

Hajj: A Global Rendezvous

Hajj a global issue meant to foster unity against oppression: Leader

وَأَجْعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَسَاجِدَ لِلنَّاسِ وَأَمِّنَا
وَأَيُّكُمْ هُنَا كَمَا مَا أَيْنَ خَانَهُ (كذب) را برای همه مردم محل گردهمایی و جای امن و امان قرار دادیم. البقرة ۱۲۵



Report

NATO seeks to prolong Ukraine war

By Ali Karbalaee

TEHRAN- The U.S.-led military alliance has been shipping arms to Ukraine in stages, depending on which side has the upper hand in the conflict.

After Russia launched what it described as a “special military operation” on Ukraine in February 2022 to de-nazify the country, NATO shipped light arms to Kyiv.

As Russian forces advanced, heavier and more sophisticated weapons have been sent to Ukraine, including modern battle tanks and Soviet-era fighter jets.

The flashpoint of the war has taken place mainly in the country's eastern Donbas region next to the Russian border.

The latest pledge in billions of euros of weapons to Ukraine is another bid to maintain a stalemate and comes after Russia appears to have the upper hand in the eastern Donbas city of Bakhmut, the longest and deadliest battle of the war so far.

Experts have pointed out that capturing Bakhmut would effectively pave the way for Moscow to secure the entire Donbas region.

The Russian Defense Ministry spokesman, Igor Konashenkov, says “the fiercest battles continued to be fought by units on the western outskirts of Bakhmut.” ▶ Page 5

Iran, Russia ink agreement on completing Rasht-Astara railway

TEHRAN - An agreement for the construction of Iran's Rasht-Astara railway was signed on Wednesday between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia in a ceremony attended by the presidents of the two countries via video conference.

As reported by the portal of the Iranian Transport and Urban Development Ministry, the agreement has been signed with the aim of completing the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

According to this agreement, the Russian Federation will invest 1.6 billion euros in this railway route.

Back in January, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash met with the Russian president's special envoy Igor Levitin to review the progress in railway cooperation between the two countries and stressed accelerating the development of INSTC.

Bazrpash and Levitin also talked

about Iran's railway projects that Russia is already participating in and explored ways of developing cooperation even further.

During the Wednesday signing ceremony, which was participated by the two countries' presidents via video conference, President Raisi considered the agreement between

Iran and Russia on the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway as an important and strategic step in cooperation between the two countries and emphasized that the government's plans to promote Iran's role in the regional economy will be followed seriously.

Stating that the signing of this

agreement is not limited to the co-operation between Iran and Russia and the countries that are on the route of the North-South rail corridor will benefit from it, Raisi said the North-South corridor is not only for Iran and Russia, but for everyone. The countries that are on its path will have many benefits.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin attend the Rasht-Astara railway construction agreement signing ceremony via a video conference on Wednesday.

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Tehran Papers

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

St. Petersburg-Persian Gulf highway on operational rail

In a commentary, Farhikhtegan discussed the railway cooperation between Iran and Russia. It wrote: ▶ Page 2

86th Naval Fleet returns home

TEHRAN- Iran's 86th Naval Fleet, which included the home-built Dena Destroyer, came home on Wednesday after the first round of the world in a mission dubbed “360-Degree”.

The flotilla completed a lengthy cruise around the world and sailed across the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic oceans without needing assistance from land for the first time in Iran's naval history.

On September 20, 2022, it departed from Bandar Abbas, a port city on the Persian Gulf. It finally anchored at Oman's Salalah harbor on the 236th day of its journey.

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

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Wednesday that the fleet earned another award at the international level by undertaking a lengthy journey around the globe.

In a post on his Twitter account, Kanaani said the flotilla made a round-the-world tour with all-Iranian warships, Dena and Makran vessels, and brought about another honor on the international stage for the first time in the country's history.

On Sunday, the 86th flotilla of warships, which had already traveled further than any other Iranian flotilla in international seas, berthed at Salalah, the port city of Oman. ▶ Page 2

IAEA not in charge of negotiations: nuclear chief

TEHRAN - Iran has reacted to remarks by the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that the chances for reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal are slim, saying that the IAEA is not responsible for the negotiations.

Mohammad Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said negotiations over reviving the Iran nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), lies with the P5+1 group of countries, which include the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.

In an interview with the Canadian CBC news channel, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi said that the chances of Iran returning to the JCPOA are slim, but it's important to keep interacting with Tehran.

“Probably there could be a return to the negotiating table, but if the interactions between Iran and the agency are seen or assessed as bad and the cooperation is not good, the chances are zero,” he said. ▶ Page 3

Academic meeting to discuss Ecbatana as treasured cultural heritage

TEHRAN - A panel of Iranian archaeologists, historians, and cultural heritage scholars has been invited to discuss ancient Ecbatana as a treasured cultural heritage in the history of the nation.

Organized by Hamedan province's tourism directorate in close collaboration with Bu-Ali Sina University, the meeting is scheduled for May 18 in commemoration of the national cultural heritage week, CHTN reported.

Known locally as Hegmataneh, the ensemble was once one of the world's greatest cities of ancient times. However, due to urban developments and natural erosion, the ancient ensemble overlaps with modern Hamedan.

The meeting will address everyday life in Ecbatana during the Median period, governmental structures, and ruined residential places of ordinary people.

It will also discuss domestic and international factors and obstacles in terms of environmental and urban architecture existing on the path of possible UNESCO registration of the site.

In addition, the experts will be elaborating on the protection and restoration of bones and burial objects from excavation sites to museums; climatic adaptability of the Parthian architecture; and pre-Parthian discoveries.

Last week, Hamedan's Governor-General said the UNESCO designation of Ecbatana would be providing a great opportunity for Iran's tourism sector. “The UNESCO registration of the Hegmataneh ensemble will provide an unparalleled opportunity not only for Hamedan but for the whole tourism sector of Iran,” Moslem Makhfi said. ▶ Page 6

Neyshabur rendezvous for Khayyam lovers on May 18

TEHRAN - The northeastern Iranian city of Neyshabur, home to the tomb of Omar Khayyam, will be a rendezvous for the lovers of the Persian mathematician, astronomer and poet on May 18, his birthday that is celebrated as Khayyam Day.

People from across the country will flock to the city to attend a variety of programs arranged by cultural officials of the city, which is also Khayyam's hometown.

As a symbolic act entitled “The Morning Sun of Neyshabur”, the bell at Khayyam High School was rung on Wednesday at 7:30 am in memory of the Persian poet to announce the beginning of the celebration.

The University of Neyshabur also launched a two-day seminar to discuss the latest studies on Khayyam.

Kamalolmolk Gallery opened an exhibition displaying verses on Khayyam poetry inscribed by a group of renowned calligraphers.

Young Persian literature aficionados attended the Chelleh Charaneh Literary Contest held in the evening at the tomb of Khayyam, reciting quatrains from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, the magnum opus of the great poet.

A group of experts also came together at the Khayyam Planetarium and Museum Complex in a meeting entitled “The Ordibehesht of Khayyam” to discuss Khayyam's achievements in astronomy.

On Thursday, municipal and cultural officials will join people to lay wreaths at the tomb of Khayyam, where several musical and theatrical performances will take place. ▶ Page 8

Op-ed

Iranian women in Pahlavi regime; isolation or advancement?

By Sara Atta

TEHRAN - The Pahlavi regime tried to change the role of Iranian women by using western models, which were not accepted by the Muslim nation of Iran, but the many mistakes of the regime, especially the historical mistake of Reza Shah in banning all Islamic hijab, made the regime unable to revive the real role and status of women in Iran.

At the beginning of the 13th century, the influence of new Western ideas on Muslims caused the formation of new discussions about the status of women in Islamic societies. In the modern western world, due to the strong presence of colonialism in Islamic countries as well as intellectual approaches in these countries, ▶ Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

St. Petersburg-Persian Gulf highway on operational rail

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

In a commentary, Farhikhtegan discussed the railway cooperation between Iran and Russia. It wrote: One of the serious gifts that Iran's special geopolitical conditions has provide for us is the transit opportunity that Iran's geography enjoys. The Western governments, by provoking opposition currents to increase tensions in the fall of 1401, wanted to make Iran appear insecure and finally to pursue the project of isolating Tehran's diplomatic representatives in capitals around the world. But the Iranian society preferred to reject the anti-Iranian groups and instead pay attention to national interests and to establish security again in the country's cities. By re-establishing security in the streets, the project of isolating Iran has completely failed. The riot project was intended to achieve the goal of bypassing Iran and creating alternative transit routes. But after re-establishing stability in the cities of the country, the government decided to complete the rest of the North-South strategic super-project by signing an agreement that was concluded on Wednesday. With its completion, in the long term, we will see the revival of Iran's role as the transit highway of the region and somehow "transit intersection of the world".

Kayhan: Turkish elections shamed self-proclaimed reformists

Kayhan dedicated its headline to the Turkish elections and said: Although the difference in number of votes between Erdogan and Kilicdaroglu was not more than 2.5 million, Kilicdaroglu's supporters did not claim fraud in the elections and did not engage in chaos. Turkey's elections and the behavior of Kilicdaroglu's supporters remind us of our country's elections in 1388 (2009). When the self-proclaimed reformers, despite the fact that the difference in number of votes between Ahmadinejad and Mousavi was more than 11 million, [13 million votes versus 24.5 million] acted upon the orders of the American, British and Israeli intelligence services and rioted against Islamism, republicanism of system and people's votes. In addition, they considered Erdogan as their model of development and democracy; and while praising the Islamism of Erdogan's secular government, they compared it to the Islamic Republic and said that Turkey has progressed because separating religion from politics. However, despite Erdogan's government's trust in the West and the United States and serving as a slave for NATO and the United

States in their war-mongering campaigns, neither Turkey became a member of the European Union nor it experienced economic prosperity. The West even did not avoid engineering a coup against Erdogan. In addition, after the coup in Turkey and the repression of the accused by Erdogan, some of the same reformists said this is also the record of Islamists and their oppression (!)

Sobh-e-No: Turkish elections is a lesson for reformists

In its editorial, Sobh-e-No addressed the Turkish elections and the Iranians' point of view in this regard. It wrote: The reformist faction should learn from the Turkish election process in which the candidates accepted the results. Rather than claiming as winner and pushing the country into chaos, they accepted the election results. In the Turkish elections that the main competitor is someone who has been in power for 20 years and must have various tools to influence the tastes of voters, no one condemned him for "distribution of free potatoes," because they follow the rules of the game. Therefore, if for once the reform factions move within the existing political frameworks, they will definitely not lose.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Biden confrontation with Congress over JCPOA

In a note, Arman-e-Emrooz addressed the secret meeting of the White House officials with the representatives of the Senate. It wrote: "The radical Republicans in the U.S. Congress want the Biden government to take the policy of sanctions against Iran more seriously instead of pursuing diplomacy." But it has not been approved by the Biden government.

Regarding the latest developments in the JCPOA and negotiations, Faraji Rad, the former ambassador of Iran to Norway, says: "It seems that the imminent visit of the King of Oman to Tehran is also related to the news that stated progress has been made in the negotiations. It is unlikely that the Sultan of Oman's trip is aimed at exchanging two or three prisoners (with the U.S.) Neither Robert Malley nor Blinken have been interviewed on the nuclear issue for some time. Only the spokesperson for the United States State Department declared a few days ago that we are looking for a long-term agreement with Iran. On the other hand, in the last week or two, the Iranian side has declared that the legal departments of Iran and the United States are negotiating with each other.

FM visits Sistan-Baluchistan over Iran-Afghanistan water issue

TEHRAN- Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian visited the southeast border province of Sistan-Baluchistan as the dispute over the sharing of water from the Helmand River still remains unresolved.

Nasser Kanaani, a spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, stated earlier on Wednesday that the minister was to meet with local provincial officials to talk about Iran's water rights.

Amir Abdollahian was accompanied by Hassan Kazemi Qomi, the acting Iranian ambassador to Kabul who also acts as Iran's special representative for Afghanistan, and Rasoul Mousavi, the minister's assistant.

A protracted water conflict between Tehran and Kabul has been centered on the Helmand River originating from Afghanistan.

Iran and Afghanistan agreed to a pact in 1973 that grants Iran access to 820 million cubic meters of river water annually.

However, since Afghanistan was thrown into decades of turmoil and because various governments had varied attitudes toward Iran, the pact was never fully implemented and discussions were never furthered.

The Taliban, which seized control of the nation in 2021, has declared it will uphold the 1973 pact.

However, politicians and government officials in Iran have frequently argued that their nation is not getting its fair share of water from the river.

Ebrahim Raisi, the President of Iran, gave orders to the foreign and energy ministries on Monday to take Afghanistan's claim over shared water resources seriously.

According to Kazemi Qomi, Iran barely received 4% of its allotted water during the previous Iranian year, which concluded on March 20.

He expressed hope that the disagreement will be resolved in the current Iranian calendar year and said that Afghan authorities had pledged to strive to eliminate any barriers standing in the way of Iran collecting its fair share from the river.

In remarks on Monday, Kazemi Qomi said one of the priorities of the Foreign Ministry is to secure Iran's water rights from Helmand.

Before feeding the Hamoun Lake, which is shared by Iran and Afghanistan, the Helmand River traverses almost a thousand kilometers from its source in the Hindu Kush Mountains.

The lake, which UNESCO named a global biosphere reserve in 2016, is crucial for the environment and economy of Iran's southeast, which is primarily desert and impoverished.

Iran is currently experiencing a significant public health problem due to dust storms from the dried-up Hamoun Lake.

The economy of the region has suffered greatly, and thousands of people have relocated to the cities in order to survive.

86th Naval Fleet returns home

From page 1 ► The Dena destroyer and Makran forward base ship are part of the Iranian flotilla.

The 86th flotilla berthed at Brazil's southeastern port city of Rio de Janeiro in February.

Dena is a Mowj-class warship that joined the Iranian Navy in June 2021.

The military vessel is outfitted with anti-ship cruise missiles, torpedoes and naval cannons.

Makran, a forward base ship weighing 121,000 tons, is the other vessel in the flotilla.

The oil tanker that was converted into a warship is used to support the combat vessels logistically and can carry five helicopters.

The Iranian Navy has established three ocean commands to oversee naval missions to the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic oceans.

As the fleet docked in Salalah, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said the U.S. failed to stop the flotilla from passing through the Panama Canal.

Irani asserted that "global arrogance" attempted to thwart the mission of the flotilla through threats and penalties, but was unsuccessful.

Speaking with Fars News Agency on Saturday, he noted that "the United States sanction was no more than a rant based on international law. They could not even prevent the flotilla from sailing into the Panama Canal. This was another slap on the face of the Great Satan."



The Great Satan refers to the U.S.

On February 3, 2023, the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated the Dena and Makran warships as Iranian property for sanctions in connection with a broader attempt to target the country's drone sector.

The chief Navy officer stated in other parts of his interview that France claimed the Iranian vessels had invaded its seas.

The French, on the other hand, were rendered speechless when the flotilla reminded them of their own shipping regulations, he continued.

"The French have some islands in the Pacific Ocean. Unfortunately, they were not aware of their own regulations and caused disturbances for us, to which we responded with the language of the

law," Admiral Irani remarked.

He also noted that "the recent incident was a big blow to the French in the field of international shipping, and they never talked about it."

Iran's rising naval power is winning the attention of global powers. For example, during a meeting with Admiral Irani on Monday in Tehran, Admiral Nikolai Yevmenov, commander-in-chief of the Russian Navy, advocated for the advancement of naval cooperation with Iran, expressing willingness to sign bilateral agreements with the Iranian Navy in a number of areas.

The Russian admiral also expressed hope that his visit to Iran would result in further improvement of cooperation between the navies of the two countries.

He emphasized the importance of strengthening ties between the Iranian and Russian naval forces.

Yevmenov also stated that the Russian Navy is fully prepared to work with Iran to further advance bilateral relations.

Also, in a meeting with Yevmenov on Monday, the deputy chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination said that the Islamic Republic will improve coordination with its partners, especially Russia, to combat challenges to regional security posed by "global arrogance."

Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari also encouraged vigilance to prevent any dominance of the arrogant countries on the global stage.

"We do not want to dominate or attack any country, but we stand against any threats and arrogant domination. In this regard, we will strengthen our cooperation and synergy with friendly and allied countries, including Russia," Sayyari stated.

Raisi calls "Nakba Day" historical tragedy

TEHRAN- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi issued a statement on Tuesday describing Nakba (Catastrophe) Day as one of the most agonizing "disasters in human history".

Nakba Day marks the expulsion of more than 700,000 Palestinians from their homes and destruction of more than 400 Palestinian villages by Israeli occupiers.

The statement by the president was issued on the 75th anniversary of Nakba Day, when Israel was established came into existence.

The Nakba is generally commemorated on 15 May.

In a commentary on May 15 headlined "Nakba anniversary highlights continued Israeli repression", the Human Rights Watch (HRW) quoted the Palestinian human rights group al-Haq as saying, "The legacy of the Nakba events is that about two-thirds of the Palestinian people became refugees," while Israel "imposed a system of institutionalized racial discrimination over Palestinians who remained on the land."

President Raisi insisted on the Islamic Republic's long-held policy that Iran will continue to back the Palestinians in their struggle to liberate their homeland from the occupation of Israeli occupiers.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its solidarity with this oppressed nation and emphasizes supporting the cause and legitimate resistance of the Palestinian people in the path of liberating the occupied territories and forming an independent and unified government in the entire historical land of Palestine with the capital of the holy Quds," Raisi said in part of his statement.

The text of the message is as follows:

May 14, 1948 is a reminder of one of the most painful tragedies in human history. This ominous phenomenon caused the longest and saddest political and human crisis in the last one hundred years in the world and widespread insecurity in the West Asian region, the organized occupation and cruel usurpation of the Palestinian land, the killing of the oppressed Palestinians and the violation of

the most obvious human rights of the original inhabitants of this holy land in 75 years.

Since the day that has been rightly named "Nakba Day", the Zionist regime has caused the displacement of millions of Palestinians, the targeted assassinations of Palestinian activists and ordinary people, the destruction of their homes, farms, and places of business and the violation of fundamental principles of international law, and it is obvious that the western supporters of this regime, especially the United States of America, are complicit in its crimes.

The Zionist regime continues its extreme and inhumane actions against the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the desecration of Islamic sanctities in the holy Quds in recent months, and in recent days, with a large-scale attack on various areas of the Gaza Strip, especially residential buildings, and targeted assassination of Palestinian citizens to escape from increasing and multi-layered internal crises.

Raisi insists on Iran's democratic plan for a political solution to the Palestinian crisis based on a referendum with the participation of all the main inhabitants of the Palestinian land.

These crimes, which have led to the martyrdom of dozens of civilians, including Palestinian women and children, are the concrete manifestation of state terrorism and mass murder, which has been the constant approach of this regime for the past 75 years.

For more than 18 years, the residents of the Gaza Strip have been living in the world's largest natural prison under cruel siege in a major humanitarian crisis. The continuation of the illegal and inhumane siege of the Gaza Strip and the ongoing crimes of



the Zionist regime against the people of this region is a gross and obvious violation of the fundamental principles of international law, human rights and humanitarian rights, and unfortunately, the silence and inaction of the self-proclaimed human rights activists only lead to the arrogance of more than apartheid regime has been done before.

While strongly condemning the crimes of the Zionist apartheid regime against the Palestinian nation and the nations of the region, and while emphasizing the need for immediate, effective and deterrent action by the responsible international institutions, led by the United Nations, to stop the crimes of the Zionist regime and support the Palestinian nation, the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its solidarity with this oppressed nation and emphasizes supporting the cause and legitimate resistance of the Palestinian people in the path of liberating the occupied territories and forming an independent and unified government in the entire historical land of Palestine with the capital of the holy Quds.

At the end, I re-emphasize the Islamic Republic of Iran's democratic plan for the political solution of the Palestinian occupation crisis based on holding a public referendum with the participation of all the main inhabitants of the Palestinian land, including Muslims, Christians and Jews, in order to exercise the right to self-determination and to determine the type of political system.

the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian parliament revealed on Sunday that talks between Iranian and Egyptian delegates are now taking place in Iraq.

Fadahosseini Maleki highlighted that ties between Tehran and Cairo will soon be repaired, and both embassies in Tehran and Cairo will reopen.

In 1980, Egypt broke diplomatic ties with Iran after welcoming the country's ousted Pahlavi king and endorsing the Israeli apartheid regime.



Days before, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian stated that Tehran welcomed a normalization of ties with Cairo and even expressed hope that the two sides would enhance bilateral ties.

Amir Abdollahian noted that Tehran and Cairo are in direct communication through respective interest sections.

He mentioned that several nations are working to urge Iran and Egypt to normalize their relations.

"We have always welcomed the development of relations between Tehran and Cairo. The heads of our missions – interest sections – in Tehran and Cairo have good meetings. There is good access to the authorities of both countries."

In the meantime, a member of

Hajj a global issue meant to foster unity against oppression: Leader

TEHRAN – Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, highlighted the importance of the Hajj pilgrimage as global issue that is meant to foster unity against oppression.

The Leader made the remarks during a meeting with Iranian officials in charge of conducting and organizing the Hajj pilgrimage on Wednesday.

Ayatollah Khamenei stressed the importance of viewing the Hajj pilgrimage correctly and the understanding of the importance of this religious obligation. “Hajj is a global and civilizational issue, the purpose of which is to advance the Islamic nation, to bring the hearts of Muslims closer together and to unite the Islamic nation against disbelief, oppression, Arrogance and human, non-human idols,” he said, according to khamenei.ir.

Referring to verses from the Quran, Ayatollah Khamenei considered the Kaaba to be the source of the rising and stability of human societies. He also referred to the worldly benefits and benefits related to the Hereafter of this great duty. “If there was no Hajj, the Islamic nation would collapse.”

The Leader considered the Hajj as an international and global event. Referring to God's invitation of all people to perform Hajj, he stated, “Inviting human beings throughout history to be present in a certain place and on certain days, is an indication of the important goal and countless benefits that exist in this divine call.”

Ayatollah Khamenei considered the unity of the Islamic nation and confronting the Arrogant evil powers as examples of these goals. “One of the numerous worldly



benefits of Hajj is that in this great gathering, Muslims demonstrate their presence and their power and they stand up to the Zionist regime, the influence of Arrogant Powers and all oppressors around the world,” he added.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also explained those benefits of Hajj which are related to the Hereafter, describing each act of this duty as an enlightening window towards the unseen world. Addressing the Hajj pilgrims, he said, “Purify and cleanse your hearts from all that goes against the remembrance of God through supplication and prayer, sincerity and worship.”

He considered the international and extraterritorial view of Hajj as a fundamental issue and pointed out the need to know about world issues and the situation of Muslim nations. “The Hajj period is a great opportunity to get to know the nations and global issues so that the false news of the media and fake news agencies do not lead people astray and away from the realities of the world.”

Ayatollah Khamenei considered unawareness in the world as the reason for a society's destruction. “As it has been said many times before, the people and our officials should be very serious about identifying the goals, methods, policies, and the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy. If this happens, the country will not be deceived as it has been deceived in a number of places,” he said.

The Leader added that if everyone is aware of global issues, they can understand the enemy's real purpose and the reason for its insistence on certain issues. “In many issues, the officials have practiced vigilance and acted in the right manner. Iran's exceptional progress in regional and global issues, which has angered the US, is the result of this vigilance.”

Ayatollah Khamenei described the practical manifestation of Islam's opposition to geographical, racial, social class-based and other discriminations as part of the fundamental principles of Hajj. “The countries that claim to be civilized, yet have no traces

of civilization in them, are still caught up in the racial issues of blacks and whites, Europeans and non-Europeans. They value their pets more than they value some humans. The successive drowning of immigrants in the sea is an indication of this reality.”

He considered the uniformity and sameness of all pilgrims from any race, history and culture as one of the secrets of Hajj. “The officials and organizers involved in Hajj should spread awareness in such a way that when people, especially the youth of today, hear the word ‘Hajj’, it will evoke fundamental concepts in their minds, such as the formation of civilizations, unity against oppressors, having a cross-border view and eliminating the current disparities that exist in human societies. If such a thing takes place, no one will be worried anymore about some pilgrims shopping for low-quality products as souvenirs.”

The Leader emphasized the need for Iranian pilgrims to take part in the congregational prayers that are held in Masjid al-Haram and Masjid al-Nabawi, calling on pilgrims to communicate and talk with each other. “It is very good to read Dua Kumayl together as a group. At the same time, the ‘Disavowal of Polytheists’ ceremony, which is part of the broad and profound provisions of Hajj, must continue.”

He described the victory of the Islamic Revolution as the cause for the recognition and partial revival of the capacities of Hajj, adding that efforts need to be made to revive all these capacities and to utilize them in the way of fulfilling the fundamental goals of Hajj.

MAY 18, 2023

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

IPL two-horse title race to come to an end

TEHRAN – On Thursday, the winners of the 22nd edition of Iran Professional League (IPL) will be unveiled.

Persepolis and Sepahan football teams are favorites to win the two-horse title race. Persepolis, the most decorated Iranian club, will try to win the title for the eighth time out of 22 editions, while Sepahan want to collect their sixth title.

Sepahan have not won the title since 2015, while Persepolis have claimed the title five times in the last six editions.

Esteghlal, defending champions, have finished in third place and will focus on winning 2022/23 Hazfi Cup, where the Blues are scheduled to meet Nassaji in the semifinals.

Esteghlal are the most decorated team in Hazfi Cup, winning the title seven times.

Persepolis, who sit top with 63 points, need a win to wrap up the IPL title. The Reds could also win the title with a draw if Sepahan, 62, fail to defeat struggling Mes Kerman.

Naft Masjed Soleyman were relegated from the IPL last week and Sanat Naft and Mes Kerman will battle to avoid relegation.

IPL 2022/23 Matchday 30:

**Naft Masjed Soleyman vs Malavan
*Esteghlal vs Tractor
*Foolad vs Aluminum
*Zob Ahan vs Havadar
*Mes Kerman vs Sepahan
*Paykan vs Mes Rafsanjan
*Gol Gohar vs Sanat Naft
Nassaji vs Persepolis

Taekwondo athlete Kalhor banned for doping

TEHRAN – Iranian taekwondo athlete Reza Kalhor has been banned for four years for using the prohibited substance.

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

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

Hakan Demir takes charge of Iran basketball team

TEHRAN – Turkish coach Hakan Demir was appointed as new head coach of Iran basketball team.

He replaced Saeid Armaghani in Team Melli.

The 54-year-old coach will also coach Manisa Metropolitan Belediyespor in the Turkish Insurance Basketball Super League at the same time.

Having previously experienced abroad by coaching Switzerland's Herens Basket and Romania's Dinamo Bucharest teams, Demir also undertook the head coaching of Turkish teams such as Beşiktaş, TOFAŞ, Banvit, Trabzonspor and Pınar Karşıyaka.

Demir will lead Iran basketball team in the 2023 FIBA World Cup, where the Persians are drawn in Group G along with Spain, Brazil and Ivory Coast.

He will also head the Iranian team in the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou.

Mountaineer Kazemi conquers Mt. Everest

TEHRAN – Iranian climber Rouhollah Kazemi reached the summit of Mount Everest.

He also managed to climb Manaslu Peak (8163 meters) last year.

Mount Everest is the world's highest mountain, with a peak at 8,849 metres (29,031.7 ft) above sea level. It is situated in the Himalayan range of Solukhumbu district (Province 1 in present days), Nepal.

Several Iranian men and women climbers have previously conquered Mt. Everest.

Iranian swimmer Asghari sets new Guinness World Record

TEHRAN – Iranian swimmer Elhamsadat Asghari achieved the fastest time to swim 5 km pulling a canoe/kayak in 1 hr 58 min 40 sec.

Notably, Elham has shattered multiple records previously held by men, including the fastest 10 km swim (one arm) in open water, completed in an astonishing 4 hr 58 min, breaking the previous record held by Teodor Tsvetkov of Bulgaria, guinnessworldrecords.com reported.

She has also set a new standard for the farthest distance swimming while wearing handcuffs, having broken the record not once, but twice. That record is now held by Shehab Allam.

Asghari began swimming at the age of five and started teaching others at 17. Her dream was to swim in open waters, so she searched for training programs online to achieve her goal. Her father, who worked as a wrestler, supported her efforts and encouraged her to set records.

“This recent record was the most challenging for me, as it required a combination of strength, speed, and endurance, and I am more suited to endurance swimming. By the third kilometer, my legs were completely exhausted and there was significant pressure on my back,” said Asghari.

In June 2013, she swam for 20 km (12.4 mi) in the Caspian Sea, despite the obstacles that Iranian female athletes face. To adhere to these restrictions, she developed a special swimsuit that covers the entire body, adding an extra 6 kg (13.2 lb) of weight in the water.

“Most of the time, my father accompanies me, but for this particular record, he could not join me due to his advanced age, so I undertook it on my own,” she added.

Iran's women's handball to compete at Asian Games

TEHRAN – Iran handball federation president Alireza Pakdel said that the women's handball team will participate at the 2022 Asian Games.

Iran's Supreme Headquarters of the Olympic and Paralympics, Asian Games, and Asian Para Games has made a decision not to send the men's handball team to the Games.

“We are going to send the women's team to the Asian Games. The federation is also going to send the men's team to Hangzhou,” Pakdel said.

The 19th edition of the Asian Games will be held in Hangzhou, China from September 23 to October 8.

Esteghlal Khuzestan win promotion to Iran Professional League

TEHRAN – Esteghlal Khuzestan football team won promotion to the Iran Professional League (IPL) on Wednesday.

The Ahvaz based football club defeated Khoosheh Talaei Saveh 2-0 and won the promotion as the second team.

Esteghlal Khuzestan won the IPL title at the 2015/16 season.

Shams Azar have previously won the title of the 2022/23 Azadegan League title and advanced to IPL as the first team.

Naft Masjed Soleyman were already relegated from IPL last week and Sanat Naft and Mes Kerman will battle to avoid relegation as the second team on Thursday.

Iran says is biggest victim of chemical weapons in modern history

TEHRAN – Reza Najafi, the deputy foreign minister of Iran for legal and international affairs, has said that the Islamic Republic has been the biggest victim of chemical weapons.

Najafi made the remarks during a meeting on Tuesday with Fernando Arias, the director general of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on the fields of strengthening cooperation, according to IRNA.

Najafi explained the effects of the cruel unilateral sanctions of the United States on the health condition and treatment of the chemical veterans of Iran. He asked the director general to continue his efforts to meet the urgent medical needs of chemical veterans.

Emphasizing that Iran is the biggest victim of chemical weapons in modern history, Najafi pointed out that the goal and purpose of the OPCW will not be achieved without the complete destruction of all types of chemical weapons stockpiles and the universality of the convention.

Najafi also delivered Iran's statement at OPCW's fifth review conference.

“The CWC is founded on a delicate balance between the rights and obligations of the Parties, thus ensuring the full, effective, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of all pillars of the Convention is not an option or optional but an inevitable must; ensuring the Convention's universality is vital for achieving the goal of a world free from chemical weapons,” he said at the conference.

IAEA not in charge of negotiations: nuclear chief

From Page 1 ► Commenting on Grossi's remarks, Eslami told reporters on Wednesday, “The Agency is not in charge of the (JCPOA) negotiations. It is up to the P5+1.”

He added, “The relations between Iran and the agency are based on safeguards and the NPT treaty, and the monitoring continues, and there has been no defect in it, and there has been no disruption and it continues.”

Talks on reviving the nuclear deal doesn't fall within the duties of the IAEA, the nuclear chief noted. “In the JCPOA talks, the International Atomic Energy Agency is not a negotiating party.”

He also rejected a Bloomberg allegation that monitoring activities



have been reduced. “Iran and IAEA relations are established and continuing according to Tehran's statement,” he said.

In response to a question whether the arms embargo of Iran will be lifted by October 2023, Eslami said, “Yes, according to the JCPOA, the arms embargo should be lifted.”

Earlier this month, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said collaboration between Iran and the IAEA will soon witness a

significant development.

In an interview with IRNA published on Sunday, Amir Abdollahian emphasized that throughout discussions on the restoration of the nuclear agreement and the lifting of sanctions, Tehran is communicating with Washington through a variety of channels.

Asserting that “a good development has taken place in the course of cooperation” between Iran and the UN nuclear agency, the top diplomat noted that Tehran had consistently criticized IAEA chief's political approach to Iran and that he had even brought up the issue in a face-to-face meeting with him.

Amir Abdollahian continued by emphasizing that President Ebrahim Raisi has made it clear that



areas as assistance, protection and international cooperation; this cannot and must not continue.”

Najafi also proposed a number of points with the purpose of outlining a comprehensive and action-oriented roadmap for the next five years. He proposed, among other things, the restoration of “the technical nature of the Organization in fulfilling the mandate of the Convention, including through addressing the verification related issues in full accordance with the provisions of the Convention and its Verification Annex, as well as avoiding non-consensual and political Ad-hoc mechanisms in this regard.”

“As a major victim of the systematic use of chemical weapons in contemporary history, and fully committed to its obligations under the Convention, the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the full, effective, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention and professional operation of the Organization,” he said.

Iran is serious about cooperating with the IAEA and expects that the UN nuclear agency would carry out its obligations within legal frameworks and refrain from engaging in politics.

“The more the IAEA distances itself from a political approach and moves towards technical cooperation, the more the path for our agreements opens up,” the chief Iranian diplomat pointed out.

Abdollahian went on to highlight that Iran is committed to resolving disagreements with the IAEA through constructive and reciprocal interaction and technical cooperation, while also upholding the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions law passed by the parliament in December 2020.

‘No permanent production, transport problem, obstacles to flower export’



TEHRAN- The head of Iran's Ornamental Plants Research Center (OPRC) said that no permanent production and the problem of transportation are obstacles to the growth of the country's flowers and ornamental plants export.

Hossein Bayat said the government's support for the creation of large production centers can provide the basis for the continuous export of these products.

“One of the shortcomings of export is that the production of flowers and ornamental plants does not follow a permanent trend, and for this reason, we cannot have a constant and permanent export of these products throughout the year, and due to the temporary stoppage of the production of the flowers and ornamental plants, we cannot meet the expectations of the export market”, he further complained.

“One of the ways to solve this problem is the government's support for the creation of large production centers so that these centers provide a platform for continuous export by supporting small production units. Otherwise, with the continuation of these conditions, we should not expect an increase in exports”, Bayat commented.

In addition to the existing problems in the field of production, transportation and transport systems and export laws of the destination countries have also created restrictions on the export of these products, the head of OPRC further lamented.

‘Garden products quality should be improved based on target market’s needs’

TEHRAN- The head of Agriculture Department of Mazandaran province, in the northern Iran, said, “We must improve the quality of the garden products according to the needs of the target markets.”

Making the remarks at a meeting of the horticulture directors of the country, focusing on the development of small-scale greenhouses, Hassan Enayati said: “We must qualitatively improve the production according to the needs of the target markets, and quantitatively, we must also increase productivity per surface unit.”

“Mazandaran has good ranks in the production of horticultural products in the country, and for this reason, we must be competitive in the production of horticultural products”, the official stressed.

Iran is the largest producer of garden products in the region, according to the chairman of the Iran Fruit Union.



Referring to the necessity of adopting a policy to increase exports, Reza Nourani said: “Given the country's high capacities, we are the first in the region in the production of agricultural and horticultural products.”

Mentioning the country's high potential in the production of agricultural products, he stated: “Iran is a country suffering from water scarcity, and we have gone through several consecutive years of drought, however, we have the first place in the production of agricultural products in the region.”

Annual apple export stands at over \$215m



TEHRAN- Iran exported 62,595 tons of apples worth \$215.09 million in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20), according to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The annual apple export fell 36 percent in terms of weight, year on year.

Based on the IRICA data, the value of one kilogram of exported apples was 34 cents in 1401, and 28 cents in 1400.

As reported, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Britain, Ukraine, Belarus, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Japan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Somalia, Iraq, Oman, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Poland, Libya, Lithuania, Malaysia and India were the major export destinations of Iranian apples in the past year.

Iran-UK trade rises over 70% in 2022

TEHRAN - The economic exchanges between Iran and the United Kingdom (UK) have more than tripled after BREXIT so that the trade between the two countries reached 696 million pounds in 2022, IRNA reported.

Based on a report published by the British Ministry of Trade and Commerce, the trade between Iran and UK in 2022 reached its highest level over the last 10 years, registering a significant growth of 72 percent.

The value of trade between the two countries amounted to 191 million pounds in 2020 when the UK exited the European Union. The trade increased to 405 million pounds in 2021 and then to 696 million pounds in 2022.

Despite this significant growth, Iran was ranked 98th among the UK's trading partners in 2022, and trade with Iran has constituted only 0.1 percent of the country's total foreign trade.

TEDPIX gains nearly 20,000 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 19,969 points to 2.321 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 13.63 billion securities worth 99.506 trillion rials (about \$199 million) were traded at the TSE.

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

Iran Oil Show 2023 kicks off in Tehran

TEHRAN - The 27th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2023) kicked off in a ceremony in the Iranian capital Tehran on Wednesday, Shana reported.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by senior Iranian and foreign officials including Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, Oil Minister Javad Oji, Science, Research and Technology Minister Mohammad-Ali Zolfigol, Head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr, Syrian Oil Minister Firas Hassan Kaddour, as well as a number of parliament members and senior oil industry directors.

Officials from NIOC, National Petrochemical Company (NPC), National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC),



Oil Minister Javad Oji delivers speech in Iran Oil Show 2023

Iranian Oil, Gas, and Petrochemical Products Exporters' Union, Iranian Petroleum Industries Equipment Manufacturers Association and Iran Industrial Equipment Manufacturers Association, and representatives of knowledge-based firms, technological parks, and startups were also among the attendees of

the opening ceremony.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Oji emphasized that Oil Show 2023 is more than a common exhibition, saying: “The presence of 200 foreign companies in this exhibition shows the strengthening of energy diplomacy by the current government.”

Iran’s monthly non-oil export to Turkey up 52%

TEHRAN- The value of Iran's non-oil export to Turkey increased by 52 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 20), as compared to the first month of the past year, the spokesman of Trade Development Committee of the Iranian House of Industry, Mining, and Trade announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that importing non-oil commodities worth \$550 million, Turkey was Iran's second export destination in the said month.

Turkey was also Iran's second source of import in the first month, through exporting non-oil goods valued at \$345 million, with 26 percent growth year on year, he added.

As previously announced by an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), the value of Iran's export to Turkey increased by 23 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Farzad Piltan, the director-general of TPO's Office of West Asian Countries, said that based on the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported commodities worth \$7.45 billion to its neighbor in 1401, while the figure was \$6.079 in 1400.

Saying that Turkey was Iran's third top export destination in the past year, the official named natural gas, aluminum, urea, polyethylene, copper cathode and cathode parts, copper wires, iron and steel ingots, and polyethylene as the major products Iran exported to Turkey in the previous year.

Piltan further announced that Iran's import from Turkey also rose 15 percent to about \$6 billion in 1401, from \$5.2 billion in 1400.

Stating that Turkey was the third source of import for Iran in the previous year, the official named sunflower seed oil, road tractors, corn, bananas, generators, barley, soybeans, synthetic fibers, crude soybean oil, and solid acrylic polymers as the main items Iran imported from its neighbor in 1401.

Based on the data previously released by the Turkish Statistical Institute, the value of Iran's exports to neighboring Turkey increased by 19 percent to reach \$3.35 billion in 2022.

Turkey had imported over \$2.82 billion worth of commodities from the Islamic Republic in 2021.

Based on the mentioned data, Iran's imports from the country also marked an 11-percent rise to hit \$3.07 billion in the past year, in comparison with 2021, when the figure was \$2.77 billion.

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, the trade between the two countries has registered a 15-percent rise in 2022.

The value of trade between the two neighbors reached \$6.42 billion in 2022, while the figure stood at \$5.59 billion in the preceding year.

Iran's trade balance with Turkey has been \$280 million positive in favor of Iran in the past year.

In last July, Iran and Turkey discussed ways of expanding economic relations along with political ties at the Turkish-Iranian High-Level Cooperation



Council in Tehran.

During the meeting, which was co-chaired by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the two sides negotiated the extension of the gas export contract between the two sides for the next 25 years.

In the meeting, President Raisi noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to expand economic relations with neighboring countries.

The president also evaluated Tehran-Ankara ties as positive and progressive, saying that the two countries should pursue appropriate policies to move towards increasing their annual trade exchanges to \$30 billion.

On the sidelines of the mentioned meeting, Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian also held talks with Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Fatih Dönmez in which the two sides exchanged views on cooperation in energy fields.

Russia’s VTB bank opens office in Tehran

TEHRAN – Russia's VTB Bank, the country's second largest bank, has opened a representative office in Tehran, as the two countries step up their financial cooperation in the face of Western sanctions.

According to head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman-Pak, this is the first Russian bank that has entered Iran and the presence of this bank could have a significant positive impact on the two countries financial exchanges.

Iran and Russia have been boosting their economic ties as the two sanctioned nations take new steps for expanding cooperation in the energy sector and increasing settlements in national currencies.

In early February, Russian Deputy



Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko told Interfax that the two countries are actively cooperating in banking and are planning to ramp up the share of national currencies in mutual settlements.

“We are continuing to work with Iran while promoting trade transactions in national currencies. The share of such settlements exceeded 60 percent in 2021. The positive trend continued last year,”

Rudenko said in an interview with Interfax.

Also in late January, Vyacheslav Volodin, the speaker of Russia's State Duma, said that the share of the ruble and the rial in mutual settlements between Iran and Russia exceeds 60 percent.

As reported by Russia Today, making the remarks in a government meeting, Volodin said, “It is important to use settlements in national currencies more actively. Much has already been done in this regard – now the share of the ruble and the rial in mutual settlements exceeds 60 percent. The work on the joint application of national payment systems is being completed. This will minimize the impact of sanctions, but also, of course, address issues

related to mutually beneficial cooperation.”

According to Volodin, both countries should now focus on boosting the efficiency of mutual cooperation in the financial and banking sectors, in particular, by increasing the use of national currencies in their trade exchanges, using the Russian ‘Mir’ and Iranian ‘Shetab’ payment systems.

The Russian official further announced that trade between Iran and Russia surged by 15 percent in 2022, reaching \$4.6 billion.

Volodin noted that the two countries are actively taking steps to build up mutual trade, saying: “extremely important in the conditions of sanctions pressure on our countries.”

Tehran, Moscow hold specialized meeting to boost co-op in energy sector



Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji (2nd L) and Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak (2nd R) co-chair energy meeting in Tehran on Tuesday.

TEHRAN – Energy officials from Iran and Russia gathered in a meeting on Tuesday evening to discuss ways of enhancing cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector, Shana reported.

Held prior to the 27th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil

Show 2023), the meeting was attended by Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji and Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on bilateral cooperation in the oil, gas, petrochemical, electricity, and nuclear energy fields. Their discussions also revolved around following up on previous memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and overcoming obstacles in the path of implementing the mentioned agreements.

As for the oil sector, the Russian side was urged to complete studies on Iran's oil fields soon and offer its assessment. Iran and Russia's gas experts also explored all avenues and agreed to hold more talks on their cooperation.

As reported, the two sides are set to sign several deals and MOUs in the mentioned areas soon.

28 Russian companies participating in Iran Oil Show 2023

Representatives of 28 major Russian companies

have traveled to Tehran for participating in this year's Iran Oil Show which is being held from May 17 to 20.

As reported by the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA), the Russian companies present at the exhibition will provide their potential partners in Iran, and also visitors from other countries, with solutions for improving the efficiency of the oil and gas and fuel and energy industries.

The participating companies are showcasing their latest achievements, services, and products in various fields including new analysis and measurement technologies, equipment and services for drilling, pumping, and repairing wells, oil transmission systems for production and supply, equipment for loading and unloading petroleum products and other technical liquids, water purification equipment, as well as technology for creating and developing infrastructures for fuel and energy industries.

NATO seeks to prolong Ukraine war

From page 1 ► This is the last remaining flank Ukraine says its forces hold on to in the city.

The promise to ship more arms was secured in the Ukrainian President's quick trip to NATO members in Europe. Volodymyr Zelensky's whirlwind tour to NATO members was not on a peace initiative as the international community has been calling for.

Instead, it comes ahead of a long-expected counter offensive that will drag out the conflict for a prolonged period of time.

The NATO members that the Ukrainian leader visited have stated the weapons are needed to assist Ukraine in this anticipated counter offensive.

Zelensky secured billions of dollars in military aid during the tour, which ended in the UK, where Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced more military hardware from British arms manufacturers.

This comes after the UK became the first NATO member to supply Kyiv with long-range cruise missiles, which will allow Ukrainian forces to hit Russian forces and depots far behind the front lines.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov says that Russia viewed Britain's decision to supply the missiles "extremely negatively".

"Britain claims to be at the forefront among those countries that continue to pump weapons into Ukraine," he told reporters in a daily call.

London's arms shipments will not change much on the ground, Peskov said, adding, "It cannot have any significant or major impact on the course of the Special Military Operation, but it all leads to more destruction, to further military action and so on. So, for Ukraine, it makes things much more complex."

Konashenkov has announced for the first time that the Russian military had downed a long-range Storm Shadow missile supplied to Kyiv by London, which only last week publicly announced that it was providing them.

"Air defense systems intercepted seven (U.S. shorter-range) HARM anti-radar missiles, one (British) Storm Shadow long-range cruise missile, and ten (U.S. shorter-range) HIMARS-launched missiles during the day," he stated.

But NATO still refuses to deliver



more advanced warplanes that Ukraine has been long asking for.

The U.S.-led alliance publicly says Russian forces have been heavily weakened during the Ukraine war, yet the unwillingness to send sophisticated warplanes comes from NATO member's fear of a direct confrontation with Moscow.

After Zelensky held talks with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, the French leader announced France will begin training Ukrainian fighter jet pilots on his country's soil, an idea the Macron government had refused to entertain just a few months ago.

During an interview with France's TF1 Presenter Gilles Bouleau, Macron was pressed on why the government has now decided that Paris is ready to train Ukrainian war plane pilots in France.

This is while France has rejected Ukraine's request to deliver fighter jets to Kyiv in line with NATO's policy of keeping the conflict at an impasse.

Here is a snippet of the interview:

TF1 Presenter:

"He (Zelensky) must have asked you for fighter jets, as he asks all the Western leaders he meets. You told him no? No for today, no for tomorrow, no forever?"

President Macron (deflecting on the question):

"We have opened the door to training the pilots."

TF1 Presenter:

"In France? Ukrainian pilots in France?"

French President Macron:

"(And we are doing this) with

several other European countries which are ready, and talks are ongoing with the Americans."

TF1 Presenter:

"From when for the French planes? On Mirage 2000s? We can guess."

French President Macron (deflecting on the question):

"Training can start right now."

TF1 Presenter:

"So there is no taboo?"

French President Macron:

"There is no taboo... (Presenter interrupts Macron and says "there was a taboo for a few months"). No, we always followed the same line.

Pressed further about delivering warplanes to Ukraine, Macron said he had not discussed that issue with Zelensky.

As the U.S.-led NATO military alliance ships tens of billions of dollars worth of weapons to a conflict that sees no signs of abating any time soon, there has been a drain on resources in the NATO member countries who are facing major economic problems.

These problems have strongly affected the public sector in many Western countries, who have seen both public and private sector workers repeatedly go on strike and stage protests over an unprecedented rising cost of living crisis as a result of the conflict in Ukraine.

The protests have increasingly seen demonstrations against support for the war, NATO itself and in France a rally was held in protest against the Ukrainian leader's visit to the country.

Meanwhile, Russian officials have denounced remarks by Macron that Moscow is becoming a subservient to China, saying Western countries must get used to a new world, nurtured by a strong Moscow-Beijing relationship.

In March, Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in an official visit, during which the two sides said they were deepening their strategic partnership by entering "a new era" of ties.

Peskov says Russia's ties with China had nothing to do with dependence on Beijing and were more to do with those of a strategic partner.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko also implied that the West had become obsessed with Moscow's strengthened relations with China and changes that implied for a new world order.

"The West is scared by the emergence of a multilateral system of international relations with a range of independent centers, such as Russia and China, which is happening before our very eyes, this emerging new world order means the end to the centuries-long dominance of the golden billion countries." Grushko wrote in a statement on the ministry's website.

According to Russian officials, the West cannot get rid of its bad habits of pitting old friends against each other by any means possible and ongoing attempts at driving a wedge between one country's ties against another.



Syria, the return of refugees, and the dispersal of terrorists from Syria's northeast and northwest," he said.

"The second round may give better opportunities to Erdogan's rival, unless he bravely plays his trump card and voices readiness to formulate a timetable for the return of Syrian refugees."

For more than a decade, Turkey has backed militants fighting against the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and sent its own troops into the Arab country's northern areas.

In recent months, however, the strategically-located US-led NATO member has taken steps to normalize relations with Syria.

Also in his interview, the Lebanese political analyst compared Erdogan with Kilicdaroglu, saying the incumbent president represents a political religion close to the West, while the latter

acts for the Western-oriented and anti-religious secular movement.

Regarding international developments, he argued that Erdogan tends to pay attention to political and economic partnerships, but his rival wants Turkey to play a regional role without being drawn into war and expansionism.

Qandil further emphasized that Erdogan has managed to build a national economy while Kilicdaroglu, with a tendency towards the US, seeks to realize liberalism, eliminate the government's role in the economy, and legalize homosexuality.

Unlike large cities, suburbs favored Erdogan as they supported an Islamic national identity aligned with the region and were unhappy with Europe's racist approach towards Turkey's EU accession bid, he said.

(Source: Press TV)



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WORLD HEADLINES

George Soros 'hates humanity': Elon Musk

Elon Musk used his Twitter platform to attack Hungarian billionaire George Soros on Tuesday, saying that the prominent Democratic Party donor "hates humanity," and "wants to erode the very fabric of civilization."

Musk also compared him to comic-book super villain.

In a tweet that has been viewed more than 20 million times, Musk wrote "Soros reminds me of Magneto" – the mutant comic book anti-hero from the X-Men series.

Musk elaborated on Soros when pressed by journalist Brian Krassenstein, who said that the Hungarian-American businessman was a frequent right-wing punching bag because some people object to his "good intentions" as "they disagree with his political affiliations."

"You assume they are good intentions," Musk responded on Twitter early on Tuesday. "They are not. He wants to erode the very fabric of civilization. Soros hates humanity." The SpaceX and Tesla CEO offered no further evidence to substantiate his claim.

Magneto is a principal character in the Marvel Comics X-Men franchise. The arch-villain of the series, Magneto was played by the British actor Ian McKellan in several feature films and possesses the ability to control magnetic fields with his mind. Like Soros, Magneto is a survivor of the Holocaust in X-Men canon.

86 Palestinians injured in clashes

On Wednesday, clashes between the Israeli army and Palestinians in Nablus resulted in 86 injuries.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society reported that one injury was serious due to living bullets, five were serious due to metal bullets and gas canisters, and 80 others were due to tear gas inhalation.

The clashes occurred when Israeli forces raided the Joseph's Tomb area, east of Nablus.

The Israeli army used live and metal ammunition as well as tear gas canisters.

Tensions have been high in the occupied West Bank recently due to repeated Israeli raids into Palestinian towns.

Since the beginning of this year, more than 160 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces.

Sarkozy to wear tag after losing corruption appeal

Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy has lost his appeal against a prison sentence for corruption.

However, the Paris appeals court ruled that he could serve his time at home wearing a tag instead of going to jail.

In 2021 Sarkozy was sentenced to three years in prison - including two suspended - for trying to influence a judge in a separate case.

The 68-year-old was the first former French president to get a custodial sentence.

Following Wednesday's ruling, Sarkozy's lawyer said she would launch a new challenge with the Court of Cassation, one of France's highest authorities.

"Nicolas Sarkozy is innocent," lawyer Jacqueline Laffont said. "We will take this all the way."

The former president has been convicted of attempting to obtain information from a senior judge in 2014 - after he had left office.

The case centred on phone conversations between Sarkozy and his lawyer at the time that were taped by police.

Patriot missile defense system in Ukraine likely damaged: US sources

A U.S.-made Patriot missile defense system being used by Ukraine likely suffered some damage from a Russian strike, two U.S. officials said on Tuesday, adding that it did not appear to have been destroyed.

The Patriot system is one of an array of sophisticated air defense units supplied by the West to help Ukraine repel a Russian campaign of air strikes that has targeted critical infrastructure, power facilities and other sites.

One U.S. official, speaking on the condition of anonymity and citing initial information, said Washington and Kyiv were already talking about the best way to repair the system and at this point it did not appear the system would have to be removed from Ukraine.

The official added that the United States would have a better understanding in the coming days and information could change over time.

The Patriot is considered to be one of the most advanced U.S. air defense systems, including against aircraft, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles. It typically includes launchers along with radar and other support vehicles.

Russia's defense ministry said on Tuesday that it had destroyed a U.S.-built Patriot surface-to-air missile defense system with a "hypersonic" Kinzhal missile in an overnight strike

Musk reveals who he'd prefer to see as president

Elon Musk, the CEO of SpaceX, Tesla and Twitter, has said he would like to see "a normal human being" with good managerial skills elected as the next US president.

During an interview with MSNBC on Tuesday, the billionaire was asked if he regretted voting for the incumbent Joe Biden at the 2020 election.

"I wish we could just have a normal human being as president. That's what I want," he responded.

"You know that old saying of, like, 'We're better off being run by people picked at random from a phone book than the Faculty of Harvard.' I don't know who said that, but it was someone very wise," he added.

The quote in question is actually attributed to American conservative writer and political commentator William Frank Buckley Jr. and originates from the early 1960s.

Speaking about the qualities required for the person in the Oval Office, Musk said that "it actually matters if they're a good executive officer. It's not simply a matter of 'Do they share your beliefs.' But are they good at getting things done? There's a lot of decisions that need to be made every day. Many of them are unrelated to moral beliefs."

"You just want a good executive cause they're the CEO of America. We want a good CEO of America, don't we?" he said.

The tech entrepreneur was also grilled about his previous claim that the 2020 presidential election had not been entirely fair.

"I don't think it was a stolen election," Musk clarified. However, he added that "if somebody is going to say that there was never any election fraud anywhere, this is obviously also false. If 100 million people vote, the probability that fraud is zero is zero."

"There was some small amount of fraud, but there was not enough to change the outcome," he said, adding that this fact should be acknowledged.

Voter anger over Erdogan's interference in Syria and war fallout cost him dearly: analyst

A Lebanese political expert says incumbent Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan failed to get the support of people in urban areas in the recent election mainly due to his interference in Syria and the fallout of his intervention in the war.

In an interview with the Press TV website, Nasser Qandil, editor-in-chief of Lebanon's al-Binaa newspaper, noted that most of the youths in cities did not vote for Erdogan – who has been at the pinnacle of Turkish politics for more than two decades – with the slogan "20 years is enough."

"The issue of Syrian refugees and Erdogan's role in the Syrian war was among the reasons behind the decrease in his votes in cities," he said.

"This is while his rival has promised to transfer refugees to their country within two years and deport them if necessary."

Erdogan gained 49.5 percent of the vote in Sunday's presidential race compared to 44.9 percent for his challenger, Kemal Kilicdaroglu.

As neither candidate reached the 50 percent threshold needed to win outright, a runoff vote will take place on May 28.

Erdogan took home fewer votes in 2023 than he did in the 2018 presidential contest.

Qandil said that in the second round of the election, Erdogan will face challenges such as heavy economic and social costs of Syrian refugees residing in Turkey, the growing unemployment rate, the rent surge, and the rising competition between Turkish and Syrian workers.

"With the support of Russia, Iran and Persian Gulf states, Erdogan can draw a two-year framework for the Turkish withdrawal from

Academic meeting to discuss Ecbatana as treasured cultural heritage



From Page 1 ► Ecbatana was once the capital of Medes and later the summer residence for Achaemenid kings. The ensemble is made up of a priceless archeological site and a singular collection of historical ruins.

The treasured site embraces artifacts from six different historical eras that are still extant, including an odd collection that belonged to Iran's Christians. It is well protected as a result of its significance to history and culture.

Ecbatana was first excavated in 1913 by the

French Assyriologist Charles Fossey. In 2006, excavations in a limited area of Hegmataneh Hill failed to uncover anything older than the Parthian period (247 BC). However, excavations have been limited due to the modern city covering most of the ancient sites.

Around 1220, Hamedan was destroyed by the Mongols. In 1386, it was sacked by Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkish conqueror, and the inhabitants were massacred. In the 17th century, it was partially restored and then frequently changed hands between the Iranian dynasties and the Ottomans.

Located on a high plain, Hamedan is pleasantly cool in the summer but can snow and freeze from December to March. Hamedans attractions include Ali Sadr Cave, Ganjnameh Inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh Hill, Alaviyan Dome, Jameh Mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church, among others.

VW owners to come together in six Iranian cities

TEHRAN – Volkswagen owners in six Iranian cities have scheduled separate reunions to be held concurrently on June 2.

It was the ninth assemblage of Volkswagens organized by the Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The gatherings were held simultaneously in Tehran, Isfahan, Mashhad, Yazd, Tabriz, and Shiraz, the club said in a press release.

For the eighth event, some 500 Volkswagen vehicles including the Beetles, Transporters, VW Vans, Golfs, Passats, The Stations, as well as some new products of the German manufacturer, came together in Tehran.

Moreover, some 90 Volkswagen vehicles joined a rally held in Isfahan, 80 went on show in Mashhad, 50 in Yazd, 35 in Tabriz, and finally, 45 were brought together in Tabriz.

Iran is home to thousands of remarkable classic and vintage vehicles. For instance, its classic car museum embraces collections of the best classic and unique automobiles, some of which are single even in the world.

Affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran is tasked to help develop tourism by establishing



tourism information offices at home and abroad, as well as developing infrastructures and tourism services.

Furthermore, among its duties is to facilitate car travel abroad or foreign tourists who are traveling to Iran by their own vehicles.

Volkswagen, abbreviated as VW, is a German motor vehicle manufacturer headquartered in Wolfsburg, Lower Saxony, Germany. Founded in 1937 by the German Labour Front under the Nazi Party and revived into a global brand post-World War II by British Army Officer Ivan Hirst, it is known for the iconic Beetle and serves as the flagship brand of the Volkswagen Group, the largest automotive manufacturer by worldwide sales in 2016 and 2017. Its name is derived from the German-language terms Volk and Wagen, translating to “people’s car” when combined.

Millennia-old settlement in Bushehr being demarcated

TEHRAN – Tol-e Tahmachi, a historical site and ancient settlement in the southwestern province of Bushehr, is being demarcated, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Surveys and mapping projects as well as library studies have been commenced to demarcate the historical site, which dates back to the 5th millennium BC, Nasrollah Ebrahimi explained on Wednesday.

The project aims at protecting the site from any possible damage, the official added.

Although archaeologists expected no prehistoric settlements on the northern coast of the Persian Gulf due to successive fluctuations and sea-level changes, based on material culture and surface finds, Tol-e Tahmachi was a settlement with a prehistoric population that had access to diverse resources from both sea and land.

With over 6,000 years of history and significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras, Bushehr province is one of Iran's most important historical centers.

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches



and lush palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. Qajar-era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

built environment, its buildings ranging in expression from modest, vernacular variants to elaborate, luxurious edifices.

The Valley de los Ingenios is a remarkable testimony to the development of the sugar industry. A living museum of Cuban sugar production, it includes the sites of 75 former cane sugar mills, plantation houses, barracks, and other facilities related to this vulnerable industry, which has witnessed a gradual and progressive decline.

UNESCO sites at a glance

Trinidad and the Valley de los Ingenios

Trinidad, located in the central Cuban province of Sancti Spiritus, was founded in the early 16th century but owes its existence and its historical raison d'être to the sugar industry that flourished there and in the nearby Valley de los Ingenios (Valley of the Sugar Mills) from the late 18th century to the late 19th century.

The exemplary city of Trinidad's prosperity during this period is clearly legible in its existing

Ancient caravanserai worthy of turning into a fancy hotel, official says

TEHRAN – The tourism chief of Alborz province has announced plans to turn a centuries-old caravanserai into a comfortable hotel.

“A fresh restoration work has commenced on Yengi-Imam caravanserai, which has considerable potential to become a 5-star hotel,” Rahim Khaki said on Monday.

Yengi-Imam caravanserai is one of the prestigious and valuable historical monuments that is situated along the ancient Silk Road, the official said.

Yengi-Imam, together with several other caravanserais, has been nominated for a UNESCO registration of the World Heritage list, Khaki said.

“Due to its traditional texture and atmospheric surrounding, the establishment of a five-star caravanserai hotel will be a good idea to accommodate domestic and foreign guests and to provide a source of income.”

In addition, side spaces of the caravanserai can be used for exhibition settings, such as ethnic fairs and handicraft sales exhibits, and local bazaars.

Considering that this caravanserai is nominated for UNESCO registration, all these actions are subject to obtaining the necessary permits and negotiations with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the official said.

Located in Alborz province near



Tehran, the caravanserai showcases an exemplary form of Persian architecture, which emerged across the Silk Road. Experts say that the caravanserai offers a unique venue for exchanging goods and traditions among travelers coming from the most diverse cultures.

All four domes of the historic structure were fully restored after almost five months of work in 2020, enjoying financial support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

The building takes the form of a square with a central courtyard. At the center of the courtyard, is a square platform accessed via a short flight of stairs. Four iwans (porticoes) open onto the courtyard on four sides.

The corners of the courtyard are angled, and passageways lead off of these corners onto octagonal,

domed halls. Between the iwans and the corner passages are three shallow alcoves opening onto three small chambers (making for a total of six on each side of the courtyard). The octagonal domed halls lead into wide corridors that run behind the aforementioned chambers.

Caravanserai or caravansary is a compound word combining “caravan” with “sara”; the former stands for a group of travelers and the latter means the building. They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them, with doors in the corners of the yard.

Passing major roads in the country, one may see crumbling caravanserais, many of which were abandoned for ages. In the Information Age, such guest houses

have largely lost their actual usage.

They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them, with doors in the corners of the yard.

Staying at or even just visiting a centuries-old caravanserai can be a memorable experience for many visitors to Iran because it allows them to experience the past and travel back in time. Narratives say it is not hard to fancy the hustle and bustle of merchants bargaining on prices, recounting their arduous journeys to one another while their camels chew hay!

The earliest caravanserais in Iran were built during the Achaemenid era (550 – 330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 to 1629, he ordered the construction of a network of caravanserais across the country. Such roadside inns were once constructed along ancient caravan routes in the Muslim world to shelter people, their goods, and animals. The former Silk Road may be the most famous example dotted by caravanserais.

The Islamic Republic has submitted an inclusive dossier on its caravanserais to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. The dossier comprises obligatory data about a selection of 56 caravanserais, which are scattered across the ancient land. And the shortlist includes qualified caravanserais located in at least 24 provinces.

Khuzestan holds potential to become health tourism destination

TEHRAN – The southwestern province of Khuzestan has considerable potential to become a medical tourism destination, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Credible surgeons and physicians, affordable medical services, and cutting-edge technologies together with close distances to neighboring countries make Khuzestan a potential hub for health tourism, Jamal Amerinasab explained on Wednesday.

Boosting medical tourism in the region could generate a significant income for the country, the official added.

According to available data, Iran hosts an average of one million medical tourists each year. “About one million medical tourists, mainly from the neighboring countries, arrive in Iran annually,” Mohammadreza Tarjoman, who presides over the Health Ministry's tourism office, said last April.

“The majority of inbound medical passengers come from the neighboring countries, including

Iraq and Afghanistan,” the official said. Talking about hospitals and clinics, he said a selection of 200 Iranian medical centers have permission to accept foreign patients.

Experts believe medical tourism in Iran is a win-win opportunity both for the country and foreign patients, as they are offered affordable yet quality treatment services and the country gains considerable foreign currency. Amongst Iran's trump cards are the presence of credible surgeons and physicians, cutting-edge medical technologies, high-tech medicine and diverse specializations, super affordable procedures, and finally its hospitable people.

Iran seeks to exceed its yearly medical travelers to around two million in [calendar year] 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

Khuzestan is home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System yet it is a region of raw beauty where its visitors could



spend weeks exploring. The province is also a cradle for handicrafts and arts whose crafters inherited from their preceding generations.

Lying at the head of the Persian Gulf and bordering Iraq on the west, Khuzestan was settled about 6000 BC by a people with affinities to the Sumerians, who came from the Zagros Mountains region. Urban centers appeared there contemporaneous with the first cities in Mesopotamia in the 4th millennium. Khuzestan, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, came to constitute the heart of the Elamite kingdom, with Susa as its capital.

Pahlavi-era edifice in Zanjan undergoes geophysical studies

TEHRAN – The Pahlavi-era (1925-1979) Rakhtshooy Khaneh Edifice Museum in the northwestern

Zanjan province has undergone geophysical studies for the first time, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The survey, which is carried out by Iranian experts, includes identifying the aqueducts and channels underneath the museum's building, identifying the condition of the structure, and directing underground water to

urban sewage, Seyyed Saeid Safavi explained on Wednesday.

The project aims at studying the historical structure to find proper ways to restore and renovate it in the near future, the official added.

The edifice was built as a laundry place to provide safety and comfort for women while washing clothes in a covered place, especially in the cold weather in winter.

The women of the city wash their clothes in this place, and men were

not allowed to enter it at all when the complex was open.

This building has been restored several times over the years and is currently an anthropological museum.

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE). The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-

registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins nearby.

In late January, Zanjan was designated as a “world city of filigree” by the World Crafts Council after the WCC assessors visited various craft workshops, stores, exhibits, and bazaars of the city in a two-day itinerary last December.

Filigree consists of curling, twisting, or plaiting fine, pliable metal threads and soldering them at their points of contact with each other with a metal groundwork.

Foreign students explore Tabriz museums on fam tour

TEHRAN –A number of foreign students, who study in different universities of Tabriz, the capital of East Azarbaijan province, have visited the museums of the ancient city on a familiarization tour, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The one-day tour, which was held on Tuesday, aimed at introducing the city's tourist attractions and promoting it as a travel destination, Ahmad Hamzehzadeh explained on Wednesday.

Some 1,000 international students study in Tabriz universities that could play a key role in introducing Iran and its culture in their countries, the official added.

Soaked in history and culture for millennia, Tabriz embraces several historical and religious



sites, including the Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and Arg of Tabriz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, to name a few. The city became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295–1304) and his successor. Timur

(Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in 1392. Some decades later, the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital. It was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz.

The city retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548 when Shah Tahmasp I relocated his capital westward to Qazvin. During the next two centuries, Tabriz changed hands several times between Persia and the Ottoman Empire. During World War I, the city was temporarily occupied by Turkish and then Soviet troops.

Tabriz was declared a world craft city of carpet weaving by the World Craft in 2016. It also bore the title of the Islamic Tourism Capital in 2018.

ICT: a key to national development

By Mehdi Garshasbi

TEHRAN - World Telecommunication and Information Society Day is celebrated annually on May 17 to help raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) can bring to societies and economies, as well as ways to bridge the digital divide.

The day marks the anniversary of the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention and the creation of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

As a key technology in order to achieve national development goals, information and communication technology (ICT) has always played a pivotal role in Iran.

Generally, the use of ICT in the contemporary world is expanding at an increasing speed and has transformed all aspects of human life in its different forms.

Statistics show that the distance between countries that use information and communication technology as the axis of development of their national programs and countries that do not use it properly is increasing sharply.

Status of ICT in Iran

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology is the highest authority in the field of ICT in the country. All activities related to the information and communication technology industry are directly related to the ministry.

According to ICT Minister Issa Zarepour, the government pays special attention to plans and policies in this sector in order to maximize the use of ICT to facilitate people's lives.

The successful designing, building, and launching of a satellite show



the growth of the national technology and scientific power of a country.

Space technology has been considered a tool to expand prosperity, peace, scientific-cultural development, and economic progress in human societies.

Different nations of the world exploit this technology in some way based on their capacity, capabilities, and efforts.

Currently, 13 universities and a research institute affiliated to the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology are offering aerospace majors, thus Iran has a high capability in training specialists and experts in the aerospace sector and is a leading country in the region.

Zarepour said in April that more than 91 percent of villages with a population of over 20 households across the country have now access to the internet via the national information network.

The villages with above 20 households having access to the internet have increased from 80 percent to 91 percent since the incumbent administration took office in August 2021, said the minister.

Access to telecommunication services in rural areas of the country had improved over the period as



the overall number of villages with access to communication services rose to 52,182, around 93 percent of all villages, while 47,837 villages had access to home landline services.

Moreover, the number of Iranian mobile users reached nearly 135.890 million, according to the CRA which put the mobile phone penetration rate in the country at 161.67 percent.

The figures showed, however, that fixed broadband adoption in Iran had stalled at 14 percent with nearly 11.921 million customers having access to the Internet via those services.

This statistic shows that fixed broadband internet has grown by less than 2 percent compared to last year and mobile internet has experienced a growth of 10 percent. However, it can be said that the speed of mobile internet expansion is 5 times the speed of fixed internet.

Digital investment worldwide

Over the past decade, the connectivity challenge has become more complex and demanding. Bringing everyone online is no longer enough.

Meaningful connectivity - the possibility to enjoy a safe, satisfying, enriching, productive, and affordable online experience - is the new imperative. For least-developed coun-

tries (LDCs), this remains a major challenge.

The digital divide between LDCs and the rest of the world shows little sign of narrowing. The risk is all too evident. As the world becomes increasingly adept at leveraging the Internet for value creation, LDCs risk falling further behind.

This year, World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) focuses on "Empowering the least developed countries through information and communication technologies."

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) calls on the public and private sectors to make pledges for universal connectivity and digital transformation in these countries through its Partner2Connect Digital Coalition.

Midway through the agenda to fulfill the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, the least developed countries (LDCs) remain the world's greatest untapped resource, whose needs must be addressed to achieve the SDGs.

Investment in these young, vibrant countries can drive sustainable growth for generations. Together, let's make 2023 a year of progress for digital transformation in the least developed countries.

In 2022, an estimated 407 million people in the least developed countries (LDCs) were using the Internet, accounting for 36 percent of the population, compared to 66 percent globally.

The 720 million people still offline in LDCs account for 27 percent of the global offline population, even though the LDC population accounts for only 14 percent of the world's population.

SOCIETY

MAY 18, 2023

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

7

Women from the Leader's point of view-3

Iranian women in Pahlavi regime; isolation or advancement?

From page 1 ► the position of Muslim women was criticized and an attempt was made to make the issue of women a symbol of the success of governments in reforming and modernizing politics. In Iran as well, some people demanded to change the status of women.

During the era of Reza Shah Pahlavi [the last Iranian royal dynasty, ruling for almost 54 years between 1925 and 1979], the fundamental rights of women were reduced to an outward presence in society, and at the end of the Pahlavi era, they became a tool to give prestige to the Iranian society. The presence of women in the legislative assemblies of the Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi era [from 1941 to 1979] had only a symbolic aspect. The process of modernism in the Pahlavi era was a contradictory mixture of secularism and westernism.

Women had a special place in the secular programs and modernization of Iranian society during the Pahlavi period, but their presence and involvement were only superficial. In fact, the Pahlavi regime pursued two main goals by implementing modernist programs regarding women; questioning the traditional and Islamic values of the society and creating more similarities between Iranian and Western society.

On 8 January 1936, Reza Shah issued a decree known as Kashf-e hijab banning all Islamic veils, an edict that was swiftly and forcefully implemented. He banned the hijab and encouraged Iranians to adopt European dress in an effort to promote nation-building in a country with many tribal, regional, religious, and class-based variations in clothing.

To enforce this decree, the police were ordered to physically remove the hijab from any woman who wore it in public. Women who refused were beaten, their headscarves and chadors torn off, and their homes forcibly searched.

It was the policy of Reza Shah to increase women's participation in society as a method of modernization of the country, in accordance with the example of then Turkey. The reform to allow female teachers and students not to veil, as well as allowing female students to study alongside men, were all reforms opposed and criticized by religious people, especially scholars and clerics.

In one of his speeches on January 9, 2008, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said that the policy was aimed at "eradicating the tremendous power of faith" in Muslim societies. "One of the most catastrophic activities was the issue of January 8th 1936, which took place during Reza Shah's reign. According to one plan, the enemies of Islam and Iran, enjoying the assistance of the "intellectuals" affiliated with the Pahlavi dynasty, decided to separate the Iranian women from their decency and hijab; they developed this plan in order to eradicate the tremendous power of faith that existed in Muslim societies-owing to the decency of women."

Although the official sources of the Pahlavi regime presented astonishing statistics of the presence and involvement of women in the social, educational and economic fields, in fact, the women's movement in Iran suffered a noticeable decline

during the Pahlavi era.

Social modernization programs in the Pahlavi era weakened the religious and traditional values in society and created an inappropriate atmosphere for the presence of women in society. Despite all legal pressures and obstacles, a large proportion of Iranian women continued to wear hijabs.

Until Reza Shah's abdication in 1941, many women simply chose not to leave their houses in order to avoid confrontations and a few even committed suicides to avoid removing their hijabs due to the decree. The majority of Iranian women who did not accept the aforementioned policies refused to participate in the political, social and economic arenas, and in this way, the social isolation of these women was provided.

Although under the next ruler Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, wearing the hijab or chador was no longer an offense, and women were able to dress as they wished, the chador became a significant hindrance to climbing the social ladder, as it was considered a badge of backwardness and an indicator of being a member of the lower class. Discrimination against the women wearing the headscarf or chador still occurred, with public institutions actively discouraging their use, and even some restaurants refusing to admit women who wore them. This period is characterized by the dichotomy between a minority who considered wearing the hijab as a sign of backwardness and the majority who did not.

The Pahlavi era should be considered a period of domination of Western cultures. Although some freedoms were given to Iranian women in appearance, the role of beauty and charm of Iranian women in this period was emphasized and efforts were made to make Iranian women like European and Western women.

Ayatollah Khamenei in one of his speeches ruled out the achievements of the Western models in Iran for women, saying, "What Western women achieved, by plummeting into a quagmire of corruption and perversion, was the destruction of the family environment. It was an absolute lie that women could advance in science, politics or social activities only by removing the hijab. Women could do so (advance intellectually and socially) by maintaining their hijab and decency, and we have experienced this fact in our Islamic country..." (Jan 9, 2008)

However, in spite of the Western colonial equations and instructions, which thought that Iranian women would follow the Western proposed models with these unconditional freedoms and removal of the hijab, the women moved ahead of the revolutionaries during the revolution of the late 1970s. The contributions of women to the revolutions and the intentions behind these contributions are complex and layered. The motivations of women for being part of the revolutions were complex and varied among a plethora of religious, political and economic reasons and women participating were from various classes and backgrounds. Activist and religious women and women dissatisfied with the regime were able to unite under the anti-Shah umbrella.

(see full text at tehrantimes.com)

Tehran to host intl. congress on biomedicine, stem cells

TEHRAN - Royan Institute will organize the 24th International Congress on Reproductive Biomedicine and the 19th Congress on Stem Cell Biology and Technology on August 30-September 1 in Tehran.

In the world today, biomedicine has attracted the attention of many governments and investors due to its strategic position and great added value.

In Iran, the value-added of biomedical production after the field of information technology services has the highest value-added. Accordingly, those in charge of this field are trying to provide the ground for growth and development.

Iran is one of the countries that has made great efforts in the field of medicine to free itself from the struggle to supply medicine and bypass sanctions and be able to respond to its local needs by relying on knowledge-based companies. One of these areas is the production of biopharmaceuticals, which has grown to 28 items.

Iran is also ranked 12th in the world and first in West Asia in terms of biotechnology, as 9.5 percent of the income of knowledge-based companies and more than 60 percent of their exports are related to biotechnology.

Stem cells are the "parent" cells from which all other blood cells develop. These are mainly red blood cells, platelets, and white blood cells. Bone marrow, the factory that produces stem cells, is

the soft tissue inside bones like the breastbone or hip bone.

Stem cells are found in the brain, blood vessels, skeletal muscles, skin, liver, bone marrow, peripheral (circulating) blood, and the umbilical cord blood of newborn babies.

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has implemented four important projects in order to strengthen the country's scientific citation in the field of stem cells.

One of the keys to the development is to provide strategic infrastructure in important fields. Smart knowledge-based platforms promote the scientific citation of the country and accelerate the formation of the scientific ecosystem.

The support of university technology development projects took place in a purposeful interaction between the Vice Presidency and the large universities.

Another measure taken in this area was supporting the development of the National Network of Animal Modeling and In-Vivo Research. This support has brought significant achievements including technologies for reproducing, keeping, and breeding of laboratory animals, the development of research and translation of knowledge and technology, and the development of technologies and laboratory services for in-vivo studies.



Another important step of the Council for Development of Stem Cell Sciences and Technologies last year was the establishment of a gene production center for the Royan Research Institute. During this process, two gene therapy projects became operational.

The launch of autophagy and regenerative medicine is also one of the plans supported by the Council last year. In this program, the management of the autophagy process in order to prevent tissue damage is recognized as a functional indicator of this plan.

Royan Institute was established in 1991 as an outpatient surgery center to provide medical services to infertile couples as well as research and training in reproductive sciences. In 2002, the research fields at Royan Institute extended into stem cell studies as well.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Precipitation forecast to reach above normal in next 3 months

The country is predicted to receive above normal rainfall over the next three months (February 20-May 21), head of the climatological research institute affiliated to Iran's Meteorological Organization (IMO) has said.

The whole country will meet normal and above normal rainfalls, the northern parts will receive above normal rainfall while southern provinces will receive normal to lower-than-normal rainfall, IRNA quoted Iman Babaeian as saying on Sunday.

This month, northern and eastern provinces will receive rain above normal averages, while in the first month of spring precipitation will be at normal amounts across the country, he noted, adding, during the second month of spring rainfall will reach its peak.

بارش های کشور در سه ماه پیش رو بیش از نرمال است

رئیس پژوهشکده اقلیم‌شناسی سازمان هواشناسی گفت: پیش‌بینی‌ها نشان می‌دهد میزان بارش در کشور در سه ماهه پیش رو (اسفند ۹۷، فروردین و اردیبهشت ۹۸) در حد نرمال و متمایل به بیش از نرمال خواهد بود.

ایمان باباییان روز یکشنبه در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: مجموع بارش‌ها در سطح کشور نرمال و متمایل به بیشتر از نرمال است اما در نیمه شمالی، بیشتر از نرمال و در نیمه جنوبی در محدوده نرمال تا کمتر از نرمال خواهد بود.

وی اظهار داشت: بارش‌ها در اسفندماه ۹۷ در نیمه شمالی و شرقی بیشتر از نرمال است، در فروردین ماه ۹۸ نیز بارش‌ها در محدوده نرمال و برای اردیبهشت بیشتر از نرمال پیش‌بینی شده است.



White lion gives birth to four cubs

An African white lion being kept at Chamran Park wildlife center in the city of Karaj, west of Tehran, has recently given birth to four rare cubs.

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Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**
Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

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

Prophet Muhammad (S)

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

Iranian studies in German: Islamic period

Part 2

Until World War I, there were only a few scholars concentrating on subjects specifically Iranian, but many Orientalists did not refrain from dealing with Iranian, particularly Persian, affairs.

Most of them, however, followed the traditions of the 19th-century, when important translations and more or less reliable editions of classical Persian texts had been published.

Persian poetry was particularly popular with the German-speaking public in the 19th century, and we still find various contributions to Persian literature and philology in the first decades of the 20th century.

It is surprising that, in those early years of the 20th century, a large number of scholars were clearly inclined to deal with contemporary affairs of their own time, much more so than scholars after the Great War.

For example, the Austro-Hungarian Alexander von Kégl (Hung. Sándor Kégl) dealt with some Persian poets and men of letters of his own time in his miscellaneous contributions to the Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes (concerning Sheybani Kashani, Wesal Shirazi, and Rezaqoli Khan Hedayat, among others), and the German Martin Hartmann, who was a specialist in classical and then contemporary Islamic studies, wrote an unusually politically accentuated article on the Constitutional Revolution, stressing its structural similarities to the Russian Revolution of 1905 and describing the Persians as the most progressive nation in the Middle East at that time (Hartmann).

But still, despite the landmarks set by Geiger and Kuhn with the publication of the Grundriss, it rather seems that the first two decades of the 20th century were in a way a prolongation of the 19th century.

From the 1920s to the 1940s: Conditions changed greatly from the 1920s onward.

Gradually major efforts were made to integrate research on Iranian themes that had previously been rooted in diverse disciplines.

Scholars of philology belonging to such fields as Islamic studies, Iranian studies, or simply Oriental studies strove more and more to concentrate their activities on Iranian themes and bring them closer to other fields (e.g., history, literature, geography, anthropology) that were apparently stronger in terms of their methodological instruments.

In regard to Iranian studies (Iranistik) three scholars may be cited here: Hans Heinrich Schaeder, Wolfgang Lenz, and Walther Hinz.

Prior to World War II, Schaeder held a chair for Iranian studies in Berlin, and after the war, for some years, in Göttingen; Hinz was then professor holding the same chair in Göttingen until the 1970s; and Lenz held an analogous position at the University of Hamburg.

Rather early in their careers, these three scholars transformed their narrow philological scope in favor of wider perspectives: Schaeder, a former pupil of the famous Islamicist Carl Heinrich Becker, opened up his mind to universalist and comparative concepts in cultural history and searched for Iranian components within the great lines of human cultural development throughout world history.

Lenz tried successfully to enrich Iranian philology by methods originating in the social

and cultural sciences. To him, the actual and contemporary socio-cultural conditions of Iranian peoples were the proper subject of his field, “Iranistik,” and Iranian philology represented a means rather than an end.

Walther Hinz opened up an aspect of research in Iranian history that hitherto had been rather alien to the view of traditional German Orientalists.

He dealt mainly with late medieval and early modern history of Persia, the so-called Middle Period, as can be seen in his pioneering study *Irans Aufstieg zum Nationalstaat im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert* (1936).

This was clearly a thematic approach to another tradition, represented mainly by Vasilii Barthold, Johannes Dorn, and Nikolai Khanikoff.

There were certainly reasons for this specific concentration on Persian and Central Asian history of the pre- and post-Mongol periods among Russian orientalists, reasons to be found in the colonial political interests of the Russian Empire, and afterwards of the Soviet Union.

Thus a specific Russian school of historical research on Persia and Central Asia had been created, whose traditions were transplanted by Vladimir Minorsky to France and later into the Anglophone sphere.

In Germany, it was Walther Hinz who took over this tradition. Two younger scholars of Islamic studies, namely Hans Robert Roemer and Berthold Spuler, who were both students of Hinz, cooperated with him and later became prominent representatives of this tradition.

Spuler concentrated mainly on the early Islamic history of Persia and on the Mongol period, Roemer, like Hinz, specialized in post-Mongol times (Timurids, Qara Qoyunlus, Aq Qoyunlus, and Safavids).

As a result of the activities of these scholars, the pre-modern and early modern history of Persia became a well-established discursive theme in German universities after World War II.

Hinz insisted that this theme should be a part of Iranian studies, but Spuler and Roemer conceived of their historical research activities as belonging to the realm of Islamic studies, for which discipline each of them held a chair, in Hamburg and in Freiburg respectively.

Moreover, none of them dealt exclusively with their common field of interest. After 1960, Hinz preferred rather to study ancient Iranian cultural history and for a while concentrated on Elamite studies.

In addition to his work on Persian topics, Roemer also concentrated on the late medieval history of Mamluk Egypt, and Spuler had strong interests in the history of religions and in Turkology.

Since their studies were embedded in larger thematic frames, it happened that their common historical “school” did not survive among their successors.

Hinz was replaced by a specialist in Middle Iranian languages and comparative linguistics, and Roemer and Spuler were succeeded by scholars in the field of Islamic studies and Islamic history, none of whom continued the line of their predecessors.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica.

To be continued.

Neyshabur rendezvous for Khayyam lovers on May 18

From Page 1 ► Winners of several mathematics competitions will be honored during a ceremony, and tours of the Complex of Khayyam Planetarium and Museum will be held.

Literati have also been invited to hold a poetry night, which will begin at 7:30 pm at the tomb of Khayyam.

“This is a great honor for the people of Neyshabur to host the Khayyam devotees on this day,” Neyshabur governor Abutaleb Javan said last week.

“It is essential to acquaint ourselves with cultural and historical luminaries of Iran in order to help improve our national identity and self-awareness,” he added.

“This is something our society and the younger generation, in particular, need more than ever,” noted Javan who is also the director of this year’s commemoration for Khayyam Day.

Born on May 18, 1048, in Neyshabur, Khayyam, whose full name is Ghiyath ad-Din Abu al-Fath Umar ibn Ibrahīm al-Nishaburi al-Khayyami, is chiefly known to English-speaking readers through the translation of a collection of his rubaiyat (“quatrains”) in *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (1859), by the

English writer Edward FitzGerald.

His name Khayyam (“Tentmaker”) may have been derived from his father’s trade. He received a good education in

the sciences and philosophy in his native Neyshabur before traveling to Samarkand (now in Uzbekistan), where he completed the algebra treatise, *Risalah fi’l-barahin ala masa’il al-jabr wa’l-muqabalah* (“Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra”), on which his mathematical reputation principally rests.

Tomb of Khayyam, Neyshabur.

Tehran book fair hosts launch of Portuguese, Spanish editions of “Cell No. 14”

Ambassador Romina Pérez Ramos, Venezuelan Ambassador José Rafael Silva Aponte, and Argentinean Muslim cleric Edgardo Robi, who uses the name Soheil Asaad, attended the book launch event held at the Nations Hall of the book fair.

Golzar said that she feels proud of her translation of the book and added, “The author had written the book in a manner that was easily understandable and I did my best to do so.”

He called the book really informative and helpful for the younger generation.

Pérez Ramos also praised the book and said, “It is easy to examine the information in the book, because the writer is well known to all of us.”

The Spanish translation of “Cell No. 14” (“Celda No. 14”) was first introduced in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas in March.

Later in April, the House of Representatives of Colombia hosted a book launch celebration of (“Celda No. 14”.

The book covers the first half of the life of Ayatollah Khamenei, from his early childhood

all the way to the 1979 Islamic Revolution that brought the monarchical regime to an end in Iran.

The Persian edition “Khun-e Deli ke La’l Shod” (“The Pains that Changed into Gains”) was published by the Islamic Revolution Publications in 2019.

It was a Persian translation of “Inna Ma as-Sabri Nasra” the Leader had written in Arabic. The memories were then compiled by the Iranian Arabic language scholar Mohammad-Ali Azarshab.

The Arabic version was unveiled by Lebanon’s Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah during a ceremony held in Beirut in February 2019 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The book also contains unpublished photos of the Leader, his father and his children, in addition to a photo collection of paintings related to the topics in the book.

Rodela, a leading publisher in Bangladesh, published a Bengali translation by Muhammad Mujahid al-Islam in 2021.

“In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd” published in Persian

TEHRAN – “In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd” by American writer Ana Menéndez has been published in Persian.

Amut is the publisher of the book originally released by Grove Press in 2001. Keyhan Bahmani is the translator of the Persian edition.

In these linked tales about the Cuban-American experience and the immigrant experience in general, Ana Menendez has instantly established herself as a natural storyteller who “probes with steady humor and astute political insight the dreams versus the realities of her characters” (Elle).

From the prizewinning title story unfolds a series of family snapshots that illuminate the landscape of an exiled community rich in heritage, memory and longing for the past.

“In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd” is at once “tender and sharp-fanged” (L.A. Weekly) as Menendez charts the territory from Havana to Coral Gables, exploring whether any of us are capable, or even truly desirous, of outrunning our origins.

Menéndez is also the author of “Adios, Happy Homeland!”, “The Last War” and “Loving Che”.

She has worked as a journalist in

the United States and abroad, and lastly as a prize-winning columnist for The Miami Herald. As a reporter, she wrote about Cuba, Haiti, Kashmir, Afghanistan and India.

Her work has appeared in publications including Vogue, Bomb Magazine, The New York Times and Tin House and has been included in several anthologies, including The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature.

A former Fulbright Scholar in Egypt, she has also lived in India, Turkey and The Netherlands, where she designed a creative writing minor at Maastricht University.

Front cover of the Persian edition of Ana Menéndez’s book “In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd”.

Fragrance of Patrick Suskind’s “Perfume” lingers at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – “Perfume: The Story of a Murderer” by German writer Patrick Suskind has been published by Saleess in Persian.

Hossein Mansuri translated the book first published in 1985.

An acclaimed bestseller and international sensation, Patrick Suskind’s classic novel provokes a terrifying examination of what happens when one man’s indulgence in his greatest passion, his sense of smell, leads to murder.

In the slums of eighteenth-century France, the infant Jean-Baptiste Grenouille is born with one sublime gift, an absolute sense of smell.

As a boy, he lives to decipher the odors of Paris, and apprentices himself to a prominent perfumer who teaches him the ancient art of

mixing precious oils and herbs.

But Grenouille’s genius is such that he is not satisfied to stop there, and he becomes obsessed with capturing the smells of objects such as brass doorknobs and fresh-cut wood.

Then one day he catches a hint of a scent that will drive him on an ever-more-terrifying quest to create the “ultimate perfume”, the scent of a beautiful young virgin.

Told with dazzling narrative brilliance, “Perfume” is a hauntingly powerful tale of murder and sensual depravity.

With translations into 49 languages and more than 20 million copies sold worldwide to date, “Perfume” is one of the bestselling German novels of the 20th century.

Front cover of the Persian edition of Patrick Suskind’s novel “Perfume: The Story of a Murderer”.

Front cover of the Persian edition of Patrick Suskind’s novel “Perfume: The Story of a Murderer”.