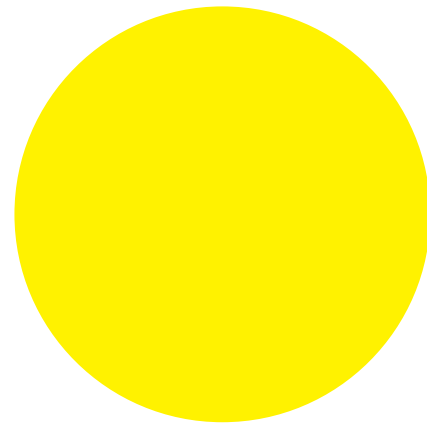




Iranian cueist Sarkhosh crowned 2023 Six-red Asian Snooker champion

Iran's 7th Development Plan forecasts 5% yearly decline in drug consumption: Minister



Iran Daily

Iran's two-month exports to Eurasia up 70%



Economy Desk An official of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said on Monday that the country's exports to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states from March 21 to May 21, 2023 grew by 70 percent following the conclusion of preferential trade agreement (PTA) with the union.

Director of the Department of Central Asia, Russia and Caucasus at TPOI Rahmatollah Khormali revealed the organization of an expert-level meeting of the second round of specialized exhibition of EAEU's member states in Tehran and added that the first round of the exhibition was held in Tehran in July 2021, with the participation of senior authorities and leading companies of the member states, IRNA reported.

Referring to the significance of the 180-million market of these countries for developing the export of non-oil products and their politico-economic proximity with Iran, as well as the successful completion of talks with the union's member states, he stated that the second edition of the exhibition will be held in Tehran on December 4-7, 2023.

Upon the conclusion of the PTA with the union's member states, Iran's exports to these countries showed a 28 percent growth in 2022 compared to the same period last year, Khormali underlined.

In this period, Iran's exports to the member states of the union registered a 70 percent growth in the two months to May 21, he said.

Iranian president voices Tehran's support for Russia's national sovereignty

International Desk In a phone call with his Russian counterpart, the Iranian president expressed Tehran's support for Russia's national sovereignty, following the aborted mutiny by the Wagner mercenary group.

According to Deputy Chief of Staff for Political Affairs Mohammad Jamshidi, Ebrahim Raeisi and Vladimir Putin discussed the Friday mutiny by Yevgeny Prigozhin.

The Kremlin also confirmed the phone call between Raeisi and Putin and said, "The Iranian president expressed full support for the Russian leadership in connection with the June 24 events."

According to Jamshidi, Putin briefed Raeisi on the recent developments in his country and emphasized that the events failed to challenge Russia's national sovereignty.

Mutiny A feud between Wagner group leader Prigozhin and Russia's military brass that has festered throughout the war erupted into a mutiny that saw the mercenaries leave Ukraine to seize a military headquarter



in a southern Russian city and roll seemingly unopposed for hundreds of miles toward Moscow, before turning around after less than 24 hours on Saturday.

The Kremlin said it had made a deal that Prigozhin will move to Belarus and not be prosecuted, along

'Look to the East' policy is in line with new global developments

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff Writer



Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi has stressed that restoring balance to the country's foreign policy is his government's overriding priority. Has the performance of his government in the past two years been in line with this principle? What has been the role of 'Look to the East' policy in keeping the balance in foreign policy? Iran Daily has conducted an exclusive interview on this subject with Hamed Vafaei, who is a researcher in international affairs and a lecturer at the University of Tehran.

differ based on the interests of countries? **HAMED VAFAEI:** Ensuring national interests is the main principle in foreign policy for countries. In fact, diplomacy is a tool for ensuring national interests. Countries sort out their priorities based on their goals and policies. Since national interests should not be endangered, the issue of balance in foreign policy comes to light. It means that countries do not focus on one subject or, as the saying goes, they do not put all their eggs in one basket.

IRAN DAILY: What does keeping the balance in foreign policy mean? Does it have a universal framework, or does it

Page 2 >

Bustling Kerman Grand Bazaar, a vibrant hub of commerce and culture

Tehran, Doha sign deal on skilled workforce plan

Iran selected as president of Ordinary Governing Council

Mitsotakis sworn in as Greek PM after landslide election victory

Greece's center-right leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis was formally sworn in as prime minister Monday after easily winning a second term with a record-high margin over the left-wing opposition, in an election that also ushered new far-right parties into Parliament.

With 99.70% of the vote counted, Mitsotakis' New Democracy party had 40.55% — more than twice the main opposition Syriza's 17.84%. It was the largest margin of victory seen in half a century and slightly expanded ND's 20-percentage-point lead

in a previous election five weeks before. Mitsotakis, 55, was sworn in after being formally handed the mandate to govern by Greek President Katerina Sakellariopoulou, and was due later Monday to name his new cabinet that's to assume its duties on Tuesday.

"My aim was to secure a stable government with a parliamentary majority. Unfortunately, two elections were needed for that," he said in a televised meeting with Sakellariopoulou, who as head of state holds a mainly ceremonial role.



“I have committed to implement major, deeply-needed reforms over the next four years, (and) have a strong mandate to do that,” he said. Held under a new electoral law that boosts the first party, Sunday's vote gave ND a comfortable majority of 158 seats in the 300-member Parliament, with Syriza getting 48. The May election had failed to provide Mitsotakis with a majority due to the one-off electoral system then in force, which prompted the new vote. Mitsotakis campaigned on a platform of securing economic growth and political stability, cutting taxes and boosting incomes as Greece gradually recovers from a nearly decade-long financial crisis.

Kyriakos Mitsotakis (L) attends the swearing-in ceremony to become the Greek prime minister at the Presidential Palace in Athens, Greece, on June 26, 2023.
● LOUIZA VRADI/REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Building barriers on Iran's eastern border continues



TASNIM

IRNA – Describing eastern borders as significant for Tehran, Iran's Minister of Interior Ahmad Vahidi said that building barriers in the country's eastern border continues.

"There are always various plans for building barriers in the eastern borders," Vahidi maintained on Monday. He added that a combination of physical and electronic barriers for the eastern borders is being implemented by the armed forces.

Iran, Pakistan to enhance naval collaboration



TASNIM – Top commanders from Iran and Pakistan engaged in discussions on bolstering bilateral cooperation in education, student exchange, and the exchange of naval delegations.

Rear Admiral Arya Shafaqat Rudsari, the commander of Imam Khomeini Naval University of Noshahr, held talks with Rear Admiral Muhammad Khalid, the commander of the Pakistan Naval Academy, to explore avenues for expanding educational cooperation between the two countries.

Azeri nationals don't need visas to visit Iran



IFP – The Iranian Embassy in the Republic of Azerbaijan said all land and air borders of Iran are open to Azeri nationals, and that they do not need to obtain visas to travel to Iran.

This comes as Baku has stopped issuing visas to Iranian citizens upon their arrival at the airport as of June 23.

Relations between Tehran and Baku soured several months ago after a man attacked the Azeri Embassy in Tehran, killing an embassy staff member.

Tehran serious about nuclear talks, prisoner swap: **FM spokesman**

International Desk

The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry said the Islamic Republic is serious about exchanging prisoners with the U.S., holding negotiations for the removal of sanctions, reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, and achieving results in the talks.

Nasser Kanaani, in his weekly press conference on Monday, added that Iran will use every diplomatic means to achieve positive results in the talks for the removal of sanctions, and has taken advantage of goodwill steps by regional parties such as Oman, IFP reported.

The spokesman also said Iran is serious about getting results, but one needs to wait and see whether the U.S. has the will to cor-

rect its past policies. The U.S. withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions on Tehran unilaterally.

"It is natural that Iran's attitude towards the U.S. will not change until America's behavior changes fundamentally," he said, hinting at speculations about an agreement with the U.S. to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman also commented on the move by the foreign policy committee of the U.S. Congress on making anti-Iran sanctions permanent.

"This is an open duplicity; they ask for negotiations, on one hand, and take steps on sanctions, on the other. Continuation of U.S. sanctions against Iran will lead nowhere as it has not

born results so far," he said. Kanaani also talked about the issue of swapping prisoners with the U.S., saying this is still on Iran's agenda. He added that it is for the U.S. government to decide whether it is ready in this regard.

Meanwhile, the spokesman announced that the Iranian Foreign Ministry will publish its annual report on the situation of human rights in the United States on the occasion of the American Human Rights Review and Exposure Week (June 27–July 3).

Commenting on new sanctions imposed by the European Union (EU) on Iran, Kanaani said the bloc is moving in the "wrong direction" by taking the "disproportionate measure" of simultaneously calling for dialogue and slapping bans



on Tehran.

"Europe should refrain from following in the footsteps of the U.S.," he added, according to Press TV.

Earlier on Monday, the European Council decided to impose the ninth package

of sanctions on an additional seven individuals over alleged human rights violations in Iran.

The EU restrictive measures now apply to a total of 223 individuals and 37 entities.



Spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry Nasser Kanaani talks to reporters during a press conference in Tehran on June 26, 2023.

● MARZIEH SOLEIMANI/IRNA

'Look to the East' policy ...

Global experience has shown that countries prioritize their national interests. As an example, Saudi Arabia was a U.S. strategic ally for decades. But the Kingdom has revised its policy and shifted to the east (Russia and China) while maintaining ties with Washington.

Do you think the government's foreign policy has contributed to maintaining a balance of diplomacy in the past two years?

The government has been pursuing this goal. The Raeisi government has made efforts in this line in the past two years. Some parts of these efforts are the continuation of the previous government's policies, such as long-term cooperation with China. Other parts pertain to the initiatives of the Raeisi government, like the expansion of ties with neighbors and easing tensions with regional countries, in particular Saudi Arabia, as well as the development

of relations with Latin American and East Asian countries. Concurrently, the government has been pursuing talks with Western countries, which show that it has tried to maintain a balance in foreign policy. Nonetheless, two years are not enough to evaluate the government's foreign policy. The government should be given enough time to fulfill its plans. Declaring goals is not enough. Achieving results in foreign policy hinges on detailed planning and active diplomacy. We can see signs of such planning and active diplomacy.

Do you believe national interests require that the government continues cooperation with Asia and the region concurrently with talks with the West?

That's right. Western countries are not satisfied with Iran's multilateral approach. But the world has gone through many changes. Developing countries such as Iran can benefit from various new potentials across the world, in particular in

East and Southeast Asia. As an example, China mediated between Iran and Saudi Arabia to ease tensions, which was a boon to Tehran. Hence, the Islamic Republic can keep the balance in foreign policy by easing tensions with the West and trying to resolve bilateral disputes concurrently with regional de-escalation and expansion of ties with China.

Presently, it seems that Iran's overriding priority pertains to economic cooperation and the resolution of economic problems. How can ongoing diplomatic efforts ensure economic interests?

As I mentioned, ensuring national interests is the main goal of foreign policy. Basically, economic interests play a significant role in this regard. But economic cooperation hinges on political and security understandings. The government has placed this approach on the agenda which includes pursuing political talks to secure economic cooperation. On the whole, the

main goal of nuclear talks pertained to the removal of sanctions and gaining economic interests. However, this goal was not achieved and sanctions remained in place. But establishing ties with organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS and Eurasian Economic Union provide economic opportunities. If Iran adopts long-term cooperation plans like the one with China, it can define economic interests for itself. As a result, political ties and understandings must lead to economic cooperation.

Some critics believe that Iran has shifted its approach from the West to the East under the influence of domestic developments. How do you interpret the incumbent government's 'Look to the East' policy?

I should mention that the 'Look to the East' policy is an accepted global policy and conforms to international developments. A series of developments has encouraged Iran's regional

rivals such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and even Israel to place the 'Look to the East' policy and expansion of ties with China on the agenda. But the 'Look to the East' policy does not mean falling under the influence of the East and severing ties with the West. National interests require that countries establish closer ties with some other countries. Opportunities created in the East rather than internal political fighting, have pushed Iran to adopt the 'Look to the East' policy. Global policy is not based on unilateralism. Iran needs to keep a balance in its foreign policy, which means that it can pursue its national interests whether in the East or the West. New opportunities have been created in the East, and Tehran should seize them. But this does not mean that ties with the West should be severed. As you see, concurrently with its 'Look to the East' policy, the government is pursuing talks with the West to remove sanctions and resolve disputes.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



China: Dialogue 'effective way' to unfreeze JCPOA

Signaling its support for "indirect talks" between Iran and the U.S. over the 2015 nuclear deal, China on Monday said the "effective way" to resolve the issue is to hold dialogue.

"It is an effective way to resolve the issue to resume the full and effective implementation of the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action] (JCPOA) through dialogue and negotiation," said Mao Ning, spokeswoman of China's Foreign Ministry, Anadolu Agency reported.

Mao said the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, was "a significant achievement of multilateral diplomacy".

The U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the agreement in May 2018, after which Iran gradually ramped up its nuclear enrichment activities, higher than the limit stipulated in the deal. Talks to revive the landmark deal have remained stalled since last year, but Tehran and Washington are said to have quietly resumed indirect talks.

The efforts to salvage the agreement got fresh impetus after the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said earlier this month that a deal on Iran's nuclear program was possible if the country's nuclear industry infrastructure remained untouched. "China has maintained close contact with all relevant parties and urged them to step up diplomatic efforts to bring the comprehensive plan back on the right track soon, safeguard the international nuclear non-proliferation system, and promote peace and stability in the Middle East," Mao said in Beijing.

North Korea holds rallies denouncing U.S., warns of nuclear war

North Korea held mass rallies in Pyongyang where people shouted slogans vowing a "war of revenge" to destroy the United States, as it marked the 73rd anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, state media reported on Monday.

About 120,000 working people and students took part in the rallies held across the capital on Sunday, state news agency KCNA reported.

Photos released by state media showed a stadium crowded with people holding placards reading "The whole U.S. mainland is within our shooting range" and "The imperialist U.S. is the destroyer of peace," Reuters reported.

Sunday's anniversary came amid Western concerns Pyongyang could soon conduct another launch of its first military spy satellite to boost monitoring of U.S. military activities after its first attempt ended in failure on May 31.

North Korea now had "the strongest absolute weapon to punish the U.S. imperialists" and the "avengers on this land are burning with the indomitable will to revenge the enemy," KCNA said.

Nuclear-armed North Korea has been testing various weapons including its biggest intercontinental ballistic missile, ramping up tension with the South and the South's main ally, the United States.

In a separate foreign ministry report, North Korea said the U.S. was "making desperate efforts to ignite a nuclear war," accusing Washington of sending strategic assets to the region.

North and South Korea remain technically at war because their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a treaty.



People attend a mass rally denouncing the U.S. in Pyongyang, North Korea, on June 25, 2023. **KCNA via REUTERS**

Hezbollah fighters down Israeli drone in southern Lebanon

Fighters from the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah shot down an Israeli drone, which was hovering over the southern part of Lebanon in violation of the Arab country's sovereignty.

Hezbollah said in a brief statement carried by Lebanon's Arabic-language al-Manar television network that it downed an Israeli drone that had entered the Lebanese skies on Monday afternoon, Press TV reported.

The statement added the Israeli aircraft was brought down as it was flying over Wadi Aaziyeh area close to Zibqine town, located 103 kilometers south of the capital Beirut and four kilometers from the border with the Israeli-occupied territories. In September 2021, Hezbollah said it had separately intercepted and struck an Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle as it crossed into Lebanon's airspace over Maryamin Valley on the outskirts of the southern town of Yater.

The Israeli aircraft was targeted with "suitable weapons," according to a Hezbollah statement at the time. The Israeli army, meanwhile, alleged that the drone "fell during routine activity" and that the incident was being "investigated."

Israel frequently violates Lebanon's airspace. Lebanon's government, Hezbollah, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) have repeatedly condemned Israel's overflights, saying they are in clear violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the country's sovereignty.

The resolution, which brokered a ceasefire in the war Israel launched against Lebanon in 2006, calls on the Israeli regime to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.



This file picture, released by the media office of Lebanon's resistance movement Hezbollah on February 1, 2021, shows a downed Israeli spy drone on display at an undisclosed location. **PRESS TV**

NEWS IN BRIEF

NATO to hold talks on Sweden entry



AFP - NATO will hold talks on Sweden joining the alliance before its summit next month, with the agreement of Turkey which has been holding up the bid, its chief said Monday.

Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said he had spoken to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and "agreed to convene a high-level meeting in Brussels before the summit."

Japan protests Russia's declaration of victory day



REUTERS - Japan has lodged a protest against Russia over the country's decision to declare Sept. 3 a day of victory over "militaristic Japan" - a move it said would fan mutual antagonism, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said on Monday.

"The passage of this law could not only stir anti-Japanese sentiment among the Russian people, but may also lead to anti-Russian sentiment among the Japanese people," the government spokesperson said.

Pakistan army general among three sacked over violence by Imran Khan's party

Pakistan's army has sacked three senior officers, including a lieutenant general, for failing to prevent violent attacks on military assets by ex-prime minister Imran Khan's supporters protesting his arrest, the army's spokesperson said on Monday.

It was a rare public announcement by the army of an internal inquiry and its outcome, Reuters reported.

At least 102 people are on trial in military courts over last month's violence, Major General Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry told a press conference in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

Chaudhry gave no details regarding how many of them were civilians or military officials. He also declined to name the senior officers who had been fired.

Human rights groups have raised concerns about military trials of civilians in Pakistan that they say cannot ensure a fair defence. The trials have also been challenged in Pakistan's Supreme Court in three petitions, including one by Khan's party.

In May, thousands of Khan's supporters rampaged through military installations across the country and vandalised them, including an air

base, several military garrisons, the house of a general and the army's headquarters. Over 5,000 of them were arrested, though most were later released.

"We had to determine why security was breached at army installations. We had to find out what had gone wrong," Chaudhry said.

He said two departmental inquiries were conducted, headed by major generals, and punishments were given according to their recommendations.

Strict departmental action had also been taken against another 15 army officers, including three major generals and sev-

en brigadiers, Chaudhry said, as part of internal accountability in the military. He did not specify what action had been taken.

Chaudhry added that several relatives, including women, of senior army officers were also facing trials for allegedly being facilitators of the violence. The army has said the arson was pre-planned by leaders of Khan's party, and have named him in at least two criminal cases as abetting the violence.

[He denies wrongdoing?] Khan, 70, a former international cricket hero turned politician, has faced a slew of cases since he was ousted from



power in a vote of no confidence last year, which he blames on the military's generals, a charge the army denies.

Khan's party has been subjected to a massive security crackdown since the May 9 violence.

Supporters of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan block a highway, during a protest against his arrest, in Karachi, Pakistan, on May 9, 2023. **AKHTAR SOOMRO/REUTERS**

Ukraine says it has retaken another village from Russian forces



Ukraine said on Monday its forces had regained control of the southeastern village of Rivnopol as they continue to advance against Russian forces after launching a counteroffensive.

The village appeared to be the ninth recaptured by Ukraine this month in the early stages of an offensive in which Ukrainian officials have signalled that the main push is yet to come, Reuters reported. "(Ukrainian) Defence forc-

es have brought Rivnopol back under our control," Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar wrote on the Telegram messaging app. She did not say when Ukrainian forces had recaptured Rivnopol, which lies just to the west of a cluster of villages that Kyiv says it recaptured earlier in the counteroffensive.

An unverified 13-second video posted on Telegram by Ukrainian land forces, showing a group

of Ukrainian soldiers in front of the remains of a building with a Ukrainian flag flying from a post, indicated the village was retaken on Sunday.

Russia, which launched its full-scale "military operation" in Ukraine in February 2022, still holds swathes of territory in the east and south. It did not immediately comment on events in Rivnopol, and Reuters was unable to verify the situation on the battlefield.



AP - Gunmen burst into a pool hall in northern Honduras and opened fire, killing 11 people and prompting President Xiomara Castro to announce security measures including curfews in the area amid a wave of drug trafficking-linked violence. The attack occurred in the city of Choloma in Cortes province late Saturday night. It left 10 men and one woman dead.

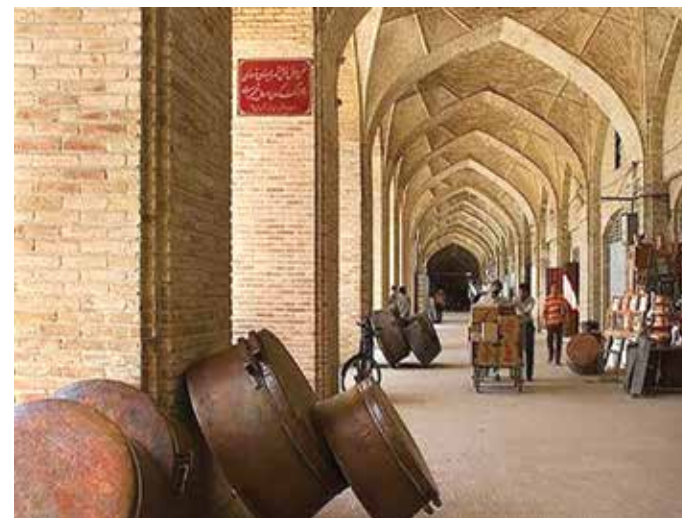
Bustling Kerman Grand Bazaar, a vibrant hub of commerce and culture



apochi.com



apochi.com



ranparadise.com

The Grand Bazaar of Kerman, a desert city located in the southeast of Iran, is one of the country's most interesting bazaars to visit. Considered by UNESCO as the second largest bazaar of the country, it is one of the main tourist attractions of the city as well as its beating heart.

Comprised of several bazaars built over centuries, it reflects the rich architecture and artistic traditions of ancient Persia. In this article, you will see why you shouldn't miss your chance to visit Kerman's Grand Bazaar, surfiran.com wrote.

Anything can be found in Iranian bazaars. They are busy crowded places, where locals and tourists come

to do their shopping. But Kerman's bazaar takes the experience to a higher level, as it's one of Iran's largest bazaars. It's a cluster of narrow alleys, high-ceilinged courtyards, encompassing caravanserais and bathhouses.

From Persian carpets to intricate metalwork, the Kerman Grand Bazaar offers a wealth of unique souvenirs.

Not yet recognized as a world heritage site, Kerman's Grand Bazaar is on the tentative list to become a UNESCO site, as the complex is one of Iran's most beautiful bazaars and a "masterpiece [that] proves man's creativity".

In time, the bazaar has become a real cultural landmark of Kerman, mentioned in many local proverbs and is still

as alive today as it was centuries ago.

The construction of Kerman's Grand Bazaar started 600 years ago, under the Timurid Dynasty, a Persian-Turco-Mongol Empire that ruled over the region in the 15th century. This empire, whose capitals were Samarkand and Herat, was famous for brining Islamic art to its pinnacle, which can be perceived in Kerman's bazaar. Over the centuries, various parts were added, most under the Safavid era (1501-1732 CE), giving the bazaar the blend of various architectures we know today.

Like other Iranian bazaars, Kerman's Grand Bazaar is comprised of several sections. The most famous is



ranparadise.com

the Ganjali Khan Complex, which is the heart of the bazaar. Built around a square, the complex has a stunning Safavid architecture, with delicate tile work, as well as paintings that display the daily lives of people under this dynasty. Inside the complex is a caravanserai, a bathhouse, and a mosque.

Another important area is Chahar Sooq

that marks the intersection of the two main bazaar alleys, and was thus once the busiest point of the city. Dating back 400 years, it is beautifully decorated. Arg Bazaar is another major market, with beautiful high ceilings, where music once played to announce the market's closure.

Then comes the Vakil Complex, which con-

tains a bazaar, a caravanserai, a mosque, and a bathhouse, considered one of the most beautiful from the Qajar era. Finally, Ekhtiari Bazaar is another must see of Kerman's Grand Bazaar. It's the oldest part of the bazaar, and contains a mosque, a caravanserai, and a bathhouse, now turned into a cozy teahouse.

What's famous in Kerman's Grand Bazaar?

Strolling into the alleys of Kerman's Bazaar, be sure to get your hands on some local specialties. Kerman is well-known for its spices, coming from southeast Iran and India, and for cumin. Pistachios cultivated in the region are among the best in the

world. Once famous for its carpets, during the 17th century, Kerman remains a great place to find antique pieces. It's also famous for copper, coming from the Sarcheshmeh Copper Mine in the region. Don't miss tasting some local sweets while in Kerman's bazaar, such as *kolompeh* (walnut and date cookies), *qottab* (pistachio and walnut pastries), and *komach sehen* (date-filled pie).

Shop for handmade jewelry, pottery and other crafts made by local artisans at the Kerman Grand Bazaar.

Best times to visit

Kerman's Grand Bazaar is located in the center of the city, starting from the Arg Square and continuing until

Mirza Reza Kermani Street. Its main entrances are Arg Gate and Mosque Gate, which were once the city's gates.

The bazaar is open every day from 9 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., except on Fridays and national holidays when all shops are closed. The best time to visit the bazaar is either in the morning, when merchants start to open their shops and the market starts being busy but isn't yet too crowded, and after 5 p.m. when it is full of life.

You can wander into the alleys to explore Kerman's Grand Bazaar, but the best way to visit it is to hire a local guide who will show you amazing places you might not discover otherwise.

Calligraphy, an important fine art in the East

Nasta'liq calligraphy, Mir Emad
wikimedia.org

While in the West calligraphy is considered mainly penmanship, in the East it is one of the most important fine arts.

Calligraphers were an essential requirement for any self-respecting court, and very often princes and nobles practiced calligraphy themselves. Moreover, prohibition against figurative art in mosques, and with an emphasis put on literacy and knowledge, Islamic leaders imparted further importance to the written word in the Islamic world, vipemo.com wrote.

Broadly speaking, there were two distinct scripts in the early centuries of Islam: Cursive script and Kufic script. For everyday purposes a cursive script was employed, while Kufic script was used for religious and official functions. Kufic went out of general use in about the 11th century, though it continued to be used in the decoration of monumental religious buildings.

About 1,000 CE, a new script – naskh – was established. This has remained the most popular script in the Arab world. The other main styles were Thuluth, Reyhan, Mo-haqqaq, Towqi, and Reqa. Arabic script was adopted in Iran soon after the Muslim conquest, and was enhanced and developed by the Persians soon after. In the 13th century, Iranian scribes invented

Nasta'liq calligraphy, Alireza Abbasi
wikimedia.org

Taliq, and in the next century, Mir Ali Tabrizi, the most famous calligrapher of the Timurid period, created Nasta'liq, a combination of Naskh and Taliq.

Nasta'liq is closely connected to Persian poetry and has played an important role in communicating poetic concepts to readers. Under the Timurid and the Safavid rulers, calligraphy experienced its highest stage of development.

The most famous calligraphers of the Safavid court were Mir Emad and Alireza Abbasi.

Alireza Abbasi

Born in Kashan, Ali Reza Abbasi (1565-1634 CE) is one of the

most important calligraphers of the Safavid period. As soon as he became a remarkable calligrapher, he left Kashan for Isfahan. He was introduced to Shah Abbas, the first court. Soon he was honored with the title "Abbasi". He was busy at the Shah's court, but soon left the court. In 1610, he returned to the court and worked there until his death in 1634. He was also a wonderful miniaturist. A part of the lobby of the Ali Qapu Palace was decorated with stuccoes with his beautiful, unique miniatures. Much of his work can be seen in Iranian museums and major museums of the West, such as the Louvre.

Mir Emad

Mir Emad (1556-1615 CE) was one of the most famous Iranian calligraphers. Nostalgic calligraphy reached its zenith through wonderful works by Mir Emad. He was born and trained in Qazvin. Mir Emad traveled to Tabriz to develop his knowledge and his art, studying under Mohammad Hossein. He was invited to the court of Shah Abbas, where he tried to train his son and daughter as calligraphers, but they did not reach as high a level as Mir Emad. A part of the inscriptions of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque in Isfahan was implemented by Mir Emad.

Iranian cueist Sarkhosh crowned 2023 Six-red Asian Snooker champion



Professional Iranian cueist Amir Sarkhosh (C) poses for a photograph after winning the trophy at the end of the 2023 Asian Confederation of Billiard Sports (ACBS) Six-red Snooker, Team and Under-21 Snooker Championships in Tehran, Iran, on June 25, 2023.

● IRNA

Sports Desk

Iranian cueist Amir Sarkhosh put up a marvelous performance at the 2023 Six-red Asian Snooker Championship and clinched the gold medal after defeating his rival from Hong Kong.

In the title clash on Sunday, Sarkhosh mesmerized spectators at the Enghelab Sport Complex in the Iranian capital Tehran and convincingly defeated Chau Hon Man of Hong Kong by 6 frames to 2.

Indian snooker players Pankaj Advani and Kamal Chawla shared the bronze medal.

The Asian Confederation of Billiard Sports (ACBS) Six-red Snooker Championship is a premier snooker tournament in Asia that sees the participation

of prominent cueists.

It is played with six color balls and sixreds.

President of the ACBS Mohamed al-Nuaimi along with President of the Bowling, Billiard and Boules Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (BBFIR), Hashem Eskandari attended the title clash.

En route to the final showdown on Sunday, Sarkhosh had defeated Iraqi cueist Ali Hussein 2-5 in the quarterfinals, and overcome India's leading snooker player Advani 1-5 in the semi-finals.

Sarkhosh also became the champion at the 2022 Asian Snooker Championship held in Doha. The 2023 ACB Six-red Snooker, Team, and Under-21 Snooker Championships were held between June 16 and 25 in Tehran, Iran.

Esmailnezhad joins Calzedonia Verona



● MEHR

Sports Desk

Iran international opposite spiker Amin Esmailnezhad joined the Italian volleyball club, Calzedonia Verona.

Esmailnezhad has an outstanding performance during the 2023 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) with Team Melli, reported Mehr News Agency.

His performance at the VNL drew attention from multiple foreign clubs, and finally, Esmailnezhad chose to play in the Italian Serie A1 Volleyball League with Calzedonia Verona. Calzedonia Verona is a professional volleyball team based in Verona, Italy. The club plays in Serie A1 of the Italian Volleyball League.

Ilkay Gundogan: Man City captain joins Barcelona

Manchester City captain Ilkay Gundogan left the club to join Barcelona following the expiration of his contract.

Gundogan left Manchester on the back of the club's greatest season, lifting the Premier League, FA Cup and Champions League trophies within the space of a month, according to skysports.com.

He spent seven years at the Etihad Stadium since joining from Borussia Dortmund in 2016, and manager Pep Guardiola had publicly hinted at his own desire to extend that stay further.

Gundogan was in talks with City over a new deal ahead of his contract expiry at the end of last week. However, the length of the deal on offer for the 32-year-old - one year plus an option of a further 12 months - was a sticking point, and he has instead penned a two-year contract, also including

a 12-month option, with LaLiga champions Barcelona. His release clause has been set at €400m (£342m).

Gundogan told the Manchester City club website: "For me, it has been a total privilege and pleasure to be part of Manchester City for the last seven years.

"Manchester has been my home and I have felt part of a very special family at City.

"I have been lucky to have experienced so many unforgettable moments in my time here and to have been captain for this extra special season has been the greatest experience of my career.

"First, I would like to thank Pep. To have been able to play under and learn from him for so long has been something I will never forget.

"I would also like to thank all my team-mates - past and present - who have all played such a special part

in making my time here so amazing.

"Finally, I would like to thank the incredible City fans. They have supported me from the moment I arrived, and I owe them all so much for their support.

"This club made me realise all my dreams and I will forever be thankful for this opportunity.

"I will carry City always in my heart. Once a blue, always a blue."

Writing on the Player's Tribune website, Gundogan said announcing to his teammates he was leaving City was his hardest goodbye in football, and explained why he had chosen Barcelona as his next, and perhaps final, move in his career.

He wrote: "Goodbyes are never easy, but it's even harder with this team. When I had to break the news to the boys that I was leaving in our group chat, I was very emotional. I will miss all of them, honestly.



● goal.com

"But I am happy to say that I'm leaving here as a champion, and I have nothing but love for the club in my heart. This season, something clicked. I just knew we were going to do it. "I don't even mean just the Champions League. The Premier League, the FA Cup - everything. Week

after week, I just felt everything lining up perfectly. Even when we were 10 points behind Arsenal, I knew we would win the league."

Addressing his decision to join Barca, he added: "If I was going to move, there is only one club in the world that made sense.

It was Barcelona or nothing.

"Ever since I was a little kid, I dreamed of wearing that shirt some day. I am confident that I have a few more years left at the highest level, and I just want to help bring Barcelona back to where they deserve to be."

Alcaraz claims Queen's title, top ranking

Spain's Carlos Alcaraz fired a Wimbledon warning as he comfortably beat Alex de Minaur 6-4 6-4 to claim the Queen's Club title and return to world number one.

In baking temperatures, the 20-year-old had too much firepower for his wily Australian opponent as he claimed his first grass-court title in impressive fashion, Reuters reported.

It was only Alcaraz's third tournament on grass, but the way he marched through the draw augurs well for his prospects at Wimbledon, where he will be seeded number one. De Minaur, the first Australian to reach the London final since Lleyton Hewitt in 2006,

had chances for a break of serve when leading 4-3 in the opening set but could not take them.

Alcaraz then broke serve in the following game before wrapping up the set on serve.

De Minaur double-faulted to hand over a service game early in the second set and there was no way the muscular Spaniard was going to pass up the opportunity to notch his fifth title of 2023.

Alcaraz is the fourth Spanish player to win the prestigious pre-Wimbledon tournament and will now hope to emulate Rafa Nadal who triumphed at Queen's in 2008 before going on to win Wimbledon for the



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz celebrates with the trophy after winning his final match against Australia's Alex de Minaur in Queen's Club, London, Britain on June 25, 2023.

● GETTY IMAGES

first time a few weeks later.

"So many legends have won here so to see my

name on the trophy surrounded by great champions, it's amazing," reigning U.S. Open

champion Alcaraz said on court.

While Novak Djokovic remains the favorite

to retain his Wimbledon title, Alcaraz will be the top seed at the tournament, where

Sprinter Noah Lyles ties Usain Bolt's record



Noah Lyles won the men's 200m race at the 2023 USATF NYC Grand Prix in 19.83 seconds.

● SARAH STIER/GETTY IMAGES

Noah Lyles approached history as the 25-year-old American sprinter recorded his 34th career sub-20 second 200-meter race after he won the 2023 New York City Grand Prix with a time of 19.83 seconds. That also marked Lyles' 11th win this season.

"It's not perfect, but it was very fun," Lyles told NBC after the race.

That marked Usain Bolt's career record. Lyles' time also ranked third-fastest in the event behind Bolt's world record of 19.19 seconds from 2009 and Yohan Blake's 19.26 from 2011.

Lyles has been on a tear for his entire professional career. He's a three-time world champion, four-time Diamond League final winner and won bronze at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics since he went pro in 2016. This was Lyles' second sub-20-second finish this season after he did it 11 times in 2022.

He'll have a chance to break Bolt's record if he enters another meet this summer. Upcoming options into the Diamond League in London on July 23 or the World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary, in mid-to-late August.

Pakistan moves closer to IMF deal



BLOOMBERG – Pakistan's race to restart a stalled International Monetary Fund loan program took a positive turn as the country made a dramatic final attempt to appease the lender less than a week before the facility ends. After days of talks with the IMF, the South Asian nation agreed to change its budget for the next fiscal year, pledging to raise taxes and cut expenses in a bid to cut its fiscal deficit. The fund had earlier raised objections to Pakistan's spending plan, saying it was insufficient to meet the conditions of the bailout. Pakistan's benchmark stock index close 3.4% higher in Karachi on Monday, the biggest gain in fourteen months.



Tehran, Doha sign deal on skilled workforce plan

Economy Desk

Iranian and Qatari ministers signed an agreement to cooperate on a skilled workforce program that will enable Qatar to recruit Iranian experts and technicians in various economic

and industrial projects. The signing ceremony was held in Tehran on Monday with the participation of Iranian Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare Solat Mortazavi and Qatari Minister of Labor Ali bin Samikh al-Marri.

After signing the agreement, Mortazavi said that members of Iranian and Qatari delegations have held fruitful meetings since Sunday as he stressed the importance of the implementation of mutual agreements between the

two countries. Mahmoud Karimi Beyravan, an Iranian deputy minister of labor, said that the memoranda of understanding between Iran and Qatar will focus on various areas including hoteling, medicine, and the mari-

time industry. He added that the Qatari side has demanded the dispatch of a skilled workforce from Iran to respond to job demands in those sectors. Also, Mohammed Hassan al-Obaidly, Assistant

Undersecretary at the Qatari Ministry of Labor, announced in the meeting that a permanent joint taskforce had been formed to follow up on the implementation of labor agreements between Iran and Qatar.

A Qatari delegation headed by Minister of Labor Ali bin Samikh al-Marri holds talks with Iranian Minister of Labor Solat Mortazavi and his deputies in Tehran on June 26, 2023.
● IRAN DAILY

Encouraging signs begin to emerge in Iran's economic recovery

Iran, according to Fars news agency, attracted \$6.05 billion of foreign investment between August 2021 when President Ebrahim Raeisi came to office and March 2023, up 84.3% compared to the same period in the previous administration. Referring to the statistics presented by the Central Bank of Iran about 12% reduction in inflation in last Iranian month, Raeisi on Sunday called for the continuation of the coordinated efforts of all bodies to continue the process of reducing inflation until the end of the [current Iranian] year. The former government, contrary to its posturing, gave short shrift to this important avenue for bringing in foreign capital and technology in the belief that it was unachievable without first reviving the 2015 nuclear deal and having Iran removed from the Paris-based FATF group's blacklist. The new administration, however, made it a policy objective to disconnect the country's lifeline from the umbilical cord of the nuclear agreement and the FATF, ordering economic and diplomatic institutions to put attracting foreign investment the centerpiece of their operations.

This policy shift espoused proactive economic diplomacy with neighboring and aligned countries with the aim of raising foreign exchange influx to Iran. According to the statistics of the Investment and Economic and Technical Assistance Organization of Iran, 401 foreign investment projects worth \$10.7 billion have been approved since the beginning of the new administration. Out of this figure, 356 projects worth \$6.05 billion have secured funding. Gross fixed capital formation, which reflects government and private investment, rose 7.7 percent in the machinery sector last year, signaling the revival of the economy especially in the industrial and services enterprises as well as the weakening of sanctions on Iran's access to production machinery. Gross fixed capital formation sharply dropped, especially in the last years of the previous government, severely eroding economic growth. Capital accumulation in the Iranian years of 1400 and 1401 fell to 4.1 percent and 2.1 percent respectively. Reports by the Central Bank and Statistical Center of Iran suggest it has started to rise again, a sign that the new government's

neighbor-oriented policies are apparently paying dividends. Among the projects, 600 anonymous investment packages have been compiled and prepared for investors in special free economic zones. Because of the sanctions, the government is usually discreet about divulging the details of foreign involvement in development projects. Hydrocarbon, agricultural, and service sectors characterize Iran's economy, along with a noticeable state presence in the manufacturing and financial services. Iran ranks second in the world for natural gas reserves and fourth for proven crude oil reserves. Intensified sanctions pressures have forced the oil exporting country to relatively diversify, but economic activity and government revenues still rely on volatile oil revenues. The shock from sanctions and commodity price volatility caused a decade-long stagnation that ended in 2020. The sharp drop in oil exports strained government finances and drove inflation to over 40 percent for four consecutive years. Sustained high inflation led to a substantial reduction in house-

holds' purchasing power and left the large pool of young and educated entrants to the labor market with little prospects, belying the US government's contention that the sanctions did not target the Iranian populace. According to the World Bank, Iran's economy has started to rebound, supported by a recovery in services post-pandemic, increased oil sector activity, and accommodating policy action. Economic activity has also adjusted to sanctions, including through exchange rate depreciation which helped domestically produced tradeable goods to become price competitive internationally. The decline in oil exports has prompted additional processing of crude oil and hydrocarbons that have then been exported as petrochemicals. Based on several reports including from the International Energy Agency, Iran's crude oil shipments have increased to their highest level in nearly five years. They topped 1.5 million barrels per day in May, the highest rate since 2018. Iranian oil exports could surge in the coming months, particularly to China, as Russian domestic demand will increase in the coming summer and that

could lower Russian exports. Under sanctions, Iranian trade has pivoted further towards neighboring countries and China, and bilateral currency exchange, barter, and other indirect payment channels are increasingly used to settle international transactions. Based on World Bank projections, the current account balance is forecast to remain in surplus, supported by higher oil prices and non-oil exports. The fiscal balance is projected to benefit from the gradual upward trend in oil exports, but the budget deficit coupled with inflationary expectations, foreign exchange pressures, and deficit monetization are expected to keep inflation elevated, albeit gradually declining over the outlook period. This month, President Raeisi unveiled the general outline of the seventh five-year development plan that will guide the annual budgets and development policies through 2028. During the presentation of the document to parliament, head of the Plan and Budget Organization Davoud Manzour said the plan is problem solving-oriented and aims to resolve the country's economic imbalances.

One key plank of the document is to credit all hard currency revenues from petroleum exports to the National Development Fund. The government's objective is to reduce the annual budget's dependency on petroleum export revenues to zero by the end of the plan. It also projects an average 80 percent annual economic growth, 22.6 percent growth in gross capital formation, 3.9 percent growth in employment and an average inflation rate of 19.7 percent. Addressing Iranian lawmakers during the submission of the bill, President Raeisi said the focus has been put on the country's central issue and priorities without changing its current laws. The previous plan for 2016-2022 also envisioned annual economic growth of 8%, with key pillars being the development of a resilient economy, progress in science and technology, and the promotion of cultural excellence. What remains to be seen is the government's diligence in implementing this catalog of objectives which successive governments have failed to achieve, especially when the country has been in crisis mode.

FAO, Iran discuss combating climate change

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and the University of Mohagheh Ardabili discussed fighting against climate change as they marked World Camel Day in Ardebil Province. The UN has designated 2024 as the International Year of Camelids. Camels, llamas, alpacas, vicuñas and guanacos are an im-

portant source of livelihood for millions of families - most of them pastoralists - in dryland and mountainous rangeland ecosystems around the world. It acknowledges their role in protecting ecosystems, conserving biodiversity, and ensuring food security in the face of climate change, according to fao.org. Yubak Dhoj G C, FAO representative ad interim to

Iran, in a message drew attention to the critical global issues of food security and climate change, and the significant role that camels play in addressing these challenges. "Climate change exacerbates the risks to food security, particularly for vulnerable countries and populations. It leads to the loss of rural livelihoods, degradation of ecosystems, and disruptions in

food systems. Additionally, indigenous communities, who rely heavily on biodiversity for their sustenance, face heightened vulnerability as biodiversity continues to decline," Dhoj G C stated. In the livestock sector, which is crucial for global food production, we encounter diverse challenges, including climate change, emerging diseases, competition for natural resources,

and evolving demand for animal-source foods, he also warned. He said that we observe World Camel Day on the 22nd of June every year, and with each passing year, the interest and support for camel development continue to grow, underscoring their untapped potential. FAO announced readiness to provide technical support to the development of short-, medium- and



long-term strategies for increasing the population of Bactrian camels, which

is planned to be prepared by the government and relevant authorities.

Iran's 7th Development Plan forecasts 5% yearly decline in drug consumption: **Minister**



IRNA

Social Desk

In an attempt to combat the nation's drug crisis, Iran's Minister of Interior, Ahmad Vahidi, announced on Monday a strategic plan to reduce drug consumption by 25 percent over the next five years. The announce-

ment, made on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, underscores Iran's commitment to tackling the drug problem head-on. Vahidi criticized the international community's approach to the drug trade, accusing it of turning a blind

eye to the illicit money laundering associated with narcotics. He pointed out the paradox of global efforts to combat money laundering while seemingly ignoring its prevalence in the drug trade, IRNA reported. "The world is quick to fight against money laundering,

drafting various conventions and protocols, yet in the realm of narcotics, money laundering is conducted with impunity," Vahidi said. The Minister further criticized the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), suggesting it was politically motivated to sanction countries

like Iran, which are at the forefront of the fight against narcotics. He questioned the West's handling of the vast sums of money generated by drug smuggling and the narcotics economy, suggesting that these funds likely end up in European banks.

Vahidi also raised concerns about the international community's role in the drug trade, pointing to the export of 12,000 tons of drug precursors to Afghanistan for the production of industrial materials, most of which originate from western countries.

"Behind the scenes, there are forces seeking to bolster the production and trafficking of drugs," Vahidi said. "It is the political currents behind the drug curtain, both domestically and internationally, and the countries that profit from the drug economy that are to blame."

Despite receiving no international assistance, Vahidi stated that the Iran has made the most significant number of drug discoveries and has given approximately 4,000 martyrs in the fight against narcotics. He expressed skepticism towards global drug policies, accusing them of harboring malicious intentions that hinder any real struggle against drug production and trafficking.

The minister also addressed the issue of drug consumption patterns, emphasizing the need to protect society from the use of dangerous, often irreversible drugs. He called for a scientific approach to health and treatment measures to combat drug use.

"Changing consumption patterns is a double-edged sword," Vahidi said. "On one hand, it could be misconstrued as condoning drug use, which is entirely false. On the other hand, we must shield society from the dangers of drug use, necessitating a scientific approach to health and treatment measures."



Social Desk

In an official statement, the chair of the executive committee for the 13th National Environment Award underscored the critical role of public participation and support in environmental initiatives.

"No program or action, particularly in the environmental sphere, can achieve significant success without the active involvement and backing of the populace. It is essential that platforms facilitating such participation

are adequately established," Alireza Mazinani said, according to ISNA. He emphasized the urgency of addressing environmental crises that have plagued human societies in recent years. He also advocated for a greater focus on the advancement of science and technology, coupled with the engagement of local communities in environmental matters.

"Crucially, environmental preservation can only be achieved through the cultivation of a culture of

awareness and education, fostering motivation, and establishing a cooperative and accountable platform," Mazinani added. He further highlighted the inherent value of environmental protection within the religious and social fabric of Iran's society, viewing it as a potent resource and support. "If we fail to instill trust and delegate environmental responsibilities to the public, it would be futile to anticipate collective efforts towards improving environmental

The need to foster public participation in environmental affairs

conditions," he cautioned. Mazinani further noted that the National Environment Award aims to boost public participation and incentivize environmental conservation. "In accordance with Article 46 of the Executive Regulations of the Environmental Protection and Improvement Law and the resolutions of the Supreme Council of Environment, the National Environment Award seeks to acknowledge the commendable efforts of individuals and organizations in environmental preservation," he explained. The chair of the executive committee for the 13th National Environment Award also acknowledged the contributions of environmental activists and academic figures in organizing this national event.

"To date, nearly 26 meetings of the national and provincial executive committee and 15 meetings of the scientific committee have been convened to ensure the successful execution of this event," he reported.

He also revealed that the creation of the festival's statue and the design of the event's poster are nearing completion, with the unveiling expected to occur soon during the official ceremony.

In conclusion, the Director General of Tehran's Department of the Environment expressed satisfaction with the enthusiastic response to the National Environment Award. He emphasized the public and exclusive nature of the event, stating that its annual and continuous or-

ganization would contribute significantly to promoting a culture of environmental protection.

The Department of the Environment's information center disclosed that the National Environment Award focuses on innovations, inventions, and flagship projects aimed at preventing environmental pollution or destruction. It also recognizes creative initiatives that reduce the costs of environmental protection, scientific research, and exceptional services that enhance societal environmental knowledge and awareness, thereby fostering a broad and comprehensive environmental culture.



ISNA

New university majors required to have employment prospects: **Official**



IRNA

Social Desk

The deputy of education of the Ministry of Science,

Research and Technology, Qasem Amu-Abedini, announced on Monday that all new academic fields

proposed by universities must demonstrate a clear link to employment opportunities. This statement was made during the national congress of Targeted, Skill-based, and Need-based Education.

Amu-Abedini emphasized the importance of skill-based education at all levels, stating that the primary role of universities is to cultivate knowledgeable and competent individuals. He further stressed that while job creation is not the re-

sponsibility of universities, they should nonetheless contribute to this endeavor through strategic planning, IRNA reported.

The deputy minister also revealed that this year, student admissions were halted for courses that lacked job perspectives. However, he clarified that these courses have not been permanently discontinued. Instead, they are temporarily not accepting new students, but will resume admissions if there is

sufficient demand.

In a significant move, Amu-Abedini disclosed that a thousand majors in different universities have been removed from the entrance exam booklet this year. He also touched upon the topic of industrial exchange, stating that universities have the capacity to offer up to 40 units from a field's curriculum based on the specific needs of an industry.

In addition, the official approved the involvement of

industry-active professors in providing necessary training alongside university faculty, further bridging the gap between academia and industry.

In a related development, the National Network of Higher Education Specialists was launched during the congress. This network, comprising approximately 1,300 higher education experts, aims to centralize the definition of higher education activities and issues through research desks.

These research desks, each managed by a team comprised of a manager, a secretary, and an expert, will identify problems, gather data, and relay their findings to the Ministry of Science. The network's broader objective is to foster synergy among the nation's universities, enabling them to collectively address specialized field issues and utilize their combined resources to overcome the challenges they face.

Iran, Russia ink agreement to expand cinematic cooperation



Arts & Culture Desk

ILNA - Farabi Cinema Foundation signed a joint cooperation agreement with Red Square Media, one of the largest content producers in Russia.

The CEO of the Iranian foundation, at the invitation of Anton Kubikov Advisor to the President of Russia and Executive Secretary of St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, signed the agreement during his visit to the country and participation in the SPIEF 2023. According to the report, this agreement has been signed in five areas of content expansion, joint production, networking of professionals, distribution and marketing, and organizing training courses.

Documentary on Persian language professors in India



Arts & Culture Desk

IBNA - In collaboration with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Office in India and the Saadi Foundation's Persian Language Research Center in Delhi, the biography of distinguished Persian language professors in India will be depicted in the form of a documentary film.

Qahreman Soleimani, the head of the Saadi Foundation's Persian Language Research Center in India stated, "To honor the continuous efforts of this intellectual community, a television documentary has been prepared. The lives of several of Persian language luminaries in India will be depicted in 12 episodes."

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Iran selected as president of Ordinary Governing Council

Iran firmly adheres to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage convention: deputy minister



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran firmly adheres to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Ali Darabi, the deputy tourism minister, said on Monday. In the 5th Ordinary Governing Council Meeting of the Regional Research Center for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia, Iran has been elected as the president of the council for a period of three years, with a majority of votes. Additionally, Atousa Momeni has been appointed as the president of the Tehran International Cultural Heritage (ICH) Center for a duration of four years. The meeting, organized by the Regional Research Center for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia, is currently taking place at Tehran's Laleh Hotel, June

26-27, according to IRNA. Darabi highlighted the significance of this specialized council meeting in the context of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in West and Central Asia. He emphasized that intangible cultural heritage is the essence of a nation's culture and, without it, tangible cultural heritage cannot truly manifest itself. He stated that tangible heritage is the product of intangible heritage and is considered an invaluable asset in the progress and sustainable development of societies, representing the wisdom and intellect of humans throughout history. This intangible heritage encompasses a wide range of knowledge, including cosmic and natural sciences, traditional arts and crafts, and social practices that promote harmony, peace, rituals, festivals, performing arts, and the embodi-

ment of coexistence among human beings. Darabi continued by highlighting the numerous unparalleled manifestations of intangible heritage in the West and Central Asia region that have thrived due to the rich cultural legacy of identity-conscious nations and their intelligent inter-generational transmission. Since 2006, Iran has been a signatory to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and is recognized as one of the most active countries in implementing the convention. With nearly 3,000 national registrations of intangible heritage and 24 elements inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Iran has achieved success in preserving cultural identity and participating in the development of multinational dossiers,

promoting social cohesion among nations within the framework of the aforementioned convention. Furthermore, Darabi emphasized the importance of establishing regional centers under the auspices of UNESCO, as these centers play a pivotal role in the cultural policies of different countries. They assist in planning and guiding cultural endeavors within their regions, safeguarding their own intangible cultural heritage, and collaborating with other countries. Iran, with its valuable experience, has been recognized as a leading authority in educational activities, awareness-raising, safeguarding, and capacity-building. The Tehran ICH Center covers twenty-four countries in the designated geographic area, enabling cultural programs of neighboring countries in West and Central Asia to align with the center's strategic planning and foster mutual respect among member nations. This collaboration plays a key role in promoting peace and sustainable development in the region. Darabi explained that while the concept of intangible cultural heritage has gained international recognition in the past two decades, it has long been a focus of attention in the East, particularly in Islamic Iran. Its countless manifestations are evident in the rituals, customs, traditional language knowledge, and diverse traditional arts and crafts. Iran takes pride in its central role in West and Central Asia, using its ca-

capacity to promote the rich symbols and aspects of intangible cultural heritage alongside other participating countries. Through the development and implementation of specialized programs, Iran seeks to protect cultural identities, honor various cultures, and foster the resulting peace. By creating opportunities for sharing experiences among nations, successful models of interaction between humans, nature, and land resources can be identified, ensuring their sustainability through effective networking and exchange of expertise. Feng Jing, the Chief of the Culture Section at the UNESCO Office in Bangkok and the UNESCO Representative in the Tehran ICH Ordinary Governing Council, also addressed the meeting online. Jing emphasized, "We hope that our collaboration will lead to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO encourages information exchange and seminars on this subject. Mid-term and long-term programs will be considered within the framework of UNESCO regulations. Preserving intangible heritage in the West and Central Asia region is significant, and we need to continue our cooperation in this field." Referring to Iran's cultural heritage that has been registered at UNESCO, he stated, "This heritage holds great importance for us, and we should strive to be diligent in safeguarding intangible heritage as well."

English Heritage said no to Dutch loan request for 'fragile' Vermeer painting



English Heritage refused to lend one of its most precious paintings to a blockbuster Vermeer exhibition, claiming it was too fragile to travel, despite expert assurance that the risk of damage was "negligible", documents reveal. Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum tried to gather all

of Johannes Vermeer's 37 surviving paintings in one place for the largest ever exhibition of work by the Dutch master. 'The Guitar Player' at London's Kenwood House was one of only nine known Vermeer paintings not to appear at the show, which ended earlier this month. Now correspondence reveals the lengths gone to by the Rijksmuseum's curators to try persuade English Heritage, which runs Kenwood, to temporarily part with the painting.

At the start of the charm offensive last July senior figures from the organisation, including its chief executive, Kate Mavor, were treated to breakfast at the exclusive Wolseley restaurant in Mayfair by a Rijksmuseum delegation led by its director, Taco Dibbits, to discuss the potential loan. The Rijksmuseum even commissioned a report by "the world's leading expert [on] vibration mitigation" to try to convince English Heritage that the painting could be safely transported to Amsterdam using the latest technology.

Camera brings 'unprecedented clarity' to restoration of historic artworks

Scientists developed technology that will revolutionise the restoration of historic works of art by allowing conservators to identify and remove ageing varnish with total accuracy. A team at King's College London's department of physics has harnessed the power of fluorescence to bring "unprecedented clarity" to the conservation process, said Klaus Sühling. A revolutionary camera will allow experts to distinguish between varnish and other com-

ponents in an artwork, such as paints and binders, the Guardian wrote. "The conservation of paintings is vital to protect our cultural heritage for generations to come," said Sühling. "Most paintings created before the late 19th century have been varnished many times, making them appear dull or yellowed as the varnish degrades. To make the image visible again, it may be necessary to remove that varnish - but it can be a big challenge to differentiate this from the underlying paint



and other components within the painting." The King's College team developed a 25,000-pixel photon sensitive camera that uses a technique called macroscopic fluorescence lifetime imaging (FLIM) to harness the natural fluorescence in centuries-old varnish.