

Kuwait Upgrades Ties With Iran in Broader Thaw

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Report

Iran's response to EU is a complete package

TEHRAN— After an extraordinary meeting of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) chaired by President Raisi on Monday afternoon, Iran's top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani wrapped up Tehran's final response to the EU proposals.

The Foreign Ministry sent the document to the European Union, a source close to the negotiating team told the Tehran Times early Tuesday.

Meanwhile, ISNA published a news brief quoting a source that Iran expects the U.S. to respond in two days.

The Foreign Ministry did not respond to the Tehran Times call in this regard.

The Tehran Times has learned that Iran's conclusion is a complete package, regarding the economic guarantees the U.S. must provide to assure Tehran of fully benefitting the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Tehran has provided an initial response to the EU proposal, made its concerns clear to the U.S. regarding the economic guarantees, and has presented a series of initiatives to the U.S. to allay those concerns.

There is no mention of Iran's demands that the IAEA should close the political claims regarding the Safeguards probe, the Tehran Times has learned. This was not mentioned by Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian as well, when he spoke to the press on Monday.

In his cordial meeting with foreign policy journalists on the occasion of Iran's National Correspondent Day, Amir Abdollahian did not refer to the closure of the political claims surrounding the Safeguards probe as an obstacle to the JCPOA revival.

"We are exchanging messages with the U.S. on three issues and we will announce our latest comments in the coming days. We told America that if our opinions on these three issues, which are reasonable opinions, are respected, we are ready to enter the stage of announcing an agreement and hold a conclusion meeting with the presence of the foreign ministers in Vienna," Amir Abdollahian said. ▶ Page 2

Iran's women's volleyball win silver in ISG 2021

TEHRAN – Iran's women's volleyball team claimed the silver medal of the 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games.

The Iranian team lost to Turkey 3-0 (25-16, 25-14, 25-15) in the final match.

It was Iran's second medal in an international tournament. The team had won a bronze medal in the 1966 Asian Games in Bangkok, Thailand.

Azerbaijan won the bronze medal after defeating Cameroon 3-0 (27-25, 25-13, 25-17).

More than 4,000 athletes from 56 countries compete in the Games in Konya, Turkey.

There are 19 sports and four Para sports on the program.

The 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games are being held in Konya, Turkey, from August 9 to 18. It is a multinational, multi-sport event attended by athletes from the nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The Islamic Solidarity Games are organized and directed by the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, but for the first time in history, the event is organized by the Turkish Olympic Committee.

Iranian vessel retrieves seized oil, leaves Greece



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TEHRAN— An Iranian-flagged tanker has reclaimed an oil cargo that the U.S. had confiscated and is on its way to depart Greece, people knowledgeable with the situation say.

Following the seizure of the Lana, previously the Pegas, Iranian soldiers seized two Greek tankers in the Persian Gulf in May,

which have yet to be freed.

In April, the U.S. hired a tanker to impound the oil onboard the Lana tanker, which was anchored off the coast of Greece.

The oil was subsequently partially extracted and loaded onto the Ice Energy tanker,

which Washington had hired and was scheduled to sail to the United States until Greece's Supreme Court determined that the cargo should be returned to Iran.

"The reloading procedure is finished," one person claimed. According to another report, it was completed on Sunday. ▶ Page 2

Iran's non-oil export to neighbors grows 22% in 4 months on year

TEHRAN— The value of Iran's non-oil export to its neighboring countries increased 22 percent in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that Iran has exported 20.711 million tons of non-oil products worth \$8.871 billion to its neighbors in the said four-month period.

Putting the four-month non-oil trade of Iran with the neighboring countries at 27.35 million tons worth \$16.871 billion, the official said that

the value of trade shows an 18-percent rise year on year.

Latifi further announced that the Islamic Republic has imported 6.323 million tons of non-oil goods valued at \$8.14 billion from its neighbors in the first four months of this year, with a 13-percent growth year on year. ▶ Page 4

Charity to build 2,700 schools using new technologies

TEHRAN – Barekat Charity Foundation, affiliated with the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, will build 2,700 schools using new ideas and technologies.

Barekat Foundation supports new ideas in building schools, Mohammad Torkamaneh, the CEO of Barekat Foundation, said on Tuesday.

The Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and training camps, and green management of schools, will be taken into consideration in the construction of these schools, he said.

Some 3,750 villages across the country are covered by the Barekat Foundation's school-building activities.

According to Torkamaneh, 1,800 schools have been constructed for the deprived, there are currently 250,000 students in Barekat schools. ▶ Page 7

Oldest human settlement in Iran identified

TEHRAN—A team of Iranian and French archaeologists has recently identified what is believed to be the oldest human settlement in Iran, ILNA reported on Tuesday.

Evidence found by the team co-led by Iranian archaeologist Hamed Vahdati and French paleoanthropologist Gilles Berillon, suggests that Qal-e Kord Cave, situated in Avaj county of Qazvin province, is the oldest human settlement in Iran discovered so far.

As the cave's culture materials are so old, it

was not possible to date them using the Carbon-14 dating method, which can only determine ages up to 45,000 years old, so electron spin resonance (ESR) and uranium/thorium methods were used instead, ILNA quoted Vahdati as saying.

According to preliminary results, the cave is over 400,000 years old, making it the oldest human settlement in the country, he added.

Stone tools found in this cave, along with the mentioned age, indicate that the cave

was occupied by other human species before the Neanderthal man, such as Heidelberg man and possibly Homo erectus, or 'upright man,' he explained.

So far, two types of extinct prehistoric horses, deer, brown bear, and rhinoceros have been identified in the animal remains found in the cave, he mentioned.

Last year, the tourism ministry announced that a fossilized tooth, previously found in the cave, could date back 100,000 years. ▶ Page 6

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Western spies took samples of Iranian soil for nuclear testing: MP

TEHRAN – An Iranian lawmaker has said that the foreign diplomats who had been detained by the IRGC intelligence were secretly taking samples of Iranian soil from an off-limit area in central Iran deserts to conduct testing for traces of potential nuclear work.

The lawmaker, Esmail Kowsari, who is sitting on Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said the sampling was a type of espionage. "This was definitely a type of espionage. The hostile countries had told these people to collect soil from some places they suspected to be suspicious so that it could be tested. Foreign spies should know that our security apparatuses have not and will not leave them alone and are constantly monitoring them," Kowsari, a former IRGC general, told Fars News.

In early July, the IRGC announced that it detained a number of foreign diplomats who were collecting soil samples deep inside Kerman deserts where the IRGC had just conducted a missile drill. The IRGC said at the time that the British deputy ambassador to Iran was among the arrested.

"These criminals do not consider that America has more than 5,000 and the Zionist regime [Israel] has more than 250 nuclear warheads, but even though we say through official and media announcements that we are enriching uranium for electricity production and agricultural issues, they want to take measures against us through cooking up documents and stealing Iranian soil," Kowsari said. ▶ Page 3

Iranian films line up for Moscow festival

TEHRAN – Seven Iranian movies will be competing in the Moscow International Film Festival.

"No Prior Appointment", "Emad and Tuba Romanticism", "Sea Boys", "Wolf Cubs of Apple Valley", "The Reversed Path", "Breeze" and "Don't Breathe" will be screened in different sections of the 44th edition of the festival, Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation announced.

The festival will take place in the Russian capital from August 26 to September 2.

Directed by Behruz Shoeibi, "No Prior Appointment" is about Yasmin, a woman who when she was six, the same age as her son, immigrated with her family to Berlin. Now she has to come back to Iran due to her father's death. Her son is suffering from autism and it makes it difficult for her to travel easily. In her short stay in Iran, she achieves a new understanding of humanity and death.

Starring Elnaz Habibi and Ali Ansarian, "Emad and Tuba Romanticism" is a love story directed by Kaveh Sabbaghzadeh.

"Sea Boys", written and directed by Afshin Hashemi and Hossein Qasemi-Jami, tells the story of two boys from northern and southern Iran who are forced to live apart from their families. ▶ Page 8

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We are closer to restoring nuclear deal, says Iran's former diplomat

TEHRAN - A former diplomat has said it seems that Iran and the U.S. have got closer to clinching a deal to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Based on evidences, it seems that we have got closer to achieving the deal," Hamid Reza Asefi, the former Foreign Ministry spokesman who also served as Iran's ambassador to France and the UAE, told the ISNA news agency on Tuesday.

"However," Asefi added, "some minor issues still remain unresolved that the sides should agree on them."

On Monday midnight, Iran submitted its response to the draft proposal presented by the European Union for reviving the JCPOA.

The EU has confirmed it has received Iran's response to the draft text proposed by Josep Borrell, the EU foreign policy chief, and presented it to the American side.

"We will submit our final conclusion in black and white to the EU coordinator by 00:00 this night (Monday night). If the U.S. response is realistic and flexible, a deal will be made. If the U.S. doesn't show flexibility, then we should talk further," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian announced on Monday.

Asefi said on such issues involved parties should reach a consensus on each issue so

that it can be said that an agreement has been "reached and finalized".

The former diplomat said according to reports released the EU's reaction to Iran's response "has so far been positive" and the Americans have also said they should study Iran's plan.

"It seems that that based on the kind of positions taken by the European officials, their reactions to Iran's foreign minister's response to (the EU) proposal have not been negative," he added.

The former Foreign Ministry spokesman said the Americans seem to have shown some kind of flexibility that the negotiations "have reached this point".

"Therefore, it has not been the case that only we have shown flexibility, they have also shown flexibility," he pointed out.

On whether he is optimistic about the restoration of the nuclear agreement, he said, "As a person who had worked on foreign policy areas for (long) years, I am neither optimistic nor pessimistic about issues. We should have a realistic approach toward issues."

Asefi, who was Foreign Ministry spokesperson for more than eight years, said what is important is that in such a delicate situation the U.S. side would not repeat wrong behaviors that it has been showing over the years.

Israel admits it killed five children in recent strikes on Gaza

TEHRAN — In a chilling revelation, Israeli military sources have revealed in cold blood that the Israeli regime was to blame for the killing of five Palestinian youngsters on the final day of the regime's recent assault of the beleaguered Gaza Strip.

Several defense insiders told the Israeli newspaper Haaretz that an army investigation into the August 7 strike on the Falluja cemetery revealed that the regime was to fault.

The Israeli army attributed the killings on an errant Islamic Jihad missile at the time of the incident.

Jamil Nijm, 4; Jamil Ihab Nijm, 13; Hamed Haidar Hamed Nijm, 16; and Muhammed Salah Nijm, 16, were killed in a cemetery in northern Gaza while sitting beside their grandfather's grave.

Nazmi Fayeز Abdulhadi Abukarsh, 16, was also killed.

Mohammad Sami, an eyewitness, told Middle East Eye that the boys used to visit the graveyard.

"I was monitoring the boys when they came back from the grocery shop and went to sit by the grave," Sami explained.

"They come here every day to sit. Every single day. This is a secure place, and they are accustomed to being here."

Recently, Israeli forces launched a wave of air raids on Gaza for three days, killing 49 Palestinians, including 17 children, and injuring at least 360 others.

+972 Magazine, a non-profit publication established by Palestinian and Israeli journalists, published last week that former Israeli soldiers exposed how the army authorizes strikes in Gaza knowing that civilians will be killed as long as the number is deemed low enough.

In the context of the latest Gaza bombing, Israeli news site Ynet quoted army officials as saying that the ratio of "non-combatants" killed to combatants was "the best of all the operations."

Israel says it launched its offensive against Gaza due to the fear of retaliatory attacks by Islamic Jihad after a senior leader of the group, Bassam al-Saadi, was arrested in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin.

Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has sharply condemned Israel's "unconscionable" slaughter of Palestinian children in the aftermath of the apartheid regime's latest indiscriminate bombardment on the besieged Gaza Strip.

Despite the "disturbing" data revealed by the international body, Israel has once again avoided

any disciplinary actions as the West continues to ignore Tel Aviv's cruel behaviors.

"Inflicting harm on any kid during a conflict is highly unsettling, and the death and maiming of so many children this year is reprehensible," stated the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Bachelet voiced concern about the large number of Palestinians murdered and injured in the occupied Palestinian territory this year, particularly children.

The senior UN official was particularly outraged by Israel's recent unjustified invasion on the confined Gaza Strip, which ignited a three-day struggle with Palestinian resistance fighters.

According to the UN Human Rights Office, the Israeli force killed 19 Palestinian children in the occupied territories, bringing the total number of children killed this year to 37.

According to the report, Israel killed 17 children during its bombardment on the Gaza Strip from August 5 to 7, and two more on August 9 during military raids in the occupied West Bank.

According to another grim assessment, "almost two-thirds of the 360 Palestinians injured by Israel were civilians, including 151 youngsters, 58 women, and 19 senior individuals."

In another proof of the regime's indiscriminate bombing of the Gaza Strip last week, the UN claims "children were the bulk of deaths in a number of situations."

According to the UN Human Rights Office, it observed Israeli attacks in the coastal enclave that seemed to be "civilian items" at first glance, "resulting civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects."

"International humanitarian law is unambiguous. It is banned to launch an attack that is likely to kill or hurt civilians or damage civilian objects in a way that is disproportionate to the concrete and immediate military advantage anticipated. "Such attacks must cease," Bachelet stated.

While the Palestinian resistance successfully forced Israel to accept the terms of a ceasefire in Gaza, tensions remain high in the occupied West Bank, where the regime conducts murderous military incursions throughout the seized areas.

Bachelet has blasted Israeli forces' "widespread use of live bullets," stating it has resulted in an alarming surge in Palestinian fatalities in 2022. So far this year, the UN Human Rights Office in the occupied West Bank has documented the killing of 74 Palestinians, including 20 children.

Iran's response to EU is a complete package

Iran requests compensation in case U.S. quits JCPOA in future

From page 1 ► The Tehran Times has learned that Iran's response to the EU addresses three outstanding issues.

Nour News, a media outlet close to Iran's SNSC, said on Tuesday that in the ideas proposed by EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, who acts as the JCPOA coordinator, some of Iran's concerns regarding the three main topics of the negotiations have not been clearly answered.

"The opinions expressed to the European Union by Iran also point to the necessity of meeting the legal demands of our country," it said.

In an interview with Al Jazeera early on Tuesday, Mohammad Marandi, media advisor to the Iranian negotiating team, said that Iran's concerns are "not difficult to resolve."

In response to the Tehran Times correspondent, Marandi said, "On Al Jazeera Arabic I said that in its response Iran has expressed its concerns, but that the remaining issues are not very difficult to resolve. Those concerns are founded upon past U.S. and EU violations. I can't say that there will be a deal, but we're closer than we've been before."

Speculations surrounding Iran's nuclear package have been raised by certain political pundits. Maybe reading between the lines of the foreign minister's words can help clear up some confusions.



"In the recent Vienna negotiations, the American side expressed its verbal flexibility on two issues. This should be in writing. On the third issue and guarantees, we must have America's flexibility. If America shows flexibility, we will reach a point of agreement in the coming days," Amir Abdollahian told the press on Monday.

EU spokesperson Nabila Massrali confirmed to IRNA that the EU has received Iran's package proposal, and has shared it with the United States.

"We are studying it and are consulting with the other JCPOA participants and the U.S. on the way ahead," Massrali told IRNA.

A U.S. State Department official confirmed that it has received Iran's proposal.

The EU seems to be satisfied with Iran's response, as a Western diplomat told Politico that

"Nothing too inflammatory (is) in there."

It is also important to note that Iran's response came after Qatar Assistant Foreign Minister for Regional Affairs Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi met with Amir Abdollahian and Bagheri Kani in Tehran on Saturday, delivering a written message from the Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdulrahman bin Al Thani.

Al-Khulaifi then held a phone call with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi on Sunday. The IAEA director general has been quiet ever since. It is not yet clear if Iran has dropped the demand or has postponed it to be discussed after the JCPOA revival. However, reading between the lines of the words of Iran's top diplomat saying that the nature of negotiations is about give and take, it can be

Navy chief says Iran ready to do operations anywhere in open seas

TEHRAN- Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, the commander of the Iranian Navy, has declared that the nation's naval forces are completely capable of conducting operations at any location in the world's oceans.

He also mentioned that his forces will embark on a special mission during the current Persian calendar year, which ends on March 20, 2023.

According to Admiral Irani, the operation will undoubtedly take place this year, but the precise timing would rely on planning by the Navy headquarters.

The admiral stated that given the need for the Navy to be present in oceans, it is planning to build a number of ships that will act as floating bases for the Navy.

Such ships must be manufactured, he said, and possibly they will be.

"The Navy displays new gear on certain occasions, such as the 10-day Dawn that commemorates the Islamic Revolution's victory, and a ship that is going to be unveiled is a base ship like Makran," he stated.

Back in June, the rear admiral also stressed the readiness of his forces to deploy in international waters to protect Iran's interests.

In an event to recognize World Maritime Day, he highlighted "Iranian Army Navy forces are present in any ocean if needed."

He said Iran's naval forces are present in the Indian Ocean to maintain peace and security, citing the direct and indirect escort of cargo ships by the nation's naval destroyers.

"The country's Navy forces are ready to

counter any foreign danger powerfully," Irani highlighted.

He reaffirmed that Iranians want peace and do not want conflict unless their opponents intend to endanger the nation's security.

Iranian Navy troops would retaliate forcefully to any opponents who pose a danger to the nation's security, Admiral Irani warned.

Also in late February, the Navy chief stressed that his forces will firmly stand up against enemies and give a rigid response to any threat and wrong move against the country's territorial waters. At the time, he asserted that trans-regional states are unable to bring security and peace to the people of the region.

"Our resources and interests in the sea are highly diverse, and our Navy is deployed everywhere we see a danger. No nation has dared enter Iran's territorial waters because of the Iranian Navy's dominance, presence, and ongoing monitoring in the seas and oceans," the commander said.

According to its military doctrine, the Islamic Republic's military power is only for self-defense and does not constitute a danger to other governments.

The armed forces of Iran are now completely self-sufficient in terms of armament owing to significant progress achieved by military specialists and technologists in the country.

Iran's military capabilities, especially its drone and missile capacity, which are only intended for defense, will never be negotiable, according to Iranian authorities, who have

Iranian vessel retrieves seized oil, leaves Greece

From page 1 ► The Iranian embassy in Athens announced on Twitter on August 12 that the vessel would sail to Iran once the reloading was done.

It was unclear whether the Lana, which had engine problems, could sail independently.

The Lana was detained for more than two months off the Greek island of Evia, near the village of Karystos. Following the court decision to allow its release, it was towed to Piraeus.

Since late July, the ship has been anchored off the coast of Piraeus.

On May 25, Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO)

issued a statement about the arrest of the Iranian cargo vessel in Greek waters, describing the move as an act of piracy and violation of international standards.

"Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) as the duly authorized maritime administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran reacted against the actions of the Greek Government as to hindering the Iranian vessel from sailing and arresting her cargo, and urged the Greek Government to fulfill its international obligations," the statement said.

"While Greece has undertaken such international obligations,

and is responsible toward the Islamic Republic of Iran as a Member State of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), such unacceptable measures have unfortunately been taken by the Greek Government, toward a vessel in need of being transferred to a place of safety, experiencing technical problems, and facing bad weather conditions. Hence, the vessel has been held under a court order, and the oil cargo of the vessel arrested," it continued.

An Iranian lawmaker said at the time that in the new alignments taking shape in the region, Greece sided with Saudi Arabia and detained an Iranian oil tanker with

assumed that Iran has dropped the demand.

"I was in the Majlis (Parliament) last week and they said that they saw the draft and it has flaws, but I will say from now on that if we reach an agreement tomorrow, if someone carefully goes over the text, the text we wrote will have flaws, but the flaws come from the fact that our opposite side of the negotiations also has demands. We cannot say that what you say is not true and your words are not acceptable to us. The text we have may have the same flaws as the JCPOA. This is due to the nature of negotiation," he said on Monday.

However, in a Tuesday afternoon interview with CNN, Marandi shed some new light on Iran's proposal. He told CNN that Iran is looking for guarantees that if a future U.S. administration withdraws from the deal the U.S. will "have to pay a price."

In line with Marandi's revelation, a regional diplomat briefed on the negotiations confirmed to CNN that "The main issue facing the revival of the deal is the guarantees requested from the Iranian side ensuring Iran will be compensated in case future U.S. Administrations decide to withdraw again from the deal."

Basically, Iran is requesting to be compensated if a future U.S. president withdraws from the agreement.



emphasized this point over and over.

In response to the regional challenges, Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani recently outlined plans to upgrade and modernize the nation's naval force.

"The Defense Ministry will update and furnish the naval fleet of the Armed Forces proportional to the needs of the Armed Forces and the regional threats across all territorial waters," Ashtiani said, highlighting Iran's geopolitical position in the region and the strategic significance of the Persian Gulf for the Islamic Republic.

The defense minister also said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran views the presence of foreigners and ultra-regional forces as the cause of insecurity in the area."

"Peace and tranquility are our message to the area and the whole globe. On the other side, we think that with the presence and collaboration of all the regional nations, regional peace and stability would be possible," the general underscored.

the aim of reducing Iranian oil supplies.

On May 31, Ahmad Ali Reza Beigi called the Greek seizure of the Iranian oil tanker a "piracy" that was part of regional rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

"What Greece has done is part of regional rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Greece detained the Iranian oil tanker due to its relations with Saudi Arabia," Beigi said. "In the new alignments that have taken shape Greece sided with Saudi Arabia and this move was aimed to restrict the possibility of Iran supplying the global market with oil."

Kuwait upgrades ties with Iran in broader thaw

TEHRAN – After six years of continued absence, Kuwaiti has sent an ambassador to Iran in a move that has been widely seen as the beginning of a thaw in broader Iran-Arab relations.

On Thursday, the Iranian foreign minister had many meetings but only one drew the attention of observers: the meeting during which the new Kuwaiti ambassador to Iran, Badr Abdullah al-Munikh, submitted a copy of his credentials to Hossein Amir Abdollahian at the beginning of his tenure.

Al-Munaikh is the first Kuwaiti ambassador to Tehran after six years. He is considered one of the prominent diplomats in the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs and served in his country's embassies in London and Pretoria. He also served as the deputy ambassador of Kuwait to the United Nations at the time when the tiny, oil-rich Arab country was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council between 2018-2019.

Kuwait downgraded its diplomatic relations with Iran in 2016 in solidarity with Saudi Arabia over the storming of the Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran



in the wake of the Saudi execution of a prominent Shiite cleric. Since then, Kuwait has not had an ambassador in Tehran.

But the ongoing negotiations between Tehran and Saudi Arabia, which started last year in April, seem to have motivated Kuwait and other fellow Arab countries to enhance ties with Iran. Kuwait is known for its moderate foreign policy toward Iran despite the fact that it often seeks to coordinate its Iran policy with Saudi Arabia. Kuwait seems to have gotten the green light from Saudi Arabia to dispatch an envoy to Iran.

Further reinforcing this extrapolation is concurrent with a decision by the UAE to dispatch an ambassador to Iran. A senior Emirati official said last month that the UAE was working to

send an ambassador to Iran as it sought to rebuild ties with Tehran after years of tensions.

The Kuwaiti move comes amid Iranian-Saudi negotiations hosted by Iraq to restore ties with Tehran. After more than a year of painstaking and security-oriented talks, Iran and Saudi Arabia appear to be on the verge of making a breakthrough that could end years of diplomatic boycott.

In late July, Iran accepted an offer by Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman for Iraq to hold a public meeting of the Iranian and Saudi foreign ministers, an indication that the countries were moving the talks to the political level.

The Baghdad talks began in April 2021 and continued

intermittently since then. After five rounds of talks, the Saudi crown prince sent a message via the Iraqi foreign minister requesting that Iraq host a meeting between the foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia.

“Five meetings were held between Saudi Arabia and Iran on the security level,” Iraqi Foreign Minister, Fuad Hussein, told Rudaw in July. “The Saudi crown prince asked us to host the meeting of the Saudi foreign minister with his Iranian counterpart in Baghdad.”

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said the result of the Iran-Saudi talks in Baghdad was “encouraging.”

Since July nothing has taken place in the negotiations. But the return of the Kuwaiti ambassador to Iran could well indicate a Saudi tendency to patch up ties with Iran.

Arab media has said the sending of ambassador to Iran by Kuwait is indicative of “a new orientation” by the Persian Gulf Arab states toward Iran.

The New Gulf news website has said upgrading Iran-Kuwait relations is part of this orientation.

Iran condolences with Egypt, Sudan over deadly incidents

TEHRAN – The Iranian foreign ministry has expressed condolences to Egypt and Sudan over a number of deadly incidents that took place in the two African countries.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani has offered condolences to Egypt's government and people, particularly the families of the victims, over a fire that killed a number of Egyptian citizens at a church in the country's Giza Governorate.

Kanaani also wished swift recovery for those who were injured in this bitter incident.

The Egyptian electrical church fire swept through an Egyptian Coptic Christian church during Mass on Sunday, causing a stampede and killing at least 41 people, most of them

children and many suffering from smoke inhalation, according to Reuters.

The blaze started just before 9 a.m. in the Abu Sifin church in the city of Giza where about up to 1,000 people had gathered.

Kanaani has also offered condolences to Sudan's government and people over the deaths of a number of Sudanese citizens in a flood that also damaged the African country's infrastructure.

Kanaani added that Iran is ready to give relief aid to Sudan.

Sudanese authorities stated that 52 people have died as a result of the torrential rains which have flooded various states throughout Sudan. The torrential downpour, which

usually occurs between May and October, has also resulted in 25 injuries as well as the destruction of thousands of homes, much-needed infrastructure, and agricultural lands.

More than 750 families were severely impacted by flooding that occurred in El Gezira and Sennar state on Saturday, according to Relief International.

The governor of El Gezira, Ismail Awadallah, called for the mobilisation of “all efforts to address the negative effects of the rainy season”.

Initial reports estimate that about 28,000 people have been affected by heavy rains and flash floods in Central Darfur state over the past few weeks, Relief International said.

Iran deputy FM meets Turkmen officials

TEHRAN – Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari has met with Turkmen political and economic officials to discuss a range of bilateral issues.

Safari traveled to Turkmenistan to follow up agreements signed by the two countries during the recent visit of the Turkmen president to Tehran that happened in June.

In his meeting with Turkmenistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Rasit Meredow, Safari explained the Islamic Republic of Iran's economic possibilities and capabilities. He underlined the need for expansion of economic and trade ties with Turkmenistan and said Iran is ready to also give Turkmenistan access to high seas through southern Iranian ports like Bandar Abbas and Chah Bahar.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy said Iran is interested in boosting transit of goods through Turkmenistan, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

He added that it's possible to increase cooperation between Tehran and Ashgabat in the oil and gas sector, including the transit of energy carriers from Turkmenistan to neighboring countries through Iranian soil.

Safari further stressed, among others, the necessity of reducing tariffs, reopening the Bajgiran border market, launching the Parsesu border crossing and boosting cooperation between border provinces of the two countries.

In the meeting, Turkmenistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister also welcomed Safari's proposals and stressed the need

to expand economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

Safari has also met with Turkmenistan's Deputy Prime Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Water Diplomacy Annageldi Yazmyradov to discuss possibilities for expansion of cooperation between the two countries.

Safari has also met with Turkmenistan's Deputy Chairman of Cabinet of Ministers Responsible for Construction and Energy Carymyrat Purcekow.

Safari traveled to Turkmenistan to follow up agreements signed by the two countries during the recent visit of the Turkmen president to Tehran that happened in June.

In the meeting, Safari underlined the necessity of boosting

cooperation between Tehran and Ashgabat in areas of mutual interest. He also said Iran is ready to export goods necessary for construction, building materials, equipment and the energy sector's technical know-how to Turkmenistan.

Safari added that competent Iranian companies are able to repair Turkmenistan's electricity power plants. The Iranian deputy foreign minister stressed the need for speeding up the completion of a project to transfer electricity between the two countries. Safari noted that Iran is ready to transit electricity from Turkmenistan to neighboring countries.

In the meeting, Carymyrat Purcekow also welcomed Safari's proposals and stressed the need to expand cooperation between the two countries in the energy and construction sectors.

Western spies took samples of Iranian soil for nuclear testing: MP

From Page 1 ► He added, “The Westerners should know that the situation has changed now and today no one cares about such issues in order to use them to cook up documents against us.”

Underlining that “we are doing our own work and do not pay attention to these things,” he said, “Westerners are not people who consider themselves the owners of everything. Those days when

they considered themselves the owners of the whole world are over. We are doing our own thing and they have to run after us to see if they catch up or not.”

Iran rejects allegations of arms smuggling to Yemen

TEHRAN – Iran on Monday reacted to Aran press reports accusing Iran of facilitating arms smuggling to Yemen, saying that these allegations are “baseless.”

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said such claims are “baseless and repetitive staging” on the part of the “invading coalition and their Western supporters,” according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The Saudi-owned Al Arabiya

news television claimed two days ago that a Yemeni group of smugglers has been implicated in smuggling arms from the Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas to Yemen.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman said the invading coalition and their Western backers must be held accountable for the crimes that they have committed for 7 years in Yemen. Kanaani said those crimes have left innocents dead,

destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and unleashed the greatest humanitarian catastrophe of the century.

He maintained that framing the Islamic Republic of Iran is only aimed at distracting the public opinion of regional and world countries from the realities of the Yemen crisis.

The ministry spokesman added that Iran's support for the Yemeni people was political from the very

beginning of the crisis and that Iran has always pushed for peace in Yemen and also the UN's efforts to peacefully end this devastating war and to keep the truce in Yemen.

He underlined that continuation of hostile policies and repetition of threadbare scenarios are at odds with their claim that they want the ceasefire hold and will not deliver any new outcome for the aggressors.

Iran start Asian U18 Volleyball Championship on high

TEHRAN – Iran defeated China 3-0 (25-21, 25-17, 25-22) in the opening match of the 14th edition of the Asian Men's U18 Volleyball Championship on Tuesday.

Iran are scheduled to meet Kuwait in Pool A on Wednesday and play Chinese Taipei on Thursday.

Japan, India, Thailand and South Korea are in Pool B.

The 2022 Asian Boys' U18 Volleyball Championship is being held at the Azadi Hall in Tehran, Iran from Aug. 15 to 22.

The top four teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2023 FIVB Volleyball Boys'U19 World Championship as the AVC representatives.

Basketballer Jafari banned for doping

TEHRAN – Iranian basketball player Mehdi Jafari has been banned for two-year for using Ephedrine.

Jafari will be ineligible from May 29, 2022 until May 28, 2024.

The accusation has been confirmed by the anti-doping laboratory in Cologne and WADA.

Ephedrine is a medication used in the management and treatment of clinically significant hypotension.

It is in the sympathomimetic class of medications. This activity illustrates the indications, action, and contraindications for ephedrine as a valuable agent in the treatment of clinically significant hypotension.

FC Utrecht Interested in Jahanbakhsh: report

TEHRAN – FC Utrecht has shown interest in signing Iranian international winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

According to 1908.nl, Utrecht coach Henk Fraser is eager to sign the Iranian winger, who currently plays for Feyenoord.

The 29-year-old player acted as a substitute for most of last season and has to compete with Javiro Dilrosun, Oussama Idrissi, Igor Paixão and Mohamed Taabouni.

Jahanbakhsh joined Feyenoord from England's Brighton for about one million euros last summer, but was never able to fully live up to the high expectations in De Kuip.

He has so far made 43 appearances for the team and scored eight times and provided four assists.

His contract runs until mid-2024.

Iran runners-up at 2022 Indoor Hockey Asia Cup

TEHRAN – Iran's men's team finished in second place in the 2022 Indoor Hockey Asia Cup on Monday.

The match finished in 4-4 in regular time in Bangkok, Thailand and Malaysia defeated Team Melli 3-2 in the penalty shootout.

The win at the Huamark Indoor Stadium enabled Malaysia to end Iran's domination in indoor hockey, having won the title eight times in a row since the first edition in 2008.

Kazakhstan also finished in third place after defeating Indonesia 5-4 in the bronze medal match.

Malaysia head coach Muhammad Amin Rahim praised his men for their performance and determination in carving out a historic win.

“I must praise them for their resilience in achieving victory. Each player gave his best and this is the result of their own hard work. Not easy to play seven matches in eight days.

“I hope indoor hockey will continue to receive attention because we have a big potential to play at the highest level,” he said in a brief statement to the media via the WhatsApp application.

This is the first time in eight years that the Malaysian national men's indoor hockey team have managed to make the final of the Asia Cup. The last time they made the final – in the 2014 edition in Changhua, Taiwan – they lost 5-1 to Iran.

Iran to wear home-made kit in 2022 World Cup: report

TEHRAN – Iran's national football team will reportedly wear a domestically produced kit during the upcoming 2022 Qatar World Cup.

According to ISNA, an Iranian company has won a tender to supply the team's kit in the major football event.

The report does not identify the name of the company but says it is the same producer which had replaced Uhlsport in the World Cup qualifications. Merooj was supplying the team's kit then, PLDC reported.

A representative of the company will travel to the FIFA headquarters in Switzerland along with a number of Iranian football federation officials to be informed about all the necessary requirements and standards needed for the kits.

This will be the first time that Iran are going to participate in the World Cup finals with a home-made kit. The team had put on clothes made by Adidas, Puma, and Uhlsport during their five appearances at the event.

Esteghlal must pay 1.3€ million to Stramaccioni

TEHRAN – The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has ruled against Esteghlal, urging the Iranian club to pay €1.35 million to former coach Andrea Stramaccioni.

Stramaccioni, who currently coaches Qatari club Al Gharafa, was head coach of Esteghlal in 2019 but left the team after Blues failed to meet their financial commitment.

The Italian coach lodged a complaint before FIFA, and the world football body said Esteghlal should pay him €1.35 million, according to their contract.

The Iranian club had brought the case to CAS, hoping for a decrease in the payment. However, the international court upheld the ruling while also urging the club to pay a 5% interest as fine plus costs related to the judicial process.

Esteghlal have been given 15 days to clear the debt.

Free zones' trade balance becomes positive for 1st time in 30 years



TEHRAN – The secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council said on Monday that the trade balance of the country's free trade zones has become \$35 million positive for the first time in 30 years, Mehr News Agency reported.

According to Saeid Mohammad, there are currently 15 free trade zones and 33 special economic zones active in the country and the necessary licenses have also been obtained for the establishment of 79 new special economic zones.

The official noted that although the overall trade balance of the free trade and special economic zones together has always been positive, but this is the first time that the foreign trade balance of the free trade zones becomes positive separately.

Underlining the important role that free trade and special economic zones play in the country's economic growth, Mohammad said: "The main function of free zones is to facilitate export, production, foreign exchange, entry of new technologies and promotion of knowledge-based companies."

He expressed dissatisfaction with the current

performance of free zones, saying: "They have not been able to grow in line with the free zones of our competitors in the region."

Mohammad further mentioned some of the obstacles in the way of the development of the country's free zones including unnecessary or vague regulations, lack of enough incentives for encouraging activities in such areas, and the lack of unified and integrated management in these zones, and said the government is doing its best to resolve such issues.

The establishment of free trade zones (FTZs) in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989 – March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azerbaijan Province, and Maku in West-Azerbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

The development of existing free trade zones and the establishment of new FTZs has become one of the major economic approaches of the Iranian government.

Iran sends technical team to Cuba to help put out fire in oil facilities

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Ministry has dispatched a group of technical experts to Cuba in order to help put out a fire set off by a lightning strike at an oil storage facility in the Cuban city of Matanzas, Shana reported.

Following the incident, the Cuban government asked for help from international experts in "friendly countries" with experience in the oil sector.

As reported, the first goal of this group is to transfer experiences and train Cuban firefighters and experts about the ways of dealing with oil tank fires. The training will help Cubans to be prepared to deal with such incidents in the future.

In addition to the dispatching of the mentioned team, Director General of the Iranian Oil Ministry's Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Mazaher Ansari had also had a video conference session with Cuban firefighting groups based at



the incident site, and the country's oil officials, in which he provided them with instructions and keynotes about the dos and don'ts of fire control in oil facilities.

Iran has a significant history in providing such services to other oil-rich countries in need. As in the fire incident in Kuwait oil facilities during the Iraq-Kuwait war, Iranian experts played a prominent role in controlling the fire.

Iran's non-oil export to neighbors grows 22% in 4 months on year

From page 1 ► As previously announced by the IRICA head, the value of Iran's non-oil trade with its neighbors during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20) stood at \$51.875 billion to register a 43 percent increase year on year.

Alireza Moghadasai put the weight of non-oil trade with the neighboring countries at 100.131 million tons in the said year, stating that trade with the neighbors also increased by 23 percent in terms of weight.

The official put the annual non-oil exports to the mentioned countries at 75.445 million tons valued at \$26.29 billion, with a 29 percent rise in value and a 12 percent growth in weight.

Major export destinations of the



Iranian non-oil goods were Iraq with \$8.9 billion, Turkey with \$6.1 billion, the United Arab Emirates with \$4.9 billion, Afghanistan with \$1.8 billion, and Pakistan with \$1.3 billion in imports from the Islamic Republic, followed by Oman, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, according to the

official.

Moghadasai further stated that Iran imported 24.686 million tons of non-oil commodities worth over \$25.846 billion in the previous year, with a 60-percent growth in value and a 68-percent rise in weight year on year.

The United Arab Emirates was the

top exporter to Iran in the said period exporting \$16.5 billion worth of goods to the country, followed by Turkey, Russia, Iraq, and Oman, he stated.

Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Armenia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain were other top neighboring countries that supplied goods to Iran in 1400, respectively.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

Iran shares land or water borders with 15 countries namely UAE, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia.

Iran to establish 7 new trade centers in Africa by Mar. 2023

TEHRAN – Aiming to develop trade with Africa, Iran is planning to open seven new trade centers in countries of the continent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2023), IRNA reported on Tuesday, quoting a senior official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) as saying.

"So far, three business centers have been established in Africa, and we plan to increase this number to 10 centers by the end of the year," Director-General of TPO's Africa Office Mohammad-Sadeq Qanadzadeh said.

Speaking at the first meeting of the Iran-Africa House which was held in collaboration with TPO, Qanadzadeh stated: "The purpose of this meeting is to introduce Iran's investment and business opportunities to African trade partners."

According to the official, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), more than 400 business delegations from Africa have traveled to Iran, and the Iranian government is also taking all the necessary measures to develop mutual relations.

Quadrilateral MOU signed to promote new technologies in mining sector

TEHRAN – Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has signed a quadrilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) with three government entities to develop smart technologies in the mining sector, IRNA reported.

As reported, the MOU has been signed with the country's Automation and Digital Technologies Development Headquarter, Technology and Innovation Department of the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, and

Mines and Materials Processing Department of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

The MOU is aimed at facilitating cooperation and effective interaction among the mentioned parties to realize the slogan of the year which is Knowledge-based and Job-creating Production in the mining sector.

Promotion of smart technologies in the country's mining industries with the aim of increasing productivity, competitiveness, and resilience is also another major goal of this MOU.

Some of the measures expected

Stressing the need for the improvement of infrastructure and providing new incentives for the development of trade with Africa, Qanadzadeh noted that several contracts have been signed with African trade partners for the development of infrastructure and maritime and air transportation.

"The agreement for the establishment of a direct airline between Iran and South Africa will also be concluded by the end of the year," he added.

He further pointed to the upward trend of trade with African nations, saying: "In the first quarter of this year, many African countries have been among Iran's top trade partners, which is a very good thing."

Back in June, TPO Head Alireza Peyman-Pak said the country is taking the necessary steps to increase annual trade exchanges with African countries to \$5 billion by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (begins in March 2025).

Peyman-Pak said the trade with the mentioned countries is expected to reach \$2.5 billion by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.



Referring to the preparation of the country's trade development roadmap at the beginning of the work of the 13th administration, the official said: "In this roadmap, major factors including exports and the share of different sectors is specified, and in the case of Africa, the priorities and targets for trade with different countries and the requirements for reaching these targets are determined."

Peyman-Pak put the share of African countries in Iran's export basket at \$1.2 billion, saying: "Africa's annual imports amount to about \$580 billion and our share of this figure is still small despite all the efforts. We have managed to export \$1.2 billion to this market."

DMC to be launched in South Pars Gas Complex for 1st time

TEHRAN– Gas Condensate Demercaptanization (DMC) will be launched in South Pars Gas Complex for the first time.

A DMC unit will be set up in the second refinery of the complex, which will lead to the highest refining capacity which is 80,000 barrels of gas condensate per day, while also improving the quality of refining, Hossein Bagheban, the director of the refinery, stated.

The DMC unit is aimed to reduce corrosive effects of harmful compounds on refinery facilities, cut environmental pollutants, improve the quality of gas condensate and ramp up the value

added of the item with a daily processing capacity of 80,000 barrels.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf water, is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

The huge offshore field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.



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

TEDPIX drops 4,000 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN– TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 4,190 points to 1,459 million on Tuesday.

As reported, over 8.891 billion securities worth 39.457 trillion rials (about \$164.7 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dropped 3,931 points, and the second market's index fell 5,857 points.

Tehran Stock Exchange experienced a growth of 9.5 percent in the value of its trades in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

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

‘Over \$1.5b worth of natural gas wasted in Iran annually’

TEHRAN – Head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) has said that over \$1.5 billion worth of natural gas is wasted in Iran's oil and gas fields every year, IRIB reported.

"Studies show that 47.5 million cubic meters of gas is wasted in the country's oil and gas fields every day, and if we consider a price of nine cents for each cubic meter of gas, the total value of the wasted gas is about 1.5 billion dollars every year," Masoud Khansari said in a TCCIMA board meeting on Tuesday.

"According to a World Bank report, in the years 2012 to 2021, Iran had the first place in terms of natural gas wastage among the world's oil-rich countries; natural gas waste increased from 11.1 billion cubic meters in 2012 to 17.4 billion cubic meters in 2021," Khansari said, mentioning a recent WB report on world's energy crisis after Russia-Ukraine war.

He noted that the major part of Iran's wastage is related to the flaring of gases associated with oil.

"I hope that with the measures taken by the Oil Ministry and the expansion of activities to prevent gas flaring, we will see a day when

this wastage will reach the lowest possible level and even become zero," the official said.

The World Bank data indicate that gas flaring is costing oil-rich countries billions of dollars in lost revenues, so that, over the past decade 144 billion cubic meters of gas have been wasted around the world annually; with this amount of gas, 1,800 million megawatt hours of electricity could be produced, which is equivalent to two-thirds of the electricity produced in the entire European Union.

Gas flaring is the process of burning the gas released through certain industrial processes, including oil extraction. In the past, when the demand for natural gas was low and, consequently, producers had little incentive to gather and sell it, it was generally – and more reasonably – dissipated through flaring.

Now, however, natural gas is known to be a valuable means of generating electricity and an important raw ingredient for the petrochemical industry. On the other hand, when released into the air, unrefined gas pollutes the atmosphere by releasing greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, causing extensive environmental damage.



Inclusive governance can bring peace to Afghanistan: analysis

In an analysis on August 15, The National Interest says an inclusive, moderate and representative governance can bring peace to the war-hit Afghanistan.

Following is an excerpt of the text: In dealing with Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, the most prudent course of action for the United States is to push for the formation of an inclusive government in the country. A strategy that focuses on either engagement with, or opposition to, the Taliban will fall short of securing American interests in Afghanistan.

The establishment of a moderate, representative government will reduce the threat of terrorist attacks emanating from Afghanistan, help reinstate the basic human rights of the Afghan people, pave the way for international recognition of the Afghan government, and mitigate the country's humanitarian and economic crises. This should be the end state guiding U.S. policy toward Afghanistan.

In its latest annual threat assessment report, the U.S. intelligence community notes that "the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan threatens U.S. interests, including the possibility of terrorist safe havens re-emerging and a humanitarian disaster." In line with this assessment, U.S. officials have identified two major U.S. interests in Afghanistan moving forward: countering terrorism and supporting the Afghan people. However, the Biden administration has yet to articulate a clear policy in response to the situation in Afghanistan.

Debates over how the United States should pursue its interests in Afghanistan have largely revolved around whether Washington should engage or oppose the Taliban. However, given the nature of the Taliban and the fact that it controls the Afghan state, neither engagement nor opposition is easy to pursue. Neither approach is likely to secure American interests in the country as long as the Taliban holds a monopoly over the Afghan state.



Engagement with the Taliban would entail domestic political costs for the administration, given the history of the U.S.-Taliban conflict and the Taliban's ties with militant groups and dismal human rights record. Engagement is further limited by the sanctions regime. Both the Taliban and the Haqqani Network—a semiautonomous arm of the group—are on the U.S. list of specially designated terrorist groups, with the latter also designated as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO). The United Nations Security Council has imposed separate sanctions on 135 senior members of the Taliban.

According to the UN, the Taliban has appointed forty-one of those sanctioned individuals to the cabinet and other top positions in its government. They include the prime minister, his three deputies, and fourteen ministers. Members of the Haqqani Network have been appointed to key positions within security institutions. Under these circumstances, a major question is how to reconcile counterterrorism interests with the urgent need to support the Afghan people. How do you enforce sanctions against the Taliban without harming the Afghan people? The Biden administration's decision to freeze the assets of Afghanistan's central bank illustrates this dilemma. General licenses issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, while facilitating aid

delivery, are insufficient to allay the concerns international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations have about operating in Afghanistan. The provision of humanitarian aid faces similar difficulties. How do you ensure that aid benefits the intended communities rather than sanctioned individuals and entities?

Moreover, it is unclear how engagement with the Taliban might advance counter-terrorism objectives.

On the other hand, opposing the Taliban presents its own complications. Undermining its de facto rulers could further destabilize Afghanistan, plunging the country into yet another full-fledged civil war—a scenario that could end up strengthening terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Khorasan (ISIS-K) while worsening Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis. In short, neither engaging nor opposing the Taliban is likely to help the United States secure its interests in Afghanistan. Both approaches run the risk of harming the Afghan population.

These dilemmas will persist as long as the Taliban maintains exclusive control over the Afghan government. Only a political arrangement in which the Taliban is counterbalanced by more moderate political forces representing Afghanistan's other political and demographic groups can advance

American interests.

Rather than fixating on engagement or opposition, the United States should work toward the establishment of more moderate, inclusive governing structures in Afghanistan. This approach is in keeping with the spirit of the Doha Agreement, which identified four components to comprehensive peace in Afghanistan: Taliban guarantees that Afghanistan's soil will not be used by anyone to threaten the security of the United States and its allies; the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan; intra-Afghan negotiations; and agreements over Afghanistan's future political roadmap.

A major shortcoming of the Doha Agreement was that it dealt only with the first two parts, leaving unaddressed the last two components of a comprehensive peace. It was not a peace-building accord—contrary to its name. Peace-building was left to intra-Afghan negotiations that were supposed to begin ten days after the signing of the deal but never took off the ground, largely due to the Taliban's resistance.

Through diplomacy with the Taliban and regional powers, the United States should strive to revive talks between the Taliban and other Afghan political actors. This approach will likely enjoy broad international support, as the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan is an almost universal demand of the international community. The United States should play a leading role in efforts to bring the Taliban back to the negotiating table.

In the Doha Agreement, the United States agreed that, in tandem with the start of intra-Afghan negotiations, it would begin taking steps aimed at removing U.S. and UN sanctions against the Taliban. Now, conditions for the removal of sanctions should include the Taliban's commitment to the formation of a more representative government.

The end of the Tunisia model

By Sarah E. Yerkes

A year ago, Tunisia's fledgling democracy—the last to survive after a series of popular uprisings swept the Arab world in 2011—faced a severe test after an extraordinary self-coup by President Kais Saied on July 25, 2021. Within a matter of hours, Saied fired Tunisia's prime minister, suspended its democratically elected parliament for 30 days, and assumed all executive power. Saied justified his actions by citing Article 80 of Tunisia's 2014 constitution, which allows a president who determines that the country is facing “imminent danger” to take “any measures necessitated by the exceptional circumstances.”

But what was initially described as a temporary emergency measure has now been extended indefinitely. On July 25, 2022, Tunisians approved a constitutional referendum that effectively codifies Saied's power grab into Tunisian law. The so-called Tunisia model of democratic transition is now at death's door. Tunisian opposition and civil society leaders are making heroic efforts to revive it, but they will need urgent and sustained support from the international community if they are to succeed.

Dismantling democracy

In the months since his initial power grab last July, Saied has systematically destroyed Tunisia's remaining democratic institutions, either by suspending them outright or replacing their members with loyalists. On September 22, 2021, in a startlingly explicit signal of the president's long-term intentions, he issued Decree 117, transferring the powers of the parliament to the presidency and allowing presidential rule by decree in all matters. At the same time, in a particularly odd move for a former constitutional law professor, Saied suspended most of Tunisia's 2014 constitution, decreeing that the government's role was to serve the president.

In his efforts to silence his opponents, Saied has subjected hundreds of journalists, activists, and opposition politicians to arbitrary arrests, travel bans, and blistering rhetorical attacks. In December 2021, Saied's government accused Moncef Marzouki, Tunisia's first democratically elected president and one of Saied's most vocal critics, of undermining state security, sentencing him to four years in prison in absentia.

In February 2022, Saied dissolved Tunisia's Supreme Judicial Council, replaced its members with loyalists, and empowered himself to fire judges—a power he exercised on June 1 to sack some 57 judges, whom he accused of obstructing terrorism cases, engaging in petty corruption, and committing such “moral crimes” as adultery and attending “alcohol-fueled parties.”

Saied's coup de grace was rewriting the constitution, bringing to fruition his long-term vision of a robust presidential system with a neutered legislature. Saied's hand-selected committee drafted a new constitution in two weeks. In a bizarre turn of events, the head of the constitution-drafting commission, Sadok Belaid, publicly condemned the version Saied released to the public, arguing that it did not reflect the committee's vision and could lead Tunisia down a path toward autocracy. While the referendum passed with an estimated 95 percent of the vote, the fact that a mere 30 percent of eligible Tunisian voters participated suggests that many of Saied's supporters have lost faith in him.

A country in crisis

Saied's July 2021 power grab succeeded because he was able to capitalize on three interrelated crises. First, the COVID-19 pandemic reached a peak in Tunisia last summer, exposing the weaknesses of the country's fragile health-care system and the failures of its government to deliver desperately needed assistance. Second, the Tunisian economy, like most in the world, was devastated by the pandemic, which in its case exacerbated already sky-high unemployment, decimated a once booming tourism industry, and thrust many Tunisians into poverty. Third, the highly fractured political system had become paralyzed, with polarization quickly rising. Politicians violently attacked each other in the halls of parliament, and Saied and Hichem Mechichi, his handpicked prime minister, routinely insulted each other on national television. Saied had grown unhappy with Mechichi's decision to work with the Islamist party Ennahda and had argued with Mechichi over control of the Interior Ministry.

In this context, it is easy to see why so many Tunisians were willing to give Saied the benefit of the doubt. Desperate and frustrated with an incompetent government, Tunisians placed their hope in a president who, following the path of

many other populist leaders worldwide, seemed prepared to take the reins and shake up a stagnant, corrupt system. But as Saied's intentions became apparent and the economic situation worsened, Saied's popular support began to disappear.

Saied justified his actions on the grounds that he was doing what the people want. Yet throughout the past year, Saied has failed to consult the people. His online consultation process, ostensibly meant to collect public input on the draft constitution, was marred with security concerns and technical difficulties; less than seven percent of eligible voters ended up participating in it. And there is no evidence that the results of that process fed into the draft that Tunisians voted on in late July. Saied and his ministers have rarely addressed the public or allowed the independent media to question them. And his increasingly authoritarian actions have inspired many protests as Tunisians became fed up with Saied's inability to deliver either economic improvement or political stability.

Saied's plummeting support is evident in the paltry voter turnout for the referendum on a new constitution—arguably the most consequential vote since the 2011 uprisings. Part of the reason for the low turnout is that most political opposition and civil society groups chose to boycott the vote rather than participate in what they saw as an illegitimate process. But another factor was that Saied can no longer rally his supporters. While there has been a steady stream of pro-Saied protests alongside anti-Saied movements, the pro-Saied protests have never amassed a significant following.

Tunisians unbowed

Tunisia's democratic transition achieved relative success in its first decade. However, the past year's events highlight such transitions' fragility. As I argued in Foreign Affairs just after Saied's election, in 2019, Tunisia's democracy benefited from political leaders who put their country above personal advancement, with multiple rounds of leaders choosing a path of consensus over competition.

That consensus allowed Tunisia to weather complex challenges, but it also stunted the growth of political competition, eventually opening the door for the polarization that paved Saied's path to autocracy. But Saied's political program, which completely consolidates power and destroys the consensus model, is not the answer. Instead, Tunisia should marry consensus with consultation and participatory democracy, while allowing room for the opposition. Such a program could build the trust in government that has been sorely lacking in Tunisia since well before Saied's election.

It is not clear where Saied intends to take Tunisia next. What is clear is that the democratic model created in 2014 will not be revived. Public trust in parliament had reached an all-time low before Saied's coup, and the Tunisian public is not clamoring for a return of polarization and mudslinging.

Another open question is whether the international community will go back to business as usual once Saied's new constitution enters into force. In the wake of Saied's authoritarian power grab, the Biden administration has proposed cutting U.S. assistance to Tunisia in half—explicitly signaling its displeasure with Saied's actions. Although Western responses to the referendum were scarcely warm, unless Saied takes further steps to reverse Tunisia's hard-fought freedoms, the democratic world is unlikely to take action to unwind Saied's year of backsliding.

Over the past decade, Tunisia was repeatedly heralded as the beacon of democracy in the Arab world. Yet it was never offered the same degree of financial and diplomatic support that other young democracies have enjoyed. Instead, Tunisia's growing economic crisis and deteriorating political situation were drowned out by the myriad conflicts around the Middle East and North Africa. While a Tunisian Marshall Plan may not have saved the country's transition, greater financial support could have helped Tunisians weather the painful side effects of the economic reforms needed to create long-term sustainable growth. Today, Tunisian civil society actors and political opposition figures need both rhetorical and financial support from the international community for their efforts to drag Tunisia back to the democratic path.

Saied has taken many pages from the dictator's playbook to roll back a decade's democratic progress in one year. But while he may have solidified his hold on Tunisian politics, he should remember the very first lesson of the Tunisia model: that the Tunisian people, when united, have the power to demand change and take down a tyrant.

(Source: Foreign Affairs)

Biden signals Africa policy reset

In both spirit and language, the newly launched Biden administration's Africa strategy illustrates the shift in the diplomatic mood in the four years since National Security Advisor John Bolton announced the Trump administration's Africa policy. Consistent with the temper of the time, Trump's Africa strategy emphasized three principles: prosperity, security, and stability. If there was one overriding military objective to be achieved, it was “countering the threat from radical Islamic terrorism and violent conflict.”

That threat endures, and evidently, the Biden administration remains committed to the same cornerstone principles. Yet, the emphases of the new strategy reflect the extent to which the tenor of relations between the United States and African countries has altered, hence the tone of accommodation and the overall prominence given to “equal partnership” throughout the document.

The reasons for the newfangled agreeableness are not far-fetched. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the United States was startled by the reluctance of key African players to condemn Russia and join the American-backed military campaign in defense of Ukrainian sovereignty. In retrospect, the reluctance had less to do with Russia per se (albeit the scope of Russian influence in Africa until that point had been grossly underestimated) and more to do with the not unjustifiable perception that Washington was wont to treat African countries as subordinates rather than allies. Given their history, African nations had to see the moral point about the injustice of the Russian invasion; what they seemed to resent was being taken for granted and dictated to by a United States that, as they saw it, was not above sacrificing moral principle on the altar of strategic expediency.

African reluctance to toe the American line on Ukraine was just one concern. The United States was also perturbed by the widening scope of Chinese and Russian economic and military influence in the region, with more African countries seemingly attracted to the idea of Chinese financial aid that arrived sans the moral scrutiny and rigorous conditionalities associated



with American assistance. All things considered, the United States would seem to be correct in its characterization of Beijing as aiming to “challenge the rules-based international order, advance its narrow commercial and geopolitical interests, undermine transparency and openness, and weaken U.S. relations with African peoples and governments” and Moscow as viewing Africa “as a permissive environment for parastatals and private military companies, often fomenting instability for strategic and financial benefit.”

If the indictment of China and Russia was as expected—it will be music to the ears of African civil society and prodemocracy activists exasperated by Beijing and Moscow's amoral support for many African dictators—sections of the African public will be quietly gratified by the United States' admission that “some of our longstanding approaches have become insufficient to meet new challenges in a more contested and competitive world” and its complementary readiness to “affirm African agency” and “elevate African voices in the most consequential global conversations.” That, in addition to the stated commitment to “revitalize and modernize its traditional tools of statecraft” should go some way towards assuaging the quite legitimate concern that the United States—and the West generally—is not always sensitive to the destabilizing effects of its power for relatively weak African states.

On this note, it is just as well that the strategy underscores the crucial importance of “African contributions and leadership” to the achievement of the strategy's four

main objectives: “foster openness and open societies,” “deliver democratic and security dividends,” “advance pandemic recovery and economic opportunity,” and “support conservation, climate adaptation, and a just energy transition.”

Taking at face value the strategy's commitment to “bolster the region's ability to solve global problems alongside the United States,” African leaders should accept the invitation to “work in common cause” with the United States with the aim of putting Africa on the path towards democratic stability and economic prosperity.

Arresting democratic backsliding is as good a place as any to start. It does not bode well for Africa that, as the strategy points out, “In 2022, Freedom House classified only eight sub-Saharan African countries as free—the fewest since 1991.” While the United States has promised “a targeted mix of positive inducements and punitive measures” as well as an offer of partnership “with other governments and regional bodies” in Africa, common sense dictates that those efforts are doomed to failure if the region's band of “presidents for life” continue to subvert liberal democratic principles and ignore consistently high public support for representative government.

Nor can the region take advantage of the United States' vow to “work with African countries to promote a stronger growth trajectory” if it continues to be hobbled by all too familiar high levels of waste and corruption. In this regard, the strategy is right to draw attention to “the strong linkages between poor and exclusionary governance, high levels of corruption, human rights abuses... and insecurity...” in Africa.

To be sure: the aforementioned challenges are by no means unique to Africa. Yet, if the continent's failure so far to realize its potential exasperates, it is because there is nothing inevitable about it. It is promising that the United States is committed to working in concert with Africa, but success ultimately depends on African countries doing the heavy lifting.

Ilkhanid summer capital unearthed in northwest Iran



TEHRAN –The ancient city of Ojan, which was once the summer capital of the Ilkhanid dynasty (1256 to 1335) has been unearthed during an archaeological excavation in East Azarbaijan, in the northwest of Iran, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

A team of Iranian archeologists identified the historical city of Ojan and uncovered a part of its government citadel after ten years of survey and field exploration, said Rahim Velayati, who leads the project.

Parts of the city, which were completely buried under soil, have been unearthed and need serious protection, he noted.

In the past ten years and over four excavation seasons, the exact location of the historical city of Ojan was identified and demarcated through the use of important documents and descriptions of the city in historical and geographical texts, he explained.

Aside from the identification of four Islamic cemeteries from the Seljuk and Ilkhanid eras as well as the discovery of several historical objects within the city area, identifying the city's government citadel and fortress, which is the largest remaining building since the founding of the city, was also very important, he added.

The city of Ojan played a very important role in the social, political, and economic life of the Azarbaijan region during the Seljuk and Ilkhanid eras. Ghazan Khan, the 13th-century ruler of Ilkhanate in Iran, built the city and named it 'Dar al-Islam'.

Early buildings in Ojan date back to the 5th-

6th centuries AH and coincided with the Seljuks. Later, the city was an administrative center of the Ilkhanids in the 7th-8th AH centuries and experienced its heyday until the late Safavid period.

Surviving architectural structures include square-shaped battlements, a government castle, some surveillance towers, enclosed walls, incised underglaze clays, underglaze paintings, and local clays without glaze from the 6th-8th centuries.

The Ilkhanid dynasty, also called Il-Khanid, was a Mongol dynasty that ruled Iran from 1256 to 1335. Il-Khan is Persian for "subordinate khan".

Hulegu, a grandson of Genghis Khan, received orders from the supreme Mongol chieftain Mongke to conquer Iran. Hulegu set out around 1253 with a Mongol army of about 130,000 men. He founded the Il-Khanid dynasty in 1256 and conquered Baghdad and all of Iran by 1258, according to Britannica.

The Il-Khanids consolidated their position in Iran and unified the region as a political and territorial entity after several centuries of fragmented rule by small dynasties. During the reign of the Il-Khanid Maumud Ghuzun (r. 1295-1304), the Il-Khanids lost all contact with the remaining Mongol chiefs in China. Mahmud Ghuzun himself embraced Sunni Islam, and his reign was a time of Iranian cultural renaissance in Iran, with scholars such as Rashid al-Din flourishing under his patronage.

Ghazan's brother Oljeitu (r. 1304-16) converted to Shia Islam in 1310. Oljeitu's conversion caused great unrest, and when he died in 1316, the civil war was imminent. His son and successor, Abu Sa'id (r. 1317-35), converted to Sunni Islam and was thus able to prevent a war.

During Abu Sa'id's reign, however, factional disputes and internal unrest continued to spread. Abu Sa'id died without leaving an heir, and with his death, the unity of the dynasty was broken. Thereafter, various Il-Khanid princes ruled parts of the dynasty's former territory until 1353.

Boundaries of historical sites should be defined precisely: tourism minister

TEHRAN—Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has said legal boundaries of historical sites should be established more carefully and scientifically to promote the welfare of local residents.

"In today's meeting with the members of parliament, we talked about historical sites and monuments, to revise some of their properties and boundaries," Mehr quoted Ezatollah Zarghami as saying on Monday.

"In some cases, boundaries of historical monuments have deprived people of normal life that is why we have to take necessary measures to improve the situation," the minister noted.

Zarghami said his ministry has been responsible for safeguarding historical sites and monuments on the one hand, and for the well-being of the local residents on the other hand.

"We are responsible for the historical sites and their boundaries, and one of these responsibilities is that these boundaries should be demarcated correctly, and sometimes they are not chosen correctly, and it is necessary to re-define those boundaries more accurately scientifically by cultural heritage experts."

"Historical boundaries cannot be manipulated in principle... and it is vital to preserving them, and we explained these issues to the legislatures," he added.

"In some cases, we can solve problems



through local decisions and regulations when experts are like a plumb bob (benchmark) of our work..." the official said.

Iran embraces numerous centuries-old bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation in the Iranian plateau was found from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

A 2019 study published in the Journal of Human Evolution suggests Neanderthals roamed across the Zagros Mountain range between 40 to 70 thousand years ago.

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

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Oldest human settlement in Iran identified

From page 1 ► The organ was examined in two laboratories in France and the United States, and the results of radiocarbon dating experiments showed that it relates to the oldest-known Neanderthal civilization in Iran.

In November 2018, the first season of the joint Iran-France archeological exploration led to the discovery of over 6,000 cultural pieces in the area. It also yielded bone remains of horses, deer, bears, and many stone tools belonging to the Middle Paleolithic period (between 200,000 to 40,000 years ago).

In the second season of the project in 2019, archaeologists



discovered the remains of a horse, which they believed to be hunted by Neanderthals in the cave.

A 2019 study published in the Journal of Human Evolution suggests that Neanderthals were

roaming at the Iranian Zagros Mountain sometimes between 40 to 70 thousand years ago.

Until the late 20th century, Neanderthals were regarded as genetically, morphologically,

and behaviorally distinct from living humans. However, more recent discoveries about this well-preserved fossil Eurasian population have revealed an overlap between living and archaic humans.

Neanderthals lived before and during the last Ice Age of the Pleistocene in some of the most unforgiving environments ever inhabited by humans. They developed a successful culture, with a complex stone tool technology, that was based on hunting, some scavenging, and local plant collection. Their survival during tens of thousands of years of the last glaciation is a remarkable testament to human adaptation.

Masuleh yields clues about ancient smelling workshops

TEHRAN—Archaeologists have discovered clues about the history of iron smelting in Masuleh and its surrounding highlands in Gilan province, northern Iran.

"It was the third archaeological season carried out here in Masuleh, which yielded ruins and relics dating from the early 5th century AH to the middle of the 7th century AH," the provincial tourism chief Vali Jahani said on Monday.

Archaeologists carved several trenches, one of which measuring 3.5 x 7.5 meters, gave clues about an iron smelting furnace belonging to the end of the 5th century AH to the beginning of the 6th century AH, the official said.

The picturesque village of Masuleh is famed for its Lego-shaped earthen houses built on another's rooftop. Archaeological evidence suggests the history of human presence in mountains near Masuleh dates back to the late Bronze Age (2000-1500 BC).

"New findings suggest this site was once a local hub for smelting iron ore and extracting pure iron and finally making iron tools," the official said.

"Previous archaeological seasons held in 1374 (1995) and 1391 (2012) yielded ruins of houses and workshops of iron smelting, as well as cultural materials including potteries and handmade tools, along with a large amount of waste material from iron smelting, which shows the extraction of iron and the manufacture of various iron tools in this place," Jahani explained.

According to the official, remains of residential buildings, smelting workshops, tools for the extraction and manufacture of metal objects (Challangari), and glazed potteries related to the Seljuk era (1037-1194) were found in previous excavations.

The recent archaeological season was aimed at obtaining additional information about the approximate extent of Old Masuleh, unearthing

ancient artifacts, and exploring possible reasons for the migration of its inhabitants to the current village.

According to the available documents, the earthquake of 890 AH and the outbreak of the plague in 943 AH were possible reasons for the migration of the ancient people of Masuleh to the current location of this historic village, Jahani explained.

Archaeological research held last year concluded that human beings resided in these highlands seasonally, at least since the late Bronze Age. The survey was carried out as part of a preliminary process to compile an all-inclusive dossier for the touristic village to be presented to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

"These new findings would help us to complete the Archaeological Atlas of the western part of Gilan, especially in the highlands of Alborz," the official stated.

Results of that preliminary survey suggested that the mountainous landscape was probably occupied by ancient herders and nomads, at least since the late Bronze Age. Moreover, the survey found remains of late prehistoric, historic, and Islamic times were recorded on the mountain top above 2500 meters above sea level.

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

According to Freidoun Biglari, a Paleolithic archaeologist at the National Museum of Iran, the discovery of stone artifacts on these highlands indicates that the area was seasonally visited



by prehistoric human groups. He added that archaeological evidence found in other parts of Gilan, such as Darband Rashi Cave, shows that the western half of the Alborz range has been inhabited by Paleolithic hunter-gatherer groups since the Lower Paleolithic period.

"Therefore, considering the existence of numerous caves and suitable stone raw resources in the study area, we expect to find more definitive archaeological evidence of the Paleolithic occupation of the Masuleh region," Biglari explained.

Home to some of the most stunning landscapes in the country, Masuleh is one of the many stepped villages that are quite common to find around the country, especially in Iranian Kurdistan and around Mashhad. They have been built on a hill so steep that the roof of one house is the pathway for the next.

Whereas practically, all stepped villages in Iran have been able to keep their rural and traditional essence, for some reason, Masuleh has evolved into a popular touristic destination that especially attracts domestic vacationers.

According to experts, Masuleh is receiving the attention of all the guidebooks, portraying it as a dreamy mountain village, so, slowly, it is becoming the prime destination for those travelers who have a little more than two weeks in Iran.

Iran is hoping to win UNESCO recognition for Masuleh.

Blue Mosque of Tabriz, surroundings undergo landscape project

TEHRAN— A landscape project has commenced trimming the surroundings of the 15th-century Blue Mosque of Tabriz in northwest Iran.

"A team of professional restorers and cultural heritage experts has begun work to trim landscapes of the Blue Mosque," East Azarbaijan province's tourism chief said on Tuesday.

Stone-paved area opposite the mosque's entrance will be restored in this season of restoration, Ahmad Hamzehzadeh said.

Completed in the mid-15th century, the Blue Mosque of Tabriz (better known as Masjed-e Kabud) was among the most glorious buildings of the time. Once built, artists took a further 25 years to cover every surface with the blue majolica tiles and intricate calligraphy for which it's nicknamed.

The Blue Mosque was once



part of a complex known as the "Muzaffariya," which included a tomb, cistern, library, and khanqah. The function of the remaining building itself in a state of ruin has not been definitively identified. It survived one of history's worst-ever earthquakes in 1727 but partly collapsed in a later quake in 1773.

Both interior and exterior surfaces were once covered in a variety of tile revetments; remains of tile mosaic, underglaze-painted and overglaze-painted tiles, and luster tiles attest to the richness

of the decorative scheme. Patterns are rendered in subtle colors with extensive use of cobalt blue as a ground for inscriptions and arabesque designs in gold and white. The dome was a deep blue, stenciled with gold patterns.

According to Archnet, its plan, which is unique in Iran, comprises a central square chamber covered by a dome and framed on three sides by a continuous arcade of nine domed bays. A domed sanctuary project from the fourth, the qibla side. An entrance portal with a

semi-dome, on axis with the qibla, accesses the arcade, which forms a five-bay vestibule parallel with the façade. The plan bears comparison to the covered Ottoman mosques of Bursa and Byzantine church architecture.

On the exterior walls of the Blue Mosque are many interesting under-glaze tiles, which are adorned with a black line and painted in white on a dark blue ground. Most of these are square blue-and-white tiles with floral or geometric ornaments.

Extensive rebuilding took place between 1950 and 1966. The dome over the central chamber dates from this period, as do the undecorated interior walls. Details from the mausoleum's interior, such as alabaster pieces from the wall panels and the main prayer niche, reveal that the mausoleum was never finished.

Natural properties in Ardabil approved as national heritage

TEHRAN —A selection of ten natural properties across Ardabil province has recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Tuesday in separate letters to the governor-general of the northwestern province, CHTN

reported.

Old trees, ancient hills, and hot water spas are among the properties added to the list.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to

the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and the Shrine Ensemble.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardabil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

Iran Technology Day to be held in GITEX 2022

TEHRAN – On the third day of the [Persian] Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEX 2022), a conference titled “Iran Technology Day” will be held.

It is expected that the exhibition will be hosting more than 4,000 exhibitors, 800 startups, 1,000 speakers and scientific personalities, 200 government institutions, and 400 investors from 170 countries.

More than 100,000 people are expected to visit the GITEX 2022 which will be held from October 10 to 14.

This year, on the third day of the GITEX exhibition, a big conference titled “Iran Technology Day” will be held.

The participants can benefit from special facilities of the Iran Business Center in the United Arab Emirates to launch businesses and hold B2B meetings. In addition to introducing your products to foreign visitors, networking with Iranian and foreign partners, and getting to know foreign competitors.

GITEX GLOBAL is one of the world's most influential meeting places for the technology industry;



bringing together thought-leaders, creators, innovators, and makers to discuss, debate, and challenge new ideologies, showcase new products and identify future opportunities.

Launched in 1981, it takes place annually in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

Technological development

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei designated the current Iranian year as “The Year of Production: Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating”.

Strengthening knowledge-based companies is on the agenda, raising hope for reducing

obstacles on the path to development.

The Leader has called on all Iranians, including citizens and government officials, to work hard to boost knowledge-based production and create new jobs.

Today, the country's knowledge-based ecosystem accounts for more than 3 percent of GDP. And the figure is projected to reach 5 percent, however, the main goal is to step toward a 10 percent share in GDP, Vice President for Science and Technology, Sourena Sattari told Fars on February 13.

The share of knowledge-based companies in the country's econo-

my has exceeded 9 quadrillion rials (about \$34 billion), and since 2019, it has experienced a growth of more than 450 percent, he stated.

There are currently 6,263 knowledge-based companies operating in the country, offering advanced products and services in various fields of technology to domestic and foreign markets, and some of them have entered international markets, Siavash Maleki, deputy head of the Fund, stated.

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

The participants can benefit from special facilities of the Iran Business Center to launch businesses and hold B2B meetings.

Over 20,000 invertebrates on display at biodiversity museum



TEHRAN – The invertebrate section of the National Museum of Natural History and Genetic Resources was inaugurated displaying about 20,000 specimens.

In this scientific archive, there are about 20,000 samples of invertebrates, including molluscs collection with 3,000 samples and arthropods collection with 18,000 samples, ISNA reported.

Molluscs are considered the second branch of invertebrates in terms of the number of species and have a considerable geographical distribution in seas, fresh waters and land, Mohammad Medadi, head of the National Museum of Natural History and Genetic Resources, said.

The molluscs include gastropods (Gastropoda) and bivalves (Bivalvia), most of these samples are related to the waters of the Persian

Gulf and the Sea of Oman in the south and the northern coast of the Caspian Sea, and there are a number of samples of land molluscs in addition to aquatic samples, he explained.

From Arthropoda, the samples of Insecta, Arachnida, Chilopoda, Diplopoda and Crustacean are kept in this archive, he added.

In the museum of the natural history of Iran, out of about 90,000 identified specimens in the world, there are more than 5,000 species of animals and plants, while entry is not open to the public.

The museum includes several sections, including a genetic bank that includes samples of genes from Iranian and foreign species for study, an herbarium collection, an animal taxidermy collection, and a geological museum.

There are the world's eight top specimens in the museum that are unique and there is no second specimen of them, including urials, hartebeest, dik-dik (the world's smallest antelopes), and Persian fallow deer.

Rich biodiversity

Iran has a high diversity of species due to geographical conditions, climatic diversity, huge water resources of the Caspian Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf, and the Sea of Oman in the south.

According to the latest studies, about 1,300 species of vertebrates, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic fish, about 30,000 species of invertebrates, and 8,000 species of plants have been identified in the country.

Unfortunately, over the past two decades, human activities have led to alarming degradation of ecosystems, deletion of genes, species, and biological capabilities; Human threats to biodiversity have accelerated the most over the past 50 years over the entire history of human life.

Out of 1,300 species of animals in the country, 130 of which are endangered and threatened, Hassan Akbari, deputy head of natural environment and biodiversity of the Department of Environment, said in December 2021.

Iran has a high diversity of species due to geographical conditions, climatic diversity, and huge water resources.

Rise of third Omicron peak

TEHRAN – Omicron variant may rise for the third time in the country, Masoud Younesian, an epidemiologist has warned.

Over the past two weeks ago, the transmission trend had been decreasing, but this downward trend has stopped during the last week, he lamented.

However, the concern is that other countries, including Bahrain, Iraq, Bulgaria, etc., are all haunted by the new waves after a while of easing. Even some countries, after the decline of the BA5 wave, experienced an upward trend. So, there are still such concerns, he stated.

Now, we may have a third peak of

Omicron ahead of us, depending on the conditions, including population movements, population behaviors, and the level of adherence to health protocols, he highlighted.

Therefore, even though we have already passed the peak of the BA5 wave, we cannot say that the seventh wave is completely over and every-



thing will return to normal, so that, we should be vigilant, he emphasized.

Hamidreza Jamaati, secretary of the National Scientific Committee of Coronavirus, said in July that if preventive measures such as wearing masks and injecting booster doses are adopted, we will not experience the rates of mortality that happened

in March with Omicron or last summer with Delta.

“Various studies have shown that in the first trimester after two doses of the vaccine, there is a 70 percent and after six months, about 50 to 60 percent effectiveness against omicron and its subtypes, so our emphasis is on completing the vaccination.”

To be continued

Charity to build 2,700 schools using new technologies

From page 1 ► Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam was founded in 1989. In the Iranian calendar year, 1386 (March 2017-March 2018) Barekat Charity Foundation- the social arm of the organization- with the aim of promoting social justice was established.

Socio-economic empowerment of communities by encouraging entrepreneurship prioritizing breadwinner women, developing infrastructures such as water supply and power grids, building roads, constructing schools and increasing educational spaces, promoting health for all, and granting non-repayable loans and insurance, especially in less developed areas and



regions most affected by 1980s war and natural disasters are of the priorities of the charity foundation.

BIRDS IN IRAN



Part 1

Description of the Iranian bird fauna

Despite the fact that large portions of the country are arid to semi-arid, Iran possesses a very rich and diverse bird fauna; over 490 species are known to have occurred.

Two main factors are responsible for this; the great range of habitats—from permanent snows to deep deserts and from lush deciduous forest in the north to palm groves and mangroves in the south—and Iran's position at a crossroads between three major faunal regions.

The bulk of the country lies within the Palearctic faunal region, which stretches from Europe and North Africa across north and central Asia to the Far East and Japan.

Lying along the southern edge of this region, Iran's bird fauna includes a large Western Palearctic faunal element, reaching its eastern extremity in the central Alborz and Zagros mountains, and a smaller, but still marked, Eastern Palearctic element, which extends into northeastern Iran in the highlands of Khorasan.

In a number of cases, western and eastern forms—either closely related species or well differentiated subspecies of a single

species—come together with a narrow zone of hybridization in the central Alborz; e.g., the wheatears *Oenanthe hispanica* and *O. pleschanka*, the buntings *Emberiza melanocephala* and *E. bruniceps*, and the green-backed and gray-backed forms of the great tit *Parus major* (Haffer).

In southern Iran, two other faunal regions have a pronounced influence on the avifauna: the Oriental region in the southeast, and the Afrotropical (Ethiopian) in the southwest.

Of 324 breeding species, 131 occur widely in the Palearctic region, 81 are Western Palearctic species, reaching the easternmost extremities of their ranges in Iran, while 19 are typically Eastern Palearctic species, reaching the westernmost tip of their ranges in Iran.

A further 25 species are characteristic of the great Saharo-Sindian desert belt which stretches along the southern edge of the Palearctic region from North Africa through West Asia to Mongolia, while another 24 are Palearctic species with restricted ranges in West Asia.

The bird fauna of southern Baluchestan and the southern Persian Gulf coast is predominantly Oriental, with some 29 breeding species of Oriental origin reaching the northwestern extremities of their ranges in Iran, while in southwestern Iran there is a small Afrotropical influence with six breeding species of African origin.

Finally, there are nine species of sea-bird and shorebird of the Indian Ocean, which breed on islands in the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

\$22m earmarked for equipping technical-vocational schools

A total budget of 900 billion rials (nearly \$22 million) has been requested to develop and equip technical-vocational high schools across the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20, 2019), Mohsen Hosseini, an official with the Ministry of Education has announced.

Describing some of the programs and priorities of the technical and vocational training organization affiliated to the Ministry, Hosseini pointed to improvement of technical and vocational training plans as the Ministry's main priority.

Competency-based education and assessment is among the most important programs of the technical and vocational organization, which must be well implemented in all career and technical education high school, he added, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان های کشور

مدیرکل فنی و حرفه ای دفتر متوسطه وزارت آموزش و پرورش از تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان های کشور در سال جاری خبر داد.

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر، سیدمحسن حسینی مقدم در دیدار با مدیران هنرستان های فنی و حرفه ای شهر شیراز و برخی از مناطق استان فارس با تشریح برخی از برنامه ها و اولویت های وزارت آموزش و پرورش در بخش فنی و حرفه ای، گفت: کیفیت بخشی برنامه های دفتر فنی و حرفه ای اولویت اصلی آموزش و پرورش است.

حسینی مقدم اظهار کرد: آموزش و ارزشیابی مبتنی بر شایستگی از مهمترین برنامه هایی است که در آموزش های فنی و حرفه ای دنبال می شود و باید این شیوه آموزش به خوبی مراقبت شده و در همه هنرستان ها اجرا شود.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON AUGUST 16

New cases	5,972
New deaths	78
Total cases	7,488,493
Total deaths	143,093
New hospitalized patients	1,113
Patients in critical condition	1,456
Total recovered patients	7,190,330
Diagnostic tests conducted	53,557,082
Doses of vaccine injected	153,384,476

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Failures are often the results of timidity and fears;
disappointments are the results of bashfulness; hours of
leisure pass away like summer-clouds, therefore, do not
waste opportunity of doing good.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:13:08 Evening: 20:11 Dawn: 4:54 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:25 (tomorrow)

Indian influences on Persian painting

Part 1

During the 17th century, the flow of artistic influences between Persia and India reversed.

Paintings and drawings in the developed Mughal style of the first quarter of the century were imported to the courts and bazaars of Isfahan.

There the “new Indian art—”with its appealing coloration (dependent on Persian miniature painting techniques) and incorporating European perspectival organization, modeling, and figure characterization—was eagerly sought out and copied by painters such as Shaikh Abbasi, Mohammad-Zaman, and Aliqoli Jabbadar.

It has long been thought that the three artists made trips to India or Kashmir to learn the new aesthetic, but this need not have been the case.

At least one Persia-trained artist, Mohammad Khan, who was patronized by Dara Shokuh, was back in Isfahan in 1670.

Due to exposure to Mughal art, Persian painting of the 17th century underwent a mammoth stylistic change, a change less dependent on direct exposure to European art than heretofore imagined.

Shaikh Abbasi, Mohammad Zaman, and Aliqoli Jobbadar, Persian artists who adopted European perspective and themes in their work on paper and papier-maché, also produced paintings that copy Indian works of art or are heavily influenced by them.

Shaikh Abbasi was attached to the courts of Shah Abbas II (r. 1642-66) and Shah Solayman (r. 1666-94). In his work, European influence is sifted through an Indian veneer, probably coming from Golconda.

He made portraits of the Safavid rulers of Persia and Mughal rulers and princes, such as a posthumous picture of Prince Dara Shokuh, dated 1669-70 in the Keir Collection, London.

The prince's headwear resembles a Scottish tam-o'-shanter more than a Mughal turban; his swarthy face and his clothing (jama) are modeled by stippling.

He stands in front of a rounded hill broken up into hillocks by dark, stippled outlines and clumps of large leaves, Abbasi's usual type of distinctive background.

Probably the models for Shaikh Abbasi's portraits were sets of pictures of rulers of Golconda and Bijapur, the Mughal emperors and nobles, and the Safavid shahs that were sold as mementos by Golconda artists.

Shaikh Abbasi often painted young Indian women, sometimes paired with or embraced by young men wearing Persian costume. A portrait of 1647 in the Art and History Trust Collection shows a gracefully posed young woman standing in front of willow trees and plants typical of Shaikh Abbasi's mentor Reza Abbasi.

The woman's “Indian” dress is much misunderstood—for instance, ruffles outlining the V-neck of her garment. It is doubtful that the artist had seen Indian garments actually worn.

Thirty-five years later Shaikh Abbasi signed and dated another tinted drawing of a woman in Indian dress, now held in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

While the earlier figure was notable for the lifelike swing of her pose, the later woman stands rigidly; the outlines of the figure and her costume are hard and precise, reinforced by pronounced chiaroscuro and modeled volumes, a technique probably derived from European engravings.

The background of overlapping hills has stippled vegetation and includes the artist's signature box

Portrait of Aliqoli Khan, by Mohammad Khan. (Courtesy of Art and History Trust Collection, on loan to Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C.)

prominently on the hillside.

As Ada T. Adamova notes, “the pictorial elements of the earlier Isfahan style are superseded increasingly by stiffness and formalized rigidity in the representation of figures”.

Why did Shaikh Abbasi portray so many Indian women? Abolala Soudavar suggests that it was due to a growing religious conservatism in Safavid society.

He believes that, due to a new emphasis on the sequestering and veiling of Persian women, the artists turned to representations of Indian women.

Although the ulama gained progressively more influence over the Persian government during the reigns of Shah Solayman and Shah Sultan Hosayn, this was not the case under Shah Abbas II, when Shaikh Abbasi first adopted this theme.

Shaikh Abbasi was influenced by a new Persian taste for exotic European and Indian subject matter, and he apparently had access to Indian and Deccani works of art in the royal Persian ketabkhana and the Isfahan bazaars.

Mohammad Zaman's name appears on a painting of a group of Indian men seated in candlelight, held in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Davis Album, as first read by Robert Skelton, in museum records).

The picture once faced another “Mughal” miniature with similar subject matter signed by Aliqoli Jobbadar and dated 1674-75.

Six other copies of Indian paintings closely related to these two and bearing ascriptions to Aliqoli are in the St. Petersburg Album.

One of these is inscribed “Aliqoli Beg Jobbadar,” and another, raqam-e Aliqoli Gholamzada-ye Shah Abbas Sani (r. 1642-66). The eight figures in Mughal dress surrounding an old Shaikh are illuminated by a single candle, and the competency of their drawing varies.

The Shaikh and three men immediately next to him are fine copies of a work by a Mughal master painter; the face of the standing boy is in the style of a follower of Reza Abbasi; and the strongly modeled backs of the two armed soldiers on the lower right are based on yet a third source.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued.

Iranian films line up for Moscow festival

From Page 1 ▶ Directed by Fereidun Najafi, “Wolf Cubs of Apple Valley” shows a shot that rings out in the valley, and then Asho's friend drops to the ground. The rifle bullet was meant for Asho; his father is wanted for murder and he, too, is being hunted. To evade those who are looking for him, Asho is forced to dress up as a girl and hide at his aunt's house. In his hunt for answers, he heads out to Apple Valley with his cousin, Pari, to look for his mother, who he has always believed to be dead.

Director-writer Abolfazl Jalili has made “The Reversed Path”, also known as “The Contrary Route” based on his life story.

The film follows Emkan, a 17-year-old teenager who has not seen his father for many years and his mother works in a factory until late at night. He has a small recording camera and he decides to make a film to give a twist to his routine life. Although Emkan is not very proficient, he tries his best to achieve his goal.

“Breeze” by Hamidreza Qasemi follows an Iranian who has grown up in a European country. After the

Mostafa Zamani and Pegah Ahangarani act in a scene from “No Prior Appointment”.

death of his parents, he goes to Iran, as it seems to him to be his homeland, but Iran turns out not to be the country he imagined, nor the one his parents told him about.

The short film “Don't Breathe” has been written and directed by

Milad Nasimsobhan.

To exert more tyranny and oppression, the ruling power has done something to its dissenters so that they exhale smoke when they breathe, and the agents must take such people into custody wherever

they find them.

The Moscow festival will open with a screening of the Russian historical drama, “Land of Legends” directed by Anton Megerdichev, and wrap up with the Korean drama, “Decision to Leave” by Park Chan-wook.

“Don't Breathe” named best short at Regina Intl. Film Festival

TEHRAN – Iranian short fantasy “Don't Breathe” was picked as best international short film at the Regina International Film Festival and Awards in Canada.

In this film by Milad Nasimsobhan, the ruling power, in order to exert tyranny and increase oppression, has done something to its dissenters so that when they breathe they exhale smoke, and the agents must take such people into custody wherever they find them. Unaware of the law, a man meets one of the dissidents and it changes the course of his life, so he decides to immigrate with the dissident to a better land for a better life.

Winners of the festival, which took place in Regina, Saskatchewan, were announced on Sunday.

“Sweet Disaster” by German director Laura Lehmus won the award for best international feature film.

It follows Frida who unexpectedly becomes pregnant, and Felix, the father of her child, breaks up with her to reunite with his ex. Although some

serious health problems caused by the late pregnancy force Frida to rest, she still tries to get Felix back, using methods which are absurd, exaggerated and sometimes hilarious.

The award for best short documentary was given to the Spanish film “Dajla: Cinema and Oblivion” by Arturo Duenas Herrero.

Life is going on in Dakhla, one of the Sahrawi refugee camps in southern Algeria, forgotten for 45 years. A film festival, the Fisahara, breaks the monotony. The event ends, life (and oblivion) continues.

“The City that Lives in Me” by Brazilian filmmaker Maria Carolina was selected as best documentary feature.

The resumption of occupation of the city in the midst of the pandemic chaos is the guiding thread of the dance documentary “The City that Lives in Me”, a celebration of the return of the on-site activities of the Castro Alves Theater Ballet. The documentary follows the artistic process of the dance company, revealing the backstage of one of the biggest theaters in Brazil.

A scene from the Iranian short fantasy “Don't Breathe” by Milad Nasimsobhan.

The award for best animated film went to “Echo” by Greek director Sergio Kotsovoulos.

The movie is about Ellie, who avoids verbal communication because she hears an ECHO of -what she thinks to be- the thoughts of the speaker. She survives thanks to her landlady. Manu moves into the apartment across from her. Day by day, their routines echo with each other.

Persians reading “The Confusions of Young Törless”

TEHRAN – A Persian translation of Austrian philosophical novelist and essayist Robert Musil's literary debut “The Confusions of Young Törless” has come to Iranian bookstores.

First published in 1906, the book has been translated into Persian by Mahmud Haddadi. Now is the publisher of the book.

Like his contemporary and rival Sigmund Freud, Robert Musil boldly explored the dark, irrational undercurrents of humanity.

“The Confusions of Young Törless”, published in 1906 while

A combination photo shows writer Robert Musil and the front cover of the Persian edition of his book “The Confusions of Young Törless”.

he was a student, uncovers the bullying, snobbery, and vicious homoerotic violence at an elite boys'

academy.

Unsparingly honest in its depiction of the author's tangled feelings about his mother, other women, and male bonding, it also vividly illustrates the crisis of a whole society, where the breakdown of traditional values and the cult of pitiless masculine strength were soon to lead to the cataclysm of the First World War and the rise of fascism.

More than a century later, Musil's first novel still retains its shocking, prophetic power.

Musil graduated from military

boarding schools at Eisenstadt and then Hranice, which at that time was also known as Mährisch Weibkirchen. These school experiences are reflected in “The Confusions of Young Törless”.

He served in the army during The First World War. When Austria became a part of the Third Reich in 1938, Musil left for exile in Switzerland, where he died of a stroke on April 15, 1942.

Musil collapsed in the middle of his gymnastic exercises and is rumored to have died with an expression of ironic amusement on his face. He was 61 years old.

A story based on a terrorist attack in civilized Europe

A review of the book “By Those Angels Lined Up in Rows”

Although you may not be as familiar with the name “Anders Bering Berwick” as you are with “Osama bin Laden,” “Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi,” or “Abd al-Malik Rigi,” it is interesting to know that he was in charge of two significant terrorist operations in Norway.

On July 22, 2011, Mr. Breivik detonated a fertilizer bomb in downtown Oslo, killing eight

people. He then went on a shooting rampage at a summer camp on the island of Utøya, killing 69 people, most of them teenagers. The camp was organized by the youth arm of the country's center-left Labor Party. “By Those Angels Lined Up in Rows,” a book by Mehran Najafi, is about this terrorist attack and the bombing that killed an Iranian journalist.

This book's narrative is presented in two different ways. The chapters are titled alternately “Raham” and “Rozan.” The chapters with the title “Raham” are told by a character with the same name, while the chapters with the title “Rozan” detail various aspects of Rozan's life before concluding with the acct of the terrorist blast in Norway.

Raham's sister is Rozan, an Iranian journalist who resides in Norway. The book's two narratives are not chronologically parallel, and Raham's stories take place after the terrorist attack. This is an important distinction.

The author chose a worthwhile topic for his

book—one that has probably received little attention in the literature world. Also, the author made a creative choice in how to tell the story, but it has a flaw: in the middle of the narrative, while attempting to advance the plot, the author also includes extra information that is irrelevant to whether you know it or not.

Comparing the other characters in the book, Raham is the most fully developed character in terms of characterization principles. Throughout the story, Raham's emotions and thoughts are well conveyed to the audience, but the other characters' characterization is lacking and somewhat hazy.

Aside from these issues, the book cannot draw readers who get bored easily because it takes until the middle of the book for readers who have no prior knowledge of the subject to understand what it is about and what the point of these stories is. In fact, the novel's main plot doesn't begin until the very end, raising the possibility that readers will put the book down before the incidents even begin.