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Extending deal with IAEA possible, Iran says

TEHRAN – Iran on Monday voiced conditional readiness to extend a deal with the UN nuclear watchdog that is set to expire in few weeks, saying the extension of the temporary deal would depend on the Vienna talks moving in the right direction. Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, announced that extending Iran's cooperation deal with the International Atomic Energy Agency is one of the country's options a day after top

Iranian negotiator signaled a readiness to extend the deal. Khatibzadeh was referring to a February deal between Iran and the IAEA which allowed the latter to continue its monitoring activities in Iran ahead of the implementation of a parliamentary nuclear law obligating the Iranian government to strictly restrict cooperation with the IAEA in case the West failed to lift sanctions. *Continued on page 3*



The beneficiaries of U.S.'s presence in Afghanistan, hit the nation with another tragedy once again

Lifting banking sanctions a must for nuclear negotiations to succeed: CBI

TEHRAN – The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati said on Saturday that guaranteed and conclusive lifting of sanctions against the country's banking system is a priority for Iran in order for the nuclear talks to proceed. "The removal of sanctions against the central bank, Iranian banks, SWIFT, and any money transfer between them and major foreign correspondent banks, needs to be verified," Hemmati said in

an interview with Bloomberg. Hemmati noted that officials from the central bank are directly involved in the negotiations to make sure that the lifting of sanctions will be real and practical. Asked about the way in which the practicality of the deal will be verified, Hemmati said: "We will make the verification in our own ways; personally, I am hopeful about the trend of negotiations." *Continued on page 4*

Powerful explosions outside a high school in Afghanistan's capital on Saturday killed at least 80 people and wounded scores more, many of them teenage girls leaving class, in a gruesome attack that underscored fears about the nation's future. The blast occurred in front of a school in the Shia majority neighborhood of Dasht-e-Barchi in western Kabul. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said the Taliban militant group was responsible for the attack. *Continued on page 5*

The Taliban, however, did not claim responsibility for the blast. Some experts believe ISIL/ISIS (Islamic State terrorist group) was responsible for the attack. ISIS continues to recruit among radicalized university students and disgruntled Taliban, said a former Afghan security official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters. *Continued on page 5*

VAR; highest priority for Iran football

BY MASOUD HOSSEIN
Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) has failed to fulfill its promise for over a year for video assistant referee (VAR) implementation and the country's football pays the price for that.

Last year, FFIRI acting president Heydar Baharvand had said they would use VAR in the coming season but the technology has never been used in Iran football.

Sunday night, a football match between Sepahan and Persepolis in Iran Professional League was thrown into turmoil due to the refereeing decisions.

Bijan Heydari had to show the spot at least two times in the match but failed to make the best decision since the Iranian stadiums have not yet been equipped with VAR.

The football federation has not yet been able to use this system due to financial and infrastructural problems and it could harm the football. In the 2020 AFC Champions League final match, Persepolis lost to Ulsan Hyundai after the Korean team were awarded two penalties after VAR review.

If the VAR had been already implemented in Iran's stadiums, Persepolis would have won their first ever title in AFC Champions League.

The Iranian players face problems playing outside the country since they are not familiar with the latest VAR developments.

The refereeing decisions changed the result of the match between title favorites Sepahan and Persepolis.

At the end of the match, the players were involved in a tunnel bust up and the controversial videos have gone viral on social media.

VAR implementation should be the highest priority for the football federation because almost all the professional leagues had already started using it in their stadiums.

Persepolis will have to meet Esteghlal in Tehran derby on Friday but there is a possibility that some players of the team will be punished ahead of the decisive match by the Disciplinary Committee. And it's all because of not being VAR in the stadium.

Iranian teams have developed in the recent years. Persepolis have advanced to the ACL final twice in three years. In the 2021 AFC Champion league, three Iranian teams out of four teams also booked their place in the Round of 16. The Iran's League Organization must implement VAR as soon as possible to prevent more controversies in the league.

UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus prepared for restoration

TEHRAN – A team of cultural heritage experts has commenced a detailed examination of the UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus as a prerequisite for the restoration of the millennium-old tower.

Located in Iran's Golestan province, the brick tower is of high architectural importance as an exemplar and innovative design of the early-Islamic-era architecture.

"Up to the moment, a documentation plan of the monument has been completed, and we have also determined a proper approach for a comprehensive restoration of the tower," the director of the World Heritage site, Abdolmajid Nourtaqani, announced on Sunday.

"So far, to prepare a comprehensive plan for the restoration of this historical building, some technological steps such as one-by-one examination of the bricks and their arrangement, have been taken."

Paying a visit to the tower, the official told reporters that the first serious restoration work on the monument took place in the [Iranian calendar] year 1310 (1931), in which several professional groups of experts took valuable measures to preserve and restore this historical monument.

For years the World Heritage has suffered from weeds growing on the surface. According to Nourtaqani, growing plants on the Qabus tower is not a new issue, and is witnessed in all brick buildings across the country, especially in northern provinces, due to their climatic conditions.

"The tower has also been facing such phenomenon for more thousand years, though the issue has been intensified by [heavy] rainfalls earlier this year," Abdolmajid Nourtaqani said. *Continued on page 6*

Hundreds injured as Israeli forces attack Palestinians at Al-Aqsa Mosque

Israeli forces stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on Monday morning, firing rubber-coated bullets, tear gas, and sound bombs at Palestinian worshippers, wounding hundreds.

There are hundreds of people injured from the clashes and about 50 of them were hospitalized," the Palestinian Red Crescent said in a brief statement to journalists.

Israeli soldiers in riot gear fired rubber bullets, stun grenades and tear gas at the Palestinian protesters, who in turned responded by throwing objects at them.

Based on some media reports, a number of wounded Palestinians have been arrested by Israeli forces outside the Lions' Gate as they attempted to flee the crackdown. The attack is an escalation of weeks of violence against Palestinians in Jerusalem al-Quds that has reverberated across the region.

The al-Aqsa Mosque and Bab al-Amoud (Damascus) Gate in Jerusalem al-Quds' Old City as well as the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood have witnessed a spike in Israeli atrocities in recent weeks.

At least 17 people, including one Palestinian paramedic, were injured during peaceful demonstrations across the occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds on Sunday evening, the Palestinian Red Crescent reported.

Outside the Old City, at least 90 Palestinians were wounded a day earlier when Israeli police attacked protesters. Another 200 Palestinians sustained injuries on Friday when Israeli forces stormed al-Aqsa Mosque, Press TV reported.

The latest raids against Palestinians come as Israel is set to hold an incendiary march on Monday to mark what the regime calls Jerusalem Day – the day East Jerusalem al-Quds was occupied in 1967 and later illegally annexed by the Israeli regime.

The march, which usually brings together thousands of extremist Israeli settlers chanting anti-Palestinian slogans, is expected to spur further violence in the occupied territories.

IRCS inaugurates 5,400 'crescent houses' nationwide

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) inaugurated 5,400 "crescent houses" across the country on Monday to expand services of volunteer members to the needy in normal and critical situations in urban and rural areas.

The Red Crescent Society houses are centers with a volunteer structure in order to promote the culture of volunteerism, attention to peace and friendship, human dignity in society as well

as strengthening the spirit of advocacy in times of peace and crisis.

Launched with a budget of 1.3 trillion rials (about \$31 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials), the centers were inaugurated by First Vice-President Is'haq Jahangiri, and IRCS Head Karim Hemmati.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society is one of the most effective and credible international relief organizations, having the largest number

of young volunteers, providing medical care in several countries, and producing pharmaceutical products, medical and relief equipment.

Established in 1922, IRCS operates as a humanitarian organization in the fields of rescue and relief in disasters, health, treatment, and rehabilitation, educating the public, youth, and volunteers, as well as the production of medicine and medical equipment. *Continued on page 7*

Islamic Ummah is against occupation not Judaism: Lebanese Islamic preacher

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
TEHRAN – A Lebanese Islamic preacher says Israel is the enemy of Islamic nations due to its occupation of the Palestinian land and not just because of Judaism.

"The Zionist regime is the enemy of the Islamic Ummah and the enemy of all the justice seekers all around the world, not because of its Judaism, but because of its occupation, aggression and criminality," Sheikh Mohammad el-Zo'bi tells the Tehran Times.

Preacher of al-Kholafa el-Rashedoun mosque in Tripoli in the north of Lebanon emphasizes, "We will continue to fight it with all forms of resistance until we liberate our occupied land and restore our rights."

Some Israeli lobbies spare no effort to portray the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as anti-Semitism, while many Muslim nations consider Israel as an enemy because of its occupation and aggression, not its religion.

"Everyone who fought people for the sake of their belief, and everyone who drove an oppressed people out of their land, and everyone who helped the displacement or prevented the return of refugees, and obstructed the restoration of stolen rights is our enemy, and the text of the Quran is clear and explicit in this regard," Zo'bi argues.

Following is the text of the interview:
What is the importance and place of Ramadan in Islam?

Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was revealed as a guide for humanity with clear proofs of guidance and the standard to distinguish between right and wrong. *Continued on page 5*

Iranian vocalist Abdolvahab Shahidi dies at 99

TEHRAN – Iranian singer and composer Abdolvahab Shahidi, who was also an oud and santur virtuoso, died of heart failure at Tehran's Resalat Hospital on Monday. He was 99.

He was admitted to the hospital on Sunday due to some heart problems, his grandchild Ali Kheradmand announced on his Instagram and added that his grandfather received his first dose of a COVID 19 vaccination five days before his death. *Continued on page 8*



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Iran-Iraq relations impervious to machination

POLITICAL TEHRAN — A mysterious set of events is unfolding in Iraq that resulted in a state of anxiety in the Iran-Iraq relations, prompting pundits to ponder whether there were plans to undermine relations between the two countries.

First of all, there was a lengthy report by Yahoo News claiming to disclose new details about the U.S. assassination of top Iranian General Qassem Soleimani. Citing interviews with 15 current and former U.S. officials, the turgid report took a deep dive into U.S. preparations to assassinate the Iranian general. However, it failed to provide previously unknown jaw-dropping details about the assassination except for a bunch of claims of Kurdish involvement in the strike. These claims were quickly rejected by Kurdish authorities in Iraq.

The Counter Terrorism Group (CTG), a counter-terrorism unit affiliated with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) that was accused in the report of playing a key role in facilitating the strike against General Soleimani, has denied any involvement in the assassination. "We deny any involvement or awareness of our forces in such act," reads a statement from the CTG sent to Rudaw English. "General Qassem Soleimani was a close friend of the late Mam Jalal [Talabani], and counter-terrorism units once fought on the frontlines against terrorism where Qassem Soleimani was also fighting."

Iran has stopped short of directly pointing the finger at the CTG but said anyone linked to the assassination of General Soleimani must be held accountable.

Pundits believe that the report may have been intended to undermine Iran's relations with the Iraqi Kurdish region and deflect attention away from those really behind



the assassination.

Reza al-Ghurabi, an Iraqi expert on Iran, said on Twitter that the Yahoo News report fostered suspicion among Iranian media outlets against Iraqi Kurdistan and deflected attention away from elements who facilitated the assassination.

In the midst of the controversy over the report, a prominent Iraqi protest leader in the holy city Karbala was shot dead in the latest of assassinations targeting activists who played a key role in organizing anti-government protests.

The protest leader, Ihab al-Wazni, was murdered in broad daylight outside his home. As usual, some Iraqi and regional parties sought to blame his murder on Iran while portraying al-Wazni as an anti-corruption activist who had opposed Iran's

influence in his country.

While the Iraqi government was still investigating the assassination, The Arab Weekly, a publication close to the United Arab Emirates, pointed the finger at Iran.

Citing an activist close to al-Wazni, the publication said, "They are Iranian militias. They assassinated Ihab and they will kill us all. They threaten us and the government is silent."

This incitement of hate against Iran has provoked a mob of protesters setting fire to the Iranian consulate in Karbala. Iran sent a letter of protest to the Iraqi embassy in Tehran and summoned the Iraqi ambassador. Iran also called on Iraq to provide protection for its diplomatic missions in accordance with international law.

The assassination of al-Wazni indicated

that how far some regional local parties would go to defame Iran and mobilize public opinion against it even though it had played no role in the assassination.

These parties are now seeking to exploit the plight of another Iraqi activist who incurred severe injuries during an assassination attempt in Diwaniya. Ahmed Hassan, an Iraqi journalist, was in intensive care after being shot in the head early Monday. No one claimed responsibility.

Iran and Iraq enjoy deep, historic relations that despite highs and lows continue to be mutually beneficial to both sides. And this has angered some local and regional parties who wish to fish in Iraq's troubled waters. These parties now seek to exploit the fraught situation in Iraq to drive a wedge between Iran and Iraq by accusing some Iraqi groups of being Iranian surrogates. With the general Iraqi parliamentary election a few months away, the political tussle between Iraqi groups is expected to intensify given the strong desire among some regional states to exacerbate polarization in Iraq.

The Arab Weekly claimed that "the upcoming battle for the protest movement [in Iraq] is likely to be with the Shia parties that are exclusively loyal to Iran."

This portrayal of certain Iraqi political groups as pro-Iran factions may reflect a desire by the United Arab Emirates and other regional states to defame these groups ahead of the next Iraqi election.

Regardless of the motivations behind the recent assassination, Iran has made it clear that it highly values its relations with Iraq and will never let certain hands undercut these relations. That's why Iran refused to escalate diplomatic tensions after its consulate was set alight and dealt with the issue calmly.

SPORTS

Iran deserves to lead International Kabaddi Federation: Avarsaji

S P O R T S TEHRAN — President of Iran Kabaddi Federation Abbas Avarsaji says that the country has the potential to lead kabaddi in the Asia or the world.

The president of the International Kabaddi Federation (IKF) Janardan Singh Gehlot died in late April and the seat has been left vacant since then.



Averseji, who is among one of the seven IKF vice-presidents, has shown interest in leading the international federation.

"First of all, I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to the family of kabaddi due to demise of Mr. Gehlot. He helped the sport attracts interest from the people around the world. Now, the federation needs to continue the way has started and I think Iran has the potential to lead the sport in Asia or in the world," Avarsaji told Tehran Times.

"Kabaddi has been played for hundreds of years in Iran. Iranian teams have shown how strong they are. In the 2018 Asian Games, men's and women's team won the title. It shows that we can lead the sport and the other members of the kabaddi federation have shown their satisfaction with us."

"Mr. Gehlot was heading the Asian and world federation at the same time but I believe that the Asia and world federations must be headed separately," he added.

"We want to get Kabaddi into the Olympics because the sport has grown around the world over the past years. Iran's Sports Ministry and National Olympic Committee have supported us to have a seat in Asia or in the world. Iran deserves to lead the Asian or world federation given its current position," Avarsaji went on to say.

Sepahan and Persepolis share spoils, Esteghlal lose to Zob Ahan

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Sepahan and Persepolis football team shared the spoils in Matchweek 22 of Iran Professional League (IPL) Sunday night, while Esteghlal suffered a home loss against Zob Ahan.

In Isfahan's Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium, IPL leaders Sepahan drew 1-1 with Persepolis. Isa Alekasir was on target for the visiting team and with three minutes left, Sepahan forward Mohammad Mohebbi leveled the scoreboard with a deflected shot.

In Tehran's Azadi Stadium, struggling team Zob Ahan defeated Esteghlal 2-0 thanks to goals from Vahid Mohammadzadeh and Milad Jahani in each half.

Tractor were also held to a 1-1 draw by Tractor in Tehran. Mehdi Tikdari was on target for Tractor in the 10th minute and Mohammad Darwishi equalized the match in the 55th minute.

Sepahan remain top of the table with 45 points. Persepolis are second with 42 points and a game in hand. Esteghlal stayed third with 34 points and two games in hand.

Ansarifard helps AEK win Athens derby and last ticket to Europe

S P O R T S TEHRAN — AEK has sealed Greece's final ticket to next season's European competitions with a 1-0 win in the Athens derby against Panathinaikos on Sunday.

A solitary goal by AEK captain Petros Mantalos, assisted by Karim Ansarifard, early in the second half gave the Yellows a precious win at the Apostolos Nikolaidis Stadium.

Panathinaikos had the chance to equalize in injury time, but Federico Macheda hit the upright from the penalty spot.

Iran to send 16 archers to World Cup Stage 2

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran will send 16 archers to the 2021 Archery World Cup Stage 2 in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The competition is scheduled to be held from May 17 to 23. The Iranian archers will participate at compound and recurve events in the Stage 2.

Milad Vaziri, Sadegh Ashrafi, Amin Pirali, Reza Shabani, Zahra Nemat, Shiva Shoja Mehr, Sogand Rahmani, Mahta Abdollahi will represent Iran in the recurve.

Mohammadsaleh Palizban, Ahmad Akbari, Hesamoddin Kowsar, Armin Pakzad, Vida Halimian, Raheleh Farsi, Arezou Taherian and Gisa Baybordi will take part in the compound.

Eight boxers to represent Iran at Asian Boxing C'ships

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Eight Iranian boxers will participate at the 2021 ASBC Asian Elite Boxing Championships.

The competition will be held in Dubai, the UAE from May 21 to 31.

The Iranian boxers ranked 16th in the medal table of the Bangkok 2019 ASBC Asian Elite Boxing Championships with one bronze.

Their goal in the upcoming Dubai 2021 edition is to reach better performance and prove their developments.

Squad:

52kg: Omid Ahmadi Safa
60kg: Danial Shahbakhsh
64kg: Ashkan Rezaei
69kg: Moslem Maghsoodi
75kg: Shahin Mousavi
81kg: Meysam Gheslshlaghi
91kg: Ehsan Roozbahani
+91kg: Porya Amiri

Extending deal with IAEA possible, Iran says

→1 The deal was reached during a two-day visit by IAEA Director-General Mariano Grossi to Iran. During the visit, Grossi met with Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

The AEOI issued a joint statement outlining the content of the understanding moments after Grossi concluded his visit to Iran.

"The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency recalled and reaffirmed the spirit of cooperation and enhanced mutual trust that led to the Joint Statement in Tehran on 26 August 2020, and the importance of continuing that cooperation and trust," the statement said. "The AEOI informed the IAEA that in order to comply with the act passed by the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran called 'Strategic Action to Cease Actions and Protect the interest of Iranian Nation' Iran will stop the implementation of the voluntary measures as envisaged in the JCPOA, as of 23 February 2021."

The statement added, "In view of the above and in order for the Agency to continue its verification and monitoring activities, the AEOI and the IAEA agreed: 1. That Iran continues to implement fully and without limitation its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA as before. 2. To a temporary bilateral technical understanding, compatible with the Law, whereby the IAEA will continue with its necessary verification and monitoring activities for up to 3 months (as per technical annex). 3. To keep the technical understanding under regular review to ensure it continues to achieve its purposes."

On Sunday, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, who is leading Iran's negotiating team in Vienna, said the deal may be extended.

He told Japanese broadcaster NHK that Iran hopes enough progress will be made so that there will be no need for an extension. But he said that if needed, Iran will consider an extension at a proper time.

Khatibzadeh elaborated on Araghchi's comments, underlining that what Araghchi said was that the parliamentary nuclear law was binding and it will expire on May 30.

The nuclear law stipulates that the Iranian government should take certain nuclear measures such as raising the level of uranium enrichment to 20% and suspending the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol if the Western parties failed to honor their obligations under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Iran's deal with the IAEA came a few days before the law came into force.

Speaking at his Monday press conference, Khatibzadeh said, "What Dr. Araghchi said in the interview with NHK is that the law of the parliament is binding and the date



of May 30 regarding the agreement between Iran and the IAEA is definitive."

The spokesman said Iran is not in a hurry to reach a conclusion in the Vienna talks but at the same time it seeks to prevent them from becoming draining.

"We do not want any date to prevent Tehran's executive instructions from being strictly implemented for the negotiating team," he pointed out. "In this interview, Dr. Araghchi pointed to only one of the choices for the date of May 21. If the talks are on the right track, with the coordination of both parties and Tehran's approval, this date can be extended."

Khatibzadeh said the decision regarding the extension of the February deal will not be made by the Iranian negotiating team. Instead, it will be made in Tehran.

"The policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the technical talks in Vienna is quite clear, the negotiating team acts within the framework of the high policies of the establishment and the executive instructions of Tehran, and sends reports to the relevant authorities on a daily basis," he continued.

The spokesman also reacted to comments by American officials that they would lift only JCPOA-related sanctions.

"Tehran made its decision in 2014 and still abides by the same decision to this day. Regarding the new round of technical talks, Tehran has again made it clear that if all sanctions are lifted and Iran's interest in lifting the sanctions is verified, Iran will certainly fulfill all its obligations under the JCPOA," Khatibzadeh said, noting that the U.S. has not yet made such a decision and it still looks forward to continuing the ominous legacy the Trump administration.

"This is a decision that Washington has not made and still has its heart set on the poisonous legacy of the previous U.S. administration and the Trump administration. The Biden government must decide whether it still wants to have its heart set on the failed legacy of 'maximum pressure', or it wants to distance itself from

German FM calls for full restoration of JCPOA

POLITICAL TEHRAN — German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has called for full restoration of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, saying time is of the essence in the current nuclear negotiations on the deal.

The top German diplomat described the Vienna nuclear talks as "tough and laborious" but said they are being pursued in a constructive atmosphere.

"The negotiations are tough and laborious but all participants are conducting the

talks in a constructive atmosphere," Maas said on the margins of a meeting with his European Union counterparts in Brussels, according to Reuters.

"However, time is running out. We aim for the full restoration of the Iran nuclear deal as this is the only way to guarantee that Iran will not be able to come into possession of nuclear weapons," he added.

Diplomats from Iran and the P4+1 group of countries as well as the United States are in the Austrian capital of Vienna for a fourth



round of talks over how to revive the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran has said the Vienna talks are moving in the right direction and negotiators have begun drafting texts for agreement on the JCPOA.

"The talks in Vienna have entered the phase of drafting texts in the field of sanctions lifting and nuclear measures," Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said on Monday.

TEDPIX gains 5,600 points on Monday

ECONOMY TEHRAN — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 5,682 points to 1.157 million on Monday.



As reported, over 9.27 billion securities worth more than 45 trillion rials (about \$1.07 billion) were traded at the TSE, Iran's major stock exchange, on Monday.

The first market's index gained 5,444 points, and the second market's index rose 7,058 points.

Iranian markets on hold as politics overshadow trades

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian markets including forex and stock markets are currently in a limbo situation as traders are waiting on the results of two major political events namely the presidential election and the nuclear deal negotiations to clear the atmosphere, Economist and Market Analyst Jamal Razaqi said.



According to Razaqi, who is the chairman of Shiraz Chamber of Commerce, traders have been cautious over the past few weeks and at the moment signals from Vienna are the only factor that is controlling the trend of the trades.

The value of the national currency rial grew in comparison to the U.S. dollar over the past week with each dollar falling to 210,000 rials. "The positive news from Vienna and optimism about the lifting of sanctions and the release of the central bank's foreign currency resources have been among the reasons for the fall in dollar exchange rates," Razaqi said.

According to the expert, the stock market is also following other physical markets and major traders are monitoring political events in order to make decisions so the trend of the trades in this market is still downward.

"The decrease in the dollar exchange rates in bank exchange offices also indicates the market's desire to continue its downward trend, but due to the ambiguity in the political and economic environment and the uncertainty of the outcome of the negotiations and the upcoming presidential election at the moment only short-term traders are active in the market."

Cellphone prices fall 10-15% in Iranian market

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The price of some cellphone models has dropped 10-15 percent in Iran in recent days following the drop in U.S. dollar exchange rates, an official with the Iranian Association of Cellphone, Tablet, and Accessories Importers announced on Monday.

According to Reza Ghorbani, the closure of the markets due to the coronavirus pandemic over the past two weeks, the decline in U.S. dollar exchange rates, and the clearance of new cellphone cargoes from customs have been the main reasons for the price declines.

"The cellphone market is now saturated because the sales have fallen, but imports and supply have risen," Ghorbani said.



Back in April, the Iranian Association of Cellphones, Tablet, and Accessories Importers announced that mobile phone traders imported 15.8 million smartphones into the country over the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Based on the data released by the mentioned association, some 2.5 million regular mobile phones were also imported into the country over the last year.

Back in January, the spokesman of the said association had announced that the price of cellphones had dropped 12-20 percent in domestic markets.

Iran's imports of mobile phones registered a 27 percent growth in the first nine months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020) as compared to the preceding year's corresponding period.

Some 8,617,438 cellphones worth over \$1.34 billion were imported into the country in the mentioned period, placing the commodity at second among the top imported items, according to the Spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Ruhollah Latifi.

The official noted that 6,779,012 mobile phones were cleared from the country's customs during the Iranian calendar year 1398's same nine months.

"The value of the imported products in the said nine months also increased by 65 percent compared to the previous year", Latifi said.

Lifting banking sanctions a must for nuclear negotiations to succeed: CBI

→ 1 Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal held another meeting on Friday to discuss the latest developments concerning the nuclear deal. During the meeting, participants agreed to expedite talks and start working on a draft text of the final agreement to revive the nuclear deal.

Iran's banking system has for decades been largely isolated from global finance because of the U.S. sanctions.

The Islamic Republic says U.S. sanc-

tions have even prevented the country from importing non-sanctioned goods like food and medicines and effectively handle the coronavirus outbreak. Washington has also stood in the way of Iran's \$5 billion loan application to the International Monetary Fund.

The Friday meeting has marked the start of the fourth round of nuclear talks, which is taking place in the Austrian capital of Vienna within the framework of the JCPOA Joint Commission.

Iran's annual saffron exports exceed \$190m

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian saffron farmers exported 324,589 tons of products worth over \$190 million to 60 foreign destinations during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

According to Ruhollah Latifi, over 78 percent of the mentioned exports in terms of value were made to five major customers of the Iranian saffron, IRNA reported.

Hong Kong with 74,578 kilograms (kg) worth \$46.626 million of imports, the United Arab Emirates with 59,791 kg valued at \$33.942 million, Spain with 49,025 kg worth \$26.44 million, China with 40,139 kg and a value of \$22.504 million, and Afghanistan with 33,781 kg and a value of \$19.168 million were Iran's top saffron buyers in the mentioned period.

According to Latifi, the mentioned five countries accounted for 79 percent of the Islamic republic's total saffron exports in terms of weight.

Iran is one of the world's top saffron producers and over 90 percent of its production is exported to



foreign destinations.

The country exported 192 tons of saffron worth \$117.5 million to foreign destinations during the first eight months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20, 2020).

45 idle industrial units to be revived in Kordestan by next March

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The managing director of Industrial Parks Company of Iran's western Kordestan province said that 45 idle industrial units are planned to be returned to the production cycle by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

Saying that 29 percent of the units in the industrial parks of Kordestan are inactive, Ahmad Khosravi said that last year 47 stagnant units were revived in the province.

Facilities have also been allocated by Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) to finance the needy units, which this year can lead to solving the financial problems of many production units located in the industrial parks, the official further announced.

There are 805 units in the industrial parks of Kordestan province, creating

jobs for over 12,000 persons.

As announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, 1,500 idle industrial units have been revived in the country during the past year.

According to Niaraki, over 6,500 new industrial units were also established across the country during the mentioned year which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the official said: "In the year that has been dedicated to the production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and executive bodies should be towards supporting the



Abbas Araghchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister who leads the Iranian delegation at the Vienna talks, issued a brief statement shortly after the JCPOA Joint Commission saying that during the meeting "it was decided

to start expert and technical consultations and work on the draft texts immediately."

The statement added, "All parties reaffirmed their seriousness to achieve the result in the shortest possible time."



country's industrial and mining units."

Niaraki pointed to a 40-percent increase in the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the previous year, saying: "The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest in the productive sectors."

He also mentioned an 85-percent rise in the allocation of land for establishing industrial units across the country and noted that over 4,500 hectares of land were handed over to applicants in the previous calendar year.

According to the official, there are over 46,000 small and medium-sized industrial units in Iran's industrial parks and zones, of them about 9,200 units are inactive.

Iran's industrial parks play a significant role in making the country independent through boosting production, which is a major strategy of Iran to combat the U.S. sanctions.

In fact, strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.

Annual export, re-export from Anzali free zone surpasses \$188m

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The managing director of Anzali Free Zone Organization put the value of export and re-export from this zone at \$188.7 million in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Ali Osat Akbari said products worth \$168.9 million were re-exported from the zone in the previous year, and named chemical products, wood, industrial machinery, and agricultural products as the main re-exported goods.

The official also announced that commodities valued at \$209 million were produced in the zone and exported to the internal markets in the past year, and said this shows the serious determination of the producers of Anzali Free Zone to provide basic goods and essential needs of domestic consumer markets in the conditions of sanctions in the country.

He further put the worth of products produced inside the zone and exported since the start of current year at \$19.8 million, and said that cellulose and chemical products, as well as industrial equipment were the major exported items.

Located in Gilan Province, north of Iran, Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone is the sole free zone in the southern part of the Caspian Sea with an area of 9,400 hectares and 40 kilometers shoreline.

It is one of the country's seven free trade-industrial zones.

Located on the North-South International Corridor, having a special position in connection with the Caspian littoral states, proximity to the ports of Astrakhan and Lagan in Russia, Aktau in Kazakhstan, and Baku in Azerbaijan, access through convenient routes to the consumer markets of CIS countries, and proximity to Rasht International Airport are some advantages of Anzali Free Zone.

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



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

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

Considering the important role that the free zones play in promoting the country's export and employment, Iran is seriously pursuing the development of its existing zones and the establishment of new zones as well.

More development measures in this field have been taking since the U.S. re-imposition of sanctions on the Iranian economy in November 2018, as Iran is reducing its dependence on the oil income while elevating its domestic production and non-oil exports.

Although the sanctions have disrupted Iran's economic

activities, they could not impede the development of Iranian free zones; in fact, the development of these zones has been even accelerated.

Many strides made for increasing activities in the free zones have played a significant part in boosting the country's non-oil exports and brought prosperity in the other economic sectors.

Three days ago, Secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council Hamidreza Mo'meni announced the approval for the establishment of 13 new special economic zones and seven free trade zones across the country.

According to Mo'meni, the decision was made during a meeting with the members of the Expediency Council on Wednesday.

"After discussion on all proposed areas and based on the experiences of the existing zones, the establishment of seven free zones and 13 special economic zones was approved," the official said.

The mentioned free zones will be established in Kordestan, Ilam, Sistan-Baluchestan, Bushehr, Kermanshah, Ardebil, and Golestan, while the special zones are going to be based in Fars, Yazd, Zanjan, Lorestan, West Azarbaijan, Qazvin and etc.

The official also announced on Sunday that 94 development projects worth 60 trillion rials (about \$1.42 billion) are going to be put into operation in Iran's free trade and special economic zones on Thursday.

According to Mo'meni, as the fourth series of inaugurations in the country's free trade and special economic zones, the mentioned projects are going to be inaugurated by President Hassan Rouhani in an online ceremony.

Covering a variety of fields including tourism, oil and gas, industry, production, renewable energies, and power plants, fisheries, and agriculture, the mentioned projects will be put into operation in Qeshm, Chabahar, Aras, Arvand, Salafchegan, and Payam zones, the official said.

The official noted that in the previous three rounds of inaugurations in the country's free and special economic zones, 163 projects with a total investment of 340 trillion rials (about \$8.095 billion) have been inaugurated.

UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus prepared for restoration

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



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

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

July 1 is considered a significant cultural event for Iranians to hold the anniversary of Gonbad-e Qabus UNESCO registration, and the annual celebration is organized by Gonbad Kavus municipality.

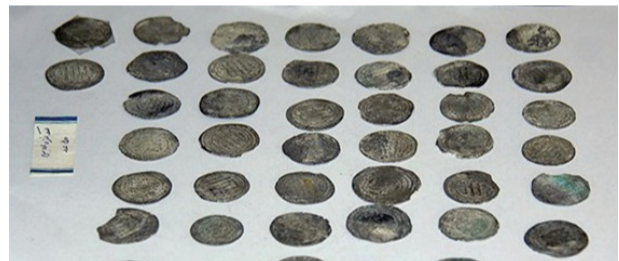
According to the UN cultural body says, the monument bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

Coins of Parthian, Abbasid, and Safavid eras restored in Zanjan museum

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A total of 25 coins, which date from the Parthian, Abbasid, and Safavid eras, have recently been restored in a museum laboratory in Zanjan.

"The restoration work conducted on these coins included chemical mechanical surface cleaning and stabilization," a local tourism official announced on Sunday.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, coins and coinage, standardized units of metal used as a medium of exchange, were first introduced into Persia by the Achaemenid Darius I (521-486 BC).



Before modern times the Persian economy consisted of a conglomeration of regional economies, each with a mint and a currency system geared to local commerce, rather than an integrated national economy. For this reason, it is more sensible to study changes in the output (weight, fineness) of a single mint over time, rather than trying to arrive at an estimation of a non-existent national norm.

Travel destinations: Kolah-Farangi Mansion

TOURISM TEHRAN — Kolah-Farangi Mansion is one of the most gorgeous tourist attractions in Rasht. The structure is located on the southern side of Mohtasham Garden (also known as the City Park).

The history of Mohtasham Garden dates back to the Qajar era (1789–1925), particularly to the time when Nasser al-din Shah Qajar ruled Iran. Akbar Khan Biglarbegi, who was one of the rulers of Gilan, started the construction of this garden and when he passed away, his daughter inherited it. She married her cousin, Sadegh Khan Mohtasham al-Molk, and therefore, the garden was called Mohtasham Garden.

A unique feature of this building is that it looks like a three-story building from the outside but it has four stories. There are two rooms on both the first and the second floor.



On the upper floor, there is a large octagonal room that has windows on every side. During different seasons of the year, these windows provided lightning and good ventilation. This building was used as the summer residence for the rulers of Rasht, and then in the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, it was changed to the City Park and was opened for public use. Nowadays it is being used as the center of preservation and instruction of the local arts of Gilan province.

The construction materials of Kolah-Farangi Mansion are brick and wood, and its roof is made of clay. All around the building on the first floor is a porch and on the second floor is a wooden balcony.

The delicate decorations of the mansion such as wooden lion heads, carved columns, and beautiful balcony railings have made this structure an attractive and unique monument.

Sophisticated Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

Bounded by the Caspian Sea and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the north, Gilan, in the far past, was within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE.

Archaeologists excavate bazaar of Ardebil

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A team of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts has conducted a minor excavation at the Seljuk-era (1037–1194) bazaar of Ardebil, which is situated in northwest Iran.

"The excavation is now being carried out at the vaulted passage of Zanjirlu to determine the antiquity and condition of the basements and foundation of this part of the historic bazaar," Ardebil's tourism chief Mohammadreza Shayeqi said on Monday.

Upon completion of the archaeological project, the bazaar is scheduled to undergo a full restoration, the official added.

The historical bazaar of Ardebil was once an important trade center during the Safavid era (1501–1736). At that time, Ardebil had a special prestige and enjoyed a remarkable political, social, and cultural status.

Inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1985, the bazaar was extensively restored during Qajar-era (1789–1925).

In the Iranian culture, bazaars have been traditional public spaces in the Iranian cities with great contributions to commercial activities in urban life meanwhile their extended activities can be traced to

social, cultural, political, and religious roles. People watching and even mingling with them in the bazaars is one of the best ways to take the pulse of the country. Bazaars have traditionally been major economic and social centers in any Iranian city.

Most mazes and passages offer certain commodities such as carpets, metalwork, toys, clothing, jewelry, and kitchen appliances, traditional spices, herbal remedies, and natural perfumes. One can also bump into colorful grocery stores, bookbinders, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, coppermiths, tobacconists, tailors, flag sellers, broadcloth sellers, carpenters, shoemakers, and knife-makers.

Several divided carpet sections across the bazaar enable visitors to watch or buy hand-woven Persian carpets and rugs with different knot densities and other features. From another point of view, bazaars are also synonyms of foods, with their unmissable colorful stalls of vegetables, herbs, and spices. Yet, most of these ingredients might be mysterious to a foreign eye.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, whose altitude averages 3,000 meters above sea level, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tra-



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

Boundary walls of iconic Iranian caravanserai restored

HERITAGE TEHRAN — The boundary walls of Yengi-Imam caravanserai, one of Iran's iconic roadside inns of the 17th century, have been fully restored.

"This phase of the renovation of the Yengi-Imam caravanserai was carried out in the shortest possible time to prevent unauthorized entry to the monument or even a potential act of vandalism," a local tourism official announced on Sunday.

Located in Alborz province, the caravanserai showcases an exemplar form of Persian architecture, which emerged across the Silk Roads. 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 at the center of its 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 onto wide corridors that run behind the aforementioned chambers.

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

Iran's earliest caravanserais were built during the Achaemenid era (c. 550–330 BC). For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai can be a wide experience as they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age.

Vast tourism complex under construction near Tehran

TOURISM TEHRAN — A vast tourism complex is being constructed in Pakdash, near the Iranian capital, Pakdash's tourism chief has said.

The project is expected to create 330 job opportunities directly, Asadollah Tajik added.

The complex, which covers an area of 3,200 square meters, includes a traditional restaurant, traditional bathhouse, flower market, conference halls, museums, and accommodation units, the official explained.

The project is scheduled to be completed within the next five years, he said.

He also noted that establishing such complexes could boost tourism in the region.

Hugging the lower slopes of the magnificent, snow-capped Alborz Mountains, Tehran is much more than a chaotic jumble of concrete and crazy traffic blanket-



File photo depicts construction workers at a building site in Tehran.

ed by a miasma of air pollution. This is the nation's dynamic beating heart and the place to get a handle on modern Iran and what its future will likely be.

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

The first time Tehran is mentioned in historical accounts is in an 11th-century chronicle in which it is described as a small village north of Ray. It became the capital city of the Seljuk Empire in the 11th century but later declined with factional strife between different neighborhoods and the Mongol invasion of 1220.

Historical watermill starts rotating once again

TOURISM TEHRAN — An underground watermill, which is located in the village of Tiran, Isfahan province, has been fully restored to be a new destination for sightseers and history buffs.

Dating back to the late Qajar era, the watermill is situated near the seasonal river of Morghab that is one of the constituent elements of the historical core of Tiran, a local official said on Saturday.

The restoration project that included

debris removal took some three years to be completed, the official said.

Watermills were typically constructed by the then design requirements for instance they featured dome-shaped roofs with high-enough vestibules to allow camels or other livestock to move back and forth with ease to convey grains or flour.

Soaked in a rich history, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran during the 16th and 17th centuries, and now it is one of



Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons.

Isfahan is filled with architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people. It has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half of the world", suggesting that seeing it is equivalent to seeing half of the world.

Arts of ancient Iran: Axe inscribed with the name of King Untash-Napirisha

TOURISM TEHRAN — The pictured Iranian hatchet inscribed with the name of Untash-Napirisha is dedicated to the goddesses Ishnikarab and Kiririsha.

The object was found in Tchoga Zanbil, in the temple of Ishnikarab near the great ziggurat consecrated by the king to Inshushinak and Napirisha.

It is currently kept at the Louvre museum in Paris. This type of weapon, with the axe blade emerging from the mouth of an animal – usually a lion – is in keeping with the tradition in the early 2nd millennium BC. An electrum figurine of a wild boar decorates the side of the hatchet.

Famous for his victorious campaigns against Babylon, King Untash-Napirisha dedicated many weapons in stone and precious metals to Elamite divinities, the principal ones being Inshushinak, Napirisha, and Kiririsha, according to the Louvre's Department of Near Eastern Antiquities.

Ishnikarab is associated with these three divinities. Although the feminine character of Ishnikarab has been questioned, she would appear to have been the wife of Inshushinak.

In making his gift, the king placed himself under the protection of the two goddesses, Ishnikarab and Kiririsha. At the time, the unification of the upper and lower regions was uncertain, and the unity of the Elamite empire fragile. The inscription of the



sovereign's name on this object in Elamite was an assertion of the linguistic identity of the kingdom, which formed one of its underlying foundations. These offerings suggest the warrior nature of Kiririsha.

King Untash-Napirisha founded a new religious capital, Al-Untash Napirisha (present-day Tchoga Zanbil), on the road linking the two principal centers of the kingdom, Anshan and Susa. In the middle of this "holy city" was a small temple dedicated to the goddess Ishnikarab. Untash-Napirisha built a temple

next to it dedicated to Kiririsha, as well as one to Inshushinak. Later, he changed his mind and turned the latter into a large ziggurat dominating this site where the country's guardian deities – Napirisha, the god of the upper regions, and Inshushinak, the god of the Susian plain – were worshipped. Kiririsha was the "Great Goddess," the "Great Wife," and the "Mother of Gods." She was also the "Protector of Kings."

The weapon belongs to a tradition introduced in the late 3rd millennium BC: namely, votive axes with blades emerging from the mouth of a wild animal, decorated with an animal on the collar. A reclining boar – an image commonly found in the region – is here featured on the heel of the blade, which appears to be "spewed forth" from the mouth of a lion. Other weapons such as daggers and swords have been found in graves in Lurestan. These arms were often inscribed with the name of a monarch, as is the case in the Foroughi Collection. Often made of precious metals, these were not made for battle, but were insignia of dignity presented to high-ranking officials.

UNESCO says that Tchoga Zanbil is the largest ziggurat outside of Mesopotamia and the best preserved of this type of stepped pyramidal monument.

Tchoga Zanbil was excavated in six seasons between 1951 and 1961 by Roman Ghirshman, a Russian-born French archeologist who specialized in ancient Iran.

Some \$766m proposed to drought management projects

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN – A total of 3.2 billion rials (nearly \$766 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been proposed for drought management projects with the priority given to the immediate supply of fresh water in urban areas across the country.

Due to the significant decrease in precipitation in the current water year (September 23, 2020) compared to the same period previous years, a proposal to provide credit to compensate for the drought damage and water shortage management throughout the country was sent to the Planning and Budget Organization, Esmail Najjar, the head of the Crisis Management Organization, said on Monday.

The proposal to allocate 3.2 billion rials (nearly \$766 million) has been made, which after approval will be spent to provide water supply to drought-ridden cities, as well as improving water quality, he stated, IRNA reported.

Rainfall drops by 54%

Precipitation in Iran amounted to 127.8 millimeters from the beginning of the current water year (September 22, 2020) until April 24, which demonstrates a 54 percent decline compared to the same period last [Iranian calendar] year.

In comparison with the long-term average (52 years), rainfall dropped by 41 percent over the aforementioned period, according to



the data released by the Ministry of Energy. Over the past water year (September 2019-September 2020), the country received 279.3 mm of rainfall.

Earlier in April, Abolghasem Hosseinpour, director of flood control at Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization said that Iran will probably experience drought over the current [Iranian calendar] year (began on March 21), as only four provinces out of 31 provinces of the

country received normal rainfall last year.

Given that Iran is an arid and semi-arid region, the rainfall rate is low, in other words, the fluctuations of rainfall vary significantly from year to year, he added.

Over the last two years, Iran was doused with rain which was unprecedented during the past 50 years, but last year, unfortunately, the country faced drought, which shows a 40 percent decrease in rainfall, he explained.

Watershed management is a solution to strengthen the ecosystem in the face of subsequent droughts by penetrating rainfall into the ground.

Wet spell or still short of rain?

Rainfall extremes over the past three years slowly questioned the conception that Iran is experiencing a long-term drought and some of the experts announced that a wet spell will embrace the country.

So, some experts claimed that Iran has entered a period of a wet spell after experiencing dry spells over the past few decades, some others highly rejected the claim implying that the country faced a lack of rain by 50mm over the past 5 decades.

Climate disruption or global climate disruption, is the new term scientists are using to explain the extreme fluctuations that can and will occur to our weather systems as anthropogenic-caused carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases increase in our atmosphere, the oceans get warmer, and weather events go wild.

The report regrets that climate disruption will be continuing as climate change is on the rise and it calls on taking proper and effective measures to alleviate the adverse effects of climate change on the country.

In fact, experiencing two or three consecutive years of rainy days cannot ensure that drought no longer hits the country, but then it may enter a multi-year drought.

Iran to likely receive 10m doses of COVID-19 vaccine by early June

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Iran will receive about 10 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine by early June if the supply process goes on according to schedule, Sadeq Tabrizi, a health ministry official, said on Monday.

A new shipment of the vaccine including 1.5 million doses will arrive in Iran on Thursday, he announced.

By mid-June, the domestically produced vaccine will be provided to the Ministry of Health, and the Iran-Cuba vaccine and the COVIRAN Barekat vaccine will also be approved and start mass production.

"It is predicted that by the end of June, we will have at least two domestically produced Iranian vaccines, and after that, in addition to the foreign vaccine, which will not be in large numbers, we will speed up vaccination by the homegrown ones," he explained.

So far, about 3.2 million doses of vaccines have been imported, including Sputnik V from Russia, COVAXIN from India, AstraZeneca from South Korea, and a Chinese vaccine.

According to the Ministry of Health, some 1,378,744 people have received the first dose of vaccine and 276,667 people have received the second dose. The total number of injected vaccines in the country reached 1,655,411 doses.

Mass vaccination against COVID-19 started on Iranian citizens with the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine on February 9.

While Iran continues efforts to mass-produce local



candidates, several foreign vaccines have already been imported and others are expected soon.

Iran is currently producing vaccines jointly with three countries of Cuba, Russia, and Australia, which may also be released by September.

Domestic vaccines

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first coronavirus vaccine made by Iranian researchers, started the third phase of the human trial in early May by being administered to 20,000 people.

Developed by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, the vaccine was unveiled on December 29, 2020, and started to be mass-produced

on March 29.

Meanwhile, a vaccine developed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute (Razi Cov Pars) is expected to become the second Iranian-made vaccine to be administered among the population in early August; which started the clinical trial on February 27.

Iran has also successfully completed the first phase of the human trial for Fakhra vaccine, the third domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine, named after nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh (he was assassinated in November 2020 near Tehran), that was unveiled and started the clinical trial on March 16.

"Osvid-19", the fourth domestic vaccine produced by Osvalh Pharmaceutical Company is also undergoing human trials, which will also be available in early September.

New cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Monday, Health Ministry's spokesperson, Sima-Sadat Lari, confirmed 18,408 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 2,673,219. She added that 2,127,192 patients have so far recovered, but 5,533 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 351 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 75,261, she added.

So far, 17,206,735 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Smuggled goods worth \$70m confiscated

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Some 2.9 billion rials (nearly \$70 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) worth of smuggled goods have been seized across the country.

The first phase of a nationwide plan to intensify the fight against smuggling goods was implemented across the country last week, Mohammad Reza Moghimi, the police chief, said on Monday.

Under the plan, police detectives identified the location of the depot through round-the-clock efforts and specialized actions, he explained.

He went on to say that essential goods worth 2.9 billion rials (nearly \$70 million) have been discovered and 1,152 criminals and 690 vehicles were arrested during the implementation of the plan.

The discovered goods were handed over to the Organization for Collection

and Sale of State-owned Properties of Iran, and the smugglers were arrested and handed over to the judicial authorities, he explained.

President Hassan Rouhani has urged a systematic fight against smuggling "from the start to the endpoint", citing the fight as a key factor in improving Iran's economy in July 2019.

Rouhani said while Iran is under sanctions, extra care should be given to stopping the smuggling of "hard-won" currency.

Every year, \$20-25 billion are smuggled in and out of the country, which, if stopped, will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, Hassan Norouzi, a member of the Parliament, said.

In the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), \$12 billion was smuggled into Iran and \$900 million out of the

country, according to the Headquarters for Combating the Smuggling of Commodities and Foreign Exchange.

According to some reports, over ten million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran on a daily basis, adding up to 3.65 billion liters every year. Other reports put the number higher. On December 19, 2018, a government spokesman said every day 11.5 million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran. Ali Adyani, a member of the Iranian Parliament's Energy Committee has quoted various sources as putting the figure at 10, 15, and even 20 million liters a day.

Mohammad Hassan Nejad, another member of the committee, says the smuggled fuel amounts to 22 million liters per day. With a 50 cent per liter profit, the total daily income adds up to 400 trillion rials annually or \$3.3 billion, nearly the



same as the country's annual development budget.

In addition to gasoline smuggling, other fuels such as kerosene and diesel are also smuggled; not in lesser quantities.

In June 2020, the first phase of the national anti-smuggling plan has been implemented with the priority of customs, tobacco, and transit goods nationwide.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Educational projects worth \$330m to be inaugurated

A total of 1,015 educational projects worth 14 trillion rials (nearly \$330 million) will be inaugurated across the country, Mehrolah Rakhshanimehr, director of the organization for renovation, development, and equipment of schools, has announced.

The projects will be inaugurated by the next 10 days, on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, he stated, ISNA reported on Sunday.

According to Rakhshanimehr, the projects include 4,168 classrooms, 11 swimming pools, and 32 gyms.

About 14,000 classrooms have been built so far this year (started March 21, 2019), compared with some 10,000 last year, he concluded.

افتتاح ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان پروژه آموزشی

رئیس سازمان نوسازی، توسعه و تجهیز مدارس کشور گفت ۱۰۱۵ پروژه آموزشی با اعتباری به میزان ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان در سراسر کشور به بهره‌برداری می‌رسد.

به گزارش ایسنا، مه‌راله رخشانی مهر افزود این پروژه‌ها طی ۱۰ روز آینده و به مناسبت چهل و یکمین سالگرد پیروزی انقلاب اسلامی افتتاح خواهند شد.

به گفته او، این پروژه‌ها شامل ۴۱۶۸ کلاس درس، ۱۱ استخر، و ۳۲ سالن ورزشی هستند.

رخشانی مهر ادامه داد تاکنون در سال ۹۸ حدود ۱۴ هزار کلاس درس افتتاح شده است در حالیکه در سال ۹۷ حدود ۱۰ هزار کلاس افتتاح شده بود.

IRCS inaugurates 5,400 'crescent houses' nationwide

→ 1 In 2005, the IRCS received the Henry Davison Award for outstanding humanitarian services, and the IRCS initiative of volunteers was selected as the best project (out of 50 projects from 45 national societies), by the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.



World Red Cross Day

May 8th marks the birthday anniversary of Henry Dunant who was at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Each year, members of the International Movement organize various events on this occasion to commemorate the unique and vital role that this Movement plays to help affected people all across the world.

The International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is a worldwide humanitarian network with today 11.6 million volunteers and more than 450,000 staff members. This global network paves the ground for the activities of the Movement in more than 190 countries in the world.

The Movement is composed of three main pillars, namely the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and around 190 Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies.

Humans already have the tools to combat climate change but we lack leadership

When it comes to the political will and leadership needed to drive the world towards a sustainable future, I'm a pessimist. Time and time again, I've heard rhetoric from politicians focusing on short-term goals at the expense of planning for the future. In 2021, the mainstream media promote responsible journalism and take a hard line with climate deniers. Many journalists hold governments to account over climate change goals. However, hard scientific data is often still manipulated and cherry-picked by politicians. I've spoken to many and liken the experience to walking through treacle.

Does their bland decision-making have to do with the structure of democracy itself, with its short electoral terms and lack of incentives for incumbent politicians to make hard and binding decisions for the decades ahead?

As I look around and see New Zealand's highways, jammed with huge diesel trucks and ever-increasing numbers of petrol-powered SUVs and cars, I feel dread. It doesn't have to be this way. What is it about living on a finite planet that humans either don't or won't understand, after all the studies and warnings show that continuing in this way leads to the inevitable collapse of the planet's ecosystem?

When you look at the true cost of the damage to the atmosphere, politicians' claims that action on carbon reduction is too expensive become bizarre. When we burn fossil fuels, we never factor in the ultimate cost of the damage to the atmosphere caused by excess CO₂. In many countries, if you pollute a waterway, you have to clean it up or pay a substantial fee for the damage – that cost has to be factored in to the cost of running your business. In the case of emitting CO₂ into the atmosphere, you can do that for little or no upfront and immediate cost. Are we offended by people polluting waterways because it is literally in your face whereas CO₂ is a transparent gas?

For most of the last few decades I have been disappointed with the lack of action on carbon emissions reductions by politicians. But on the other hand, I'm very optimistic when it comes to the extraordinary ingenuity of human beings. We already have the tools to combat climate change. The last two decades have seen massive advances in renewable energy electricity generation to the point where these sources are now cheaper than equivalent coal-burning power plants, even before the cost of damage to the atmosphere is taken into account. The International Energy Agency (IEA) reported that, in 2019, almost 30% of OECD electricity was met by renewable sources including hydro, solar, wind, biomass and geothermal.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 180)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

جمع صفت – بسیاری از صفت‌های فارسی ممکن است به جای اسم استفاده شوند و پسوند جمع بگیرند:

پیر: پیران، پیرها جوان: جوانان، جوان‌ها

جمع شکسته‌ی عربی – کلمات عربی زیادی در فارسی جمع شکسته دارند و ممکن است دارای جمع فارسی هم باشند:

مفرد	جمع عربی	جمع فارسی
آثر	آثار	آثرها
آهل	آهالی	–
مرکز	مراکز	مرکزها
مدرسه	مدارس	مدرسه‌ها
مِلت	مِلل	مِلت‌ها

جمع با "ات" – پسوند عربی "ات" برای جمع گروه زیادی از کلمات عربی و چند اسم فارسی استفاده می‌شود. بعضی از کلمات عربی ممکن است دارای جمع فارسی هم باشند:

اطلاع	اطلاعات	–
تمرین	تمرینات	تمرین‌ها
سؤال	سوالات	سؤال‌ها

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13. He who is deserted by friends and relatives will often find help and sympathy from strangers.
Imam Ali (AS)

Brooklyn Film Festival to screen "The Tank" from Iran

A R T TEHRAN – Iranian short "The Tank" will have its U.S. premiere during the 24th Brooklyn Film Festival, which will take place from June 4 to 13. Starring Nader Fallah, the narrative has been directed by Mojtaba Purabdollah. The film is about, Abolfazl a 10-year-old boy who lives in an apartment upon the roof of which is a tank of water that supplies the water of the building. He along with his friends go on the roof to swim in the tank as a hobby. One day Abolfazl closes the lid of the tank while Mohammad is in it. Screenwriter and filmmaker Bruno Derlin and filmmaker Rick Gomez are the jury members of the short narrative film competition. The organizer of the festival is the Brooklyn Film Society, which is a non-profit organization missioned to provide a public forum in Brooklyn in order to advance public interest in films and the independent production of films. Themed "The Clearing", the 2021 edition of the festival will include both virtual and in-person components. The festival will premiere 140 films that will actually be viewable online and a shorter lineup that New Yorkers can catch in-person at Windmill Studios in Greenpoint.

Nezami's Leili and Majnun, heroism of sentiment

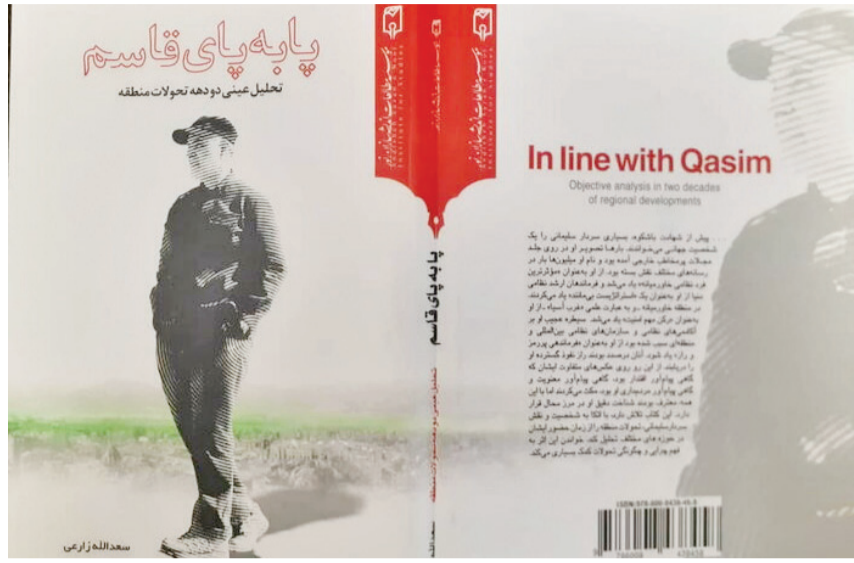
Par 2
As well as being engagingly written, the poem also has a strong moral undertone, depicting the way mundane and earthly love are transfigured into a sublime spiritual force. Nezami operates at the boundary of the profane and mystic, although he leans more towards mystical concepts. One important aspect of love the poet shows is that a pure mystical and God-centered love creates havoc when focused on an object in a human society and in an earthly setting. Through the character of Majnun as an ideal lover who becomes entirely absorbed by love, Nezami skillfully shows how the lover's situation and condition correspond to those of an ascetic; indeed, asceticism is given as an alternative. When Majnun's character is viewed as an ascetic, he observes the basic principles of abstinence such as celibacy, mortification, silence, seclusion, sleep deprivation and avoidance of food. In pictorial presentations, Majnun is depicted as an emaciated ascetic. Nezami shows that the experiences of a lover and of an ascetic are similar, except that an ascetic acts intentionally whereas a lover is afflicted by the force of love. In the prologue and epilogue, Nezami imparts pieces of advice to the reader about various themes including life's transience, death, humility, etc.

The popularity of the theme following Nezami's Leili and Majnun. Poetic citations ascribed to Majnun, and anecdotes about his love occur in Persian and Arabic texts before the appearance of Nezami's romance. But Nezami's Leili and Majnun changed the image of Majnun decisively from the twelfth century onwards. Despite its simple structure and plot, the romance is among the most imitated works in Persian, and in other languages under Persian cultural and literary influence, such as Pashto, Urdu, Kurdish, and the Turkic languages. Nezami's Leili and Majnun has been translated into many languages. The English reception of this story in the eighteenth century was indirect, usually based on translations of an imitation of Nezami's romance. Sir William Jones (1746-94) introduced Nezami to the English world in several of his publications. He did not translate any of Nezami's romances, but did publish a Persian edition of Hatefi's Leili and Majnun in 1788. This version of the romance became a source of inspiration for Isaac D'Israeli (1766-1848), who made an adaptation in English. D'Israeli's work was later put into the opera Kais, or Love in the Deserts: An Opera in Four Acts by William Reeve, which was performed in London at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. Louis Aragon (1897-1982), one of the leading representatives of the Surrealist movement, bemoaned his love for his beloved in Le Fou d'Elsa (1963). Aragon's version was based on Jami's Leili and Majnun, again an imitation of Nezami's version. The first translation of the romance was an abridged verse rendition by James Atkinson published in 1836; this has been reprinted several times (1894, 1915). In recent decades, several translations, adaptations and performances of this romance have appeared in English, of which those by Rudolf Gelpke (originally in German) and Colin Turner should be mentioned.

(Source: Encyclopedia Iranica) Concluded

Book on Gen. Soleimani's role in regional developments published

CULTURE TEHRAN – A book recently published by an Iranian center for strategic studies gives an analytical insight into the key role Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani played in regional developments in West Asia during the 2000s and 2010s. "In Line with Qasim" released by the Andisheh Sazane Nur Institute for Strategic Studies was introduced during a meeting in Tehran on Sunday. Author Sadollah Zarei attending the meeting held at IRNA office pointed to the assassination of General Soleimani by the U.S. government, and said, "Israel and the U.S. supposed that they could inflict serious damage on the resistance front by the assassination." "However, the U.S. could not achieve any of its goals; Hezbollah remained in Lebanon; Syria managed to alleviate its economic crisis; Iraq was able to tackle its problems. Therefore, Martyr Soleimani is still alive and his influence still continues in the region," he added. He went on to say, "General Soleimani was recognized as the firm basis of security in West Asia as many international and



Cover of the book "In Line with Qasim" by Sadollah Zarei. Zarei also announced Andisheh Sazane Nur Institute for Strategic Studies' plan to translate the book into Arabic and English.

General Soleimani has been the subject of numerous books published following the martyrdom of the chief of IRGC Quds Force in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020. Mohsen Saleh, a Lebanese associate professor of modern and contemporary Arab history, has authored "Vanquisher of America" on the commander. The book has been published by Tamkin Publications in Beirut to commemorate the commander's first martyrdom anniversary. Saleh, a former head of the Department of History and Civilization at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), is currently the general manager of Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations in Beirut. In addition "Sincerity-Centered Leadership: The Essence of the School of Shahid Soleimani" was released by the Raahdan Publishing House in Tehran in February. Written by Seyed Mohammad Moqimi, a management professor at the University of Tehran, the book gives a scientific analysis of General Soleimani's leadership qualities.

Turkish translation of "Inquests about Palestine" ready to be published



Author Zahra Mostafavi attends a meeting the publisher organized in Tehran on September 20, 2018 to introduce her book "Inquests about Palestine".

CULTURE TEHRAN – Esmail Bandiardarya recently completed translating Iranian writer Zahra Mostafavi's book "Inquests about Palestine" into Turkish and it is ready to be published in the near future.

He made the remarks during a webinar organized by the Iranian Culture Center in Istanbul to discuss translations and publications on the issue of Palestine last Friday. Bandiardarya said, "I have translated more than 300 books from Persian into Turkish," citing "Inquests about Palestine" as his most recent translation work. Kurosh Moqtaderi, the Iranian cultural attaché in Turkey, also attending the webinar, stressed the importance of the Palestinian issue. "Quds is the first Qibla of Muslims that has been occupied by Zionists since 1948," he said in the webinar, which was held to commemorate International Quds Day. Referring to publications on the Palestinian issue, Moqtaderi added: "Several books on this issue have so far been translated from various languages into Turkish". The book consists of several articles and research works on the issue of occupied Palestine. One of the main chapters of the book discusses the viewpoints of

Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, about Palestine. The writer delves into recent developments and the Islamic awakening in West Asia in the final chapter. Another speaker at the webinar was Aydin Altai, a Turkish writer and researcher, who commented on the issue of Palestinian book publications and distribution, stating that he has carefully studied the views of Imam Khomeini. He said, "Resistance is the central core of Imam Khomeini's discourse." "The necessity of identifying the enemy caused him to name the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan as International Quds Day," Altai added. The Turkish author and researcher further emphasized the importance of compiling and translating valuable works about Palestine in order to convey the realities to the audience. The original book "Inquests about Palestine" was first published by First Qibla Publications as its first Persian edition in 2013.

Iran, Finland working on co-production "Layers of Lies"

A R T TEHRAN – Iran and Finland are collaborating in an action movie entitled "Layers of Lies". Ramin Sohrab is the director of the project, which has been written by Sohrab, Amir-Hossein Makui, Joe Leone and Sami Laulajainen. In "Layers of Lies", an ex-fireman returns to his home country Iran after a decade-long absence, only to have his old enemy resurface and steal away what he treasures most - and now he'll stop at nothing to exact revenge. The crew is taking final scenes of the movie starring Sonja Farling, Antti Reini

and Anu Sinisalo. Earlier in 2018, the Cinema Organization of Iran (COI), where the major policies for Iranian cinema are made, announced its plan to extend the country's overseas collaboration on film production. Over the past few years, a number of Iranian cineastes have begun joint productions with several overseas companies after they acknowledged the need for collaboration in the international arena. "Beyond the Clouds" by Majid Majidi, "Yeve" by Anahid Abad and "1st Born" by Ali Atshani are the latest examples

of films Iranian filmmakers have made along with foreign partners. "Beyond the Clouds" is Majidi's first India-set movie whose story is set in Mumbai's impoverished underclass. He made the movie in 2017 in collaboration with the Indian companies, Zee Studios and Namah Pictures. "Yeve", a co-production between Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation and the National Cinema Center of Armenia, was shot in Armenia. The film, which was Armenia's submission to the 90th Academy Awards in the best foreign-language film category, narrates a melodrama set in the country.



"Layers of Lies" by Ramin Sohrab.

As the first co-production between Iran and America, "1st Born" lays out its comic plot on the difficult relations between Iran and the U.S. The story of the comedy is also entirely set in the U.S. with an all-American cast. Iran also pursues film projects with companies in Serbia, China, Malaysia, Japan and several other countries.

George Eliot's "The Mill on the Floss" published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN – English writer George Eliot's 1860 novel "The Mill on the Floss" has recently been published in Persian in Tehran. Neyestan is the publisher of the book translated by Lida Tarzi. Brought up at Dorlcote Mill, Maggie Tulliver worships her brother Tom and is desperate to win the approval of her parents, but her passionate, wayward nature and her fierce intelligence bring her into constant conflict with her family. As she reaches adulthood, the clash between their expectations and her desires is painfully played out as she finds herself torn between her relationships with three very different men: her proud and stubborn brother, a close friend who is also the son of her family's worst enemy, and a charismatic but dangerous suitor. With its poignant portrayal of sibling relationships, "The Mill on the Floss" is considered George Eliot's most autobiographical novel; it is also one of her most powerful



Front cover of the Persian translation of George Eliot's novel "The Mill on the Floss".

and moving. The story was adapted as a film, "The Mill on the Floss", in 1937, and as a BBC series in 1978 starring Christopher Blake, Pippa Guard, Judy Cornwell, Ray Smith and Anton Lesser. Mary Ann Evans, known by her pen name George Eliot, was also a translator and one of the leading writers of the Victorian era. She was born in 1819 at a farmstead in Nuneaton, Warwickshire, England, where her father was estate manager. Mary Ann, the youngest child and a favorite of her father's, received a good education for a young woman of her day. Influenced by a favorite governess, she became a religious evangelical as an adolescent. Her first published work was a religious poem. Through a family friend, she was exposed to Charles Hennell's "An Inquiry into the Origins of Christianity". Her 1872 work "Middlemarch" has been described by Martin Amis and Julian Barnes as the greatest novel in the English language.

Iranian vocalist Abdolvahab Shahidi dies at 99



Iranian vocalist Abdolvahab Shahidi in an undated photo.

→ 1 Born in Meimeh, a small town near the central Iranian city of Isfahan, he began learning songs and playing the oud and santur from maestro Esmail Mehtast. His love of playing oud led him to compose the albums "The Mystery of Oud" and "Farewell My Oud". He recorded ten albums, the last of which was "I Can't Live My Life in Solitude without You" in 2014. With over 230 performances, Shahidi was the most prolific singer in Golha, a professional music program of Tehran Radio that had

many top musicians. In his collections, Shahidi worked with great composers and performers of his time such as Jalil Shahnaz, Faramarz Paivar, Ali-Asghar Bahari, Hossein Tehrani, Rahmatollah Badiei, Hassan Nahis and Mohammad Esmaili. The Persian literary monthly Bokhara in collaboration with Iran's House of Music honored Shahidi in May 2015 for his lifetime achievements during a ceremony, which was attended by numerous top musicians, including vocalist Mohammadreza Shajarian

and ney virtuoso Hassan Nahid. In his brief speech at the ceremony, Shajarian said, "I always hid myself behind this great man and I always learned from him how artistic behavior must be." Nahid briefly expressed his respect for Shahidi and said that he has seen nothing but kindness from Shahidi. "Shahidi is the image of a musician I always wanted to be: a high-minded man without greed. He gave me this hope that one can possess pure art, be a generous and kind person and do worthy artwork," he added.