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©File photo

Thank you! I don't need a plastic bag

**BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI**  
Plastic pollution is getting the whole world in hot water. In Iran, plastic bags have the highest share in the total 4 million plastic waste generated annually, so that, it is time to say no to plastic bags.

Plastic bags constitute half a million tons of the whole plastic waste produced in the country annually. Every Iranian consumes an average of three plastic bags a day, 96 percent of which goes directly into the trash bin.

According to the World Population Review 2021, Iran is ranked 17th in the production of plastic waste.

The report also claims that approximately 500 billion plastic bags are used worldwide, and plastic pollution is a global catastrophe caused by humans.

Plastics are materials that have been estimated to decompose for more than 450 years, during which time they are transformed into tiny particles called microplastics (plastic objects with a diameter of less than 5 mm).

These materials are now found even on the highest point in the world, Mount Everest. Therefore, July 11 has been named "International Plastic Bag Free Day" to draw the attention of the world to the environmental damage of plastic consumption.

Plastics remain in the environment for hundreds of years without decomposing, and their chemicals gradually enter the soil and water, in addition to contaminating them, kill animals and eventually enter the food chain.

Microplastics are the phenomenon of modern life today. The average useful life of each plastic bag in Iran is only 12 minutes, while in the past two years, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world, the use of plastic objects, like gloves and disposable dishes has also increased more than ever.

**Microplastics are everywhere**  
Microplastics have spread to all parts of the world - to land, air, and food supplies, and even to the rain, and researchers have found these tiny particles in the tissues and organs of the human body, and even in the placentas of embryos.

A 2018 study found that microplastics pass through the human gut and that these tiny particles can penetrate the lungs and cause a variety of diseases, including cancer.

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## Restoration begins on historical caravanserai in Saveh

TEHRAN - A restoration project has been commenced on Shah Abbasi caravanserai in the village of Aveh, near Saveh, the central province of Markazi.

The project involves replacing worn-out bricks, repairing some damaged rooms as well as flooring, Saveh's tourism chief Reza Ayyaz said on Sunday.

A budget of 200 million rials (\$4,700 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, which is scheduled to come to an end within two weeks, the official added.

The caravanserai has a symmetrical plan with four iwans (porches) and consists of a central courtyard, entrance gate, rooms, and stable.

The structure is named after Shah Abbas the Great (r. 1588 - 1629), who ordered the construction of such roadside inns across the country.

The inn was very prosperous during the Safavid period (1501-1736) and many caravans from around the country used to stay here during this time.

The historical structure was inscribed on the national

heritage list in 2000. Caravanserai (or caravansary) is a compound word combining "caravan" with "sara". The first stands for a group of travelers and "sara" means the building. They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them with doors in the corners of the yard.

Iran's earliest caravanserais were built during the Achaemenid era (550 - 330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 - to 1629, he ordered the construction of network caravanserais across the country. For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai, can be a wide experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age! Markazi province is considered the industrial capital of the country. It is rich in natural, historical, cultural, and religious attractions.

Hand-woven carpets and kilims, made in its cities including Farahan, Sarugh, Lilitan, Senejan, and Vaf are known internationally.

## How the West is fueling the war on Yemen?

When Saudi Arabia declared war on Yemen back in March 2015, Riyadh predicted that the 'military intervention' would take around three weeks to complete. As the war raged on and expanded, American arms manufacturers rubbed their hands in satisfaction waiting eagerly by the telephone.

Daily airstrikes by America's top ally in West Asia mean a requirement of weapons and everyone knows the last thing Saudi Arabia knows how to build is indigenous weapons. Saudi Arabia's arms stockpile began to run dry and sure enough, the calls were made.

Top American arms manufacturers such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Raytheon clinched the most impressive contracts but many other companies also sealed agreements. The majority of these deals were made during the era of former U.S. President Donald Trump, remember the American economy was doing "so great" once

during the Trump era to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars worth of contracts with Riyadh, which also brought unemployment levels down in the United States.

Saudi Arabia and its partner in crime, the United Arab Emirates became even more lucrative markets. The arms manufacturers made a great profit and it was truly an exciting time for these firms. However, not so exciting for Yemeni civilians who were on the receiving end of these apparently 'precision-guided missiles'. The bombs these companies were sent to the Saudis were being dropped by American-made warplanes on vital Yemeni infrastructure in addition to Yemeni markets, hospitals, weddings, funerals, schools, even school buses packed with school kids were bombed; the list is endless.

To make matters worse, the Saudis relied on the Americans on which targets to strike.

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## Navy chief: It is a dream for Israel to be in regional waters

TEHRAN— Speaking in a televised program on Saturday evening, Navy Commander Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said security in Iranian maritime borders is very high and said it is like a "dream" for Israel to be present in "our geography".

Khanzadi also said the Iranian Navy has a significant presence in the east and north of the Indian Ocean.

He added, "The Indian Ocean, as the third largest ocean in the world, has been plagued by

piracy in recent years, and centers of insecurity have been formed in the Gulf of Aden."

He also referred to the rotation of hosting the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) from Iran to France, saying, "The hosting of the sixth session of the IONS Symposium in 2018 was entrusted to Iran. France was named as the next host. At the same symposium, we told the French where they were going to hold the next summit. They told us in Paris, and we said that you are

attending the symposium because of the Réunion Island, and you have to hold the next symposium on this island."

The IONS is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues.

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## Afghanistan conflict: neighbors' reading!

**BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI**

Over the past few weeks, the Taliban have succeeded to take control of large parts of Afghanistan, including important provinces and territories in the country's west.

Half of Afghanistan's 370 districts have so far fallen into the hands of the Taliban.

There is no clear vision of what is awaiting Afghanistan. But the Taliban's continuous advances show their ability to take control of the remaining parts. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani met Joe Biden at the Oval Office on June 25 to remind the Americans of their promises to support the Afghan government.

However, Ghani's pleas fell on deaf ears. He returned home empty-handed. The Biden administration is firm to fully exit American troops from the war-ravaged country. Reportedly, the U.S. plans to keep only a small group of its troops in the country to protect its diplomatic compound in Kabul.

Speaking to reporters on July 8, Biden said it is "the responsibility of Afghan people alone to decide their future and how they want to run their country."

The prospects in Afghanistan may seem bleak. Based on the realities on the ground the Taliban will take the helm in the Central Asian country in the not-too-distant future.

The Americans held several rounds of secret talks with the Taliban in Doha without the presence of the Afghan government, something that angered the Afghan government.

The point is that the Taliban's advances in various parts of Afghanistan have speeded up concurrent with the United States' withdrawal from the country. It can be inferred that the Taliban have received a green light from the American side in the Doha talks.

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## "Asphalt Workers" wins special jury award at Iran Intl. University Theater Festival

TEHRAN - "Asphalt Workers" received the special jury award at the 23rd Iran International University Theater Festival, the organizers announced on Saturday.

The play directed by Amin Movahedipur had its premiere at Tehran's Neauphle-le-Chateau Theater last Friday.

Winners received their awards in the closing ceremony of the festival held at the Samandarian Hall of the Iranshahr Theater Complex.

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## Leader responds to message from Palestinians, says days of Zionist domination are over

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Following a message by a large number of Palestinians living in Syrian camps on the victory of the Palestinian people and resistance groups against Israel in the 12-day war, the Supreme Leader thanked the Palestinians.



Mohsen Qomi, the deputy international relations officer at the Leader's Office, wrote a letter to Mohammad Al-Bahisi, president of the Palestinian-Iranian Friendship Association, sending the gratitude of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. It was stated in the letter that the Sword of Quds operation only shows a small portion of the Resistance Front's power.

The heroic defense of the zealous Palestinian people from Al-Aqsa Mosque and the land of Quds showed the unity of the people of all Palestinian regions and the admirable coordination of all resistance groups, Qomi said, adding this showed well that the days of the Zionist domination are over.

"The time has come for the defeat of the occupiers of the Holy Land, the era of the liberation of Palestine and the liberation of Holy Quds," the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said.

In May, tensions in the area coincided with Israeli troops storming the al-Aqsa mosque compound and the mosque itself in occupied Jerusalem al-Quds. Staying true to their word, the resistance retaliated with a barrage of missiles towards Israeli settlements in retaliation.

Israel responded by pounding Gaza in a 12-day war that many experts say the Palestinians resistance won and changed the equations on the ground.

## President-elect says youth need more opportunities

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — In a meeting with Sports and Youth Minister Massoud Soltanifar on Saturday, President-elect Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi highlighted the importance of giving opportunities to the young generation.

The president-elect emphasized efforts to facilitate youth marriage by through providing loans as well as the development of counseling centers.

Soltanifar visited the president-elect on Sunday to congratulate him for winning the June 18 presidential election and brief him about the Sports and Youth Ministry.

Raisi thanked the minister for his congratulations and briefing, saying that government should give more opportunities to the youth in various fields of management and policy-making than before.

Raisi mentioned the simultaneous development of public and professional sports as well as the use of experience, skills and knowledge of sports veterans as among the main approaches of his incoming government in the field of sports.

Raisi will start his job as president in early August.

So far, many cabinet ministers have met with Raisi to brief him about the respective ministries.

## Iran signs agreement with Asian Parliamentary Assembly

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Asian Parliamentary Assembly on the rights, benefits and immunities of the Permanent Secretariat of the Assembly of Asia, known as the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, was signed on Sunday by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Majidi, the secretary general of the Assembly, at the Foreign Ministry building.

The agreement was signed after it was approved by the government and the necessary permission was issued to the Foreign Ministry.

The establishment of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) was approved in November 2006 during the seventh meeting of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace in Tehran, hosted by the Iranian parliament, and thus the structure of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace in the Tehran meeting was changed to the Asian Parliamentary Assembly.

According to the resolution of the APA, it was decided from the beginning that the secretariat be based in Tehran.

The Asian Parliamentary Assembly, as a dynamic regional mechanism in the field of inter-parliamentary interaction, has a wide and diverse field of activity, and a significant range of important regional and international issues such as the fight against corruption, justice in the field of health, fight against drug trafficking, strengthening elements of cooperation and friendship among members, reducing poverty, protecting the environment, promoting cultural diversity, combating trafficking in cultural items, the rights of women, youth and the elderly, as well as situations such as the crimes of the occupying regime in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Asian Parliamentary Assembly adopts annual resolutions in order to ensure consistency and regular follow-up of its actions in these areas and other matters of concern to its members.

## Full security prevails in Iran-Afghanistan border, says army official

**→ 1** "Of course, inside Afghanistan anything may happen and some places may be seized by the Taliban, but that will not affect Iranian people and armed forces, thanks to the management of the situation at the national, regional and local levels and owing to the vigilance of our military, security and border forces."

Over the past weeks, the Taliban have overrun areas in Afghanistan bordering five countries – Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, China and Pakistan.

On Friday, the militant group claimed that it had seized control of 85 percent of Afghan territory, a declaration government officials dismissed as part of a propaganda campaign.

The Taliban gains come amid the withdrawal of U.S.-led troops from the country after two decades of war and occupation.

# Navy chief: It is a dream for Israel to be in regional waters

**→ 1** The IONS has 24 members, including Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, France, Australia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia, Seychelles, Thailand, Timor Leste, and the UK.

There are also 8 observers, namely China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, the Netherlands, Russia and Spain.

Khanzadi also referred to his recent visit to Réunion Island owned by France, saying that on the sidelines of the symposium, he met with the commanders of the German, Dutch and French navies and reiterated the firm position of Iran on regional coalitions of which they (France, Germany, and Netherlands) are a member.

"We have raised the issue and they also said that they will convey the Islamic Republic's positions to their capitals and it seems that the Europeans intend to separate their way from the Americans," he remarked.

The top Navy commander said that it seems that the Europeans are under pressure from the Americans, and it is the United States that is "mischievous in the meantime."

About the International Maritime Security Cooperation on International Coordination Center that will soon open in Chabahar, Admiral Khanzadi said that Iran has been thinking for a long time to establish a center to lead maritime security efforts at the IONS Symposium.

"This center is being established for the first time in Chabahar Free Zone. The main effort of this center is to collect white data and dominate the northern Indian Ocean region. This information must be shared between countries and any activity that interferes with maritime security must be stopped. The center can also conduct naval operations," he highlighted.

He continued by saying that right now, the Navy is in online contact with all IONS



member countries.

The commander of the Navy also stressed about sending an army fleet to the Atlantic Ocean, saying, "Makran ship is a mobile seaport and it has a good capacity for the presence of our fleets in the high seas. Sahand has sailed for 400 days since its construction, which shows that there is a great capacity of knowledge in the youth of this country."

Today the Islamic Republic is the country that is setting a precedent in the Atlantic region, Khanzadi stated.

"Of course, part of that presence is because the Americans said the Iranians could not be present in the Atlantic," he underlined.

According to the Navy chief, it has a special message when a fleet from the Islamic Republic is present in the Cape of Good Hope and the Atlantic Ocean.

"We had no plans to be in the Gulf of Mexico at all. The United States is concerned that today, for the first time in Iran's history,

the gates of the Atlantic have been opened to us," he noted.

"One day the Leader of the Islamic Revolution told us to plan to go to a country like Gambia, where the Americans started slavery," he said.

Khanzadi noted that the presence of the Iranian Navy, which represents a country that supports the oppressed, also has a special message, and incidentally, Iran's fleet was present in Gambia last week.

"The Americans have set up bases around us over the years, and today they are terrified when we are 5,000 kilometers away from them. This fear is because the presence of Iran breaks the hegemony of the United States," the top military official highlighted.

Khanzadi added that today maritime terrorist acts are being carried out in the Red Sea, and in a situation that the Iranian oil is under embargo, they are seeking to hit Iranian tankers.

## Iran summons Slovenia ambassador over PM participation in MKO gathering

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry on Sunday summoned the Slovenian ambassador to Tehran to voice strong protest at the Slovenian prime minister's participation in an anti-Iran virtual gathering organized by the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group.

The Slovenian Ambassador Christina Radi received an official letter of protest in response to Prime Minister Janez Jansa's "unacceptable and undiplomatic" move, the Foreign Ministry said in a press release.

At the meeting with the Slovenian envoy, the Foreign Ministry director in charge of the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe Department expressed Iran's "strong protest at the baseless allegations raised against Iran," the ministry said in its report.

The ambassador was notified that the Slovenian premier's participation in an event organized by a terrorist group that is abhorred by the great Iranian nation coupled with his wrong and groundless remarks against Iran run counter to the diplomatic norms and to the spirit of the bilateral relations, it added, according to Tasnim.

The ministry said this act by the prime minister is strongly condemned.

The Slovenia ambassador was also reminded that supporting a terrorist group violates the UN Charter, the internationally-recognized principles, the human rights values, and is not acceptable by any means.

The Slovenian government has been asked to provide an explanation for the anti-Iran move, the report said.

It said the envoy has pledged that she would convey Tehran's protest to Ljubljana.

Slovenian Prime Minister Jansa and former U.S. secretary of state Mike Pompeo were among speakers at a gathering of the MKO held in Berlin on Saturday.

The MKO, that is recognized as a terrorist organization by much of the international community, fled Iran



Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa

in 1986 for Iraq and was given a camp by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

They fought on the side of Saddam during the Iraqi war against Iran in 1980s. They were also involved in the bloody repression of Shiite Muslims in southern Iraq in 1991 and the massacre of Iraqi Kurds in the north.

The notorious group is also responsible for killing thousands of Iranian civilians and officials after the victory of the Islamic revolution in 1979.

More than 17,000 Iranians, many of them civilians, were killed at the hands of the MKO in different acts of terrorism including bombings in public places and targeted killings.

The MKO, also called MEK, is a cultish group that tolerates no criticism.

Former MKO members say the notorious group employs

charm offensive to recruit members and later brainwash them.

Anne Khodabandeh, an expert in cult abuse and radicalization, told Press TV on Sunday that the MKO is in no way an ordinary group, but rather operates as a cult. She noted that the terror group exercises cultic abuse in order to assert control over its members.

The former MKO member said Western countries, particularly EU member states and the U.S., have delisted the anti-Iran terrorists and mainstream media outlets have turned a blind eye to the abysmal record of their crimes and human rights abuses.

"The MKO is essentially deceptive. They present themselves in a very, very different way to what they really are. They develop what you might call a radicalized personality, persona or in other words magnetic personality... Radicalized people do develop a superficial personality, which is actually very attractive to others.

"When they (MKO officials) go into meetings with politicians and the like, they can switch on this very charming and convincing persona," she pointed out.

Khodabandeh said anti-Iran figures, groups, politicians and administrations exploit the MKO as a tool to harm the Islamic Republic at any possible opportunity, disseminate misleading information and propagate against Tehran.

The Leeds-based expert went on to say that Western countries and politicians do not actually support the MKO, but rather view it as an instrument.

"Neither does the United States, the United Kingdom, nor do European governments see the MKO as a viable alternative" to Iran's Islamic establishment, she said.

"Having lost the support of [slain Iraqi dictator] Saddam Hussein, the only country that actually offered them support was the Albanian government, and they get direct support. They have actually been literally pushed out of North America, Europe and Britain," Khodabandeh said.

## World must take effective steps to lift illegal bans on developing states: diplomat

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The world must take "serious and effective" steps to counter the U.S. coercion against developing states, an Iranian diplomat has said.

Ali Hajilari, the first counselor of Iran's permanent mission to the UN, made the remarks while addressing the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in New York on Friday.

Hajilari also denounced the United States' unilateral and illegal measures as well as inaction by the international community to stand up to such a policy.

"The U.S. unilateral coercive measures, including the imposition of illegitimate and illegal sanctions on developing countries, on the one hand, and the international community's passivity towards it, on the other,

have turned the pivotal ideal of sustainable development, namely 'no one should be left behind', into a purely decorative, absurd, ridiculous and meaningless slogan," the Iranian diplomat said, according to Press TV.

He added that this slogan is the backbone and the "DNA" of development and without

its realization, any effort or plan to promote development in countries is more like a joke.

The Iranian diplomat urged the international community to adopt an immediate and effective measure to lift illegal and illegitimate sanctions against developing countries.

While ruling the White House, Donald Trump introduced sanctions against Iran under his "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran. The former U.S. president acknowledged that sanctions against Iran are unprecedented in history. The sanctions, which have not yet been lifted under the Biden administration, are contrary to UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses the 2015 nuclear deal.

Trump started to return previous sanctions that had been lifted under the nuclear deal – JCPOA – and introducing new ones. When Trump officially abandoned the JCPOA in May 2018, his top diplomat Mike Pompeo said the U.S. will impose "the strongest sanctions in history" on Iran. Also in November 2018, John Bolton, who was the White House national security advisor at the time, said, "It's our intention to squeeze

them (Iranians) very hard... until the pips squeak."

Hajilari said it will not be possible to achieve the right to development, as an inalienable human right, while multilateralism is under mounting pressure and the unilateral measures taken by a small number of countries have endangered the foundation of international cooperation.

In order for the ideal of "no one should be left behind" to materialize, the international community needs to take integrated, coherent, constructive, and effective steps to end any unilateral coercive measures, including illegitimate and illegal sanctions against developing countries, he emphasized.

"This important [issue] will not be possible unless immediate and united measures are taken to counter both unilateral coercive measures as well as those countries that impose such illegitimate actions on others," the Iranian envoy pointed out.

The Economic and Social Council is at the heart of the United Nations system to advance the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. It is the central platform for

fostering debate and innovative thinking, forging consensus on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals. It is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits.

The UN Charter established ECOSOC in 1945 as one of the six main organs of the United Nations.

Addressing the UN General Assembly's High-Level Meeting on AIDS on Thursday, Iran's permanent envoy to the United Nations Majid Takht-Ravanchi identified the U.S. illegal and inhumane sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic as means of endangering the Iranian nation's health towards political goals.

"The United States' oppressive and unilateral sanctions run counter to the principles and goals sought by the UN Charter as well as the international law and the essential norms that govern the international relations," Takht-Ravanchi said.

Top Iranian diplomats have called illegal sanctions against Iran, especially during the Coronavirus pandemic, as instances of war crime and crimes against humanity.



# The West is accustomed to supporting terrorism

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — In the latest sign of Western double standards in dealing with the issue of terrorism, a slate of former and current Western officials participated in a gathering held by a widely detested Iranian opposition group that is known for its role in carrying out thousands of targeted assassinations inside Iran in the 1980s.

The group, Mojahedin-e-Khalq, also known by its initials MEK or MKO, began its annual three-day conference online on Saturday with several former and current American and European officials delivering paid speeches via videoconference. The officials mostly launched into worn-out tirades about Iran's internal and foreign policy.

About 30 members of U.S. Congress are expected to participate in this year's conference of MEK, including Senator Bob Menendez, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Republican Senator Ted Cruz, and Republican House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, as well as former ministers and officials from Europe, the United States and Canada.

Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa also delivered a speech at the conference, drawing harsh criticism from Iran and promoting the Iranian Foreign Ministry to summons the Slovenian ambassador to Tehran.

In a statement on Sunday, the ministry called Jansa's move "unacceptable and undiplomatic."

"After the presence of Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa in the virtual meeting of Mojahedin-e-Khalq terrorist grouping, the Iranian foreign minister's assistant and director general of the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe department of the Foreign Ministry summoned Slovenia's ambassador to Tehran Ms. Christina Radi and after conveying Iran's strong protest against this move and the baseless accusations leveled against the Islamic Republic of Iran, gave



her Iran's official notice of protest against the government of Slovenia," the ministry said in a statement.

"During the meeting, it was emphasized that Iran condemns the virtual presence of Slovenia's premier in the gathering of a terrorist group, loathed among the great Iranian nation, as well as the official's false and nonsensical remarks, which run counter to diplomatic norms and the atmosphere of bilateral relations," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said, noting, "This is besides the fact that supporting a terrorist grouping violates the UN charter, recognized international principles and human rights values and is, under no pretext, acceptable."

The Western officials' participation in the MKO conference reflects a deeply flawed understanding of Iran on the part of the West. Every year, dozens of these officials flocked to Paris to deliver furious speeches to the cheers of a mostly hired audience. They kept participating, though virtually, in the MEK gatherings even during the coronavirus pandemic. Of course, most of these officials do

so for the sake of money. At the end of the day, MEK offers irresistible lump sums for short appearances and thus one can make a quick buck within a few minutes by reading an already prepared text or regurgitating what had been said by others all the time.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh pointed to this issue in a tweet on Saturday, saying, "Bought western politicians (incl #LyingCheatingStealing Pompeo) sell themselves cheap for a Europe-hosted circus arranged by a once Saddam-backed terrorist cult with Iranian blood on its hands. Insatiable thirst for \$\$ & anti-Iran obsession is driving shameful western hypocrisy."

But some participants appear in MEK gatherings with different goals. It is difficult to imagine that some influential former and current officials show up at these gatherings simply to make money. For Example, former Saudi spy chief Turki al-Faisal is by no means in need of the money of a group facing growing accusations of being on the Saudi payroll.

This type of officials often sees MEK as

their last hope of bringing about fundamental political change in Iran while falsely believing that the group is capable of bringing down the Iranian government. But this is wishful thinking simply because MEK has no constituency in Iran and its propaganda of being "the most organized Iranian opposition group" rests only on its ability to pay off hapless refugees and adventurous college students to fill in for real Iranians.

The lack of popularity among ordinary Iranians begs the question of why MEK has been confined to the dustbin of history in Iran. MEK's unpopularity among the Iranians stems from two things: First, the group had been implicated in many terrorist attacks and assassinations in Iran in the 1980s. Second, while the group was going on a killing spree in Iran its leaders colluded with Iran's number one nemesis, Saddam Hussein, the former dictator of Iraq who gave them many military bases near Baghdad. With the military support of Saddam, MEK mounted a devastating military attack on Iran that led to its forever eradication in the country. Iranians have never forgotten, nor have they forgiven, this act of treason by MEK.

This may explain why the Iranian people feel offended when they see Western officials advocate for "freedom" in Iran to be achieved by a group having the blood of thousands of Iranians on its hands. The main reason why Iran usually accuses the West of sponsoring terrorism is their continued, brazen support for MEK, which has been on the blacklist of the U.S. and the European Union until recently.

Iran has always complained that the West supported terrorism. And Western participation in MEK "circus" gives Iran all the more reason to repeat this complaint. For Iran, the Western support of terrorism represented by MEK is not an exception. Instead, it's a tradition deeply rooted in Western hypocrisy and is a habit the West finds difficult to kick.

## Iran welcomes expansion of ties with Syria: MP

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — A senior Iranian lawmaker who is on a visit to Syria has welcomed the expansion of ties between Tehran and Damascus in various fields.

Abbas Golrou, the deputy head of the Iran-Syria Parliamentary Friendship Group, said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the improvement of relations with Syria in various fields."

On the second day of his visit to Damascus, Golrou said during a meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad at the Syrian Foreign Ministry that "the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria are long-standing friends with historical background and religious commonalities who have supported each other in various developments in the region."

The Iranian lawmaker noted, "The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that strengthening mutual commonalities and increasing the level of trade can strengthen the two countries in the face of U.S. sanctions."

Golrou attributed the survival of Syria and the victory over the Daesh and other Takfiri groups to the wise leadership of the president of the country and the people's struggle against the Takfiri groups, according to the Iranian state news IRNA.

Golrou, the chairman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, noted, "Implementation of agreements and joint cooperation is very important in the process of strengthening the economic strength of the two countries and the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the improvement of relations with Syria in various fields."

Golrou emphasized, "Special attention to economic issues and special cooperation in this field will further strengthen the interactions between the two countries."

The ranking lawmaker considered the cooperation of friendship and parliamentary groups as the first step in the interaction between the governments of the two countries and a suitable platform for improving the level of cooperation.

He added, "Parliamentary relations, the meeting of joint commissions and the interactions of friendship and parliamentary groups will play a constructive role in strengthening



Iran-Syria relations."

In the meeting, the deputy head of the Iran-Syria Parliamentary Friendship Group described the country with a bright horizon and a bright future, and stressed the need to pay special attention to economic cooperation and strengthening cultural, social and economic capacities.

Congratulating the Islamic Republic of Iran on the presidential election, Syrian Foreign Minister Mekdad called the two countries strategic friends and constant supporters of each other.

Mekdad added, "Iran and Syria once again showed internal unity and solidarity to the world by holding timely elections."

Explaining the recent situation and developments in the region, the Syrian foreign minister stressed the need for vigilance and cooperation between high-ranking officials of Iran, Syria and other countries.

Appreciating the Islamic Republic of Iran's continued support for Syria in the fight against terrorism and extremism, Mekdad said, "Syria is out of the crisis and the time has come to rebuild its infrastructure, and we welcome the support of friendly countries for economic and trade cooperation."

Expressing his satisfaction with the presence of representatives of the Iran-Syria Parliamentary Friendship Group in Damascus, he added, "The people of the Syrian government and president will never forget the immediate assistance and sacrifices of the Iranians against the Takfiri

movement. The Syrian people and government will always be grateful to the people, government and leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

When discussing the ongoing negotiations on the Iranian nuclear issue, Mekdad praised in this regard the wisdom, strength and keenness of the Iranian leadership to defend the interests and rights of its people in the face of all attempts to pressure again, and Syria is standing by Iran in these negotiations.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on developments in the region, especially in the occupied Palestinian territories, where views were identical on the importance of supporting the steadfastness and resistance of the Palestinian people until their occupied land is liberated and their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital is established.

The Iranian delegation also met with Speaker of the People's Assembly Hammoudeh Sabbagh, who affirmed on Thursday the importance of boosting parliamentary relations through exchanging visits, viewpoints, and joint coordination at regional and international conferences, according to SANA.

In his meeting with Golrou and his accompanying team, Sabbagh said that forces of evil and global aggression, led by the U.S., besiege Syria and Iran together under false and misleading titles, claiming that they fight terrorism, while, in fact, they support and protect it.

In continuation of their visit, the Iranian delegation also met with Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous. The two sides stressed the importance of boosting parliamentary relations, increasing the joint visits to achieve the common interests of the two friendly countries and peoples.

The Syrian prime minister affirmed that the Syrian government seeks to push forwards and develop economic cooperation and trade exchange between the two countries and promote it up to the level of strategic relations that bind Syria and Iran.

He expressed appreciation for the support provided by Iran to the Syrian people, pointing out that the Syrian and Iranian peoples have foiled plots of the enemies in the region.

## SPORTS

### Iran hopes for 28 medals at Paralympic Games

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Chef de Mission Hadi Rezaei predicts their Para athletes will win 28 medals in the pandemic-delayed Paralympics.



Iran will send 63 athletes to Tokyo and it will be the nation's smallest team since sending 40 to Sydney 2000.

Since then, Iran sent 89 athletes to Athens 2004, 72 to Beijing 2008, 79 to London 2012 and 110 to Rio 2016.

Iran finished 15th in the medal table in 2016 with 24 medals after winning eight golds, nine silvers and seven bronzes.

"We will send 63 athletes to Tokyo and want to finish the Games in 10th place. According to our monitoring progress, our athletes are capable of winning 11 gold, 11 silver and six bronze medals in Tokyo," Rezaei said in a press conference held in Iran's NPC headquarters on Sunday.

"The gold medal winners will receive a cash prize of 10,000 euros, while the silver and bronze medal winners will be awarded 4,000 and 2,500 euros in cash, respectively," he added.

About 4,400 competitors from more than 160 countries were set to compete at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics before it was delayed by a year.

### Mahdavikia named Iran U23 football team coach

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Former Iran national football team winger Mehdi Mahdavikia has been named as new coach of the country's U23 football team on Sunday.

Mahdavikia, who has worked at the Hamburger SV Academy in the past years as an assistant, will lead the team in the AFC U23 Asian Cup 2022 Qualifiers, where the Iranian team have been drawn in Group B along with Tajikistan, Nepal and Lebanon.

Iran U23 football team were without a coach since January 2020 where the team were knocked out from the 2020 AFC U23 Championship under leadership of Hamid Estili.

Mahdavikia, 43, represented Iran at the 1998 and 2006 FIFA World Cups. He scored against the U.S. in the 1998 World Cup.

### Iran come 12th at FIBA U19 World Cup

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran lost to Latvia 71-63 in their last match at the 2021 FIBA U19 Basketball World Cup on Sunday and finished in 12th place.

Iran had finished 11th in the 2013 FIBA U19 World Cup held in the Czech Republic.

The U.S. and France will lock horns in the final match, while Canada play Serbia in the bronze medal match.

The tournament is being held in Riga and Daugavpils, in Latvia.

The Baltic country is hosting the event for a second time, following 2011. The United States go into the 2021 edition as the reigning champions from 2019 and the winners of seven of the previous 14 tournaments.

### Iranians win two medals at Para-Archery World Ranking Tournament

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Zahra Nemati and Alisidana Manshaezadeh claimed two medals at the Para-Archery World Ranking Tournament and Final Paralympic Qualification 2021 on Saturday.

Nemati won a silver after losing to Italian Elisabetta Mijno 6-4 in the final match of the Recurve Women Open.

Italian Petrilli Vincenza beat Margarita Sidorenko from Russia 6-2 in the bronze medal match.

Manshaezadeh also beat Daniel Lelou from France 142-137 to win a bronze medal at the Compound Men Open.

Russian Bair Shigaev beat Ukraine's Serhiy Atamanenko in the final match.

Para-Archery World Ranking Tournament and Final Paralympic Qualification 2021 was held in Czech Republic from July 3 to 10.

### Argentine Pereyra joins Shahdab volleyball team

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Argentinean opposite striker Federico Pereyra joined Iranian volleyball club Shahdab Yazd.

Pereyra was a member of Argentina in the 2021 Volleyball Nations League and his strong performances in the VNL should help him return to the Olympics after nine years.

He was a member of the Argentinean team that finished fifth at London 2012, but did not play for the national team between 2015 and 2019, before he was called up for the VNL.

Now, the opposite has joined Iranian top-flight volleyball team Shahdab and will play at the Iran Super League in the upcoming season.

### Issa Alekasir a doubt for Tehran derby

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team striker Issa Alekasir will most likely miss the match against Esteghlal.

The match, called as Tehran derby, will be held on Thursday at the Azadi Stadium.

Alekasir suffered a foot injury in the match against Foolad and will not be ready for the match against Esteghlal.

Persepolis will meet their archrivals Esteghlal in Iran's Hazfi Cup quarterfinals. Persepolis midfielder Kamal Kamyabinia will also miss the derby due to the injury.

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali has praised the level of ties between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union, underlining the importance of the economic body.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the first specialized Eurasian exhibition in Tehran on Sunday, Jalali said, "The Eurasian Economic Union is an important and promising union for economic actors."

"The Preferential Trade Agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Union was reached as a result of long negotiations and efforts of the parties, and during the year and a half that has passed since this agreement, it has had a significant impact on increasing the volume of trade between Iran and Eurasian Union member states," he added.

Emphasizing Iran's commitment to a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Union, he praised the approach of the union secretariat and member states to this issue and added, "In the approach of Russia and Mr. Putin himself, we see a positive assessment for the expansion of relations with Iran in the form of the Eurasian Economic Union and Iran's membership in this union."

## Iran hails ties with Eurasian Union

He also referred to Iran's efforts in the field of logistics and added that Iran can facilitate Eurasian trade through regional corridors.

Jalali pointed to two rail and sea routes and noted, "In the railway area, two very important border points of the Rasht-Astara and Chabahar-Zahedan railways are being completed. In the case of the Rasht-Astara railway due to lack of financing by the Republic of Azerbaijan problems have been created, but the Chabahar-Zahedan railway is being completed with internal resources."

The Iranian ambassador to Russia assessed the various railway routes to the Republic of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkmenistan as important North-South, East-West and middle corridors and expressed hope for the revival of these rail routes, according to ISNA.

He also stressed the role of the Caspian Sea route in developing direct trade, especially with Russia and Kazakhstan.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he referred to the existing problems in developing trade between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union, expressing hope that Iranian traders will become professional and reach the level of Eurasian countries.

It is through such professionalism and

strengthening Iran's customs that trade between the two sides will improve, he suggested.

He also called for correcting existing problems and making the agreements more effective to achieve the goal.

Emphasizing the effective role of private sector traders and chambers of commerce and the relationship between traders, Jalali said that the lack of familiarity of traders with the laws of other countries is one of the main problems in trade between the two parties. And the solution is online education and creating a database of businessmen of countries.

In the end, Jalali emphasized perseverance and efforts to develop relations.

The opening ceremony of the first specialized Eurasian exhibition was held in the presence of Iran's ambassador to the Russian Federation. Officials and diplomats from other countries, including Russia, were also present.

During the ceremony, Jalali visited the exhibition and met with a number of businessmen and traders participating in the exhibition.

The exhibition, which runs until July 13, will feature Eurasian Union companies, including 30 companies from Russia, 30 companies



from Kyrgyzstan, more than 10 companies from Armenia, more than 10 companies from Kazakhstan and companies from Belarus, along with Iranian companies.

The companies that participated in the exhibition are active in the fields of banking and finance, technology transfer, construction of large factories, silos, ports, wharves, oil tanks, shipbuilding, steel and cement. wholesalers of livestock inputs, oil and agricultural products are also present at the fair.

In May, Ambassador Jalali and Adviser to the President of the Russian Federation Anton Kobayakov stressed the need for expanding economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries.



## Quarterly aluminum ingot output rises 30%

➔ 1 The country's aluminum ingot output stood at 446,800 tons in the previous year.

Iran's major aluminum producers had managed to produce 278,318 tons of the product in the Iranian calendar year 1398.

The country's aluminum ingot production in the Iranian calendar year 1398 had declined eight percent in comparison to the figure for its preceding year.

IMIDRO data show that among the country's top producers, Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) had the best performance in the previous year producing 185,000 tons of aluminum ingots.

Aluminum ingot production in the country reached 41,000 tons in the last month of the previous year (February 19-March 20), registering a 38 percent rise compared to the 30,000 tons in the preceding year's same period.



Annual production of the aluminum ingot in the country is planned to increase 63 percent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

Last year, during the inauguration ceremony of Iran's biggest aluminum production complex (in the central Fars province), the former industry minister said the country's aluminum production is expected to be doubled with that unit going operational.

The official put the value of the Iranian mining industry's production at about \$22 billion, saying that the country is relatively self-sufficient in minerals and a great deal is also exported every year.

He went on underlying the country's capacities in the sector, saying that Iran is ranked 18th among the world's top aluminum producers, and with this new plant going operational the country will climb four places to stand at 14th place."

Iran plans to reach the annual production of 1.5 million tons of aluminum ingot by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

## IME's value of weekly trade up 14%

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** —The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) increased 14 percent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, in the past week, 1.322 million tons of commodities with a total trading value of \$486 million were traded at the exchange, showing also a 30-percent growth in terms of the volume of traded commodities.

The exchange sold on its metals and minerals trading floor 945,515 tons of commodities valued at nearly \$305 million.

Commodities traded on this floor included 342,413 tons of steel, 3,32 tons of copper, 5,450 tons of aluminum, 27 tons of precious metals concentrate, 28,605 tons of zinc, 475,750 tons of cement, 10 kg of gold bars, 13,000 tons of sponge iron and 80,000 tons of iron ore.

Furthermore, the IME saw trade of 372,006 tons of commodities on both export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor with a total trading value of more than \$179 million.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 93,500 tons of vacuum bottom, 109,405 tons of bitumen, 84,402 tons of polymeric products, 30,739 tons of chemicals, 32,000 tons of lube cut, 3,795 tons of base oil, 110 tons of argon, 25,500 tons of sulfur and 260 tons of insulation.

It's worth noting that the IME also played host to trading 5,080 tons of commodities on its side market

As previously reported, the value of trade at Iran Mercantile Exchange rose eight percent during the past Iranian calendar month (May 22-June 21).

More than 3.623 million tons of commodities worth over \$1.88 billion was traded at the exchange in the past month, indicating also 22 percent growth in terms of weight as compared to its preceding month.

The IME sold on its metal and mineral trading floor 1.816 million tons of commodities worth almost \$1.076 billion.

Commodities traded on this floor included 979,170 tons of various types of steel, 550, 280 tons of cement, 26,060 tons of copper, 690 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 129 tons of precious metals concentrate, 31,245 tons of aluminum, 165,000 tons of iron ore, 33,705 tons of zinc, 400 tons of metallurgical coke, 60,000 tons of sponge iron, 250 tons of lead and 13 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the exchange played host to trading of 1.74 million tons of commodities on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor valued at more than \$795 million.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 492,393 tons of various grades of bitumen, 319,550 tons of polymeric products, 159,480 tons of chemicals, 19,834 tons of oil, 540,400 tons of vacuum bottom, 42,630 tons of sulfur, 450 tons of argon, 550 tons of insulation and 157,000 tons of lube cut.

There were also 6,316 tons of commodities traded on the IME's side market.

The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) rose 108 percent compared to the preceding year.

During the past year, about 3.5 quadrillion rials (about \$83.5 billion) worth of commodities were traded at the mentioned market.

In the past year, several new records were achieved in terms of the volume and value of transactions in the mentioned market's various floors including the industrial, petroleum, and petrochemical floors.

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

# Industry, energy ministries to ink MOU for building power plants

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian

Ministries of Energy and Industry, Mining and Trade are going to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) within a week for collaboration in constructing 13 power plants for industrial units across the country.

"This week or during the next week, a memorandum of understanding will be signed between the two ministers of industry and energy to start the construction of 13 power plants for industrial units across the country," Deputy Industry Minister Saeed Zarandi told Mehr News Agency on Sunday.

"Since earlier this year, the Industry Ministry, on behalf of the industrial sector, started seeking a permit for building 13 power plants. We held several meetings with Tavanir [Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company] and the Energy Ministry and proposed to sign a memorandum of understanding with the ministry. We also sent a letter to the



Energy Ministry last week to expedite the issuance of the permit," Zarandi explained.

According to the official, the mentioned power plants are financed by 12 investors

from various industrial sectors and will be constructed within 2.5-3 years.

The official noted that the power plants will have a total capacity of about 10,536 megawatts (MW) whose output will be used by the mentioned industrial units.

As reported, the said power plants will be constructed in Isfahan, Hormozgan, Markazi, Yazd, Kerman, Fars, Semnan, and Khuzestan provinces.

One of the main goals of this program is to provide reliable and sustainable electricity to high-consuming industries and the country's industrial parks in order to reduce the pressure imposed on the national grid in the industry and mining sector, according to Zarandi.

"If these power plants are built, a significant load will be removed from the national electricity distribution network," he stressed.

The official further noted that in case of any surplus electricity generation, the industrial units can sell the surplus electricity to the Energy Ministry.

## Knowledge-based firms ink deal with RIPI to indigenize oil equipment

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Research Institute

of Petroleum Industry (RIPI) has signed two deals with domestic knowledge-based companies for commercial production of newly indigenized oil equipment, Shana reported.

As reported, the mentioned deals were signed with Azma Sanjesh Pishro LTD and TOF Tech Pars Company for the mass production of oil- and water-based nanofluids, as well as the joint development of an Ion mobility spectrometry (IMS) device for analyzing sulfur and mercury compounds and other gaseous and fluid currents, respectively.

IMS is a technology developed in recent decades to detect, identify, and monitor trace organic compounds in different matrices. This technology uses the ion mobility of detected substances in an electric field to separate the ions under atmospheric pressure.

Strengthening domestic production and indigenizing the knowledge and technology for the production of the

products and equipment that Iran imports from other countries has become one of the major programs that the country is pursuing in recent years.

To materialize this objective, knowledge-based companies have played a noticeable part, especially in indigenizing the products and equipment applied in the oil industry, which is the major sector in the country's national economy.

Cooperating with capable domestic knowledge-based companies and startups is one of the very fruitful steps that the oil ministry has taken in its efforts to reach complete independence from foreign resources for meeting its equipment needs.

Back in November 2020, the Head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Research and Technology Directorate said that the company is seriously pursuing a program for using the capacities of domestic knowledge-based companies for meeting the oil industry's technological needs.



In materializing the goal of indigenizing the production of the oil industry's equipment, RIPI has also played a very significant role in collaborating with the knowledge-based companies for working on innovative research projects for producing various equipment and base-products needed in the industry.

## South Pars cumulative gas output exceeds 1,800 bcm

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Over 1,800

billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas has been produced from the giant South Pars field in southern Iran since the beginning of the field's development up to March 20, according to Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) which is in charge of developing the huge gas field.

As announced by the POGC Office of Public Relations, the total amount of gas production from the South Pars field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, reached 1,867 billion cubic meters since the beginning of operation until the end of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Some 2.2 billion barrels of gas condensate have also been extracted from this joint field since the beginning of



development.

The value of South Pars products, on the development of which nearly \$80 billion has been invested, is estimated at \$335 billion so far, according to the POGC.

The huge South Pars field covers an

area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

The development of South Pars field started in 1998 and 29 different phases were defined for the project along with a separate oil block. The field, however, is currently divided into 24 standard offshore phases, the output of which is processed by 14 gas refineries on land.

Since the beginning, the field's development project has gone through so many ups and downs and many foreign

and domestic companies have contributed to the completion of the field's various phases.

France's Total, Italy's Eni, Malaysia's Petronas, Russia's Gazprom, Norway's Statoil and the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) are some of the foreign companies which have worked on the field for different phases and in different time spans.

Despite all the U.S pressures which led to the departure of almost all of the above-mentioned companies from the project, and despite all the technical and engineering problems faced in the process, Iran has managed to proudly finish the development of almost all the phases of the field and even the field's oil layer is also producing nearly 50,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil.

## Iran rises electricity imports from neighbors

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Ministry's

Spokesman for Electricity Industry Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said the country has increased the electricity imports from three neighboring countries to offset the surge in domestic demand, IRNA reported.

"Up to 650 megawatts (MW) of electricity is currently imported from Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Armenia," Rajabi Mashhadi wrote on his social media.

The official noted that due to the infrastructure limitations and domestic demands, the mentioned countries are not able to supply the Islamic Republic with more electricity.

He underlined that managing consumption is the best possible option at the moment for preventing blackouts during the summer peak period.

The official called on people and businesses to manage their electricity consumption especially in peak consumption hours of the day.

Earlier this week, Rajabi Mashhadi said that Iran



has stopped electricity exports to neighboring countries due to the surge in domestic demand and only 50 MW of electricity is exported to Afghanistan at the moment.

He announced on Tuesday that the country's power plants are currently able to generate only 54,000 MW of electricity which is nearly 12,000 MW less than the

domestic power demand.

Daily electricity consumption in Iran reached 66,250 megawatts (66.25 gigawatts) on Monday, July 5, to register a new record in the history of Iran's electricity industry as a new heatwave has blanketed the country over the past few days.

The mentioned figure was 8,000 MW more than the consumption in the previous year's peak period, and 10,000 MW more than the figure in the previous year's same date.

In the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

This year, however, new deteriorating factors like severe drought and the decline in the country's water resources as well as a new wave of illegal cryptocurrency mining across the country have also worsened the situation.

## TEDPIX climbs 14,500 points on Sunday

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX,

the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 14,538 points to 1.285 million on Sunday.

As reported, over 7.422 billion securities worth 53.914 trillion rials (about \$1.283 billion) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.

The first market's index rose 15,060 points, and the second market's index gained 14,478 points.

TEDPIX rose 43,000 points in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.282 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Civ-

il Servants Pension Fund (CSPF), Social Security Investment Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed indices.

Iranian stock market is expected to follow an upward trend as the country's foreign currency exchange market has become more stabilized over the past few months, according to stock market analyst Azim Sabet.

"As one of the important factors in the market, [foreign] exchange rates have reached a stage of stability; therefore, one can expect a reasonable upward trend in



the market," Sabet told IRNA on Saturday.

He pointed to the effective measures taken for improving the current trend of stock exchange transactions and added:

"One of the significant issues regarding the stock market's current trading environment is the management of fluctuations in the market."

The expert stressed that people should not expect the stock market to always follow an upward trend, saying: "Sometimes companies report on their performance and activities in a certain period of time and shareholders must use that information to make decisions based on the value of the companies."

Exchange transactions can take a reasonable course if the macroeconomics of the country is managed and no sudden changes are made, he said.



# Afghanistan conflict: neighbors’ reading!

➔ **1** Afghanistan is now in a state of confusion. Some media outlets say the Taliban is practicing violence, while others try to promote the idea of handing over the land to the Taliban voluntarily.

Reportedly, the Taliban have not resorted to violent acts against the people, especially against the Hazaras, Shias and Tajiks. They are just fighting against government forces.

According to reports by Afghan media, the Taliban are accommodating all the ethnic groups in their organization as they have eyes on the upcoming administration in Kabul.

Given their lightning advances across Afghanistan, some pundits predict the Afghan government will be overthrown in less than a month.

According to local Afghan officials, the Taliban are advancing in rural areas and near Kabul. They now hold almost twice as much of Afghanistan as they did just two months ago, raising fresh doubts about whether the Afghan government can survive now that 90 percent of U.S. and NATO forces have left the country.

What may worry regional countries most, especially Afghan neighbors, is that American weapons have fallen into the hands of unknown militant groups during the Americans’ two-decades of presence in Afghanistan. Among the groups that have gained access to such advanced arms is ISIS, which sees no limit for its savagery.

But if you ask whether these advanced weapons can pose a threat to Afghanistan’s neighbors in the future, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran, I would say no, because, the United States, despite having advanced weapons, failed to destabilize Iran’s borders. The Islamic Republic has been successful in protecting and defending its national interests.



Some analysts and military experts say the United States let extremist militant groups gain access to such advanced weaponry in order to push Afghanistan toward more insecurity and chaos. They say the U.S. will feel happy to see China, Russia and Iran feel the brunt of insecurity and instability in Afghanistan.

Regional countries, Afghan officials, analysts had called for a responsible pullout of U.S. forces from Afghanistan.

An unnamed Afghan government official has said the U.S. withdrawal was “irresponsible.”

“It is the most irresponsible, selfish thing the U.S. could do to its Afghan partners,” the official told the DPA news agency. “They could have ended this in a responsible way, with a little more patience.”

However, it must not be forgotten that the U.S. is one of the main culprits for decades-long insecurity in Afghanistan.

It is just enough to remember how the U.S. fanned the flames of religious extremism during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

**Iran working hard to broker peace in Afghanistan**

Many in Iran ask about Tehran’s stance towards what is going on in Afghanistan. Some people warn about the Taliban’s presence close to Iranian borders.

Like it or lump it, the Taliban is advancing at a lightning speed across Afghanistan. They now claim that they control 80 percent of Afghanistan.

The U.S. and its allies are fleeing Afghan-

istan in disgrace after two decades. Before them, the Soviets left in disgrace.

It is also clear to all that Ghani’s government is unable to resist the Taliban’s attacks for a long time given its reliance on foreign military aid.

In fact, inter-Afghan talks are the only viable solution for more than four decades of war and bloodshed in Afghanistan.

Negotiation is essentially important for Afghanistan. If the warring sides show flexibility, they can ensure the national security and interests of the Afghan people, alleviate the decades-long suffering of their people and bring the region closer to stability.

It is for this reason that Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told the delegates from the Afghan government and the Taliban in Tehran on July 8 that “courage in peace is more important than courage in war, because peace needs sacrifice and forgiveness, needs ignoring one’s maximal demands, and paying attention to the other side’s demands.”

On July 7, the first day that high-ranking representatives from the Taliban and the Afghan government met in Tehran, Zarif showed Iran’s longing for peace in Afghanistan by writing that “Iran stands with our Afghan brethren.”

Iran is now playing a constructive role. Iran’s move in hosting intra-Afghan talks has so far been welcomed by Pakistan and India, two major shareholders in Afghanistan.

The fact that Iran has succeeded to host the warring sides is a milestone. It is a great honor in the history of Iranian diplomacy.

Other shareholders in the stability of Afghanistan can also play positive roles. A new round of civil war in Afghanistan is not in anyone’s interest.

## How the West is fueling the war on Yemen

➔ **1** The Pentagon set up a ‘command and control center’ (it was later revealed that the British used this as well) to tell the Saudis, which targets to stoke. Unless the Pentagon intentionally provided civilians targets to prolong the war, this is something that must be investigated, then American intelligence has serious issues. In any case, the bombing campaign was so indiscriminate that it sparked major alarm among International Organizations, the European Union and Human Rights Groups.

Washington also provided logistical and diplomatic support to Riyadh as well as training for Saudi pilots. This is why Yemenis refer to the onslaught as the Saudi-American war against their country. According to one of the most prominent arms exports monitoring groups, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the U.S. was the largest supplier of arms and weaponry to Saudi Arabia during 2015 and 2019 accounting for 73 percent of its arms imports during the same period. The sale of weapons to Riyadh accounted for 25 percent of the total arms sales of the U.S. during 2015 and 2019.

Trump vetoed three Congress acts seeking to stop the immediate sale of weapons to the Saudis and the UAE. Trump was of the belief that any opposition to the sale of arms to these two Monarchies would damage Washington’s relations with them while at the same time weaken America’s status in the global arms trade. But remember, the war on Yemen, started during the Barack Obama era and continues today under the Joe Biden era. It is hard to imagine that all three administrations could not foresee a humanitarian disaster by supporting Riyadh. Yes, Biden says he will end American support for Saudi Arabia but the reality on the ground proves otherwise. However, it was during the Trump era that Riyadh enjoyed increased support from Washington. Trump’s first trip abroad since taking office was to Riyadh, where Saudi officials did their best to seduce him.

In Riyadh Trump announced around \$110 billion dollars worth of arms to the Kingdom including dozens of F-15 warplanes, Apache attack helicopters, Patriot missile systems, hundreds of armored vehicles in addition to thousands of missiles and bombs. However, it is important



to highlight here that these sales are widely believed to have already been approved by former President Obama.

This suggests no matter who is in power at the White House, the deep state is the one calling the shots. Still, the infamous meeting between Trump and Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed Bin Salman, at the Oval Office, where Trump displayed colorful placards in front of reporters, proudly highlighting American arms sales will almost certainly go down in history.

Even after the gruesome murder of Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, which the CIA concluded was ordered by the Saudi Crown Prince himself did not stop Trump’s unwavering support for the ruling Saudi monarchy’s war.

However, the U.S is not alone in selling arms to Saudi Arabia.

The United Kingdom has sold tens of billions of pounds worth of weapons. London has also played a serious role in training Saudi military forces. This is while the UK portrays itself globally as an advocate of the International Arms Trade Treaty.

According to the charity group, Oxfam, British arms to the Saudis include billions of pounds for the sale of Tornado and Typhoon warplanes, helicopters and drones as well as grenades, bombs and missiles. Oxfam says British arms exports to Saudi Arabia to be used in Yemen is a shame

on the consciousness of the UK. France’s arms exports to Riyadh include billions of euros worth of weapons. According to SIPRI French arms sales sharply increased during the Saudi war on Yemen. Germany and Italy are among others to put profit over peace.

Meanwhile, Canada broke its own record for selling military hardware to Saudi Arabia, which infamously included armored vehicles, 31 large-caliber artillery systems and 152 heavy machine guns. This is despite the Canadian government’s statements on human rights and global peace.

From the viewpoint of international law, Saudi Arabia’s military actions in Yemen constitute war crimes and the use of Western weapons would naturally make western nations complicit in war crimes. In late 2019, a United Nations report sounded the alarm for the first time saying the U.S., the UK and France may be complicit in war crimes by arming and supporting Saudi Arabia that is using starvation as a war tactic in Yemen.

Activists had hoped the UN report would end Western support for the Saudis, but this was not the case. There were only brief periods where UK court battles and dock workers refusing to upload weapon cargos temporarily halted the supply of arms, otherwise, it was business as usual.

Saudi Arabia has killed tens of thousands of women, children and defenseless people while preventing the delivery of international humanitarian aid to Yemen. To make matters worse, so far, there has been absolutely no accountability or punitive measures against the Saudis.

But one thing is for sure, Saudi Arabia’s daily airstrikes on Yemen would not be occurring on a daily basis had it not been for a steady supply of weapons from the United States and other Western powers.

Experts say Saudi Arabia’s war on Yemen would have ended many years ago and many lives would have been saved if the West ended the export of arms to the Kingdom.

It is an unfortunate state of affairs where the self-proclaimed flag bearers of Human Rights have put profit in a lucrative yet very dangerous and deadly market over the lives of innocent civilians and their ongoing suffering in the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.

## Ex-Israeli army chief warns of Hezbollah’s ‘unmatched rocket threat’

Former Israeli army chief of staff has warned of the threat posed by Hezbollah to the occupying regime, saying the Lebanese resistance movement is in possession of thousands of long-range rockets and dozens or more precision-guided missiles.

Speaking to The Jerusalem Post newspaper, Gadi Eisenkot discussed “the unmatched more than 150,000 rocket threat,” which the group presents to Israel.

Israel had “achievements and also more than a few missteps” in dealing with the threat from Lebanon and Syria over the past 15 years, he said.

The impact of Israeli attacks on Hezbollah during the 2006 war was “that for 15 years there has been a good security situation on the Lebanese border, though at the same time Hezbollah has strengthened its capabilities,” Eisenkot added.

Lebanon fought off two Israeli wars in 2000 and 2006. On both occasions, battleground contribution by Hezbollah proved an indispensable asset, forcing the Israeli military into a retreat.

Lebanon and the occupying entity are technically at war since the latter has kept the Arab country’s Shebaa Farms under occupation since 1967.

According to Press TV, Eisenkot further

predicted that in a major war between Israel and Hezbollah, Israelis could spend several days in bomb shelters and the damage to Israeli properties could be extensive.

The Israeli army had previously warned that any future war with Hezbollah could lead to much larger casualties, sometimes tossing out numbers like 1,000 dead Israelis.

## Syria hails UN resolution to extend cross-border aid mechanism as ‘achievement’

The Syrian foreign minister has hailed as an “achievement” a newly-adopted United Nations resolution to extend the cross-border aid operation into the Arab country, as the move would compel the West to respect the territorial integrity of Syria.

Faisal al-Mekdad made the remarks in a statement on Saturday after the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2585 to extend the authorization of cross-border aid mechanism for Syrians for another 12 months.

The resolution, which won the unanimous support of the 15-member council, will allow cross-border aid into Syria from the country’s Bab al-Hawa border crossing with Turkey to run for six months until January 10, 2022, and then for an extension of an additional six months until July 10, 2022.

The second six-month extension remains pending and is subject to the issuance of a substantive report by the UN secretary-general, which particularly focuses on transparency in aid delivery operations in Syria and progress on cross-line access in meeting the country’s humanitarian needs.

According to the resolution, the secretary-general will be required to brief the Security Council on a monthly basis and to present a report on the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and on compliance by all relevant parties in Syria.

The report would also provide detailed information on UN humanitarian cross-border operations, including the distribution mechanism, the number of beneficiaries, operating partners, locations of aid deliveries at the district level, and the volume and nature of items delivered.

Mekdad was cited by Syria’s official news agency SANA as saying on Saturday that adopting resolution 2585 in its current form was an achievement because it included all aspects which Western countries had refused to consider.

The top diplomat underlined that the new resolution has put many restrictions on the movement of goods as well as the Western states which disrespect international borders and use the crossings to violate Syria’s territorial integrity.

Mekdad said the UN, like Western countries, has failed

to deliver real humanitarian aid to the Syrian people and that the aid batches often fall into the hands of armed groups and organizations affiliated to the Western states, which are distributed among terrorists or sold later to Syrians at high prices.

Mekdad said the resolution renews the United Nations’ strong faith in the territorial integrity of Syria and leaves Turkey, along with the United States that supports militants in northern Syria, not satisfied.

The United Nations Security Council approved aid deliveries to Syria from Turkey in 2014, which have been renewed to this day.

Moscow and Beijing argue that the mechanism violates Syria’s sovereignty and that aid should be channeled through the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Concerns have also grown over Western efforts, which are made under the guise of humanitarian assistance, to support Takfiri terrorist groups that have been suffering heavy defeats against Syrian government forces.

## Russia denounces long-time U.S. blockade against Cuba as violation of human rights

The Russian Foreign Ministry has denounced the decades-long U.S. embargo against Cuba as a violation of both international law and the human rights of Cubans.

In a statement posted on its website on Saturday, the Russian Foreign Ministry said the restrictive measures that the White House has maintained against Cuba for more than 60 years have a hostile character and constitute a human rights violation, according to a report by Prensa Latina.

The economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba has been described by experts as an act of economic warfare.

Numerous resolutions passed by the United Nations General Assembly have indicated that the blockade is against international law. The U.S. has recently further tightened the illegal blockade against the Caribbean nation under the pretext of fighting the spread of the coronavirus.

Cuba has reiterated that the U.S. embargo, which is impeding the country’s ability to purchase equipment and other supplies to deal with COVID-19, is making the pandemic even worse.

## U.S. forces come under attack in Syria

A powerful explosion has rocked the gas refinery that US forces are using as a military base in the east of the Syrian province of Dayr al-Zawr.

According to a war monitor, the blast was caused by a mortar shell landed in the Conoco gas field, where American troops are stationed.

A U.S. military official, speaking to Reuters on the condition of anonymity, said the incident left no casualties or damage.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. American troops have recently been targeted in Syria following last month’s U.S. airstrikes against resistance groups on the Iraqi-Syrian border.

Earlier in the week, the United States’ biggest military base in Syria’s al-Omar Oilfield was hit by a number of “massive” explosions.

Over the past years, the U.S. has been maintaining an illegal military presence on Syrian soil, collaborating with anti-Damascus militants and stealing the country’s crude oil resources.

## China, N. Korea vow to boost ties in face of foreign hostility

North Korea and China have hailed the 60th anniversary of their friendship treaty, vowing to further strengthen bilateral relations in the face of hostile foreign adversaries.

In a message sent to Chinese President Xi Jinping, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said it is “the fixed stand” of his government to “ceaselessly develop the friendly and cooperative relations” between the countries, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said on Sunday.

“Despite the unprecedentedly complicated international situation in recent years, the comradely trust and militant friendship between the DPRK and China gets stronger day by day,” Kim was quoted as saying. The treaty, he said, is defending socialism and peace in Asia “now that the hostile forces become more desperate in their challenge and obstructive moves.”

Signed in 1961, the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance is currently the only defense treaty China and North Korea have with any nation.

In his message, the Chinese president also said he plans to strengthen communication with North Korea “by steadily leading the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries to a new stage.”

## Asa’ib to Americans: Iraq’s resistance will not leave you alone

The leader of an anti-terror Iraqi group says the country’s resistance forces will celebrate the liberation of Iraq over the remains of American soldiers.

“The Iraqi resistance will not leave you alone and will celebrate the victory and liberation of Iraq over the remains of your occupying soldiers,” Akram al-Kaabi, the secretary general of the Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, tweeted Saturday, addressing the American forces in Iraq.

According to Press TV, the remarks came after a senior U.S. State Department official pleaded with Iraqi resistance groups to “just leave us alone,” following a surge in attacks against American positions in Iraq.

“I understand that some of these militias completely disagree with what the United States is trying to do in Iraq in fighting ISIS (Daesh), but we’re asking them, we’re demanding, that they just leave us alone and we’ll leave them alone, so that we can fight this common enemy, which is ISIS,” Acting Assistant Secretary of State Joey Hood said in an interview with Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television news network.

## Resistance News

## “Palestine Scholars” warns of massive settler break-in at Aqsa Mosque

**INTERNATIONAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**— The Palestine Scholars Association has warned of Jewish settlers’ intents to desecrate the Aqsa Mosque in masse on July 18 to mark the anniversary of the alleged temple destruction.

“The Zionist extremists plan, on the anniversary which their Torah calls the temple destruction anniversary when the second temple was demolished according to their claims, to make up for what they failed to do on Ramadan 28 when they announced their intents to break into the Aqsa Mosque, publicly perform rituals inside it, and demonstrate their sovereignty claims over the holy site through raising Zionist flags and playing the Zionist anthem,” head of the association Naseem Yassin said in a press release on Saturday.

Yassin stressed the need for the Palestinians to get prepared to confront and foil the intended mass settler break-in at the Aqsa Mosque, affirming that the intensive presence of Muslim worshippers at the Mosque was always the best option to defend it.



## Fences installed to protect prehistoric site in eastern Iran

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A series of metal fences have been set up to protect Kale Kub site in Sarayan, eastern South Khorasan province.

A budget of 400 million rials (\$9,500 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to the conservation project, Sarayan’s tourism chief Mohammad Arab said on Sunday.

Moreover, the project aimed to prevent the destruction of the historical site and the entry of unauthorized vehicles, the official added.

Leading Iranian and foreign archaeologists have participated in field surveys and excavations at the site for five seasons, and good results have been reported, he explained.

However, there will be a need for more funds to continue archeological excavations and research activities in the site, he noted.

Kale Kub is one of the few prehistoric sites identified in South Khorasan province that demonstrate a cultural sequence spanning between the fifth and third millennia BC.



The first season of archeological excavations on Kale Kub site was implemented in 2019 in collaboration with Japanese archeologists.

The project revealed the chronological sequence from the 5th to late 4th millennium BC. However, poor preservation and protection have damaged most parts of the site.

A special pottery style of 4th millennium BC, which is seen on the relics found in Kale Kub, is the most important discovery on the site, as this style has been previously seen in the western Iranian plateau.

Since there are two deserts, Dasht-e Kavir and Lut desert, between these two parts of the country, the Kale Kub excavations could help us to comprehend how the culture made its way to the east.

Covering an area of over nine hectares, the historical site is a listed National Heritage property.

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

Saffron and barberry, the former known as the “red gold” in the country, which is considerably produced in almost all parts of the province, have made it a significant destination for ecotourism.

## Illegal excavators arrested in Mazandaran province

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** –Iranian police have recently arrested nine unauthorized diggers in Savadkuh county, the northern province of Mazandaran.

The suspects were traced and finally detained, said Mohammadreza Kordan, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage, CHTN reported on Sunday.

Some excavation tools and two metal detectors have been seized from the culprits, who were handed over to the judicial system for further investigation, the official added.



An early civilization flourished at the beginning of the first millennium BC in Mazandaran (Tabarestan).

Its insecure eastern and southeastern borders were crossed by Mongol invaders in the 13th and 14th centuries. Cossacks attacked the region in 1668 but were repulsed. It was ceded to the Russian Empire by a treaty in 1723, but the Russians were never secure in their occupation. The area was restored to Iran under the Qajar dynasty.

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

## ‘Needlework’ a common craft in Iran’s Baluchestan

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** – Baluchestan embroideries are the most exquisite samples of handicrafts in Iran. These needleworks are locally called “Suchan Duzi”.

There are many documents that prove this embroidery existed from the early years of Islamic era in this tribe and flourished during the Timurid and Safavid dynasty. Suchan Duzi is most commonly used as a decoration of local dresses.

The needlework covers all over the fabrics, and is used to decorate handcuffs, trousers and are applied in forms like strips in the handcuffs, a piece on the back and the top of the Chadors. Since local dresses are worn by women in many cities and regions, this embroidery is popular in all big or small cities and villages of Zahedan and Saravan in the east and to Iranshahr in the west.

The techniques of needlework differ between each nomadic region like Iranshahr (Qasem Abad, Pip, Espakeh, Verkat, Chenef) and region of Khash and Gasht. Qasem Abad is proud to be the hometown of two artists of this craft: Ms. Zarkhatun Baluchi and Ms. Mahtab Jahan Bani.

# Archaeological work starts at centuries-old public bathhouse

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The first round of archaeological excavation has recently commenced at the remnants of the Safavid era (1501-1736) public bathhouse in Farahabad, the northern province of Mazandaran.

The project aims at revealing the historical background of the monument and preventing further destruction as well as turning it into an outdoor museum, CHTN quoted archaeologist Mohammad Arman Ershadi, who leads the excavations, as saying on Sunday.

The bathhouse along with some other historical structures is located in a historical village named Tahan, which was built by the order of Shah Abbas the Great (r. 1588 – 1629), he added.

The bathhouse is made of brick and mortar and consists of an entrance corridor, a changing area, and a pool, he explained.

However, further excavation surveys are needed to determine the exact plan of the bathhouse, he noted.

Bathhouses or ‘hammams’ in Iran were not only places for bathing and cleaning up. They had a social concept for people



who gathered at these places weekly.

It was a place where people talked with each other about their daily life and

shared humor and news. There are still bathhouses in Iranian cities but they do not have their social function anymore

## Handicrafts sector creates 45 jobs in North Khorasan in Q1

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The handicrafts sector generated 45 job opportunities in the northeastern province of North Khorasan during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Some three billion rials (\$71,400 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was also invested in this sector during the mentioned time, Mohammadreza Qahremanian announced on Sunday.

Handicrafts exports from the province also reached 2.5 billion rials (\$59,500) during the mentioned period, the official added.

Potteries, handmade pieces of jewelry, and klim and carpets were amongst the objects exported mostly to Poland, China, Turkey, Lebanon, Qatar, and Canada, he noted.

Among the benefits of the province’s handicrafts are their relative added value, low production costs, easy accessibility of training, and their attractiveness, which has resulted in a booming market and created jobs for many, he explained.

Experts believe though the northeastern province may not be the first choice of travelers, its tourism industry is getting momentum.

According to Lonely Planet, most foreign tourists pass straight through North Khorasan in transit between Mashhad and Gorgan, but if you have time to explore,

it’s worth diverting south from the capital, Bojnurd, towards Esfarayen, famed for its wrestling tournaments, the remarkable citadel of Belqays and the partly preserved stepped village of Roein some 20km north.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran’s number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

Shiraz was named a “world city of [diverse] handicrafts”. Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a “world city of filigree”. And Qassemabad village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts. Chador Shab, a kind of homemade outer garment for women, was, however, the main subject for the WCC assessment for the village.

The value of Iran’s handicrafts exports stood at \$120 million during the first eleven months of the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – February 18, 2021), Mehr reported. The country’s handicrafts exports slumped during the mentioned months in comparison to the same period last a year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.



The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

## Milad Tower, a modern face of Iranian capital

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – As a city with a long history and rich culture, Tehran has long been an attractive destination for culture enthusiasts and history buffs.

Several museums, historical palaces, old mansions, and different cultural centers, scattered across the Iranian capital, have always been on the bucket list of domestic and foreign tourists.

In the meantime, if one wishes to see the modern face of the city, the Milad Tower might be a great place to go.

Dominating the skyline of Tehran’s western suburbs, Milad Tower is 435m high, including 120m of antenna, making it, in 2017, the world’s sixth-tallest free-standing tower.

The tallest building in Tehran, immediately after its construction, the tower became a new symbol of the city.

The multipurpose building can be



seen from almost every part of the city.

Besides providing a bird’s-eye view of the city, it also hosts some business events and entertainment.

Bearing a striking resemblance to Menara Kuala Lumpur, its octagonal concrete shaft tapers up to a pod with 12 floors, including both enclosed and open observation decks, a gallery, a cafe, and a revolving restaurant.

The Milad Tower is part of the International Trade and Convention Center of Tehran. In addition to a convention center and a world trade center, Milad Tower also hosts events and exhibitions.

Observation decks are of particular interest to regular visitors. These are located at the pinnacle of the head structure. It provides a stunning 360-degree view of the mountains and city.

In addition, you can browse the art gallery and museum in the tower. A revolving restaurant offers breakfast (on weekends), lunch, and dinner, as well as the opportunity to watch the city go by.

Beyond all the recreational facilities, Milad Tower’s conference hall is one of Tehran’s most important conference centers that usually hosts the most important Iranian festivals and international festivals, such as the

International Fajr Film Festival.

This conference center includes several halls for exhibiting films, performing concerts, etc. It is adjacent to the tower. With a hall that can hold 1500 people, it is one of the largest in West Asia.

Whether you should visit or not depends largely on the weather; on a rare clear day the views are worth it, but otherwise probably not. You need a taxi to get here.

The first time Tehran is mentioned in historical accounts is in an 11th-century chronicle in which it is described as a small village north of Rey.

Tehran has many to offer its visitors including Golestan Palace, Grand Bazaar, Treasury of National Jewels, National Museum of Iran, Glass & Ceramic Museum, Masoudieh Palace, Sarkis Cathedral, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Carpet Museum of Iran, to name a few.

## Baran Khahi or rainmaking ritual

Based on their religious teachings, beliefs, and traditions, humans raise their hands to the sky and pray and seek help from their creator when they face hardships. This has led to the formation of different and diverse religious and rituals all over the world. A factor that plays an important role in forming cultural elements is the effect of geography and the environment. From many years ago, providing water has been one of the most important problems of people who live in dry lands, where water is scarce such as central regions of Iran, lands around the Lut and Namak Desert.

When rainfall decreases and people encounter long and extreme draughts and very difficult conditions, a ritual that is generally like performance takes place to ask for abundant rain from nature. It is called Talab-e Baran (prayer for the rain) or Estesgha. This ritual is performed in some cities of Iran more seriously, especially in the desert lands.

Ancient Iranians believed in water and rain and praised and worshiped them. It is believed among the prophets and Imams that when facing draughts and little rainfalls, it is best to pray, ask for rain and blessing from God.

In many regions where the follower of Divine Faith



live, rituals of prayer for rain is performed following specific formalities, and the religious figures attend them. Although such ritual also exists in the culture of other nations, they are more common in Iran and are held with more diversity.

Generally, a group song is sung in the ceremony and it may be accompanied by music, and performances. Talab-e Baran is called by different names in each region. For example, in Markazi Province it is called

Chamche Galin, in Dashtestan it is called Ketra Ge’she and Geli, in Bushehr Galin Va Aroose Zesht, and among the Bakhtiari Har Har Haroonak or Keli Kuseh.

Rituals related to prayer for the rain can be categorized based on the fact that they are performed in groups or not, or the symbols that are used in them. Prayers, cooking Ash (a kind of porridge), Gav Robayi (stealing cows), Hormat Shekani, using Baransaz stones, breaking spells and freeing the rain from the spells, Tafa’ol or fortune-telling, Tabut Gardani and Alam Gardani, Kuse Gardi, Aroosak Gardani (puppet shows), rope competitions, using unconventional objects, asking Qalandars to perform music and sing, Hodorsa Hodorsa, Chehel Mola (forty mollas), Aroosi-e Ghanat, sacrifices, putting scissors under the downpipe, putting an upside-down shovel on the rives, writing down the name of seven or forty bald men and tying it from downpipe, and many more traditions can be seen in parts of Iran, and is performed based on the beliefs of the people. Some of them are performed combined. For example, Kuseh or Aroosak Gardani is performed at the end of cooking Ash. But in some parts, each is performed separately.

(Source: Visit Iran)



# Iran to mark national marriage week

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — National marriage week is celebrated across the country on July 12-18.

This year, the day focuses on youth-related fields. The Ministry of Sport and Youth has assigned each day of the week with a special theme as follows:

Monday, July 12: Timely and conscious marriage, promoting simple life, dealing with emerging customs and useless rituals

Tuesday, July 13: The role of premarital counseling in a lasting marriage

Wednesday, July 14: Promoting and facilitating marriage with the participation of charities

Thursday, July 15: Youth empowerment, strengthening family management skills in young couples, healthy and vibrant society

Friday, July 16: Marriage, promoting childbearing, strengthening parenting skills, a dynamic and growing young community

Saturday, July 17: Promoting the Iranian Islamic lifestyle and family excellence

Sunday, July 18: Media literacy, educating young people by social media content

Holding a number of campaigns aimed at creating a culture of easy marriage is also one of the important actions of the sports and youth ministry this year, Azam Karimi, Director of youth social planning and development said.

Currently, 430 specialized counseling centers across the country provide free counseling to young couples during the national marriage week, she stated, IRIB reported.

During the one-week event, several on-line meetings with the presence of related experts will be held, she noted, adding, 800



media products on the subject of conscious marriage and the reduction of social harms and the role of marriage counseling, will be published.

According to Karimi, 3,700 centers are currently working in the field of social harms, including behavioral harms, street violence, malnutrition, children of

divorce, the fight against addiction, street and labor children.

Mohammad Mehdi Tondgooyan, deputy minister of sports and youth, has said that the marriage rate downward trend after 17 years, despite the prevalence of the coronavirus and its economic consequences, has risen and Iran experienced a five percent

growth in marriage.

The marriage rate in Iran has increased by 5 percent over the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021).

## Demographic issue

The fertility rate in Iran has been declining over the past eight years, the lowest of which was related to the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2019- March 2020) with a birth rate of 1.2, according to the data published by the Statistics Center.

The number of births in the whole country faced a downtrend over the past three years, as registered births decreased to 1,196,135 over the past [Iranian calendar] year; a difference of roughly over 120,000 to 16,000 per year.

Population decline comes up with consequences, including the reduction of the working population (aged 15 to 64) and the aging population in the coming decades.

Some 14 policies to support childbearing and the family were announced by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in [the Iranian calendar year] 1393 (March 2014-March 2015) when he stressed that social, cultural, and economic development should be done in accordance with these general policies to support families.

The policies address the need to increase the population and the various dimensions of it, including childbearing, facilitating marriage and strengthening the family, reproductive health, promoting the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle, empowering young people, honoring the elderly, and the environment, which can lead to an increase in the quantity and quality of the population if it is timely and continuous implemented.

**Iran experienced a five percent growth in marriage rate after 17 years, despite the prevalence of coronavirus and its economic consequences.**

## Thank you! I don't need a plastic bag

→ 1 Hundreds of studies also show that plastic bags and packaging are the deadliest plastic materials in the oceans, killing marine organisms such as whales, dolphins, turtles, and seabirds around the globe.

Discarded fishing nets, medical and plastic gloves are very deadly compared to other waste that is dumped in the oceans and accidentally swallowed by animals.

According to researchers, swallowing plastic materials is the biggest cause of extinction of marine species and 80 different species of animals in the world, which is a terrible way to die, as it does not happen quickly and is probably not painless.

### Plastics entering the oceans to triple in 20 years

A study in 2016 showed that nearly 11 million tons of plastic are released into the oceans, and in 2020 the results of a study showed that the volume of plastics entering the oceans will triple by 2040, and goes beyond the number of fish by 2050.

In order to reduce the spread of microplastics, we need to reduce the consumption of plastics worldwide and move towards the use of alternative products that are environmentally friendly. Having a cloth shopping bag, using recyclable water bottles, avoiding disposable spoons and forks are some

of the ways to reduce plastic waste generation.

Payam Joharchi, head waste management office at the DOE, announced in July 2020 that a bill to reduce the consumption of plastic bags, which is mentioned in 6 articles, has been prepared, focusing on incentive issues such as tax exemptions and aiming to reduce the production of plastic bags by 20 percent annually.

It also takes steps towards the production of renewable bags, given the importance of the issue of employment, it is planned to happen in six years.

Hossein Abiri Golpayegani, an environmental activist, also said that in order to reduce the consumption of plastic bags, it is necessary to implement deterrent policies such as increasing the price of plastic bags and making these items less available to the public.

In recent years, many countries have banned the production and consumption of plastics, including Bangladesh in 2002, Bhutan in 2007, Hong Kong in 2007, as well as the UK, and instead reusable and recyclable bags were sold.

Ireland, Taiwan, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium are also seeking to impose heavy taxes and stop the production of plastic bags, or have done so.



**Plastic bags constitute half a million tons of the whole plastic waste produced in the country annually. Every Iranian consumes an average of three plastic bags a day, 96 percent of which goes directly into the trash bin.**

## Intl. innovation center opens to attract foreign students

→ 1 Pointing out that the power of countries depends on the power of technology companies, he said that "If we want to guarantee our power, we must consider the development of knowledge-based companies."

"We should try to sell Iranian products to other countries and make the world, especially neighboring countries, want Iranian products," he highlighted.

Supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem, facilitating the process of commercialization of knowledge-based ideas, creating employment, and empowering Muslim students in the knowledge-based economy are among the goals of the center, which seeks to establish contacts with educational and research centers in the Islamic world and attract talented Muslim students across the world.



Accordingly, this innovation center intends to play a key role in empowering and developing the cultural and economic development of Muslims around the world by attracting, organizing, managing, and synergizing accelerators, startups, technology companies, and knowledge-based companies.

### Innovation in Iran developed rapidly in 5 years

Knowledge-based companies and creative startups have grown over the past five years, and Iran has risen 45 places in the Global Innovation Index, according to the UNESCO 2021 Report.

The Global Innovation Index in Iran from 2015 to 2019 has risen from 106 to 61 with continuous improvement, showing 45 steps growth.

The development of accelerators and innovation centers over the last five years has led to a rapid increase in startups and knowledge-based companies.

Between 2014 and 2017, exports of knowledge-based goods grew by a factor of five, before slumping in 2018 after the U.S. withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan

of Action (2015), commonly referred to as the nuclear deal, and re-imposed sanctions.

The report states that innovation in Iran has developed rapidly over the past five years, and by the end of last year, 49 accelerators and 113 innovation centers had provided services to start-ups with the participation of the private sector.

### 5,000 knowledge-based companies

Currently, some 5,000 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency.

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in, leading to import reduction.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

## Iran finds herbal medicines effective in COVID-19 treatment

Two herbal drugs that are effective in healing the symptoms of COVID-19 have been permitted to be produced domestically.

The Food and Drug Administration has approved four domestically produced herbal medicine effective in the treatment of COVID-19 and has issued a production license for two of them.

Kianoush Jahanpour, the spokesman for the Food and Drug Administration, told IRNA on Monday that "none of these drugs are a cure for COVID-19, but they have effects to reduce the symptoms of this disease and should be further investigated."

The first herbal medicine in this collection is an oral spray containing six herbal essential oils, and according to the results of a clinical trial presented, if used, it helps to improve the pulmonary complications of coronavirus, including shortness of breath, cough, and arterial oxygenation, he explained.

## تولید دو داروی گیاهی موثر در درمان کرونا در ایران

سازمان غذا و داروی ایران چهار فرآورده طبیعی تولید داخل با اجزای گیاهی برای بهبود علایم کووید-۱۹ را تایید کرده و مجوز تولید را برای دو مورد آنها صادر کرده است.

کیانوش جهانپور سخنگوی سازمان غذا و دارو روز دوشنبه در گفت و گو با ایرنا گفت: هیچکدام از این داروها داروی درمان کووید-۱۹ نیستند اما اثراتی برای بهبود علایم این بیماری داشته اند و باید مراحل بررسی بیشتر را طی کنند.

وی گفت: اولین داروی گیاهی از این مجموعه یک اسپری دهانی حاوی ۶ اسانس گیاهی است و با توجه به نتایج کارآزمایی بالینی ارائه شده در صورت مصرف به بهبود عوارض ریوی کووید-۱۹ شامل تنگی نفس، سرفه و اکسیژن رسانی شریانی کمک می کند.

## COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. July 10

New cases	17,664
New deaths	165
Total cases	3,373,450
Total deaths	85,859
New hospitalized patients	1,821
Patients in critical condition	3,684
Total recovered patients	3,025,911
Diagnostic tests conducted	24,514,183
Doses of vaccine injected	6,837,822

## Climate characteristic of Iran

### (Part 4)

In winter Azerbaijan (stations: Tabriz, khoy, Miandoab) and the central Zagros (station: Shahr-e Kord) thus constitute the arctic poles of Persia. In the summer months the whole country is extremely hot; in July, the hottest month, temperatures average above 26° C.

In the Caspian lowlands (station: Ramsar) the July average is generally lower than in the continental highlands, but that is owing to the extreme humidity of the sultry neighboring regions. Most of the Persian Gulf coast experiences a similar pattern.

For example, the two Persian Gulf stations at Bandar-e Abbas and Abadan report average July temperatures of about 35° C, added to which the permanent flow of moist sea air produces such high humidity that the inhabitants of the coastal areas leave their homes whenever possible and with-draw to cooler mountain regions for the summer months.

The same is true of large parts of the Caspian lowlands, the periphery of the Dasht-e Lout, Baluchistan, and the area around Jaz Mourian in Kerman, which are the hottest parts of the country in summer.

Persia can be divided into precipitation zones that correspond to the temperature zones: The west, northwest, and north are particularly favored, both in annual averages and in seasonal distribution of precipitation, whereas that part of the plateau that is situated in the rain shadow of the neighboring mountains is markedly less so.



It is clear that in Persia high average rainfall is recorded precisely at those points where moisture-laden winds or air masses strike the mountain ranges or single high peaks and are forced to give up much of their moisture; the northern flanks and foothills of the Alborz and the western slopes of the Zagros are thus the best-watered regions in the country.

The area that receives by far the most precipitation is the southern Caspian lowland. The extremely humid winds off the sea strike the northern flanks of the Alborz and ?alesh mountains and lose most of their moisture.

In view of the prevailing northeasterly direction of the tradewinds the southwestern portion of this region, that is, the heartland of Gilan province and ?alesh, enjoy the highest total precipitation in Persia.

Anzali (Bandar-e Pahlavi) receives an annual average rainfall of nearly 2,000 mm, whereas Rasht, which lies only about 30 km inland, receives 200-300 mm less. Farther east precipitation diminishes, reflecting the lower moisture content of the air masses that blow southeast across the Caspian: Babolsar receives 807 mm and Gorgan only about 700 mm.

In general, the immediate coastal areas and the lower mountain slopes experience the highest rainfall. At elevations of about 2,000 m the moist air collides with the dryer winds of the plateau; the boundary is marked by a fairly stable level of condensation, which determines the ecology of the region.

The outer slopes and uplands of the Zagros, which experience winter westerly air flows and Mediterranean cyclones, are characterized by patterns of precipitation somewhat comparable to those on the northern flanks of the Alborz and in the southern Caspian lowland.

These winds produce late-autumn and winter precipitation that contributes to annual averages of 500-600 mm. Nevertheless, differences in exposure play a much more important role than in the north. The western flanks of the mountains receive a great deal more precipitation than the eastern flanks and the valleys that lie in the rain shadow.

Furthermore, precipitation continues to decline sharply from west to east; for example, although Kermanshah, in the central Zagros, receives an annual average of 470 mm of precipitation, Isfahan, which lies about 300 km farther inland, on the eastern fringes of the range, receives less than 100 mm.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)



**Without water, everything withers**



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A wise man first thinks and then speaks and a fool speaks first and then thinks.

Imam Ali (AS)

## Iranian pre-Islamic elements in Islamic art

**Part 2**

The triple-ayvan structure of Parthian origin is clearly recognizable in the Bab al-Amma, the monumental facade of the Abbasid palace called Jawsaq al-Khqani, built at Samarra by the caliph Al-Motasem in 836, overlooking the Tigris.

The palace of Firuzabad features a particular bayt formed by an ayvan flanked by two rooms that can also be seen in Sarvestan; an ayvan with a pair of flanking rooms and a portico of three arches is in the Emarat-e Khosrow in Qasr-e Shirin and the castle of Okhayzer, located about 50 kilometers south of Karbala.

While the horseshoe shape of the arches of the transepts and the lower arcade arches of the Omayyad mosque at Damascus (705-15) derive from Syrian Christian architecture, the horseshoe arches of Amman and Okhayzer originate from Sassanid prototypes, such as those at Taq-e Gerra, probably dating back to the Middle Sassanid period, and al-Maariz, a 6th-century residential house at Ctesiphon .

The two staircase minarets of both mosques at Samarra (9th cent.), as well as the minaret of the mosque of Ebn Tulun in Cairo (876-79), derive their forms from the ancient ziggurats. The ziggurats are at the origin of an important Islamic architectural pattern, namely the stepped elements employed as crenellations.

Probably an ancient symbol of the sacred mountain, its iconography originated in the Iranian plateau in the 4th millennium BC. This architectural feature was employed for the first time as crenellation of religious buildings (temples, altars, ziggurats) in Assyria in the 2nd-1st millennium BC., retaining its original symbolic value, but possibly with the addition of the apotropaic one as well.

From Assyria, it spread over the Near East, both as an architectural element and as a symbolic-decorative motif derived from it, and in the Achaemenid Persia as well.

In its original meaning of sacred mountain, it represents the axis mundi and the sovereign as the guarantor of the world order (the rock-cut relief of Bisotun, shows Darius wearing a crenellated crown).

During the following Parthian and Sassanid periods stepped elements were employed in similar ways (elements of crowns, crenellations of buildings, components of architectural decoration).

Stepped elements lost a great deal of their significance in the Islamic period, although they were employed as crenellations in many buildings, beginning with the Umayyad era.

The apotropaic meaning of crenellations was probably preserved only in Yemen. In continuity with the Iranian pre-Islamic past, stepped elements have also been employed, with their symbolic significance, in several products of the early Islamic period, including coins, architectural decoration, various art objects, etc.

The apotropaic function of quadrupeds (felines and horned animals) and birds (birds of prey) placed near the spouts of ewers or other wares is no longer evident in Islamic art crafts, yet these zoomorphic sculptures survive as decorative motifs in metalwork from the Umayyad period.

The anthropomorphic or, more frequently, zoomorphic ware shape (askoi) is another pre-Islamic artistic feature that was widely employed in Persia and continued to be used in the Islamic period.

Furthermore, the Islamic metalwork produced bronze zoomorphic sculptures that were used as ewers, with a small reservoir that retained its ancient function.

The quintessential example of continuity of techniques, both in manufacture and decoration, are the metal vessels that were produced with similar stylistic features even after the Sassanid Empire had ceased to exist as a political entity, and retained the same shapes and the same iconographic themes, including investitures, audiences, hunts, battle scenes, and animal motifs.

In Islamic painting and sculpture, we can observe the preservation either of typical Sassanid motifs (Arnold) or of Iranian-Central Asiatic somatic-stylistic features, recognizable, for example, in an Omayyad painting from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, in a stucco sculpture from Kherbat al-Mafjar, and, further, in the famous Samarra paintings (9th cent.).

A major vehicle of transmission of Iranian pre-Islamic elements in the Islamic art was iconography, such as the so-called “flying gallop”, frequently combined, in the Sassanid period, to a fluttering ribbon, as we can see in a floor painting from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, 724-727.

Brief mention should also be made to other iconographic themes and their diffusion, such as the senmurv, the male or female figure lifted by an eagle, and popular legendary episodes such as the hunt of the Sassanid king Bahram Gur with his slave.

Survival of Iranian pre-Islamic elements in Islamic art can be traced up to the Safavid, Qajar and Pahlavi periods, in architecture, iconography, stone relief, and a variety of decorative arts.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica  
Concluded

# “Asphalt Workers” wins special jury award at Iran Intl. University Theater Festival

→1 In the direction category, Hossein Hosseini won the best director award for his play “After Falling”, while Mohammad Ohadi-Haeri was selected as runner-up for the play “Story of a Verb”. Mahmud Heidari and Amir-Hossein Barimani received the award for third place for “Night of Doubt”. Ohadi-Haeri, Negin Firuzmanesh, Shideh Ghaffarian and Sina Sheibani won the award for best playwright for “Story of a Verb”. Ruzbeh Kazemi won the award for second place for “After Falling” in this section, and Shahab Rahmanian and Parnia Sham received the award for third best playwright for “Home”. Amir-Hossein Barimani was picked as best actor for his role in “Night of Doubt” and Sepehr Tehrani wins the award for second best actor for his role in “After Falling”. The award for third best actor was shared by Payman Mohseni for “Silent Cry” and Ehsan Majuni for “Hamlet”. The award for best actress went to Marjan Eftefaian for her role in “After Falling”. Negin Firuzmanesh was selected as second



A winner bows to the audience after accepting his award during the 23rd Iran International University Theater Festival at the Samandarian Hall of the Iranshahr Theater Complex in Tehran on July 10, 2021. (Mehr/Behnam Tofigi)

best actress for her role in “Story of a Verb”, and Ava Tadayyon won the award for third best actress for her role in “Hamlet”. The jury members Navid Mohammadzadeh and Hadi Hejazifar delivered short speeches before honoring the winners. “It’s amazing that the festival could be organized physically with theatergoers,” said Mohammadzadeh and added that the jury did its best to be fair in its judgment. Hejazifar also confirmed Mohammadzadeh’s remarks and said, “We discussed the performances every night until the early morning to make our good and fair choices.” The following is a list of other winners at the festival. Best set design: “Hamlet” by Seyyed Mehdi Musavi. Best costume design: “Pope Zhito” by Mohammad Mehri. Best stage lighting: “Karim” by Mehran Karimi. Best music: “Construction” by Mehdi Zamani.

## Iranian children honored at International Child Art Foundation Olympiad



A painting by the 8-year-old Iranian boy, Rastin Jaafari, won an award at the 6th Arts Olympiad of the International Child Art Foundation in Washington, D.C.

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Several Iranian children have been honored with awards at the 6th Arts Olympiad of the International Child Art Foundation located in Washington, D.C. The winners are Sogol Fattahi, Rastin Jaafari, Hasti Abedi, Ali Gholami and Hosna Eskandari, who all are members of the various branches of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA), the

institute announced on Sunday. Only students aged 8 to 12 were allowed to participate in the Arts Olympiad and the work produced for the competition will be showcased during the World Children’s Festival from July 31 to August 2 at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. “My Favorite Sport” was the theme of the festival. In one part of the Olympiad students were asked to separate themselves into two groups of “artists” and “athletes”. The group of “artists” were asked to answer these questions: 1. Why do people run, swim or play soccer? 2. How do you feel when you play a sport? They also had to draw or paint any sports gear or equipment they have seen such as a bat, a ball, a goal post or an athletic t-shirt. The group of “athletes” were asked to answer these questions: 1. Why do people draw, paint, sculpt or carve? 2. How do you feel when you create art? They were also asked to draw or paint any art tool or

equipment such as a palette, a brush, a crayon or an easel. In another part, students were asked to read this quotation of Nobel laureate Nelson Mandela, “Sport has the power to change the world, the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else can. Sport speaks to people in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where there was once only despair. It is an instrument of peace, even more powerful than governments.” They then were asked to answer these questions: If “sport” is replaced by “art” in the above quote, would it still ring true? Why or why not? How about adding art to sport? Does the quotation become stronger? The organizers have said children have the power to bring the human race together in a celebration of creativity, diversity and unity. The festival intends to create a perfect setting for the global community for the development of mutual empathy and global leadership training.

## “Sky Sun, Tile Sun” named best animation at Italian short film festival

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Ziba Arzhang’s movie “Sky Sun, Tile Sun” was selected as best animation at the Tracce Cinematografiche Film Fest in Italy. The festival, which is dedicated to short films, is scheduled to be held from July 13 to 18 at Forte Sangallo Nettuno in Rome. However, the winners were announced a few days before. In “Sky Sun, Tile Sun”, due to the intensity of the explosion and bombardment of the sun, the tiled wall breaks and it gets dark everywhere. People help each other to build a new sun for the sky. The Iranian film “Cellmate” directed by Behzad Khodaveisi won an honorable mention in the social film category. Starring Saba Mohammadi and Qorban

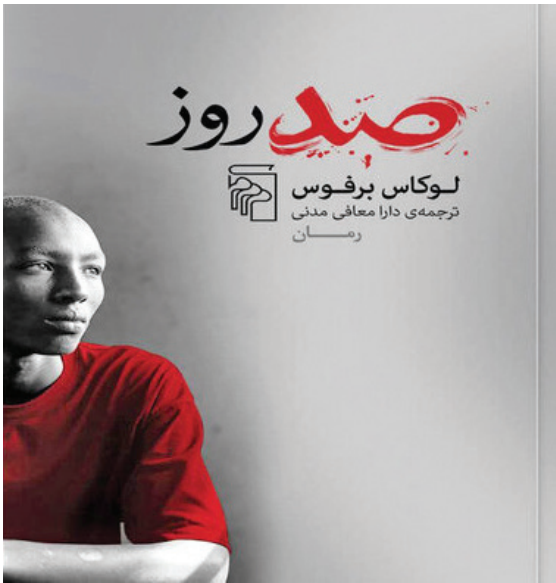
Najafi, the film is about Rana, a girl around the age of 10, who spends her day in a courtyard playing with a little bird in a cage, hanging out laundry, or reading books. The film has previously screened at several festivals and won awards, including the award for its screenplay written by Solmaz Etamad at the Japan Media Arts Festival in Tokyo in 2020. The film won one of the four Excellence Awards in the Entertainment Division of the annual festival, which has been organized since 1997 by Japan’s Agency for Cultural Affairs. In the free category, “Bernardino da Luina” by Italian director Diego Monfredini was named best film. “22nd Of April” by Cesare Maglioni from Italy won the Mediterranean Prize

in the Social Film section. The short shows the coronavirus is affecting the entire planet, killing thousands, changing the way we see the world and pushing our societies to rethink their habits deeply. One habit to improve above all others to be able to win the fight against this new common enemy is hand-washing. But what about those places where freshwater is not a given primary commodity? “Ora Zero” by Fabiana Pernisco from Italy was picked as best social film. The audiovisual essay Ora zero reflects certain situations of the city of Taranto (Italy) and its inhabitants, focusing mainly on the social and environmental problems suffered by the immediate surroundings of the industrial complex



“Sky Sun, Tile Sun” by Iranian director Ziba Arzhang. Ilva (today owned by ArcelorMittal), Europe’s largest steel center.

## Aid worker David Hohl’s account of Kigali massacres published in Persian



Front cover of the Persian translation of “One Hundred Days”.

**CULTURE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — “One Hundred Days” carrying Swiss aid worker David Hohl’s account of the massacres of Kigali in Rwanda has been published in Persian. The novel penned by Lukas Bärfuss was originally published in 2008, and Markaz is the publisher of the Persian edition translated by Dara Moafi-Madani. As snow falls outside his home in the Jura mountains, former Swiss aid worker David Hohl tells an old school friend how he witnessed the massacres in Kigali. A young idealist, David arrives in Rwanda in 1990 to work for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. He finds a life of postcolonial privilege and boredom, inhabited by expats who know little about Rwandans and cannot be bothered to learn the local language. Relief from boredom comes with civil war, David watches with excitement as troops march through Kigali; Agathe, the cosmopolitan Rwandan woman he has haplessly been courting, finally succumbs to his advances.

But who is Agathe? Is she a Europeanized student, a daughter of African farmers, locked in an eternal struggle with nature, or is she a militant Hutu inciting murder from the back of a flatbed truck? And what is David’s own role in the genocide? As the genocide rages over the course of one hundred desperate days, the clear line David has always drawn between idealism and complicity quickly begins to blur. Born in Thun, Switzerland in 1971, Bärfuss began training as a bookseller after graduating from high school. Since 1977 he has lived and worked as a freelance writer in Zurich. In 1998, he co-founded the independent theater group 400asa. Bärfuss has won the Mulheimer Dramatikerpreis in 2005 for the play “Der Bus”. He also received the Swiss Book Prize in 2014 for “Koala” and the Georg Büchner Prize, the most prestigious German literature prize, in 2019. He was the first Swiss to win the Georg Büchner Prize in 25 years, the last Swiss winner being Adolf Muschg in 1994.

## Theater troupe recounts “The Zoo Story” at Qashqai Hall

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — American writer Edward Albee’s debut play “The Zoo Story” was performed by an Iranian troupe last week at the Qashqai Hall of Tehran’s City Theater Complex. Mehdi Pashai was the director of the play, which was staged based on a Persian translation by Elham Faqih. Mehdi Zaminpardaz, Bahar Nuhian and Pashai were members of the cast for the play, which was scheduled to remain on stage until August 4, however, its other performances were canceled due to a new wave of COVID-19. The one-act play was written in 1958 and completed in just three weeks. It explores themes of isolation, loneliness,

miscommunication as anathematization, social disparity and dehumanization in a materialistic world. This play concerns two characters, Peter and Jerry, who meet on a park bench in New York City’s Central Park. Peter is a wealthy publishing executive with a wife, two daughters, two cats and two parakeets. Jerry is an isolated and disheartened man, desperate to have a meaningful conversation with another human being. He intrudes on Peter’s peaceful state by interrogating him and forcing him to listen to stories about his life and the reason behind his visit to the zoo. The elements of ironic humor and unrelenting dramatic suspense are brought to a climax when Jerry brings his victim down

to his own savage level. Eventually, Peter has had enough of his strange companion and tries to leave. Jerry begins pushing Peter off the bench and challenges him to fight for his territory. Unexpectedly, Jerry pulls a knife on Peter, and then drops it as if inviting Peter to grab it. When Peter holds the knife defensively, Jerry charges him and impales himself on the knife. Today, professional theater companies can produce “The Zoo Story” either as a part of “Edward Albee’s at Home at the Zoo” (originally titled “Peter and Jerry”), or as a standalone play. Its prequel, “Homelife”, written in 2004, however, can only be produced as a part of “Edward Albee’s at Home at the Zoo”.



A poster for Edward Albee’s debut play “The Zoo Story” on stage at Tehran’s Qashqai Hall.