvation risk in Sudan, Haiti, Burkina Faso and Mali

Two UN agencies warned Monday of rising food emergencies including starvation in Sudan due to the outbreak of war and in Haiti, Burkina Faso and Mali due to restricted movements of people and goods.

The four countries join Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen at the highest alert levels, with communities that are already facing or projected to face starvation or otherwise risk a slide “towards catastrophic conditions.”

The report by the World Food Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization calls for urgent attention to save both lives and jobs. Beyond the nine countries rating the highest level of concern, the agencies said 22 countries are identified as “hotspots” risking acute food insecurity.

“Business-as-usual pathways are no longer an option in today’s risk landscape if we want to achieve global food security for all, ensuring that no one is left behind,” said Qu Dongyu, FAO Director-General.

NATO troops form security cordons in Kosovo as Serbs protest

NATO peacekeeping soldiers have formed security cordons around four town halls in Kosovo to keep back Serbs protesting against ethnic Albanian mayors taking office in a Serb-majority area after elections they boycotted.

In Zvecan, one of the towns in north Kosovo, state police – staffed entirely by ethnic Albanians after all Serbs quit the force last year – sprayed pepper gas to repel a crowd of Serbs who broke through a security barricade on Monday and tried to force their way into the municipality building, witnesses said.

Igor Simic, deputy head of the Serb List, the biggest Belgrade-backed Kosovo Serb party, accused Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti of fueling tensions in the north.

“We are interested in peace. Albanians who live here are interested in peace, and only he (Kurti) wants to make chaos,” Simic told reporters in Zvecan, speaking in English.

CAR interested in hosting Russian military base

The Ambassador of the Central African Republic (CAR) to Russia, Leon Dodonu-Punagaza, has said his country is interested in having a Russian military base on its territory that could accommodate between 5,000 and 10,000 soldiers.

“Our country is the first country in Africa that resisted the French,” he said in an interview published by Izvestia on Monday, adding that a Russian military base would help reinforce CAR, where threats to security remain and have worsened due to the inflow of refugees from war-torn Sudan.

The ambassador praised the role of Russian military instructors in strengthening his nation’s armed forces and emphasized the importance of continuing military-technical cooperation, despite the opposition of some countries.

“In recent weeks, when Russia delivered six military aircraft to us, it was the French who began to resent it, yelling and yelling. But this is not our business; we are interested in cooperation with Russia,” Dodonu-Punagaza noted.

In December last year, the last 130 French soldiers of the logistical mission MISLOG-B left the capital Bangui as a result of tensions with France over the growing Russian military presence.

F-16’s to Ukraine: “NATO playing with fire”

From page 1 ► The mathematics don’t add up, but more importantly it’s another major signal by the U.S.-led NATO military alliance of wanting to drag out the war as long as possible.

After many months of lobbying for the warplanes, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has finally got his wish.

As NATO members continue to pour weapons into Ukraine, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has warned that Western governments are “playing with fire”.

The warning came after the United States authorized its allies to supply Kyiv (only from their own stockpiles) with the U.S.-made F-16 warplanes.

Russia’s top diplomat has branded the move as “an unacceptable escalation” of the conflict.

During an interview with Russian media, Lavrov was asked on where the limit stands about the escalation of NATO’s arms shipments, to which he responded, “of course, this is an unacceptable escalation. I think there are still people in the West who understand this, but everything is dictated by Washington, London and their satellites who are in the European Union... It’s playing with fire, without a doubt”.

The issue of escalation is not a question of Ukraine receiving F-16 fighter jets as senior Russian officials have downplayed the logistical aspects of the transfer, while observers are questioning their effectiveness on the battlefield in the face of Russia’s more powerful air force.

The matter has more to do with the Kremlin’s argument that NATO is attempting to contain Russia by prolonging the war and suffering of Ukrainian people, while using Ukraine as a proxy, with increasingly sophisticated weapons being sent to Kyiv instead of focusing on peace.

Russia had already warned against sending the fighter jets, saying the move would bring to the spotlight the U.S.-led NATO forces’ direct military involvement in the war. Senior Russian diplomats say transferring the warplanes will not undermine Moscow’s military objectives.

They also say the logistics of the F16’s in Ukrainian hands makes little sense.

“There is no infrastructure for the operation of the



F-16 in Ukraine and the needed number of pilots and maintenance personnel is not there either,” Russia’s ambassador to the U.S., Anatoly Antonov, pointed out in remarks published on the embassy’s social media platform.

Antonov has also echoed Lavrov’s remarks, accusing the US of subjecting other countries to its own foreign agenda at the recent G7 summit.

“Washington completely subordinated the G7 members to its own policy regarding the conflict in Ukraine,” Antonov said, adding that the U.S. wants a “strategic defeat” for Russia.

“What will happen if the American fighters take off from NATO airfields, controlled by foreign ‘volunteers?’”

Russia’s Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has dismissed any transfer of the U.S. jets to Ukraine as “absolutely pointless and stupid”.

“These efforts are completely useless and meaningless: our capabilities are such that all the goals of the special military operation will certainly be achieved”, Ryabkov has been cited by Russian media as saying.

Analysts agree that the U.S., unlike its European allies, wants a strategic defeat for Russia. Washington is not seeking any diplomatic solution to the war.

Any transfer of the fighter jets will not alter the course of the battle and is more of a symbolic gesture, something that is offered to Ukraine during international summits, such as the G7 in Hiroshima last week. The delivery is intended to please the government in Kyiv to continue fighting.

The U.S.-led NATO military alliance says the F-16 warplanes will help Kyiv in its long-awaited counter

Mayor pledges support for UNESCO-designated tower restoration



TEHRAN – Gonbad-e Kavus mayor on Sunday pledged support to help restore the city's 1,000-year-old brick tower, which is registered as a World Heritage.

“The municipality is ready to provide funds to any amount allocated by the trustees of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts for the restoration of Gonbad-e Qabus and its surrounding landscape,” Seyyed Ali-Asghar Mousavi said on Sunday.

Mousavi made the remarks in a meeting with cultural heritage, tourism, and city officials of the northern Iranian city, IRNA reported.

The head of the Islamic City Council of Gonbad-e Kavus attached great importance to safeguarding the ancient monument as a masterpiece of architecture.

“Gonbad-e Qabus, as a magnificent work, is an honor not only for the people of Gonbad-e Kavus but for all Iranians and even the whole Islamic world, so we should protect it as best as possible,” Rasul Paydar said.

Another speaker in the meeting was the director of the Gonbad-e Qabus World Heritage site who requested the financial support of the municipality to speed up the restoration of the conical part of the tower and to complete the landscaping of this historical monument.

“The conical part of Gonbad Qaboos, which consists of 5,000 valuable and historical bricks, needs an urgent restoration of 1,500 bricks, the current

cost of which is estimated at 14 billion tomans (some \$280,000),” Abdolmajid Nourtaghani said.

Last year, Nourtaghani publicized that the restoration and monitoring process of the tower may take two years. “A new restoration project on Gonbad-e Qabus may take about two years of fieldwork, analysis of the samples produced, substitutes of the worn-out bricks with exact replicas, and a thorough monitoring process.”

It is not possible to open all segments of the roof at once and then see that the samples produced are not suitable. Restoration work must proceed according to principles, the official explained.

Located in Golestan province, the monument is of high architectural importance as an exemplar and innovative design of early Islamic-era architecture.

Experts say that growing plants on the Qabus tower is not a new issue and is witnessed in all brick buildings across the country, especially in northern provinces, due to their climatic conditions.

Visible from great distances in the surrounding lowlands near the ancient Ziyarid capital, Jorjan, the 53-meter high Gonbad-e Qabus dominates a modern town of the same name laid out around its base in the early 20th century.

Its hollow, cylindrical shaft of unglazed fired brick tapers up from an intricate geometric plan in the form of a ten-pointed star to a conical roof. Two encircling kufic inscriptions commemorate Qabus Ibn Voshmgir, Ziyarid ruler and literati as its founder in 1006 CE.

As mentioned by UNESCO, the monument bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. The structure capped by an eye-catching conical roof boasts intricate geometric principles and patterns which embellish parts of its load-bearing brickwork.

Abandoned school to become a heritage museum in Alamut

TEHRAN – Qazvin province’s tourism department seeks to establish a new cultural heritage museum in the historical Alamut region, which was once the territory of Ismaili leader Hasan ibn Sabbah in the 11th-century.

An abandoned school in Alamut has been determined to host the museum after it undergoes an extensive restoration, ILNA reported on Sunday.

“Due to the fact that the mentioned museum is located next to Hassan [ibn] Sabbah's castle, we expect that after its launch, it will attract the attention of domestic and foreign tourists,” the provincial tourism chief said on Sunday.

“We are set to display a part of the archaeological findings discovered in different periods of exploration in Alamut Castle in this museum,” Alireza Khazaeli said.

Last year, Qazvin’s governor-general said the historical region of Alamut has a great capacity for sightseeing and tourism. “We believe that Alamut is the advantage of Qazvin's tourism and proper planning, and more attention to this area can lead to its growth and development at the national and provincial levels,” Mohammad-Mehdi Alaei said.

A story of 'Eagle's Nest'

The valleys of Assassins were once the spine of Sabbah (1070–1124) and his followers as remnants of their history are everywhere, hiding in the ancient sight.

In the 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book “The Valleys of the Assassins.”

Alamut is famed for a well-fortified castle nestled on top of a hill, once sheltering the followers of Sabbah, who was the spiritual leader of a heretical Ismaili sect, known as ‘Assassins’.Narratives say Sabbah led a bizarre, much-feared mercenary organization whose members were dispatched to murder or kidnap leading political and religious figures of the day.

Narratives say that the name Alamut, which means “Eagle's Nest”, is associated with a regional 8th-century king who spied an eagle landing amid its rugged lofty crags and was inspired to build an impressive fortress.

The ruined structure, better known as Alamut Castle, is now a top travel destination for both domestic and international sightseers. The castle is situated on the northeastern side of Gazor Khan village in the environs of Mo’alem Kalayeh.

Sandwiched between the dry and barren plain



of Qazvin in the south and the densely forested slopes of the Mazandaran province in the north, the site, also known as Alamut, draws many travelers with particular objectives in mind: to find the past in the present, to learn about other cultures, to have a breath of fresh air, or simply to get some distance from work, to cite a few.

To reach the castle, you should pass for nearly half along a narrow road surrounded by cherry and pomegranate orchards, until a mass of gray-brown rock looms from the distance with fortifications perched atop a summit.

Assassins believed their actions would transport them to paradise. Supposedly, Sabbah cunningly cultivated such beliefs by getting his followers stoned on hashish (unknown to them) and then showing them beautiful secret gardens.

This notion, however, gave the sect its popular name ‘Hashish-iyun’, the root of the modern English term ‘assassin’. Or so the story goes. Peter Willey's book, Eagle's Nest, gives an altogether more sympathetic version, portraying Sabbah as a champion of the free-thinking, pro-science Islamic tradition and suggesting that the hashish tales were exaggerations designed to denigrate Ismaili Islam.

The castle was captured by Mongol ruler Hulagu Khan in 1256 using diplomatic trickery, having earlier forced the surrender of the Ismailis' spiritual leader (Sabbah's successor).

Sabbah's rule from Alamut (which he renamed the City of Good Fortune) is shrouded in mystery and enigma. This is partly because most Ismaili records of the era were destroyed by the invading Mongols while the writings of their detractors survived.

For centuries, Alamut Castle was almost forgotten and only returned to public consciousness with the publication of Stark's 1930s travel diary, Valleys of the Assassins. A copy of that recently reprinted volume makes a great companion for the trip.

A journey through time: must-see churches for every traveler

Over the past millennia, Iran has witnessed many events, both social and technological, religious, cultural, etc. which have resulted in current differences of races, languages, religions, and cultural differences.

During the Parthian period, Christianity and the call to Christianity arose in Iran, and some converted. Gradually, shrines to the followers of this religion sprang up all over Iran, each built in a different way.

Although Christianity does not currently make up a large portion of Iran's population, this religion, along with Zoroastrians and Judaism, constitutes Iran's non-Islamic religions and has more than a million adherents. Currently, Iran is home to more than 600 churches and over 300,000 Christian practitioners.

Churches, chapels, and cathedrals, as symbols of the Christian world, are usually beautifully adorned to display unmatched architectural features. Today, there are nearly 600 churches in Iran, 90 of which are listed on the National Monuments list and three are recognized as World Heritage.

Here are glimpses of eight significant churches in the country:

Saint Sarkis Cathedral
Located in downtown Tehran, Saint Sarkis Cathedral was Constructed in the early 1970s as an Armenian Apostolic Church.

A highlight of this church is the Armenian Genocide Memorial in the courtyard of the building, commemorating the Armenians exterminated by the Ottomans in the second decade of the 20th century. The outer part of St. Sarkis Cathedral is made of white marble, and the inner walls are covered with paintings on biblical themes.

Cathedral of Saint Savior
The Cathedral of Saint Savior, also known as Vank Church, is a beautiful



Sightseers visit Cathedral of Saint Savior (aka Vank Church), which is located in the New Jolfa district of Isfahan, central Iran.

cathedral located in the historic area of Jolla in central Isfahan.

Built between 1648 and 1655 with the encouragement of the Safavid rulers, the cathedral has a sumptuous interior richly decorated with restored wall paintings full of life and color, including gruesome martyrdoms and pantomime demons.

Befitting a city of miniaturists, relatively recent gifts to the museum include a prayer written on a single hair, visible only with the aid of a microscope and one of the smallest prayer books in the world.

Saint Mary Church of Tabriz
The Saint Mary Church of Tabriz, also known as Holy Mother of God Church, was built during the 12th century based on the Armenian style of architecture in the center of Tabriz where the historical area of Dik Bashi is now located.

The church has been mentioned by historians such as Marco Polo during his excursion to China around the year 1275. It is interesting to know that the church has been rebuilt on the ruins of a church that was beforehand destroyed by a

devastating earthquake in 1780.

Saint Garapet Church
Saint Garapet Church was constructed in the mid-20th century in the oil-rich city of Abadan, southwest Iran.

It was one of the largest places of gathering for the Armenian community in Abadan at the time, however, due to the low population of Armenians in the city, it is no longer operational. It was damaged in the 1980-1980 Iran–Iraq war but was later restored.

Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran

The Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran in the northwest of the country consists of three monastic ensembles of the Armenian-Christian faith: St. Thaddeus, St. Stephanos and the chapel of Dzordzor.

These buildings — the oldest of which, St. Thaddeus, dates from the 7th century — are examples of the outstanding universal value of Armenian architectural and decorative traditions. They testify to a very important exchange with the other regional cultures, in particular the Byzantine, Orthodox, and Persian.

Tourism minister calls on ambassadors to fight Iranophobia

TEHRAN – Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami has called on Iranian ambassadors to other countries to help foil anti-Iranian sentiment or Iranophobia that is forged by some Western governments.

“Ambassadors have a historical duty concerning Iranophobia...” Zarghami said on Sunday.

He made the remarks in Tehran during a meeting with envoys to other countries, saying: “[International] tourists [visiting the Islamic Republic] are the best example of countering that Iranophobia.”

“Effective efforts to attract [more] tourists to the country can lead to a change in tourists' view of Iran,” the minister said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarghami considered the ambassadors as the commanders of the front line of the country's diplomacy.

Referring to tourism as the most concrete example of public diplomacy, he added: “A mission of the ambassadors is to introduce Iran to the people of the world and fight Iranophobia and to introduce the country's tourism capacities to the world.”

“Dignity, expediency, and wisdom should be properly understood and implemented through effective approaches according to the specific characteristics of each country.”

Moreover, the ambassadors should assure foreign investors about the stability and profitability of investing in Iran's tourism.

At the end of the meeting, the minister invited the ambassadors to visit the National Museum of Iran, IRNA reported.

Iran still 'unknown' to many travelers

Experts say the contribution of tourism and the hospitality industry is an effective tool to foil anti-Iranian sentiments.

“When holidaymakers arrive in Iran, they feel the real face of the country, so tourism is a great instrument to help thwart Iranophobia and Islamophobia sentiments,” says Abdolkarim Sadeqdoust, who presides over the ICESCO office in Iran.

They believe Iran is still somehow “unknown” to many potential travelers due to such a “media war.” “Iran's tourism is grappling with some challenges, on top of those media propaganda aimed at scaring potential travelers away from the Islamic Republic.”

Long shunned by Western travelers, the Islamic Republic has steadily stepped-up efforts to use tourism, over the past couple of years, to help promote its international image battered by endless opposition mostly from the U.S.

A backpacker's dream, Iran holds vast potential as a holiday destination with stunning landscapes, numerous World Heritage sites, and above all, its hospitable people.

The country is often portrayed as “one of the safest to travel” by most visitors who experienced it, particularly solo female travelers and families, and the Lonely Planet calls its people the “friendliest in the world.”

“My advice is: don't believe what you hear on the news. Explore the place, talk to locals, and come to your own conclusions. Come to Iran with an open mind and I guarantee you'll make many great friends in Iran,” Polish traveler Anna Karsten wrote in her travelogue.



“To me, being uncomfortable once or twice doesn't mean that the place is dangerous. I never once felt physically threatened, unsafe, or at risk, even when I was wandering the streets of Iran. I felt safer in Iran than if I was walking around in NYC. Even the tap water was safe in Iran!”

Ellis Veen, a cultural anthropologist from the Netherlands who has traveled for more than 20 years to over 50 countries along the ancient Silk Road, says: “After my visit to Iran one of the most frequent questions I got is whether it was safe for me to travel to Iran as a woman. My short answer would be yes, and I would recommend Iran to anyone considering it.”

“Iran is one of the safest countries in the Middle East (West Asia) and Iranians are among the friendliest people I have met in my travel history.”

It's no surprise for those who are aware of Iranian culture and the great hospitality its people are famous for. Iranians are traditionally generous hosts, giving the best of what they have to their guests. In traditional Iranian culture, guests are cherished like precious jewels. It is here in Iran that a typical invitation for a cup of tea can be extended to an overnight stay, or a humble asking for directions may forge a warm friendship.

Job Openings at IOM Iran

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) announces vacancies for the following one-year fixed-term positions:

Vacancy Notice Number	Title	level
VN # IOM0523-07	Logistics and Procurement Assistant	G4
VN # IOM0523-08	Finance Assistant	G5
VN # IOM0523-09	Project Assistant - IBG	G5

Interested applicants are hereby advised to send their CV, Personal History Form, and cover letter to iomtehran@iom.int indicating the related Vacancy Number no later than 05 June 2023.

For details of the Terms of Reference and instructions to apply, please check the UN Iran website: iran.un.org

Department of Environment sets up SDS intl. conference secretariat

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment has set up a secretariat for the international conference on combating sand and dust storms which is scheduled to be held in Tehran on September 9-10.

In February, DOE chief Ali Salajeh said that based on the successful experiences of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of combating sand and dust storms, the United Nations introduced Iran as the host of the international conference on combating sand and dust storms, IRIB reported.

Arrangements have been made with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in July, this meeting will be held in Tehran with the presence of the environment ministers of the world countries, Salajeh said.

The Department of Environment will hold five international meetings in the current Iranian calendar year that started on March 21, he added.

The conference is scheduled to be held in Tehran on September 9-10.

“At least five international meetings will be held this year, one of which is the conference on combating sand and dust storms,” he added, IRNA reported.

One of the approvals of the regional meeting of environment ministers, which was held in Iran last summer, was the establishment of a regional dust organization, he highlighted.

“Environmental diplomacy is the main priority for the country’s



political diplomacy, so holding the conference on combating sand and dust storms is important for us.”

So far, 11 meetings of the national headquarters for policymaking and controlling dust storms have been held and the results of these meetings should be evaluated and made public, he stressed.

In the field of diplomacy, the Department of Environment has held meetings with neighboring countries to the extent that Egypt has also announced its readiness to attend the Tehran meeting, he highlighted.

He pointed out that a delegation from Iran will travel to Iraq in the near future to discuss the issue of sand and dust storms in order to make decisions to deal with the problem.

In July 2022, Tehran played host to a conference of ministers and officials from 11 countries, aiming to boost cooperation for resolving extant environmental problems, especially sand and dust storms.

Environment ministers of Iraq, Armenia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Syria, and Qatar, as well as deputy ministers of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan along

with delegations from Turkey and Uzbekistan, participated in the event which was held with the theme of “Environmental Cooperation for a Better Future.”

Addressing the opening ceremony, President Ebrahim Raisi emphasized that the preservation of the environment is essential and an inevitable priority.

Raisi had earlier obliged the Department of Environment to diligently pursue the solution of sand and dust storms through diplomacy and international forums, as well as interaction with neighboring countries.

“Conservation of the ecosystem and environment, which is a global concern, especially for countries of the region, is an inevitable priority today. If the environment is not safe and peaceful for people, the development will not be in its proper place and it will even become a threat to human health,” Raisi stated.

The SDS phenomenon has been plaguing the country for several years and has caused problems in many provinces.

According to studies, eight large sand and dust storm hotspots

stretching to 270 million hectares in neighboring and Persian Gulf countries are affecting Iran.

Regional maps show that Saudi Arabia produces the highest level of particulate matter, followed by Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, and the UAE, respectively.

According to experts, natural and human factors are involved in the occurrence and severity of this phenomenon which is mainly caused by excessive consumption of water and drying up reservoirs.

To deal with sand and dust storms, positive measures have been taken inside the country.

A ten-year plan has been prepared to curb internal sources of sand and dust storms.

The internal dust sources are estimated at 34.6 million hectares, generating an average amount of 4.22 million tons of dust per year, about 1.460 million hectares are dried wetlands.

In recent years, about €370 million has been spent by the National Development Fund to combat SDSs, which had good results, but it seems that the annual credit is declining as conditions improve.

Letizia Rossano, the director of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM), said in June 2022 that Iran is really at the forefront of understanding the problem of sand and dust storms as well as dealing with it.

More than 80 percent of the entire populations of Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and the Islamic Republic of Iran are exposed to medium and high levels of poor air quality due to sand and dust storms,” she noted.

SCO forum on poverty reduction, sustainable development starts in China



YANGLING, China – The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Forum on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development was officially launched in Yangling, Shaanxi province of China, on Monday, Tehran Times journalist Eshrat Mardi reports from Yangling.

The forum was attended by leading international figures to discuss and address global poverty to achieve sustainable development.

The forum was opened by Wang Xiao, a member of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Provincial Committee and Executive Governor of Shaanxi province, who introduced and welcomed all the participants.

Secretary of the Shaanxi Provincial Committee of the Communist Party and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Shaanxi Provincial People’s Congress, Zhao Yide, made a keynote speech in which he underlined China’s achievements in eradicating poverty, future plans for rural revitalization, and increasing agricultural products.

Ms. Shen Yueyue, Vice Chairperson of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and Chair of the Good-Neighbourliness, Friendship, and Cooperation Commission of the SCO, praised China’s elimination of extreme poverty as a “miracle in human history.”

Emphasizing that China succeeded to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals a decade ahead of the 2030 deadline, she called on the SCO member nations to work cooperatively on poverty reduction and improving people’s well-being.

Uzbekistan’s Deputy PM, Vice Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, and Deputy Minister of Labor, Social Security, and Migration of Kyrgyzstan were among the other speakers who explained about their countries’ experiences in fighting

poverty. China’s rural revitalization and agricultural prowess were major themes in the speech given by Liu Huanxin, Administrator of the National Rural Revitalization Administration of China.

Meanwhile, Zhang Ming, the Secretary-General of the SCO, acknowledged that poverty remains a global challenge exacerbated by the pandemic and regional conflicts.

“Poverty Reduction and Development in SCO Member Countries” and “Agricultural Integration and Standardization in SCO Member Countries” were two subjects that were discussed in the forum.

The three-day forum will last until May 31st and serve as a platform for further strategic cooperation and sharing best practices among member states in their continued fight against poverty and pursuit of sustainable development.

The SCO is an influential Eurasian political, economic, international security, and defense organization representing approximately 60% of the Eurasian landmass, 40% of the world population, and around 20% of the global GDP.

SOCIETY

MAY 30, 2023
Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

7

Iranian universities advance in world’s highly cited institutes

TEHRAN – The number of top Iranian universities and research institutes in the Essential Science Indicators (ESI) database has increased from 112 last year (March 2022-March 2023) to 115 this year, the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC) has reported.

Essential Science Indicators, or ESI, is a fundamental analysis and evaluation tool that reveals emerging science trends, as well as the performance of influential individuals, academic institutions, papers, journals, countries, and regions in various fields of scientific research.

According to the latest bi-monthly edition of the ESI database, the number of the world’s top universities and research institutes in all subject areas is 8,557, of which 115 universities and research institutes from the Islamic Republic of Iran are on this list.

The number of top Iranian universities and research institutes in this database has increased from 112 last year to 115 this year.

Iran’s top universities and research institutes are present in 19 subject areas, and the largest number is in the engineering subject area with 59 universities and research institutes.

The number of institutions in the fields of clinical medicine was 57, chemistry 50, material sciences 25, agricultural sciences 23, pharmacology and toxicology 19, plant and animal sciences 16, environment/ecology 15, social sciences, biology and biochemistry, and computer sciences 13 each.

Meanwhile, the number of institutions in the fields of neuroscience and behavior was 7, geology 6, physics and immunology 5 each, molecular biology and genetics 4, mathematics and microbiology 2 each, and psychiatry/psychology 1.

With 136 universities and research institutes, Turkey ranks 13th in the world and Iran ranks 14th in the world. After Iran and among Islamic countries, Saudi Arabia ranks 23rd in the world with 41 universities and research institutes, and Egypt ranks 24th in the world with 39 universities and research institutes. Pakistan ranks 25th in the world with 37 universities and research institutes.

ISC is the third internationally accredited citation center established in Iran based on a resolution adopted in 2008 by the 4th Meeting of the Islamic Ministers of Higher Education (ICMHESR) in Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to index, evaluate and publish scientific productions in Islamic countries.

In “ISC world university rankings by subject” includes 4 major criteria of Education, Research, International Activity, and Innovation.

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

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

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

Some of these systems evaluate broad scientific fields such as humanities and social sciences, technical and engineering, and medicine, and others measure special fields such as chemistry, mathematics, artificial intelligence, anthropology, and nursing in institutions.



Times Higher Education

In the 2023 ranking of the Times Higher Education Institute, which was published in 2022, the names of 66 Iranian institutions were included in the list of the world’s top institutions in 10 different scientific fields, and in total, the names of these institutions were repeated 167 times in scientific fields.

These 10 scientific fields include “arts and humanities”, “business and economics”, “clinical medical sciences, basic medicine and health”, “computer sciences”, “educational sciences”, “biological sciences”, “physical sciences”, “engineering and technology”, “law and psychology” and “social sciences”.

Academic Ranking of World Universities

The ranking system of universities based on their academic performance is known as Shanghai. In its latest edition (the year 2022), this ranking system has evaluated and ranked world institutions in various scientific fields.

In this list, there are 34 Iranian institutions, whose names appear in the list of top institutions 143 times in various scientific fields.

The Shanghai ranking of institutions covers 54 scientific fields, including 8 fields in natural sciences, 4 fields in biological sciences, 22 fields in engineering, 6 fields in medical sciences, and 14 fields in social sciences.

QS World domain rankings

Based on the 2023 edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranking, seven Iranian institutions have been included in the list of more than 500 top institutions in different scientific fields. The names of these institutions have been repeated 10 times in various scientific fields.

The QS ranking system evaluates the world’s leading institutions in 5 fields arts and humanities, engineering and technology, life sciences and medicine, and social sciences and management.

The evaluation indices of this ranking system are 5 indices of the international research network, the H index of citations, per capita citations to publications, academic reputation, and occupational reputation.

QS World subject rankings

Based on the 2023 edition of the QS World subject ranking, 16 top Iranian institutions have been placed in various scientific fields and the names of these institutions have been repeated 79 times in the list of top institutions in various scientific fields.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iran working with Green Climate Fund

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) is working with the United Nations Green Climate Fund (GCF), under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to reduce the effects of climate change.

FAO and the Department of Environment as the National Designated Authority (NDA) of GCF, partnered to bring together local, national, and international stakeholders in a three-day workshop.

“Throughout the implementation of this Project, FAO as the delivery partner has always stayed committed to providing its technical expertise, data, and tools to support the country in its efforts to financing with particular attention to the requirements of the GCF,” said Gerold Bödeker, FAO Representative to Iran.

همکاری ایران با صندوق اقلیم سبز سازمان ملل

سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست به عنوان مرجع رسمی ایران در زمینه حفظ محیط زیست با صندوق اقلیم سبز سازمان ملل با محوریت سازمان خواربار و کشاورزی ملل متحد (فائو) در راستای کاهش تاثیرات تغییر اقلیم همکاری می‌کند.

فائو و سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست کشور به عنوان مرجع صلاحیت دار ملی ایران و صندوق اقلیم سبز با همکاری یکدیگر، این پروژه را پیش بردند و در قالب چند برگزاری چند کارگاه اقدامات را بررسی کردند.

گرولد بودِکِر نماینده فائو در جمهوری اسلامی ایران گفت: در طول اجرای این پروژه، فائو، به عنوان شریک اجرایی، همیشه متعهد به ارائه تخصص فنی، داده‌ها و ابزارهای سیاستی خود برای تأمین مالی اقدامات اقلیمی با در نظر گرفتن الزامات صندوق اقلیم سبز بوده است.



Valuable oak forests in Lorestan

About 1.2 million hectares of the area of the western Lorestan province is covered with forests. Oak is the most important plant species in the region, having an extraordinary ecological role in preserving water and soil resources.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The faithful are tied in kindness and affection together like members of a body, one's pain and hardship affect the others.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:02 Evening: 19:34 Dawn: 3:07 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:55 (tomorrow)

German cultural influence in Persia

Part 3
After World War II, English became the most studied and spoken foreign language in Persia, providing another avenue for translating German literature into Persian.

Even today most German literary works are not translated directly from German, although German has meanwhile become the second most important foreign language after English and before French. German literature of the 20th century became known in Persia after World War II and soon superseded the classics.

The propagation of modern German literature in Persia owes much to the literary journal Sokhan, in which many German authors and their works were first presented to the Persian public, e.g., Franz Kafka's "Vor dem Gesetz" and "Die Verwandlung".

Success and a large reading public rewarded the kind of German literature that corresponded to the Persian taste both by its content and style.

Among these were works of social criticism which could easily be applied to Persia's own social problems. Among the works particularly popular were Hermann Hesse's Steppenwolf (tr. K. Jahandari as Gorg-e Biaban, Tehran, 1961) and Siddhartha (tr. F. Garakani as Sedhertha, Tehran, 1962), Heinrich Böll's Ansichten eines Clowns, Günter Grass's Katz und Maus, Max Frisch's Andorra, and Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Der Besuch der alten Dame.

Especially popular were Franz Kafka, who greatly appealed to Persians, and above all, before the revolution, Bertolt Brecht. An extraordinary success was Stefan Zweig, whose works formed one third of all fiction translated from Western languages between 1945 and 1955.

Normally, however, the share of German literature was rather insignificant, and the reception of many works was and is limited to a small cultural elite.

The influence of these works on Persian literature still continues to be comparatively insignificant. Persian poetry, which has its own powerful tradition behind it, has been less subject to external influences.

The modern Persian novel was mainly influenced by French novelists. Persian short story authors have mainly followed English and American models.

German drama was popular and was performed before the revolution, but major incentives for Persian dramatists issued for a long time from French plays.

Kafka is generally considered to have been the greatest inspiration for modern Persian literature. Sadeq Hedayat (1903-51) translated excerpts of Kafka's works for the journal Sokhan and also provided a theoretical introduction to Kafka's work with his Payam-e Kafka.

The seemingly plausible statement that Kafka provided a stylistic model for Hedayat appears to be questionable, however, since Kafka's works were almost exclusively translated from French into Persian. As with many other authors, it must have been the content, rather than the form, which exercised the stronger influence.

Those exposed to a lasting influence were some of the prominent representatives of modern Persian literature who lived in Germany and were directly in touch with German culture.

Thus Bozorg Alavi (1904-97), who studied in Germany in the 1920s, lived there in exile from 1953 until his death. He was professor of Persian language and literature at the Humboldt University in East Berlin until 1975 and wrote in the preface to his Geschichte ... persischen Literatur that he owed his own intellectual evolution to German culture.

The same is true of his friend Mohammad-Ali Jamalzadeh (1892-1997), the father of modern Persian short story writing, who worked from 1916 to 1930 at the Persian embassy in Berlin, where he first published his famous Yaki bud yaki nabud.

He was a member of the committee of Persian nationalists (Komite-ye melliun-e Iran) that was founded in Berlin in 1915 under the leadership of Hassan Taqizadeh.

He wrote for the journal Kaveh, edited by the latter, which played a prominent role in the propagation of scientific methods and the development of modern Persian intellectual history.

The influences of German culture and literature on Alavi and Jamalzadeh also reflected indirectly on other Persian authors, such as Hushang Golshiri (1937-2000).

The influence of German thought was particularly remarkable in the philosophical realm. Ahmad Fardid (1912-94), one of the most influential contemporary Persian philosophers, who had studied in Germany and France, acquainted Persian intellectuals with Friedrich Nietzsche, Friedrich Hegel, Emmanuel Kant and other German philosophers.

He was especially interested in Martin Heidegger, who also influenced Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923-69). Both Al-e Ahmad's and Fardid's concept of Gharb-zadegi clearly reveal traces of Heidegger. Since the 1950s, a circle including the country's leading intellectuals, philosophers, and translators had formed around Fardid.

German image and popularity

The attention of Persians was first drawn to Germany by the power constellations of the late 19th century and the World War I alliances.

Germany, a powerful enemy of Great Britain and Russia, had to be Persia's friend, inspiring the country with the hope of liberating itself from the interferences of these two powers.

Since then, Germany's image in Persia has always been good despite some political ill-feelings. Even today, twenty years after the revolution, Germany's popularity is intact despite sporadically critical relations.

However, this popularity is not due to a success in cultural relations, but to economic and technical cooperation and the Persian appreciation of German products. Germans are often taken aback by the sympathy of many Persians, including young people, for Hitler, and by their pride in belonging to the same Aryan race as the Germans.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica.
Concluded.

Big win: Iranian short cinema garners five awards at Festival Corti a Ponte

TEHRAN – Short movies by Iranian directors have won awards in five categories, including best fiction short, at the Festival Corti a Ponte in Padova, Italy.

“Play” by Ali Gitinavard was selected as the best fiction short. In this film, Janan, a 6-year-old girl, performs parts from Shakespeare's Hamlet with her mother.

“‘Play’ has found a way to develop an emotional film which is also able to rationally reflect and focus on the essence of a relationship and the coping with its loss,” the jury said in a statement.

“The film intercepts valuable insights on immortal questions, such as: What is it left in the aftermath of a loss, what do we do with its incomplete and fragmented memories? With his undisputable talent for engaging a young cast, the director has taken us to a place where playing is a brave and desperate act of rebellion against the inevitable. The film is ultimately, to our eyes, the story of humankind against the illusion of control,” it added.

The SENZA Award was given to “Adapt”.

Directed by Kamal Kachuian, the film is a snapshot of the lives of couples who, instead of with love, advance their relationships with sadism and masochism. They are neither able to build nor even separate. Neither of them is superior to the other, and it is as

Vincent Van Gogh comes to life in Iranian play “Butterfly and Yoke”

TEHRAN – Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh comes to life in the Iranian play “Butterfly and Yoke” on stage at the Sayeh Hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex.

Celebrated dramatist Mohammad Charmshir has written the play based on letters Van Gogh wrote to his younger brother Theo.

Amirmohammad Shahani Dashtegoli is the director of the play starring Amirhossein Sardarian, Yashar Beikzadeh, Mahtab Vejdani, Maryam Kia, Alborz Ahmadvani, Darya Razavizadeh and Ghazal Hassanzadeh.

The play focuses on the pain and suffering of the artist who failed to enjoy the benefits of his art in his lifetime but posthumously became one of the most famous and influential figures in Western art history.

He drew inspiration from night cafés, sunflowers and France's beautiful scenery.

In his early life, Van Gogh used to sell his paintings, but during the last decade of his life, discovered painting as an art and began producing paintings for their artistic nature.

Yet of the more than 800 oil paintings and

TEHRAN – Five movies by Iranian filmmakers will be competing in the 25th Shanghai International Film Festival.

“The Annoyed”, “15 Horsepower”, “Cause of Death: Unknown”, “Dolphin Boy” and “The Passion of Mahmoud” will be screened in different categories of the festival, which will take place from June 9 to 18 in Shanghai, China.

Written and directed by Mehdi Fardqaderi, “The Annoyed” will be showcased in the official competition.

The drama is about three

New Persian translation of Kate Chopin’s controversial novel “The Awakening” published

TEHRAN – A new Persian translation of American writer Kate Chopin's controversial novel “The Awakening” has been published in Persian.

Considered a landmark work of early feminist fiction, the book has been translated by Mahan Sayarmanesh. Davat Moaser is the publisher of the book.

When first published in 1899, “The Awakening” shocked readers with its honest treatment of female marital infidelity.

A scene from “Play” by Ali Gitinavard.

if they do not see each other and only continue to coexist.

The jury called “Adapt” “a strong reminder of the essence of cinema.”

“Without the need of significant resources, without a professional camera, it depicts the beauty of filmmaking, using technical intuitions and formal care to provide a highly emotional experience that couldn't exist outside of the realm of cinematic forms,” the jury said.

The 16th edition of the festival took place from May 8 to 20 in Padova.

“The Last Break” by Masum Azarani won a special mention in the fiction short film competition. It follows a student

who has trouble going to school because his shoes are dirty.

“A Shared Path” by Negar Naqavi received the Lentezza Jury Award. The film tells the story of two Afghan children who start a difficult journey on a bus but in the end, they recognize that they have a shared path.

The short “underlines a social theme of fundamental importance such as that of childhood stolen from all those children who find themselves living in conditions of profound hardship as they come from depressed and war-torn areas,” the jury said.

“Snoring” by Sara Abedi was given the Ex Aequo Award in Piccolo Festival International, a

side section in the Festival Corti a Ponte.

In this movie, ten-year-old Sarah faces the challenge of her father's snoring. She decides to make a documentary about this challenge and its conflicts.

The film “is distinguished by the good control of the various stages of production, from the idea to the screenplay to the shooting, up to the interpretation, especially of the child, with an adequate and functional structure and timing for the narrative characteristics of the short film,” the jury said.

The 16th edition of the Festival Corti a Ponte took place from May 8 to 20 in the Venice area.

Thespians perform “Butterfly and Yoke” at the Sayeh Hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex on May 26, 2023. (Theater.ir/Reza Moattarian)

700 drawings that constitute his life's work, he sold only one in his lifetime.

Always desperately poor, he was sustained by his faith in the urgency of what he had to communicate and by the generosity of Theo, who believed in him implicitly.

The letters that he wrote to Theo from 1872 onward, and to other friends, give such a vivid account of his aims and beliefs, his hopes

Shanghai festival picks five Iranian films

Farrokh Nemati acts in a scene from “The Annoyed” by Mehdi Fardqaderi.

their funny tricks. One day, the peace of their joyful world is destroyed by an evil octopus.

“The Passion of Mahmoud” by Davud Abdolmaleki will be screened in the documentary competition.

This year's festival is the first since before the pandemic to be held in a fully physical format with international guests.

The official competition features 12 films, including “Mom, Is That You?!” by Japanese filmmaker Yoji Yamada and “Muyeres” by Spanish director Marta Lallana.

which anticipates D. H. Lawrence in its treatment of infidelity.”

Although the theme of marital infidelity is no longer shocking, few novels have plumbed the psychology of a woman involved in an illicit relationship with the perception, artistry and honesty that Kate Chopin brought to “The Awakening”.

Bigdol has previously published a Persian translation of “The Awakening” by Farzaneh Doosti.