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Cover Photo: Ardebil's Suspension bridge

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Parham Construction Company, has successfully completed a jetty and one of the most advanced Caspian Sea rail ferry link-span.

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Field of Activities:

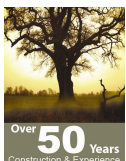
1- Construction of marine structures. 2- Piling & Drilling . 3- Pre-stressed reinforced concrete structures. 4- Heavy reinforced concrete structures. 5- Civil and road construction works. 6- Oil & Gaz.

Qualification:

Class1: In The Field Of Water, Subfield Of Marine Structures.

Class: In The Field Of Road & Transportation.

Class5: Oil & Gaz.





Iran's Momentous Year

As the first quarter of the Iranian year comes to a close, Iran and Iranians are set to undergo two 'fateful' aftermaths in the remaining nine months.

The first will hopefully be a post Covid era that many now believe turned into a 'political tool' if indeed it wasn't one from the very beginning.

The other is the post-presidential elections so full of shortcomings and apprehension.

Two apparently different but decisive events which neglecting them would cause irreparable losses.

It is abundantly clear that avoiding possible deprivations by these two happy events depends solely on the prudence and providence of the authorities in charge.

In addition, this should be a suitable period for improving the real structural position of our joint Chamber as far as possible to provide better conditions for improving our cooperation with British counterparts.

Dr. Amir Houshang Amini

Iran's foreign trade during the First month of year 1400

(20 March to 20 April 2021)

According to the statistics of the IR of Iran's Customs Department, the Iran's foreign trades volume during the First

month of the year 1400 are as indicated in the following tables:

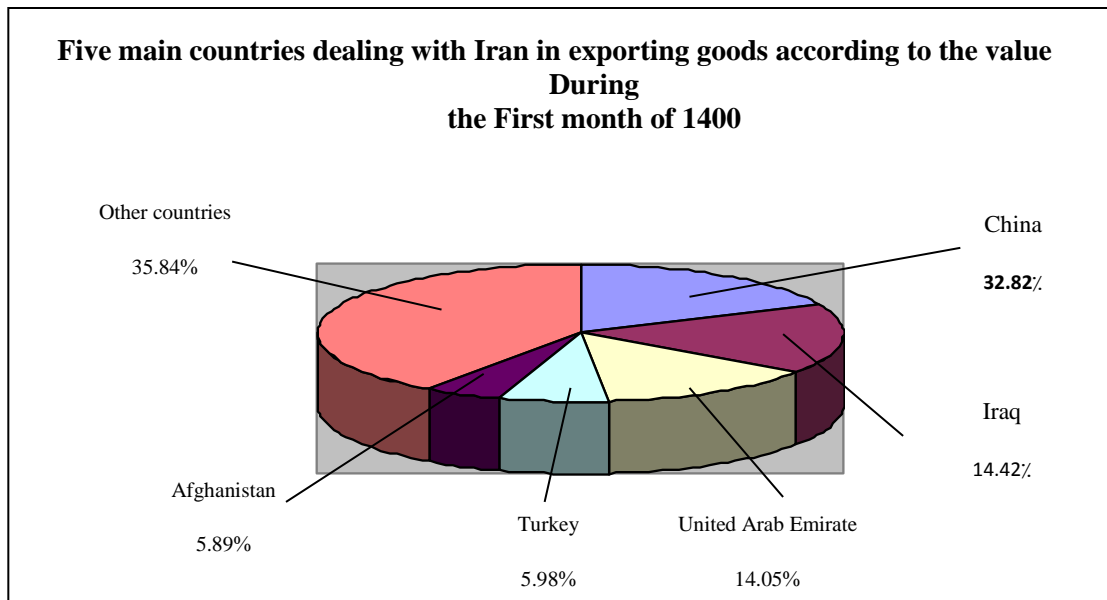
Primary import/export statistics of non-oil goods with the calculation of gas's Liquidities during the First month of 1400

Activity	First month of the year 1400		First month of the year 1399		Percent of changes	
	Weight (Thousand tons)	Value (Million Dollar)	Weight (Thousand tons)	Value (Million Dollar)	Weight	Value
Import	2.041	2.794	2.491	1.902	-18.04	46.90
Export	8.302	2.968	5.322	1.643	55.99	80.62

Exports:

The most important exports during the First month of 1400, have been done with countries, as follows: 1) "China" with 974 million Dollars and 32.86 percent of value, 2) "Iraq" with 428 million Dollars and 14.42 percent of value,

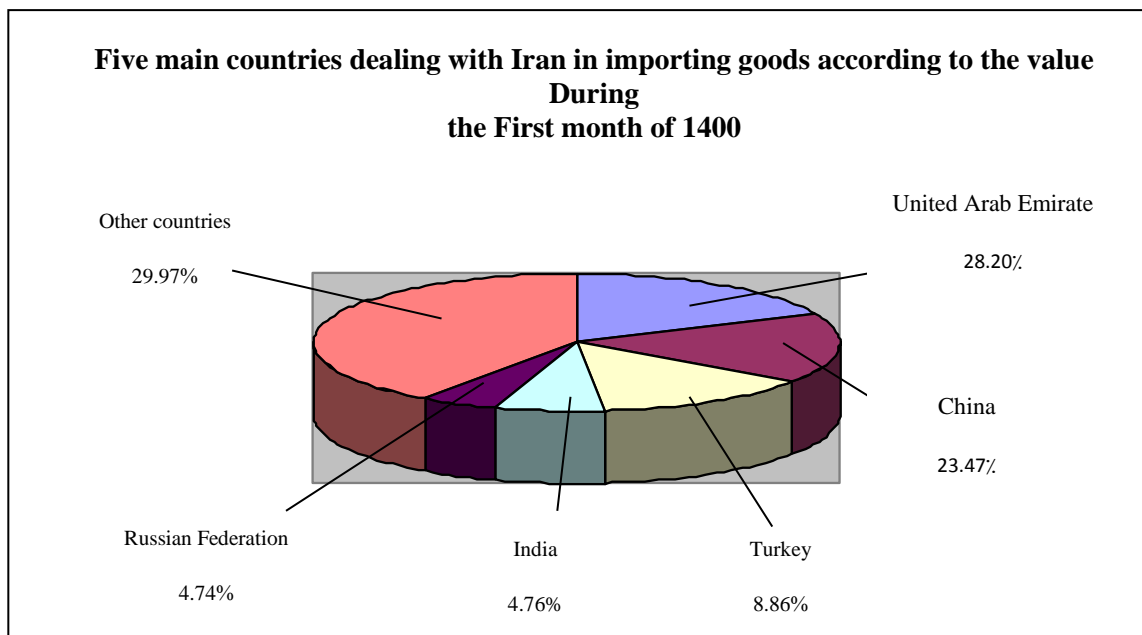
3) "United Arab Emirate" with 417 million Dollars and 14.05 percent of value, 4) "Turkey" with 177 million Dollars and 5.98 percent of value and 5) "Afghanistan" with 175 million Dollars and 5.89 percent of value.



Imports:

The most important imports during the First month of 1400, have been done with countries, as follows: 1) "United Arab Emirate" with 788 million Dollars and 28.02 percent of value, 2) "China" with 656 million Dollars and 23.47 percent of value,

3) "Turkey" with 247 million Dollars and 8.86 percent of value, 4) "India" with 133 million Dollars and 4.76 percent of value and 5) "Russian Federation" with 132 million Dollars and 4.74 percent of value.



Ambassador's Farewell



As I come towards the end of my three-year tour in Iran, I leave with genuine regret at having to say goodbye to this wonderful, fascinating and creative country.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to set out for members of the Iran-o-British Chamber of Commerce my reflections on the last few years, and the prospects for the future. Let me start by paying tribute to all those who work tirelessly to promote economic relations between our two countries – the Chamber of Commerce here, its counterpart in London, the team from the UK's Department for International Trade based here in our Embassy, and also all the businessmen, entrepreneurs and financial service providers who have found ways to enable business despite a difficult environment.

And the last three years have certainly seen some difficulties. No other country, in my view, has suffered the same combination of long-running Covid19 challenges, and sanctions impacts. My arrival in Iran came just be-

fore the decision by President Trump to remove the US from the JCPOA, a decision which my country and other Europeans regretted, and the consequences of which we have been living with ever since.

Throughout this period, we have made great efforts to keep trade with Iran alive, both by supporting individual Iranian and British companies, and by international lobbying of banks and of the authorities in Washington, to ensure humanitarian trade is exempted, and prevent 'over compliance' with sanctions. We have all learned over the recent years that there are two impacts of very sweeping sanctions regimes: first, the direct legal restrictions placed on business activities, and second, the wider 'deterrent effect' that discourages companies more generally. So, for example, even though humanitarian transactions are specifically exempted from the US sanctions on Iran, that does not mean that banks will necessarily support such transactions. In addition, the Covid19 pandemic depressed economic activity all over the world in 2020,

as countries locked down their economies to protect lives, and the closure of borders also had a huge impact on international trade.

In that context, it is encouraging that bilateral trade has not been forced down to zero. It is far from where we want it to be. But in agriculture, health and pharmaceuticals, retail, foodstuffs and machines for industry, trade between our countries has continued. Bilateral trade fell from a high of at least £500m after the JCPOA, to £145m last year, but I have every hope that with the world's emergence from the pandemic, and if the Vienna negotiations are successful in lifting the most damaging sectoral sanctions, that trade can rapidly grow again, and surpass the earlier figures. It should grow as Iran's overall trade increases, but I believe we can also increase the market share, compared to other competitors here, and of course a proactive approach by the Chambers of Commerce can play a decisive role in that.

Will those Vienna talks succeed? That is the question everyone is now asking, and at time of writing this, it is impossible to say what will happen. I will say two things however: it is clear that an agreement to return to the JCPOA would be in the interests of all the original JCPOA parties, especially Iran and the United States. And second, there is no doubt about the scale of the efforts that are being put in by diplomats from the E3 countries and the EU, together with Russia and China, to bring Iran and the US into a mutual agreement. So with those efforts and the underlying logic of a diplomatic solution, we must be hopeful.

What will happen in the event that sanctions are substantially lifted as part of that negotiation? Many Iranians as well as British business representatives have pointed out to me that there will be caution, because of the experience of 2016-2018. But I also know many companies are enthusiastic and keen about returning to the Iranian market or entering it for the first time. This can only be good for the prosperity of both our countries, and the relationship between us.

However, there is the 'other side of the coin', which is the challenges faced by companies trading or investing in Iran, separate

from any sanctions impacts. We continue to hear of regulations that are changed without warning, discriminatory treatment of foreign investors, serious obstacles at Customs, and a lack of transparency in the banking system. All of these deter business from coming to Iran. On the banking point, I know that a number of banks here have made serious and commendable efforts to conform with international standards, but sadly the question of national action, which means coming into line with FATF standards, seems still to be stuck in the political sphere, rather than being the technical regulatory issue that it should be.

Economic relations are only a part of the wider relationship between our countries, which it is our job as diplomats to promote. I am glad that the visa service for the UK only shut down relatively briefly during last year because of Covid, and is fully open for all categories. Like others, I was delighted to see the huge success of the exhibition about Iran at the V&A museum in London that opened last month ('Epic Iran'), demonstrating the affection and fascination of British people for Iran. I would dearly love to see more tourism to Iran being enabled, as soon as the pandemic has receded far enough for that to be possible. And British Universities, think tanks and institutes remain interested in more collaboration with Iran.

In my tour as British Ambassador here, I have seen one Presidential election, several international crises involving events in the Persian Gulf region, visits by our Foreign Secretary and other Ministers, demonstrations outside our Embassy, trade successes but also many disappointments, and a constant lively debate about our countries in the international and domestic press. I have also been lucky enough to see the magical Naqsh-e Jahan square in Isfahan, the forests of Mazandaran, the Caspian coast, the extraordinary built heritage of Yazd, the ski resorts of the Alborz, and many other places. I have toured impressive, cutting-edge factories, and inspirational art exhibitions and cultural events. I and my family found an exceptionally warm welcome from ordinary Iranians wherever we went. It is very hard to tear myself away from this amazing country.

Most unique travel destinations in Iran



A view of Mohammad Helal shrine near Kashan

Tehran – Embracing 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites, Iran is an amazingly underrated country with an immense history, sociable people, and magnificent architecture. However, the grandeur of this country is rarely shown in the mass media; it is sadly always buried underneath footages that only reflect the world of politics. What is not reflected through is the beauty of its landscapes, the details of its striking architecture, the hospitality of the locals, and so much more. Here is a selection of the most unique travel destinations in Iran:

Borj-e Azadi: Borj-e Azadi (Azadi Tower) is the most iconic landmark of Tehran and is undeniably worth a visit during your time in the Iranian capital. Completed in 1971, the structure has a very distinct style that merges

traditional Persian architecture with modern influences — one can see this quite clearly by its big iwan arch that is covered with 8,000 pieces of white marble.

Azadi Square, where the tower sits, is very symbolic too: a lot of protests happened there during the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and it's



still a popular site for demonstrations today. Visitors can climb Azadi Tower using the elevator or stairs to get a nice view of the city from the top.

Imam Zadeh Saleh: The beautiful Imam Zadeh Saleh, also known as Tajrish Mosque, is where Saleh, the son of Musa al-Kazem (AS) (the seventh Shia Imam) is laid to rest.



The mosque boasts some truly stunning tile work on the minarets and dome, and the interior is decorated with brilliant mirror work, something that's quite common in Iranian shrines.

Visitors can also stop by the lively Tajrish Bazaar nearby for some souvenirs and more glimpses of local life.

Shah Charbagh: Shah Cheragh Shrine, whose name translates to "King of the Light", is one of the holiest places in Shiraz. It is truly a priceless sight. The interior of the shrine is even more spectacular than the exterior facade; as you step inside, you'll be overwhelmed by the incredibly intricate mirrorwork covering the walls and ceilings, sparkling and shimmering like diamonds.



There is an interesting story behind this name: in roughly 900 CE, a traveler followed a mysterious light he saw from a distance and ended up stumbling upon an illuminated grave. The body of an important Muslim figure was found inside, and a tomb was subsequently built to house that grave. As time went on, the

site expanded and went on to become an important pilgrimage destination for Shia Muslims. Today, after many rounds of renovations, it's a structure admired by tourists from all over the world.

Eram Garden: Shiraz is not just filled with stunning mosques and shrines, it is also home to one of the most beautiful Persian gardens in Iran — the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Eram Garden.



Visitors are surrounded by over 45 species of plants, 200 species of roses, and countless fruit trees, including a famous 3,000-year-old cypress tree, and sound of birds chirping and the fresh smell of blossoms all around.

No one knows when exactly Eram Garden was built, but it is said to have been completed in the 13th century during the Seljuk era. It was then passed down and restored multiple times before being handed to the University of Shiraz, which owns the garden today.

Maharloo Lake: Maharloo Lake, also known as the Pink Lake due to the amount of red tide in its salty water, is just a one-hour



drive from Shiraz and worth the excursion if you want to witness fascinating natural wonder surrounding the city.

The best time to visit this salt lake is between July and September, when the water from the lake is more likely to evaporate, making the pink hues more intense. For the same

reasons, the lake is likely to be less pink during the rainy season (April to June). Do not forget your camera, as this is certainly one of the most beautiful places in the country.

Naqsh-e Rostam: Only a 10-minute drive from the UNESCO-registered Persepolis is Naqsh-e Rostom, the royal necropolis of the Achaemenid Empire (c. 550 – 330 BC). The site is home to four majestic rock-cut tombs and several majestic bas-relief carvings.



Naqsh-e Rostam, meaning “Picture of Rostam” is named after a mythical Iranian hero which is most celebrated in Shahnameh and Persian mythology. Back in time, natives of the region had erroneously supposed that the carvings below the tombs represent depictions of the mythical hero.

One of the wonders of the ancient world, Naqsh-e Rostam embraces four tombs where Persian Achaemenid kings are laid to rest, believed to be those of Darius II, Artaxerxes I, Darius I, and Xerxes I (from left to right facing the cliff), although some historians are still debating this.

Beneath the funerary chambers are dotted with seven Sassanian era (224–651) bas-reliefs cut into the cliff depict vivid scenes of imperial conquests and royal ceremonies; signboards below each relief give a detailed description in English.

Arg-e-Rayen: You can start your journey in Kerman by visiting this massive adobe fortress; the magnificent Arg-e-Rayen. Constructed in the Sassanid era (224 – 651 CE), this majestic structure rising gloriously out of the desert will leave visitors in absolute awe! It is a must-see during your time in Iran.

The fortress is also really well-preserved despite the natural disasters it had to endure. It's said that around 5,000 people lived in this citadel up until roughly 150 years ago, and the

current structure you see has been built over the ruins of an older fortress.



The fortress was divided into three parts: a section for the kings, a section for the lords and the wealthy, and a section for the ordinary people. Walls and towers separated each of these areas. It was well-situated on a major trade route and was, therefore, a popular hub for caravans and merchants. There were also a lot of workshops here with people making guns, knives, and swords. Today, you can still see some of them by the entrance.

Kaluts of Lut Desert: The gem of the southeastern Kerman province is undoubtedly the magnificent Lut Desert, a UNESCO site, which is home to some truly ethereal clay-rock



formations known as Kaluts. Many visitors highly recommend camping overnight there to fully soak in the magic of this desert.

The unique and incredible shapes of the Kaluts were formed by erosion due to strong wind and water. Some of these rock structures are easily climbable, and one can get a fantastic view of the desert from the top.

Lut is one of the hottest places on Earth — its highest registered temperature is 70° C (158° F)! For that reason, it is best to visit during the spring or autumn. If you go during the summer, try to be there in the early morning or evening when temperatures are cooler.

Amir Chakhmaq complex: The stunning Amir Chakhmaq complex is one of the biggest gems in the UNESCO-designated city of Yazd. The complex houses a majestic mosque, a bathhouse, a mausoleum, and several cafes and restaurants.



There is also a bazaar behind the square where visitors can try some local liver kebabs. Having a relaxed atmosphere, it is a great place to sit down on a bench, people-watch, and admire the captivating Amir Chakhmaq Mosque.

Amir Chakhmaq mosque is the star of the square and a symbol of Yazd. From the outside, this three-storied structure looks very different from other mosques in Iran; its facade consists of several symmetrical sunken alcoves — a truly unique sight.

Towers of Silence: About ten km away from the mosques and adobe houses of Yazd lies another site filled with history and tradition. The Towers of Silence (also known as dakhmas) were where Zoroastrians performed their sky burial rituals up until 40 years ago.



Zoroastrians believed that when people die, their bodies could be contaminated by demons and made impure. So, in their tradition, they attempted to purify the corpses by laying them in three concentric circles on top of the Towers of Silence. The bodies will then slowly decompose while being picked apart by desert vultures. The bones were moved into ossuaries inside the towers. This tradition dates back to

the early 9th century CE, but in the 1970s, the use of these towers was banned in the country, so Zoroastrians started using other burial methods.

Khaju Bridge: One of the most relaxing things to do in Isfahan is to visit the stunning Khaju Bridge in the evening. This centuries-old bridge lights up splendidly in the dark, exuding an incredibly magical and peaceful vibe. It is also the perfect place for photography and a glimpse into local life in Iran, as it is a popular gathering spot for families and teenagers.



The bridge is also decorated with gorgeous tile work and paintings, and there is a pavilion in the middle where Shah Abbas II (the 7th Safavid king) used to hang out and admire the beauty of the Zayanderud River beneath.

Mohammed Helal shrine: Some a 20-minute drive from the heart of the oasis city of Kashan lies the shrine of Mohammed Helal, a breathtaking hidden gem that most visitors do not know about. This shrine displays some true gems of Islamic architecture, including intricate mosaic tiles, a large blue-tiled dome, and glittering minarets.



An amazing thing about this place is that you are likely to be the only tourist around in one of the most beautiful places in Iran, which is quite rare given that most attractions in this country are quite crowded. The people working at this shrine are also very friendly and will offer to help guide you around.

Ardebil's suspension bridge, one of the longest ones in the world



One of the world's longest suspension bridge with a length of 500 meters is being constructed in the northwestern province of Ardebil and will come on stream in June 2021.

The bridge is being constructed in Aznav tourist area in Khalkhal city, which is famous for its mountains, springs, and gardens, ILNA quoted provincial tourism chief Nader Fallahi as saying on the first Monday of June. Pointing to the province's Meshginshahr suspension bridge and Hir curved glass suspension bridge as popular tourist attractions, he noted that Ardebil can be named the province of suspension bridges.

Meshginshahr suspension bridge is 345 meters long, 3 meters wide and 80 meters high. It was inaugurated in 2015 and is said to be the largest of its kind in West Asia.

Inaugurated in January, Hir curved glass suspension bridge is the first of its kind in the world. Measuring 220 meters in length, the bridge's all-glass parts and metal cables have been constructed by domestic engineers using high-quality materials.

The official also said that three ski resorts in Owjur of the Sareyn county, Shabil in Meshginshahr, and Alvaresi in Sareyn county will be launched by the Iranian calendar year 1400 (starts March 20, 2021). Earlier in April tourism authorities of the province announced that they have developed extensive plans to draw

more tourists during the winter season to the province and make it the winter tourism hub of the country.

In December 2019, Fallahi announced that seventeen tourism projects, worth 1,500 billion rials (some \$35 million) would be inaugurated in the province in the near future.

Ha said that the objective to launch tourism projects in the province is to provide tourists



from all over the world and domestic tourists as well with the opportunity to use these facilities and select Ardebil as their prime destination. Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

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

Extracted from Tehran times



Nezami Ganjavi

Khosrow and Shirin



Khosrow & Shirin is the title of a famous tragic romance by the Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi (1141–1209)¹, who also wrote *Layli and Majnun*. It tells a highly elaborated fic-

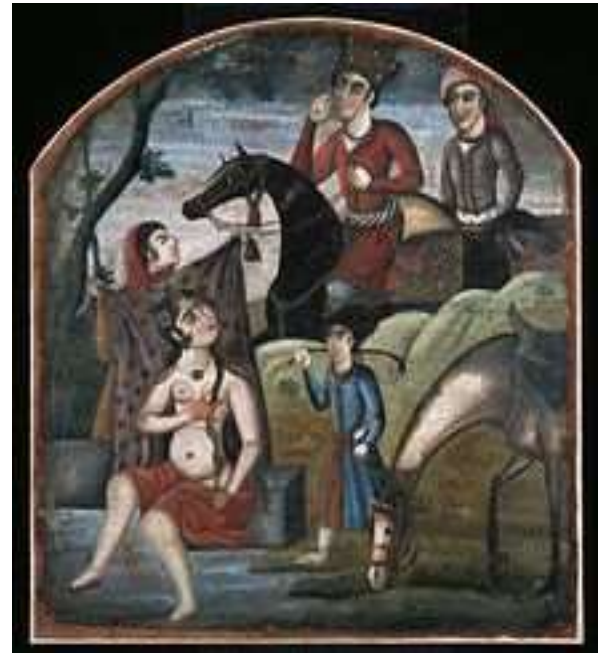
tional version of the story of the love of the Sasanian king Khosrow II for the Armenian princess Shirin, who becomes queen of Persia. The essential narrative is a love story

of Persian origin which was already well known from the great epic o-historical poem the Shahnameh and other Persian writers and popular tales, and other works have the same title.

Variants of the story were also told under the titles "**Shirin and Farhad**"

Nezam's version begins with an account of Khosrow's birth and his education. This is followed by an account of Khosrow's feast in a farmer's house; for which Khosrow is severely chastised by his father. Khosrow asks forgiveness and repents his offence. Hormoz IV, who is now pleased with his son, forgives him. That very night, Khosrow sees his grandfather Anushirvan in a dream and Anushirvan gives him glad tidings of a wife named Shirin, a steed named Shabdiz, a musician named Barbad, and a great kingdom, that is Persia.

Shapur, Khosrow's close friend and a painter, tells Khosrow of the Armenian queen Mahin Banu and her niece Shirin. Hearing Shapur's descriptions of Shirin's flawless features, the young prince falls in love with Shirin, the Armenian princess. Shapur travels to Armenia to look for Shirin. Shapur finds Shirin and shows the image of Khosrow to Shirin. Shirin falls in love with Khosrow and escapes from Armenia to Khosrow's capi-



tal Mada'en; but meanwhile, Khosrow also flees from his father's anger and sets out for Armenia in search of Shirin.

On the way, he finds Shirin unclothed bathing and washing her flowing hair; Shirin also sees him; but since Khosrow was traveling in peasant clothes, they do not recognize one another. Khosrow arrives in Armenia and is welcomed by Shamira the queen of Armenia - yet he finds out that Shirin is in Mada'en. Again, Shapur is sent to bring Shirin. When Shirin reaches Armenia, Khosrow - because of his father's death - has to return to Mada'en. The two lovers keep going to opposite places until Khosrow is overthrown by a general named Bahram Chubin and flees to Armenia. In Armenia, Khosrow finally meets Shirin and is welcomed by her. Shirin, however, does not agree to marry Khosrow; unless Khosrow first claims his country back from Bahram Chubin. Thus, Khosrow leaves Shirin in Armenia and goes to Constantinople. The Caesar agrees to assist him against Bahram Chubin on condition that he marry his daughter Mariam. Khosrow is also forced to promise not to marry any one else long as Mariam is alive. Khosrow succeeds in defeating his enemy and reclaims his throne. Mariam, out of jealousy, keeps Khosrow away from Shirin.

Meanwhile, a sculptor named Farhad falls in love with Shirin and becomes Khosrow's love-rival. Khosrow cannot abide Farhad, so he sends him as an exile to Bisotun mountain

with the impossible task of carving stairs out of the cliff rocks. Farhad begins his task hoping that Khosrow will allow him to marry Shirin. Yet, Khosrow sends a messenger to Farhad and gives him false news of Shirin's death. Hearing this false news, Farhad throws himself from the mountaintop and dies. Khosrow writes a letter to Shirin, expressing his regret for Farhad's death. Soon after this incident, Mariam also dies. According to Ferdowsi's version, it was Shirin who secretly poisoned Mariam. Shirin replies to Khosrow's letter with another satirical letter of condolences.

Khosrow, before proposing marriage to Shirin, tries to have intimacy with another woman named Shekar in Esfahan, which further delays the lovers' union. Finally, Khosrow goes to Shirin's castle to see her. Shirin, seeing that Khosrow is drunk, does not let him in the castle. She particularly reproaches Khosrow for his intimacy with Shekar. Khosrow, sad and rejected, returns to his palace.



Shirin eventually consents to marry Khosrow after several romantic and heroic episodes.

Yet, Shiroyeh, Khosrow's son from his wife Mariam, is also in love with Shirin. Shiroyeh finally murders his father Khosrow and sends a messenger to Shirin conveying that after one week, she would have to marry him. Shirin, in order to avoid marrying Shiroyeh, kills herself. Khosrow and Shirin were buried together in the same grave.

Although the story was known before Nezami, it was brought to its greatest romantic height by him. Unlike the *Shahnameh*, which focuses on the history, kingship and battles of

Khosrow, Nezami decided to focus on the romantic aspect of the story.

When the Saljugh Sultan Arsalan Shah requested a love epic from the poet without specifying the subject further, Nezami picked on the story of lovers Khosrow and Shirin, a theme set in his own region and based on at least partly historical facts, though an aura of legend already surrounded it.

1-Nezami Ganjavi (1141–1209) himself considered it the sweetest story in the world:

The tale of Khosrow and Shirin is well known And by Truth, there is no sweeter story than it.

It is believed to be one of the best works of Nezami. His first wife Afaq died after it was completed. Many versions of Nizam's work have been retold. The story has a constant forward drive with exposition, challenge, mystery, crisis, climax, resolution, and finally, catastrophe.



Besides Ferdowsi, Nezami's poem was influenced by **Fakhreddin Asaad Gorgani** and his "Vis and Rāmin".¹ which is of the same meter and has similar scenes. Nezami's concern with astrology also has a precedent in the elaborate astrological description of the night sky in *Vis and Ramin*.

Nizami had a paramount influence on the romantic tradition, and Gorgani can be said to have initiated much of the distinctive rhetoric and poetic atmosphere of this tradition, with the absence of the Sufi influences, which are seen in Nezami's epic poetry.

*Application of Plant Sciences and Biotechnology to the Iranian Horticulture Sector**

By: Alidad Varshochi (PhD), Head of R&D, Director of Business Development, RANA Agro-Industry Corporation

An overview of Iran's Horticultural Sector

An overview of the Iranian Agricultural sector implies that the sector accounts for roughly 6% (approximately \$30 billion) of Iran's total GDP while it employs around 4.3 million people (approximately 5% of Iran's population). Iran's total agriculture land mass accounts for

18 million ha, which is 12% of the country's total land mass.

This land area is split between temporary crops and permanent crops: 15.5 million ha and 1.9 million ha respectively.

Source: Dr F Pouria-Nejad, MOA Dept. of Medicinal Plants, personal comm.

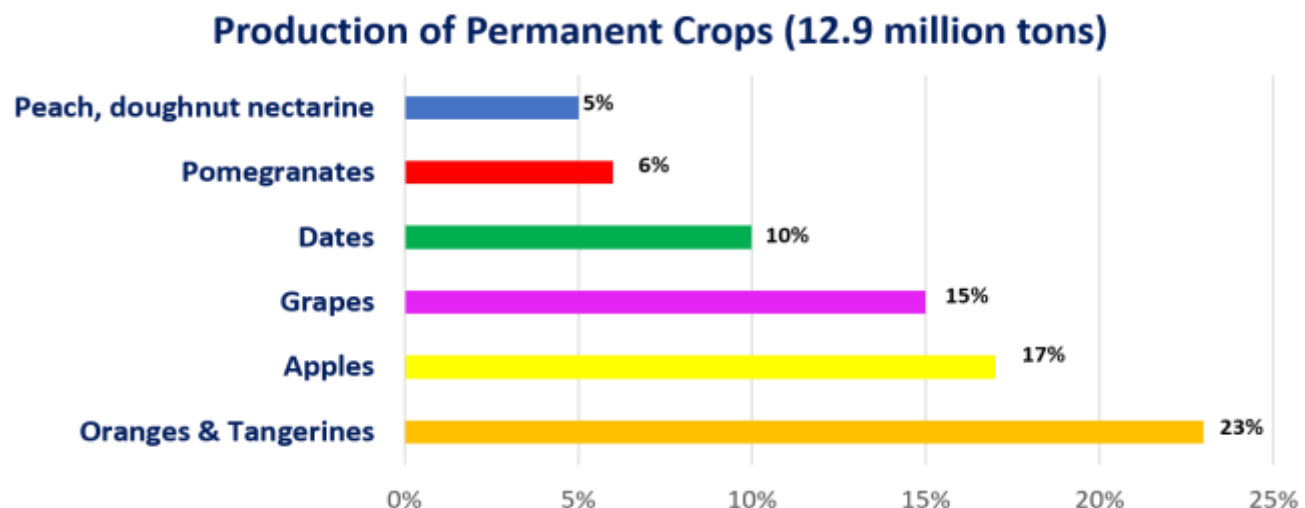


Chart 1: Production of Permanent Crops

Production of Permanent Crops (12.9 million tons)

Chart 1 demonstrates the the production of permanent crops which totals around 12.9 million tons annually (2019 data). Obviously, the

items and figures fluctuate every year, however typically the same permanent crops appear as the top produce in production as shown here.

Source: Permanent crops horticulture survey (2019): Statistical Centre of Iran

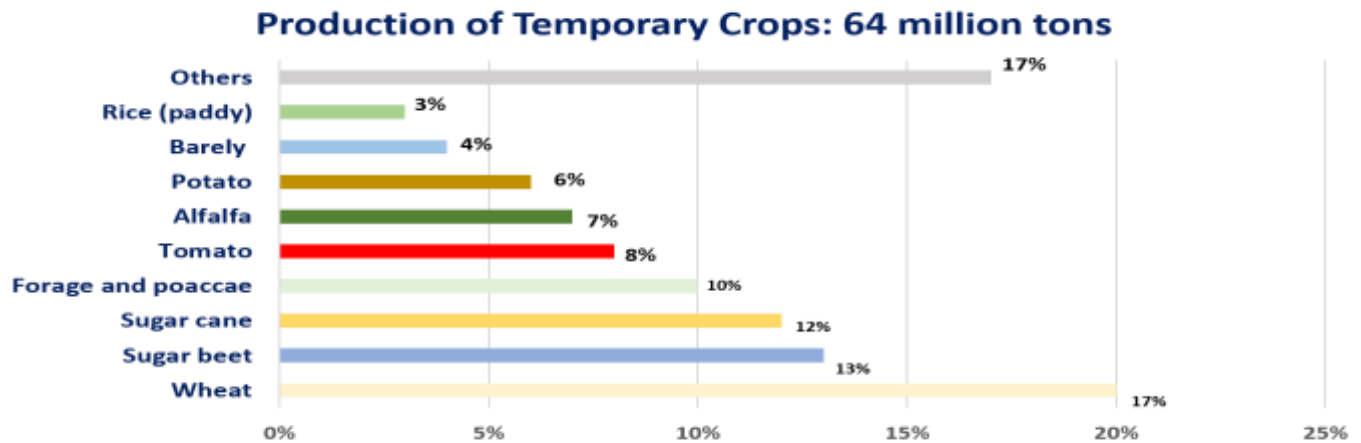


Chart 2: Production of Temporary Crops

Production of Temporary Crops (64 million tons)

Chart 2 is similar to the previous one demonstrating the production of temporary crops this time. Again, these are typical crops that feature

in the top list of items being produced every year which include wheat, sugar beet, sugar cane, forage and poaccae etc.

Source: Permanent crops horticulture survey (2019): Statistical Centre of Iran

The Ministry of Agriculture's 6th 5-year plan's horticultural sector priorities

It is important to note that the Iranian agricultural sector is heavily regulated by the Iranian government, and therefore government policy formulation has a significant bearing on businesses and industries that are involved in this sector. The government's 6th 5-year plan priorities as applied to this sector include the following:

- ❑ Development and promotion of glass-house and controlled environment produced produce
- ❑ Replacement and or modification of inefficient/old orchards
- ❑ Development of medicinal plants production
- ❑ Development of rainfed and sloped medicinal plants orchards using green water

❑ Management of environmental pressures with the use of novel technologies (pest management, genetics etc.)

- ❑ Support for certified and organic produce
- ❑ Support for internal producers/suppliers of horticulturally related products and services
- ❑ Building and enhancement and new and established glasshouse facilities

There is clearly an emphasis on the promotion of medicinal plant and glasshouse produced crops as well as the management of environmental pressures which can be alleviated partly by the application of genetics in crop production.

Source: Dept. of Horticulture, MOA

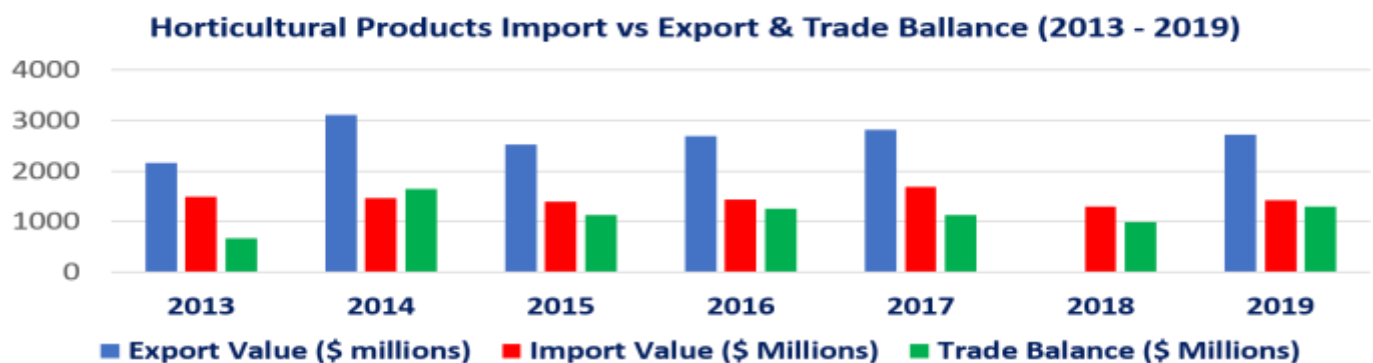


Chart 3: Horticultural Products Import vs Export & Trade Ballance

Horticultural Produce Trade Balances (2013 – 2019)

Chart 3 demonstrates horticultural trade balance trends between 2013 to 2019. The mean values for total exports, total imports and trade

surpluses over those years are \$2.7 billion, \$1.46 billion and 1.16 billion respectively.

Source: Dr F Pouria-Nejad, MOA Dept. of Medicinal Plants, personal comm.

Iran's Water Crisis

Iran's water crisis is a critical issue with severe repercussions for this sector.

In a very recent Nature article by Ashraf *et al.* (2021), a very grim picture of Iran's water crisis is painted. In this article, the massive amount of human withdrawals of freshwater from Iran's underwater basins has resulted into:

- Overdrafts from 77% of Iran's land mass

- A growing soil salinity problem nationwide

- An increased frequency and extent of land subsidence in Iran's plains

The paper warns that the continuation of such unsustainable ground water mismanagement will irreversibly impact the land and its environment whilst threatening Iran's water, food and socio-economic security.

Source : Ashraf *et al.* (2021) Nature, Scientific reports : 11 :9135

Commercial Application of Plant Sciences and biotechnology

The plant sciences do offer a number of disciplines and technologies which, can be applied to alleviate some of the issues in this sector. For example, the application of Plant genetics and genomics can allow for the selection and development of saline and drought tolerant crops. This can in turn, allow for cultivation in lands with high soil salinity levels and or ones that are experiencing drought.

A typical route to this would be the establishment of a mapping population containing plants that have natural traits of interest (e.g., saline or drought tolerance), Quantitative Trait Loci mapping is then carried out on the mapping population, which helps in the identification of regions within the genomes of the plants that harbour genes of interest. Once the QTLs have been validated, markers are developed within those regions of the plant's genomes.

You can consider markers as milestones within the genome of plants which can help find the genes of interest in those plants. Indeed, the developed markers are then used to select the plants that contain the best genes. Those newly identified plants from the mapping population are then used in integrated breeding programmes to develop varieties. Plant varieties can be described as plants that

contain a whole host of genes of interest which have been bred into them. Those newly formed elite plant varieties can then be mass produced through various techniques such as grafting or plant tissue culture.

Vertical farming is also an area which can contribute positively to both water conservation and efficient crop production.

Although, such method of production is not applicable to every crop, it can certainly help in the production of several plant varieties. This is certainly an area which remains very underdeveloped in Iran.

As always, new technologies and methods attributed to efficient irrigation and water management systems is very much in demand, given the critical water crisis that the country faces.

Another area of promise is consultancy in modern field management best practices. From our experience, many of the issues faced by Iranian horticultural producers stems from their lack of access to training in the latest field management practices.

Commercial plant tissue culture or plant micropropagation, which is a branch of plant biotechnology, can also be applied to mass produce plant varieties, which contain traits of interest.

Key Sector Stakeholders

In my opinion, some of the key sector stakeholders include the following:

- Ministry of Agriculture Jihad – Department of Horticulture and all related offices
- Private Sector – Involved in the production and

distribution of horticultural and medicinal plants and related products

- Medicinal Plant Associations
- Khaneyeh Keshavarz – Iran's principal organisation for all farmers and agriculturalists

Suggested Sustainable Business models

Pending the political situation in Iran and speaking from our company's experience in this sector, the following modes of business collaboration is suggested:

- Joint Venture Partnerships with the Iranian Private Sector. Such partnerships facilitate technology transfer for the exploitation of local market opportunities for mutual profit,

while simultaneously opening the foreign partner's market to the local partner's needs.

- Joint Product Development/Tech Transfer/Licensing Agreements are also encouraged as apart from the mutual benefit they carry, such partnerships also benefit from government support.

RANA Agro-Industry Corporation

Rana Agro-Industry Corporation is Iran's largest family-owned plant tissue culture company with over 25 years of experience in the mass production of elite date palm and walnut plant varieties. The company was established originally through a joint British Iranian venture back in 1992.

Over the past 20 years, the company has successfully produced, marketed and sold over 2 million date palm plants. RANA Agro-Industry Corporation has a thriving export market and has exported to more than 10 countries worldwide.

**-Dr. Alidad Varshochi's speech at Agri Teck & Animal care webinar mutually held by BICC & IBCCIM with cooperation of DIT Tehran on 23rd April 2021*

Value of Trades rises by 18%

Tehran (ISNA) - Within the week ending on June 18th 2021, the IME witnessed trade of 824,288 tonnes of commodities with a total



trading value of almost 384 million USD, showing 31% and 18% of growth in volume and value of trades respectively.

According to a report by the IME's internal affairs and PR, the exchange sold on its metal and mineral trading floor 438,651 tonnes of commodities worth more than 216 million USD. Commodities traded on this floor included 185,564 tonnes of steel, 4,720 tonnes of copper, 8,850 tonnes of aluminum,

250 tonnes of molybdenum concentrate, 400 tonnes of metallurgical coke, 12 tonnes of precious metal concentrate, 585 tonnes of zinc ingots, 194,270 tonnes of cement, 11 kg of gold bars, 9,000 tonnes of sponge iron and 35,000 tonnes of iron ore pellets. Moreover, the IME saw trade of 383,664 tonnes of commodities on its oil and petrochemical trading floor valued at nearly 167 million USD. Based on this report, the IME's customers purchased on this floor, 85,000 tonnes of vacuum bottom, 154,368 tonnes of bitumen, 66,580 tonnes of polymeric products, 31,155 tonnes of chemicals, 38,000 tonnes of lube cut, 110 tonnes of argon, 1,270 tonnes of sulfur, 455 tonnes of insulation, 1,976 tonnes of PDA TAR and 4,750 tonnes of base oil & slack wax. Also, the exchange played host to trading of 1,973 tonnes of commodities on its side market.

Japanese reporter talks of true facts after Tehran visit



Tehran, Jun. 27 (MNA) – In an interview with MNA, Miso Kumode talked of undeniable social and political facts in Tehran contrary to what she thought before visiting Iran.

The 13th Iran Presidential Election was held on June 18 and according to the statement issued by interior minister Rahmani Fazli, Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi won Friday's votes by a landslide, gaining 61.95% of the total votes.

During the 2021 Presidential Election, some 500 international journalists from 226 foreign media covered the event in Iran. Head of Middle East Office of Japanese Newspaper Tokyo Shimbun Miso Kumode was among the journalists who paid a visit to Tehran to cover the 13th Presidential Election. She shared her experience of visiting Iran with Mehr News Agency.

Referring to her mindset about women's status in Iran created by western Media outlets, Miso Kumode said, "Before visiting Iran, I thought that all women have to wear 'Chador' and if I take photos in the street, someone will come to me and ask me why I took the photos and tries to investigate me. My imagination about Tehran was that it is a restricted city. This was my imagination about Tehran before visiting it," adding that she thought that Iranian women's participation in social and civic activities is insignificant.

She also noted that she enjoyed Iranian food during her visit to Tehran, adding that, "Iranian food is perfect."

Commenting on the geographical location of Tehran, Kumode said that she was attracted by the mountains around Tehran and is willing to visit Tehran once again for climbing.

Miso said that her imagination of Iran before visiting was mostly created by some media including Reuters and AP, as well as some experts' opinions about Iran. "When I asked them about Iran and their people, they always told me about 'Hardliners' and never said anything about 'Principalists'. When I came here [Tehran] to cover the news of the Iran election, for the first time, I heard the word 'Principalist'. I always heard about 'Hardliners' in the Western media."

"When I came to Iran, I interviewed with a 'Principalist' and found that a 'Hardliner' is not equal with a 'Principalist'," she added.

She went on to say that her mentality is changed after visiting Tehran and has a very good impression about Iranians, adding, "I loved it very much. It is a quiet clean city. You don't see garbage and trash on the streets. Iranian people were very nice and polite to me. I found the Iranians educated people."

Kumode highlighted that her imagination changed about Iran as a journalist as well, say-

ing, "When I wrote articles, I always used the words like 'Hardliner' inside my articles. Now, I changed my expression. 'Hardliner' and 'Principalist' are different. I changed my mind. I always thought that only 'Moderate Conservatives' and 'Reformists' are trying to have a good relationship with the international community." She also pointed to the little impact of the sanctions on Iran, saying that when she visited the Grand Bazaar of Tehran, she found normal life goes on though people made complaints about rising prices under sanctions. Referring to her visit to a ventilator manufacturing factory in Tehran, Kumode said, "Before I came here, I thought that there are some exceptions about sanctions on Iran, especially for medical section, like medicine, ventilator and some needed products for fighting against coronavirus, including masks."

"The manager of the factory told me that on the paper, there are some exceptions about sanctions on Iran, but in fact, everything is restricted," she added, saying that Iranians are making even a small piece of ventilator themselves. The Japanese journalist also pointed to her interview with Iran's deputy health minister, saying that she understood that Iranians faced some difficulties when they tried to make COVID-19 vaccines because of the sanctions they could not import small animals testing. She noted that they think that they are imposing sanctions on the Iranian government but the biggest victims are civilians. The normal people will face damage from the sanctions rather than politicians, stressing that sanctions are not fair especially in this pandemic situation.

Interview by Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

Iran ranked world's 10th largest steelmaker in Q1 2021: WSA

TEHRAN - Iran was ranked the world's tenth-largest steel producer in the first three-month of 2021, Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Reno-vation Organization (IM-IDRO) announced referring to the data released by the World Steel Association (WSA).

According to the WSA's data, Iran produced 7.5 million tons of crude steel in Q1 2021, registering a 10.7 percent growth compared to the same period in 2020. The Islamic Republic's steel output stood at 2.6 million tons in March, indicating a 10.7 percent rise year on year. Based on the mentioned data, the world's top 64 steel makers managed to produce 648.9 million tons of steel in the mentioned three months to register a 10 percent rise from the figure for the last year's same period. Also, the production of world's major steel producers reached 169.2 million tons in March, with a 15.2 percent increase over the same period last year. Producing 271 million tons and 29.6 million tons of the product, China and India stood at the first and second places in the said period, respectively, while Japan stood at third place producing 23.7 million tons of crude steel. The U.S., Russia, South Korea, Germany, Turkey, and Brazil took fourth to ninth places, respec-



tively. The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers. The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025). According to the former Acting Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Hossein Modares Khiabani, the production capacity of the country's steel chain increased from 123 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 230 million tons in the previous year (ended on March 20).

Why does Washington seek to increase military presence in CA?

By: Payman Yazdani



TEHRAN, May 24 (MNA) – The United States is going to increase its military presence in Central Asian countries in the east of the Caspian Sea in an attempt to contain China and Russia. The United States is reportedly going to spend some \$240 on building military facilities in Central Asian countries including Turkmenistan. However, Ashgabat has kept silent about the reports by Russian media.

Afghanistan's local media are also reporting that Pentagon is building a military base in Pakistan's tribal region of Kurram near Afghanistan's border.

Reports on the US attempts to boost its military presence in the region are circulating around although Washington has promised to pull its forces out of Afghanistan under an agreement with Afghanistan's Taliban.

Following the Pentagon's announcement of the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan in April, Gen Kenneth F. McKenzie, Commander of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) told reporters that the US didn't have any agreements with Afghanistan's neighbors to station its troops there, but he said he was hoping to make such deals with them before the withdrawal of forces from neighboring Afghanistan.

Washington has kept its military presence in Afghanistan under the excuse of fighting terrorist groups and establishing peace in the country. A closer look at the current situation shows that the US presence has not only failed to bring stability and security to the people of Afghanistan, but the United States and its Western allies have secretly backed terrorist groups to increase their destabilizing activities in line with their geopolitical interests. In the meantime, there are reports indicating that the US is trying to solidify its presence in Afghanistan contrary to what has been declared as withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan in accordance with Doha agreement with the Taliban. Washington is also reported to have been trying to increase its military presence in Central Asia along with China's western borders.

Washington is increasing its military presence in Central Asia not for the sake of the centrality of the region, but it is due to Washington's foreign policy priorities and relations in the vicinity of that region.

Now that the US is ostensibly diminishing its presence in Afghanistan, it needs to redefine its foreign policy priorities and interests, especially when Russia is also seeking to increase its influence in its traditional backyard along

with its southern borders. In addition to trying to reduce Russia's influence in Central Asian countries, the Americans are also seeking to reduce China's influence as its biggest economic rival.

According to observers who monitor Chia's moves, the country's huge investments as part of the "One Road - One Belt" initiative, most of which is going to take place in Central Asian countries, the rising superpower is seeking to replace Washington in leading the new world trade order. For this, the American presence in the Central Asian countries in the east of the Caspian Sea could be an attempt to prevent Beijing from implementing its economic agenda.

Consequently, Washington thinks the best way to contain China's rising economic influence, as well as Russia's increasing influence in its own southern neighbors, is through an increased military presence in the region. By increasing military presence in Central Asian countries, the Americans have always sought to create instability and insecurity on China's western borders by backing militarily and financing terrorist and separatist groups, so that they can put hurdles ahead of regional countries in an attempt to prevent Russian and Chinese from making their wishes true. Furthermore, an increased military presence on Iran's borders and destabilizing activities in the vicinity of Iran has always been on the US agenda to increase pressures against Tehran.

Tens of Iranian relics returned home from British institute

Tehran— A total of 100 Iranian relics, which were on loan to the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) for some half a century, have been finally returned home, ISNA reported on Saturday. "Through cultural diplomacy, another collection of [Iranian relics, which contains] 10,000 cultural materials, including 100 museum objects have been returned to the National Museum of Iran after half a century. The objects were on loan to the British Institute of Iranian Studies," the news agency quoted Iran's tourism minister as saying. We hope to set up a public exhibition of the relics at the National Museum of Iran in near future, Ali-Asghar Mounesan added, the report said. The museum objects are made of stone, pot-tery, bone, brick, etc., and the documentation of these works is on the agenda of the National Museum of Iran, the official noted. "The Tehran headquarters of the British Institute of Persian Studies used to be home to groups of British archaeologists and Iranologists who came to Iran to study, visit, conduct field studies and archaeological excavations...," the minister explained. BIPS was founded in 1961 to promote and encourage the study of Iran, its history, civilisation, and culture in all periods of history. Much of BIPS research and work in its early years was in the field of archaeology. In 1976 BIPS opened its purpose-built centre in north-



ern Tehran, designed by Reza Khazeni architects. The Tehran centre houses an extensive library that exceeds 40,000 English and Persian language volumes, journals and periodicals as well as epigraphic material, maps, photographic and fieldwork archives; a unique resource that is open to Iranian students, scholars and members of the public. It is thought to be the largest collection of English language volumes in Iran. The Tehran centre remains one of the few overseas institutes continuing to operate in Iran. It also houses a hostel for the use of visiting academics and students. BIPS is one of a small number of British International Research Institutes funded by the British Academy, the UK's national body for the humanities and social sciences. BIPS is also a member organisation, with a worldwide membership, open to anyone with an interest in Iran and the Persianate world.

Short Economic News

Iran Short Economic News:

Iran's New Envoy to London Appointed

Iran's new ambassador to the UK is going to take office on Tuesday.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand has been appointed as the Islamic Republic's new ambassador to London.

He is replacing Hamid Baeedinejad, who has served in the post since September 2016.

According to Iran's charge d' affairs at the Embassy in the UK, Hosseini Matin, the new ambassador will arrive in London on Sunday, July 4.

Baharvand will reportedly assume his diplomatic duties on Tuesday after presenting his letter of credence to Queen of the UK, Elizabeth II.

Iran and Britain named their new ambassadors to London and Tehran in September 2016 after a long period of severed ties.

Iran-Britain ties soured in 2011. On November 27, 2011, a large majority of Iranian lawmakers voted to downgrade diplomatic ties with Britain, following Britain's decision to impose sanctions on the Central Bank of Iran. Later, angry Iranian students stormed the British embassy in Tehran and pulled



down the European country's flag. Following the incident, Britain withdrew its diplomatic staff from Tehran in late November 2011 and asked Iran's diplomatic delegation in London to leave within 48 hours.

The two countries made diplomatic efforts afterwards to amend ties.

In August 2015, the British embassy in Iran reopened after a 4-year closure. Britain's then Foreign Secretary Hammond attended a ceremony in Tehran to mark the reopening on August 23. It was the first visit by a British foreign secretary to Iran since 2003.

Simultaneously, Iran's embassy in London also reopened.

UK introduce its new Ambassador to Iran



The British Foreign Office has introduced Simon Shercliff as the country's new ambassador to Iran.

"Shercliff is due to replace Rob Macaire in August," it said in a statement.

IBCCIM would like to welcome the new ambassador in advance.

Akbar Komijani appointed as new CBI Governor

TEHRAN (MNA) – Akbar Komijani has been appointed as the new Governor of the Central Bank of Iran.



The Iranian President's Chief of Staff Mahmoud Vaezi made the announcement on Wednesday, saying that according to the decision of the Cabinet, Akbar Komijani was appointed as the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran. On May 30, the cabinet of President Hassan Rouhani has approved the removal of Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati from his post over his absence from his post amid 2021 President elections campaigns.

The cabinet further replaced Hemmati with Akbar Komijani, who previously served as the deputy CBI governor.

Spokesman: Key Issues Still Remain in Vienna Talks

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Monday that Tehran continues Vienna talks carefully, adding that there are key issues that still remain to be addressed.

“Different Sides have reached significant achievements,” Khatibzadeh said adding, “however, key issues have remained.”

He emphasized that Tehran is in no hurry during the talks.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister and top negotiator Seyed Abbas Araqchi announced on Tuesday May 25 that serious and key issues have still remained unresolved in talks between Iran and the Group 4+1 (China, Russia, Britain and France plus Germany) in Vienna. “Today, a new round of our negotiations with the G4 + 1 countries will begin. In the past (the last four rounds of talks), we have made relatively good progress and paved a special path and we know that we have to move along a clear path,” Araqchi said before taking part in the 5th round of meeting of the nuclear deal's Joint Commission in Vienna.

“Serious and important issues still need to be resolved,” he added.

“Today, we will start the negotiations again and God willing, we hope to be able to reach the final solutions during the next few days of nego-



tiations,” Araqchi said. He noted that the meetings of the Joint Commission include holding formal and informal bilateral and multilateral negotiations, and added, “We had bilateral talks even before the start of the joint commission. I just had a very good meeting with the Russian delegation in which we reviewed the issues that need to be addressed in the negotiations, and thanks God, there were good common positions over a majority of issues.”

The US, under former president Donald Trump, unilaterally withdrew participation in the agreement and re-imposed sanctions against Iran, which the accord had lifted.

The Trump administration subsequently launched what it touted as a campaign of “maximum pressure” against Iran, hoping to force the Islamic Republic to accept large-scale limits on its nuclear program and missile work, among other things. The administration of US

President Joe Biden has verbally renounced that policy and admitted to its failure, while expressing a willingness to return to the Iran deal.

However, it has so far stopped short of taking any concrete steps to that end and retained the sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

World Short Economic News:

US defends JCPOA inaction to justify Biden's failure



Tehran, IRNA – The administration of US President Joe Biden has had a poor performance in returning to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal that his predecessor Donald Trump withdrew from three years ago.

The Biden administration's refusal to heed Iran's demands to revive the deal shows that his team lacks the required determination to resolve issues caused by Trump and his fellow Republicans. Recent remarks by Biden and his secretary of state Anthony Blinken, expressing disappointment over the nuclear agreement (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or the JCPOA) and throwing the ball in Iran's court are inexplicable for different reasons.

First, it was the US which violated the JCPOA by pulling out of it; and a year after that, Iran took remedial measures within the agreement. This issue is also approved based on legal grounds.

Second, in order to revive the JCPOA, it is the US that should return everything to the situation prior to Trump's withdrawal. That includes the removal of all sanctions imposed over the past two years.

Third, the main cause of the ongoing differences over the revival of the JCPOA is unlawful measures taken by the US government.

Fourth, the US, due to its unlawful sanctions, has caused heavy harm to the Iranian people, and therefore, the nation has the right to seek compensation for the damage it has suffered from.

Fifth, the Biden administration has not shown sincerity when it came to returning to the JCPOA, because he could revive the deal just like what he did in dealing with other accords that his predecessor Donald Trump withdrew from and return to the nuclear agreement as soon as he took power at the Oval Office. So, his reluctance to revive the deal proves that his political rivals are powerful.

However, Biden wants to harvest from the burnt land that Trump left, in fact, the current administration could earn no results but for the mines that the previous administration planted. And this shows Biden's weakness in dealing with his presidential rival. The fact is that the democrats are not able to defeat firebrand Republicans in the next three years of Biden's stay at the White House. The Democrats' inability to resist the Republicans' pressure has led them to a situation to try to justify procrastinating their return to the commitments under the JCPOA.

The incumbent American authorities insist on their reluctance to lift all sanctions imposed by the Trump administration. They do not want to take responsibility on the United States' withdrawal from the nuclear agreement. The Biden administration cannot resist the hardliners in the Senate and in the region.

The Iranians have sent their message that the negotiation process cannot continue in long-term because it is not logical for the Iranian nation to pay the price of the Biden administration's incapability and weakness.

Time for US to make hard decision on JCPOA



New York, IRNA - Ahead of initiating the seventh round of talks in Austrian capital, Vienna, to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, the Biden administration's authorities have changed their tone, while they are expected to make difficult decisions on their country's return to the agreement.

Antony Blinken, US Secretary of State, has warned about the future of nuclear talks at the time Iran is using advanced centrifuges, adding that the Biden administration may withdraw from the negotiations in Vienna.

Abbas Araghchi, the top Iranian negotiator, said that the signatories to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have had enough negotiations in Vienna and now it is the time of decision-making.

Iran's great decision to maintain the deal helped keep it alive till now, Araghchi noted, saying that it is the other sides' turn to come to conclusion on reviving the agreement.

Robert Malley, the United States' Special Envoy for Iran, said in an interview with National Public Radio (NPR) on Friday that Iranians' demand for lifting all sanctions imposed by the Trump administration since 2018 seems to be difficult, adding that the Americans want to remove sanctions, which are prerequisite for their return to the nuclear agreement, and they will not lift all bans imposed by the previous administration.

Criticizing direct US-Iran talks

Malley also criticized the situation that does not involve Iran and the US in direct talks, saying if both sides met, they could do more jobs in less time and they would be able to avoid misunderstanding, but Tehran insists on

refusing any meeting until Washington returns to the JCPOA.

New Israeli government's green light to the US

Blinken met Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid in Rome on Sunday. Lapid said that the method of negotiations should be professional and direct not in news conferences.

Israel's new PM Naftali Bennett pronounced support for the Biden administration's policy toward Iran, noting that the new government in Tel Aviv will distance itself from former premier Benjamin Netanyahu's reluctance to cooperate with the US on Iran nuclear talks.

US trying to put pressure on Iran

A diplomat told IRNA on condition of anonymity that the US authorities' change of tone is mostly aimed at putting pressure instead of threatening. They want to persuade Iran to accept their conditions, because they are well aware that threatening Tehran will not bear fruit.

According to the diplomat, it seems that the American officials do not want to increase the level of political tension with Iran. They know that the Iranians will respond to threats.

US on verge of critical decisions

Ali Vaez, Crisis Group's Iran Project Director, told IRNA that the Vienna talks have entered the phase of critical decision-making; so, the different sides announce their demands clearly.

The analyst went on to say that there is no proper legal mechanism in the United States to assure the Islamic Republic that another president or administration will not repeat the Trump administration's withdrawal from the JCPOA.

The nuclear deal should turn into a treaty, which gets endorsement from two-third of congressmen, and it is impossible, but if it gets the votes, a US president can discard it by an executive order.

However, let's wait and see whether President Joe Biden can get rid of the bumps that his predecessor Donald Trump created when it comes to the US's compliance.

IBCCIM's New Members

Member Companies:

Neek Profile Negin Co.: Production & Trade, M.D.: Seyed Alli Shirazi, Address: Postal Code: 1894633055, Flat no. 2, 4th Floor, No. 1, Pars Building, Gholamy Zaei St., Saeidi Higheay, Tehran, Tel: +98 (21) 55856390-3, Fax: +98 (21) 55856390, Email: as_shirazi@yahoo.com .

Pishro Kaghaz Negar Pars Co.: Sainitary cardboard for disposable containers & packaging, M.D.: Mehdi Attarian Gharamaleki, Address: Postal Code: 1513738133, Flat No. 22, No. 13, Seventh St., Bokharest St., Arzhantin Square, Tehran, Tel: +98 (21) 88109092-5, Fax: +98 (21) 88109096, Email: parspack2017.com@gmail.com.

Dana Geophysics Kish Co.: Oil & Gas Exploration, M.D.: Seyed Sadegh Shojaee, Address: Postal Code: 1919943555, Forth Floor, No. 140, Zafar St., Tehran, Tel: +98 (21) 24319995, Fax: +98 (21) 24315011, Email: shojaee.sadegh@danaenergy.com .

Ruby Desert Co.: Nuts & Dried Fruit, M.D.: Mehran Parsian Far, Address: Flat No. 12, No. 20, Golshahr Bulevard, Jordan St., Tehran, Tel: +98 (21) 26209763, Fax: +98 (21) 89774154, Email: parsian@rubydesert.com.

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Mohandesi Bonyan Mostahkam Khavarmianeh Co.: Engineering, M.D.: Masoumeh

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Key Economic Indicators

Population and Labor Force

Population (1399)	84.0 million
Urban	63.4 million
Rural ¹	20.6 million
Population Growth	1.2 percent
Population Density	51.0 per sq km
Active Population (1399, Q3)	25.8 million
Unemployment Rate (1399, Q3)	9.4 percent
Urban	10.2 percent
Rural	7.2 percent
Male	8.1 percent
Female	15.9 percent
18-35 years old	16.5 percent
15-24 years old	23.7 percent

Source: Statistical Center of Iran (SCI).

¹ Includes non-resident population.

External Sector (million US\$) (Nine months, 1399)

Current Account Balance	-704
Trade Balance (goods account)	1,275
Exports (FOB)	34,211
Imports (FOB)	32,937
Total External Debt (end of period)	9,348
Exchange Rate (US\$/IRR) Interbank Market (average)	42,000

Monetary Sector (growth rate, percent) (Azar 1399 compared with Esfand 1398)

Liquidity (M2)	26.6
Money (M1)	44.4
Quasi-money	22.9
Non-public Sector Deposits	27.2

Real Sector (1399, Q3)

GDP Growth (1390=100)	
Oil	3.9 percent
Non-oil	2.9 percent
Performance of 1399, Q3 (current prices; trillion Rls.)	
GDP (at basic price)	9,283
Gross Fixed Capital Formation	2,477
Private Consumption Expenditures	4,617
Public Consumption Expenditures	913

Tehran Stock Exchange (1399, Q3)

Tehran Stock Exchange Price Index (TEPIX)	
(end of period)	1,439,124
Value of Shares and Rights Traded	Rls. 5,679.3 trillion
Number of Shares and Rights Traded	614.8 billion

Source: Central Bank