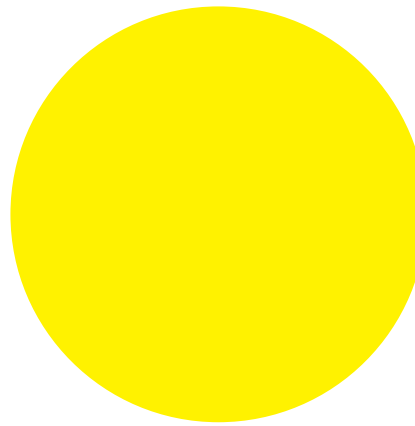


Special Issue

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BRICS, SCO Opportunity for Iran's Economy

Raeisi: Enemy failed to isolate Iran

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (c) speaks at a press conference in Tehran on August 29, 2023. **ABOLFAZL NESAEI/ IRAN DAILY**

Iran's unemployment rate drops: VP

Economy Desk

Iranian Vice President for Executive Affairs Mohsen Mansouri said that not only the inflation rate has decreased but also the unemployment rate in Iran has dropped to below nine percent since President Ebrahim Raisi's administration took office two years ago.

He made the remarks during an inauguration ceremony of 7,000 job-generating projects that was held through videoconferencing on Tuesday, Mehr news agency reported.

"One of the definite policies of the president, which he has always insisted on was solving economic problems, especially creating jobs. According to the Statistical Centre of Iran and monitoring systems of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour, and Social Welfare, more than one million jobs were created last year," the top official said. He noted that most of the created jobs were the results of the efforts of industrialists and manufacturers.

US furious with Israel over revealing Libyan FM meet

US President Joe Biden's administration is reportedly furious with Jerusalem for revealing last week's meeting between the foreign ministers of Israel and Libya. Foreign Minister Eli Cohen on Sunday announced the meeting with his Libyan counterpart Najla Mangoush, sparking outrage in Libya over the unprecedented sit-down and a storm of criticism at home over his revelation, Israeli media reported. Mangoush on Monday was fired for meeting with Cohen, and US officials told Israel that the episode will deter other countries from embarking on a normalization process with Israel. A US official also said it "killed" the conversation channel with Libya about recognizing Israel.



AFP

Iran's new air defense system can engage 12 targets at once

Iran has unveiled its indigenous 'Tactical Sayyad' air defense system, boasting that it can simultaneously engage 6 to 12 of these targets within a 120-kilometer radius. Afshin Naderi Sharif, the Iranian deputy defense minister for Research and Industrial Affairs, added that the system demonstrates the ability to detect up to 24 targets within a range of 180 kilometers, according to armyrecognition.com.



FARS

Sharif emphasized that the Tactical Sayyad is purposefully designed for medium altitudes. Notably, one of the system's standout features is its short-range self-protection mechanism, a significant improvement over Iran's existing Khordad-3 and Khordad-15 air defense systems.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

FM: Iran to promote cooperation within ACD

PRESS TV - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said Tehran will do its best to boost cooperation among the members of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) during its rotating presidency of the forum. He made the remarks in a Monday meeting with Secretary General of the ACD Pornchai Danvivathana in Tehran.

The top diplomat said during its rotating presidency of the ACD, in addition to promoting cooperation within the body, Iran will do its utmost to pave the way for the realization of its goals.

Amir-Abdollahian said the Kuwait-based ACD secretariat plays a leading role in bolstering cooperation among its members, and expressed Iran's readiness to help the secretariat and the ACD Cultural and Tourism Coordination Center, which is based in Tehran, in this regard.

Danvivathana, for his part, briefed Amir-Abdollahian on ACD's foreign ministerial meeting, which is set to be held in September on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's annual meeting. Iran's one-year presidency of the ACD will start following that meeting.

The first of its kind in Asia, the Asia Cooperation Dialogue is a continent-wide forum, which was inaugurated in Thailand in 2002.

Nine Iranian pilgrims killed in Iraq road crash

REUTERS - At least nine Iranian pilgrims died and dozens were injured when a bus carrying them collided with a truck in the southern Iraqi city of Nassiriya on Monday, two medical sources said.

The bus was crammed with pilgrims en route to the holy city of Karbala. One of the medical sources said 31 people, including women and children, were injured and five of them were in a critical condition.

Every year, millions of Iranians travel to neighboring Iraq to participate in Arba'een march, which is the 40th day after the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein, Shias' third imam.

BRICS, SCO opportunity for Iran's economy

Raeisi: Enemy failed to isolate Iran

National Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi said alliances like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are a very good opportunity for Iran to increase its economic capacities and confront the West's unilateralism. Speaking during a news conference in Tehran on Tuesday, Raeisi said that relations with the alliances' great economies will surely help the economy's growth in Iran.

Back in July, Iran gained full membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which is a political organization with eight members, namely, Russia, India, Pakistan, and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The BRICS group of emerging economies also approved Iran's full membership in the organization last week.

President Ebrahim Raeisi said that efforts by the enemies to isolate Iran and drive the Iranian people to despair have failed, whereas all indicators attest to growth and progress in the country.

Enemy's failed policy
"Relations with Latin America, Africa and many

Asian countries, becoming active in the Eurasian Economic Union and membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and, recently, in BRICS all show that the enemy did not succeed in its policy to isolate Islamic Iran, and our political, commercial and economic situation shows the failure of the enemy in this strategy."

Raeisi added that Iran has also forged strong relations with Islamic and like-minded countries, its enemies are also knocking on the door after initially trying to ditch the country when riots broke out following the death of Iranian girl Mahsa Amini last September.

"The enemy tried to follow two strategies of isolating Iran in the world and disappointing the people inside, and it failed in both.

Raeisi was referring to sanctions imposed on Iran since the United States torpedoed the nuclear deal in 2018, as well as protests that erupted in September 2022 over the death of Mahsa Amini in custody.

"That is because we follow numerous agendas in our foreign policy all at the same time, one of which is the JCPOA," the president said, referring to the 2015 nuclear deal, which is on life support after the US



Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi speaks at a press conference in Tehran on August 29, 2023.
● ABOLFAZL NESAEI/IRAN DAILY

withdrawal. "We've followed relations with neighboring countries as well as Islamic and aligned states, and improved the level of political, economic and commercial relations, where commercial ties have grown 14 percent over the previous government," he said.

Economic ties
"In the area of regional trade ties and business

measures, in which some believed little can be done, the government broke the record and it turned out that there are many capacities in the country," Raeisi added.

The president said the people's efforts and hope have increased day by day, as shown by production, science and technology indicators and knowledge-based initiatives of Iranian youths. "Today is the day Islamic

Iran is known as an advanced and technological country," he said.

US media reports have said the Biden administration has been negotiating quietly to open diplomatic channels with Iran. The indirect talks, they say, reflect a resumption of diplomacy between the United States and Iran after the collapse of more than a year of negotiations to restore the 2015 nuclear deal.

The Iranian side has not commented on such claims, but President Raeisi said on Tuesday, "We have not abandoned the negotiating table for removing the sanctions".

"The other side left the negotiation table, and now they regret it, stating that they are ready to negotiate." But, he added, "We are not tying the country's economy to the wishes of Western countries".

Over 2.5m Iranians in Iraq for Arbaeen march

Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said more than 2.5 million Iranians have entered Iraq to participate in the Arbaeen march. The Iranian interior min-

ister made the remarks in a meeting with his Iraqi counterpart Abdul Amir al-Shammari in Iraq's capital, Baghdad. Omar Adnan al-Waeli,

head of the Iraqi Border Crossings Authority, said that the number of pilgrims is expected to be higher compared to previous years.

Earlier on Friday, Ahmad Vahidi had visited Khosravi and Manzar border crossings, during which he expressed appreciation to Iraqi officials for facilitating the movement of Iranian pilgrims.

It is expected that this year more than four million Iranian pilgrims will travel to Karbala to attend the Arbaeen march. Iran's Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian said

the millions-strong Arbaeen March, an annual event that marks the 40th day after the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (PBUH), symbolizes the fight against oppression and the struggle for freedom.

"As one of the largest gatherings of people in the world, the Arbaeen March represents a colossal, noble and deep-seated motion, which annually brings together millions of Muslims from all over the world with different nationalities, races and languages to commem-

orate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH)," Amir-Abdollahian wrote in a message published in Iraq's Arabic-language Al-Zora and Al-Sabaah newspapers.

The top Iranian diplomat noted that faith in religion, trust in God, ethics, justice, defense of the oppressed, and unity of Muslim countries, confronting global arrogance, and formation of a united Muslim Ummah are among the fundamentals of the Arbaeen march. Millions of Muslims across the world are

observing the annual mourning rituals of Arbaeen, which mark the 40th day after the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Shia Imam.

He underscored that Iraqi people have for many years offered services to Arbaeen pilgrims of all nationalities, especially Iranians, irrespective of their ethnicity. Arbaeen brings together millions of people from across the world, who undertake an 80-kilometer (50-mile) walk between the holy Iraqi cities of Najaf and Karbala.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran seeks to visit Hirmand dam in Afghanistan

Iran demands to inspect the reservoir of a dam on the Hirmand River in Afghanistan that has caused a standoff with the Taliban administration over Iran's share of water from the river.

Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said on Tuesday that a committee has been formed to facilitate an Iranian delegation's visit to the dam to verify the claims by Afghan officials that the river suffers from unprecedentedly low levels of water, IFP reported.

The Taliban have been refusing to allow Iran's share of water from Hirmand, known as Helmand in Afghanistan, to stream into Iran, blaming drought and technical issues for the low supply of water in the past months.

However, Iran's Space Agency said images obtained from Iranian satellites show that the Taliban government is preventing water from reaching the Iranian side of the border by building numerous dams and diverting the

flow of water.

Vahidi said the situation would cause a drought and social issues in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, which is located in a hot and dry region and receives low rainfall compared to other regions in the country.

Iran stresses that Afghanistan must adhere to the terms of the internationally-binding 1973 Hirmand River Water Treaty and supply Iran with its share of water from the river.

Renovation project underway in Naseri Palace of Alborz Province



● ISNA

Iranica Desk

A project is underway to refurbish Naseri Palace, dating back to the Qajar era, in Shahrestanak village of Alborz Province, said the head of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization.

Rahim Khaki told ISNA that most obstacles hindering the implementation of the project, including lack of cooperation by local people, have been removed.

He said the project is being implemented at an acceptable speed, adding that the problem of supplying gas to the complex has been solved as well.

The official added that the dossiers for the registration of six intangible cultural heritages of the province have been prepared and handed over to the Cultural



● ISNA

Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry.

He noted that Alborz Province, with a rich treasure of tangible and intangible cultural heritages, can prepare such dossiers for many years. Khaki said that the eighth phase of the archaeological excavation has been launched in Uzbek Hill in Nazarabad,

pointing out that the results of these studies would definitely help uncover the history behind the region.

"The results of the seventh phase of excavation will be published in two books," he said.

The official noted that continuing the implementation of excavation projects is a

prerequisite for global registration of Uzbek Hill, adding a number of infrastructures should be created in the area as well.

"We are trying to receive a permit for turning the area into a museum site and a meeting will be held in this regard with related officials in the near future," he con-

cluded.

Nazarabad is a town in Alborz Province, in which this historically important site is located. Uzbek Hill is an old hill, with a peak of 26 meters, which was registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 1973. In an area of 100 hectares, the historical site is one of the most valuable in the world, such that it has been deemed worthy that it be registered on UNESCO's World Heritage Site.

The 9,000-year-old site was home to villagers who, for the first time, used handmade raw clay, as well as cement, as construction materials.

Archeologists believe that at that time no other group of rural and urban people made raw clay from water and soil, and the cement was not used in any other structure of the world.

White Bridge, symbol of Ahvaz



● iraniantours.com

Iranica Desk

The White Bridge of Ahvaz (known in Persian as Pol-e Sefid) in the southern province of Khuzestan is considered a symbol of the city.

One of the oldest in Iran, the bridge was built over the Karun River to facilitate passage be-

tween the two parts of the city.

The White Bridge, with a height of 13 meters above the river, is 501m long and 9.8m wide, chn.ir reported.

At first glance what attracts everyone's attention is the white color of the bridge.

Ahvaz is divided into

two sections: the eastern part, hosting the most number of factories and offices affiliated with the oil and steel industry, and the western part, comprising the city's residential districts. The White Bridge connects these two parts to one another.

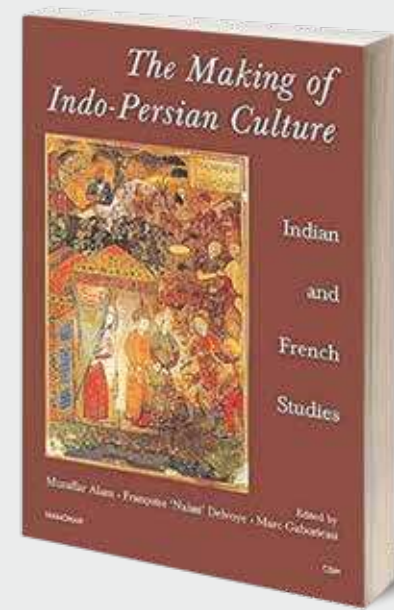
In the past, light vehi-

cles, people and cattle passed over the White Bridge, which is presently a one-way passage used by pedestrians and vehicles. It is also ranked eighth on the list of the largest suspension bridges in the Middle East.

The bridge was built by a German engineer

and his wife in the early 1900s. The engineer died after raising one of the two arches of the bridge; his wife completed the project in 1937.

The bridge was renovated in 2011, when light fixtures were added to it, and was registered as a National Heritage Site in the year 2000.



Formation of Indo-Persian culture

The making of Indo-Persian culture is closely connected with the establishment and the spread of Islam in northern Indian plains. Islam came to India in two ways. An older mode, in the longue duree, is the intermittent arrival of Muslims on the western and southern coasts of India close on the heels of the developments following the death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Except for the conquerors of the province of Sind (now in Pakistan) in 711, these first Muslim settlers were peaceful merchants; they were mostly Arabs and their contact with India could indeed be traced back to the pre-Islamic period. They were the ancestors of some of the Muslim communities in south India, notably in Kerala and in Tamil Nadu; adherents of the Shafi school of law. They developed a culture which-even when couched in Tamil or Malayalam-remained grounded in Arabic models. They always looked to Arabia and other Arab lands for inspiration.

But from the eleventh century onwards a new wave of Muslims arrived, not from the sea, but overland through the passes of Afghanistan. They were not Arabs, but Turks steeped in Persian culture. Although Turkish sporadically remained the spoken language of the ruling families till the eighteenth century, Turkish culture never really developed in India. It was the Persian culture which flourished in Ajam that took root in India, and remained dominant-down to the nineteenth century, well into the British period. In fact more Persian literature was produced in India than in Central Asia and even in Iran proper during this period. It is this Persian culture acclimatized to the Indian environment which came to be known as Indo-Persian culture.

The formation of this culture went through several phases. The first one took nourishment with the rise of the Ghaznavids

and later the Ghurids around the north-west borders of India in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, even though India had had contact with Persia at the time of the Samanids of Bokhara. Based in Ghazni in Afghanistan, the Ghaznavids had become the most powerful Sultans in the eastern lands of the Baghdad caliphate; they extended their rule to north-west India down to Lahore which became their second capital in 1022, and a major centre of Persian culture. The early Ghaznavids had at one time patronized the famous epic poet Ferdowsi (940-1020 CE), who along with other major poets patronized by them, inspired the early Indo-Persian poets of Lahore.

Among them Abul Faraj Rumi (died 1091) and Mas'ud Sadi Salman (died in 1131) deserve special notice. Not only were they great poets, but they served as models later in the entire Persian world.

The same dynasty also had in Abu'l-Faql Bayhaqi, the first great historian writing in Persian. This area under the two dynasties produced a large number of Persian poets and Persian writers whose works have been noticed by later anthologists. Thus the Indo-Persian culture was undoubtedly founded as early as the eleventh century in Ghaznavid Punjab and its neighbourhood. However, it is only in the following phase of the period of the unified Delhi Sultanate, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that the Indo-Persian culture, as we know it, matured. At that time, Persianized Turkish dynasties were supreme not only in the Islamic world but in India also.

The successive dynasties of Delhi Sultans, being in constant contact with Iran and Central Asia, patronized the development of a local Persian culture. This period saw the beginning of a tradition of writing history in Persian which was to continue well into the British period.

The above is a lightly edited version of part of the first chapter of a book entitled "The Making of Indo-Persian Culture", edited by Muzaffar Alam, Françoise 'Nalini' Delva, and Marc Gaborieau, published by Centre De Sciences Humaines.



A Russian peacekeeper guards the Lachin corridor on December 27, 2022, as demonstrators stage a protest.
● TOFIK BABAYEV/AFP

Blockade Closed 'Arteries of Artsakh's Economy



By Eliza
Matevosyan
Economist

**PERSPECTIVE
EXCLUSIVE**

Since December 12, 2022, Azerbaijan has blocked the "life road" to Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenian: Artsakh) known as the Lachin Corridor, isolating its 120,000-strong population and placing them on a siege. Until June 15, 2023, only Russian peacekeeping troops and the International Committee of the Red Cross had limited access to enter Artsakh. However, their movement was also restricted, worsening the ongoing humanitarian disaster. The crisis is affecting all aspects of life and undermining the pillars of Artsakh's economy.

Today, Artsakh is facing its most serious self-sufficiency challenges. The region relies heavily on importing a number of essential goods. Prior to the blockade, around 400 tons of vital commodities such as grain, flour, vegetables, fruits, household items, etc. were transported from Armenia to Artsakh on a daily basis. However, due to the ongoing blockade, the regular supply of food, medical supplies, and energy resources has been completely halted. As a result of this 8-month-long blockade, the necessary vital goods have been imported about 17 times less compared to what would have been imported without the blockade, and since Aug 8, 2023, until the moment of writing this piece, vital goods have not been imported at all.

This dire humanitarian crisis is progressively causing irreversible losses, leading to loss of life, and constraining the constitutional and fundamental rights of the people. Therefore, the organizations that were established with the purpose of addressing human rights issues must take immediate and effective measures. Otherwise, the selective activity of these structures should be called into question. Because of the blockade, the population has encountered significant challenges related to food self-sufficiency, leading individuals to rely on their savings and adopt restrictive measures. As of January 20, a special coupon system has been implemented in Artsakh. Within the coupon system, limited volumes of pasta, buckwheat, rice, sugar, oil, fruits, vegetables, eggs, and non-food products like washing

powder are sold. However, since June 15, none of the aforementioned products have been supplied in the slightest. This situation further exacerbates the ongoing humanitarian crisis. To further isolate and worsen the crisis resulting from its blockade, Azerbaijan has launched attacks on Artsakh's critical civilian infrastructure. The Azerbaijanis have completely cut off the electricity supply since January 9, with periodic disruptions occurring from the start of the blockade. Additionally, starting from March 21, they have successfully disrupted the only gas supply from Armenia. As a consequence of these actions, the republic has been forced to implement a schedule of rolling 6-hour blackouts since January 10. This has led to daily power outages and additional emergency shutdowns, causing many facilities to either close or significantly reduce their operations. The Artsakh Water and Sewerage CJSC is alerting that a drinking water problem is brewing due to wind power outages. If the blockade persists, there will be serious challenges in maintaining a stable water supply. Meanwhile, the limited fuel reserves in Artsakh have been exhausted, resulting in a complete halt of public transport throughout the republic starting from July 25. Earlier, on July 18, public transport within Stepanakert was significantly reduced. However, interregional routes were maintained until July 25. The current situation resulting from the blockade of Artsakh is presented. These problems also affect all sec-



The photo shows various coupons that were distributed to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh following the food shortage caused by the Azerbaijani blockade on the Lachin Corridor.
● ARAX

tors of the country's economy with a chain effect. Prior to the blockade, Artsakh's economy was experiencing significant activity. According to the National Statistical Service of Artsakh, a growth rate of 12.2% was recorded in 2022 compared to the same period of the previous year. Further economic growth was anticipated, but due to the blockade, Artsakh's economy incurred a loss of around \$456 million, leading to the decline of the predicted annual GDP index (\$903 million) by more than 50 percent. Many companies have halted their operations in the current situation, while some organizations that primarily rely on local raw materials continue to function despite the acute shortage of imported auxiliary materials. Consequently, since the onset of the blockade, 1468 businesses (accounting for 34.3% of the total) have suspended their activities

due to operational challenges.

An estimated 17,000 people including those in state-supported temporary work placements and more than 80% of private sector employees have lost their jobs and sources of income as a result of the blockade and its disruptions to Artsakh's vital infrastructure. Unemployment rates have been rapidly rising, accompanied by a significant decrease in state budget revenues. The budget targets for January–July 2023 were not met. Tax revenues and duties totaling 16.4 billion Armenian Dram (AMD) (\$42.69 million) were collected for the state budget, which was 63.1 percent compared to the planned target of 26.0 billion AMD (\$67.68 million). In July, the revenues collected were 54.6 percent below the target, resulting in a shortfall of 2.5 billion AMD (\$6.5 million). The blockade of Artsakh has also led

to negative consequences for the republic's real estate market. During the first semester of 2023, only 1,572 real estate transactions were conducted in Artsakh, marking a decrease of 61.2% compared to the first semester of 2022 and a 53.7% decrease compared to the second semester of 2022.

The construction sector has also encountered significant challenges. The blockade has resulted in the suspension of construction activities, halting the progress of projects including the construction of 32.6 kilometers of roads, tens of kilometers of water lines, irrigation systems covering thousands of hectares of land, 3,717 apartments, and more than 40 social and industrial infrastructure projects.

The decline across all sectors of the Artsakh economy is evident. Normal operations in trade, services, agriculture, construction, tourism, restaurant and hotel management, communications, and the mining industry have been disrupted. This is starkly reflected in the comparison between the first half of 2023 and the same period of the previous year. According to data released by the Artsakh State Revenue Committee, sales turnover in the mining sector dropped by 94%, the construction sector by 89%, the production sector by 60.6%, the trade sector by 54.5%, and the energy sector by 41.8%. In July, nearly all indicators reached zero due to the import blockade of various goods. Overall, it can safely be said that the blockade has closed the blood vessels of the Artsakh economy and is gradually suffocating it.



Russian soldiers enforcing a blockade against Nagorno-Karabakh avoid eye contact with a local boy wearing an Armenian flag on his back. armenian-assembly.org

Unveiled Motives Behind Azerbaijan's Blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh



By Varduhi Harutyunyan
International affairs expert

**PERSPECTIVE
EXCLUSIVE**

Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenian: Artsakh) is still grappling with the aftermath of the 44-day conflict, instigated by Azerbaijan in 2020. With each passing day, the threat of a humanitarian catastrophe is increasing. Since December 12, 2022, Azerbaijan has dispatched environmental activists to close the Lachin Corridor — the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia. This has resulted in more than eight months of blockade, which has affected 120,000 Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh who now face restricted mobility and disrupted supply chains.

The situation further deteriorated after April 23, 2023. Violating the international commitments made by the leaders of Armenia, Russia, and Azerbaijan in the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020, the Azerbaijani authorities escalated matters by establishing an unauthorized checkpoint in the Lachin corridor within the jurisdiction of the Russian peacekeeping forces.

By subjecting Nagorno-Karabakh to an extended blockade, the Azerbaijani authorities continue to violate not only the aforementioned trilateral statement but also the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights issued on December 21, 2022, as well as the decisions of the International Court of Justice issued on February 22 and July 6, 2023. These rulings mandate that Baku immediately undertake all measures at its disposal to guarantee unhindered movement of people, vehicles, and cargo in both directions along the Lachin Corridor.

Having forsaken its international obligations and under the pretext of "combating the illegal flow of weaponry" into Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan initially restricted and subsequently prohibited the transport of essential items such as food, medicines, and energy resources to Artsakh. Electricity and natural gas supplies were completely halted. Furthermore, from July 26 until the moment of writing this report, a convoy consisting of 22 trucks carrying humanitarian aid for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh has remained stranded at Kornidzor in the Syunik region of Armenia, situated at the threshold of the Lachin Corridor. In effect, the Azerbaijani authorities

have obstructed the transport of humanitarian provisions to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, which includes 30,000 children, 20,000 elderly people, and 9,000 disabled individuals. Consequently, limited internal reserves of food and medicines are swiftly diminishing, plunging Nagorno-Karabakh into a man-made humanitarian catastrophe. The international efforts to avert this crisis are becoming increasingly urgent, but they are delayed as the regime that deprived the Armenians of Artsakh of energy resources continues to be considered a "reliable energy partner" and a "strategic partner" of both the West and Russia.

Azerbaijan initially conditioned the unimpeded functioning of the Lachin Corridor with the establishment of what they refer to as the "Zangezur Corridor". The term was introduced by Baku soon after the 44-day war in 2020, with a deliberate misinterpretation of paragraph 9 of the statement of the leaders of Armenia, Russia, and Azerbaijan issued on November 9, 2020. This distortion aimed to equate the Lachin Corridor, linking Armenia with Artsakh, to a road intended to connect the western part of Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan through Armenian territory. It is important to note that according to the mentioned document, all economic transport links in the region should be unblocked and transport links between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan should be ensured. However, nowhere in the document is there any reference to a "Zangezur Corridor," particularly not within the framework of the extraterritorial logic that Azerbaijan seeks

to convey to the international community through vague statements concerning the road.

Armenia has consistently rejected the possibility of establishing an extraterritorial corridor to link Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan, asserting that it will not grant passage for such a route through its sovereign territory under any circumstances. This stance is a "red line" for Armenia, a violation of which could potentially trigger extremely dangerous outcomes not only for Armenia itself but also for the entire region.

Such a "corridor" is aimed not only at connecting Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan, it also seeks to forge ties across the Turkic world, establishing a connection between Turkey and Central Asian countries. It is worth noting that Azerbaijani and Turkish high-ranking officials have articulated this sentiment multiple times.

Moreover, the objective of the "Zangezur Corridor" is to disrupt the link between Iran and Armenia, to prevent Iran's land access to the Europe and the Eurasian Economic Union market that goes through Armenia. In addition, the establishment of such a passage would inevitably change the balance of power in the Caucasus, increasing the influence of Turkey and Azerbaijan while diminishing the sway of Iran and Armenia. Confronted by resistance from both Armenia and Iran in connection with the "Zangezur corridor," Azerbaijan escalated its blockade of Artsakh. The blockade appears to be part of a strategy aimed at advancing a pseudo-policy of "integrating the population of Nagorno-Karabakh into Azerbaijan". The aim is the complete



A graffiti painted on the walls of Yerevan, Armenia, to drum up support for Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenian: Artsakh). mirrorspectator.com

expulsion of the indigenous Armenian population of Artsakh through forced emigration or deportation.

The humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh proves that the peaceful and secure coexistence of Artsakh as a part of Azerbaijan is not realistic. The international community should clearly address that the rights and security of the Armenians of Artsakh can be ensured exclusively outside of Azerbaijan's sovereignty. Armenia envisions the resolution of this crisis through the implementation of an international mechanism that bolsters fostering a di-

logue between Baku and Stepanakert (the de facto capital of Artsakh).

However, by avoiding direct dialogue with Nagorno-Karabakh and periodically raising the demands in negotiations, Azerbaijan potentially paves the way for future aggression against both Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, with the military support of some regional countries, as was witnessed during the 44-day war. The lingering presence of mercenaries who were deployed during that conflict in 2020 further compounds the uncertainty and instability within the region.

FIBA World Cup: Cote d'Ivoire defeat all but ends Olympic dream for Iran



Iran's Piter Girgoorian (10) goes up for the basket during a defeat against Cote d'Ivoire at the FIBA Basketball World Cup in Jakarta, Indonesia, on August 28, 2023.
● FIBA

Sports Desk

Iran is on the verge of missing out on a berth in next year's Paris Olympics after suffering a second successive defeat at the FIBA Basketball World Cup.

Beaten by Brazil on the opening day, Turkish coach Hakan Demir's fell to a 71-69 loss to Cote d'Ivoire after a thrilling final few minutes in Jakarta's Indonesia Arena on Monday to stay bottom of Group G.

The Africans exploited Iran's four turnovers in five possessions by grabbing the lead in a tense fourth quarter. The stretch also included the fifth foul for Hamed Haddadi, who had been Iran's focal point on offense in the second half.

Even though Arsalan Kazemi scored off an in-bounds play to give Iran a 69-68 advantage with 13 seconds left, Solo Diabate was the hero late as his courageous drive to the rim gave him the chance to win the game from the foul line.

Behnam Yakhchali hit a clutch three-point shot with one minute remaining and scored a game-high 19 points, while Nisre Zouzoua topped the score for the Ivorians with 17.

"After the last game against Brazil our response was very important. We started the game very well and had the lead for most of the game. They made better decisions in the last minute and won. We fought until the end and have to keep on going like this," Yakhchali said after the game.

With defending champion Spain coming Iran's way today, the Asian side is unlikely to finish as the continent's top team at the World Cup after co-host Japan came out on top against Finland (98-88) in Group E on the preceding night.

Taremi eager to seal last-gasp Milan move: Report

Should the deal eventually go through, Taremi will become the second Iranian international to move to the Serie A this summer, following Sardar Azmoun, who joined AS Roma from Leverkusen on a season-long loan deal.



Porto striker Mehdi Taremi (c) is seen in action during a 2-1 victory over Rio Ave in the Portuguese Primeira Liga in Vila do Conde, Portugal, on August 28, 2023.
● fcporto.pt

Sports Desk

Porto striker Mehdi Taremi has made his desire known to the Portuguese club that he wants to join Serie A giant Milan before the summer transfer window deadline on Friday, according to Relevo journalist Matteo Moretto.

The Italian club representatives are in talks with Porto over a deal for the Iranian talisman, whose contract at the Primeira Liga side runs until July next year.

Portuguese newspaper A Bola, meanwhile, wrote that Monday's 2-1 away victory against Rio Ave was likely the last appearance in the

Dragons' outfit for the prolific frontman.

Porto is believed to be asking 25-30 million euros for their Iranian asset, who turned 31 last month, though Milan is reluctant to meet the price tag.

Yet to get off the mark in the new season, Taremi bagged 31 goals, while providing his

teammates with 14 assists, in 51 appearances across all competitions for Porto in the previous campaign – including 22 strikes in the league which saw him finish as the leading marksman in the Portuguese top flight.

Porto still had to settle for a runner-up finish behind Benfica in the league but went on

to lift the Taça de Portugal trophy for a second year in a row. The Iranian also netted five to help Porto win the group in the UEFA Champions League before being knocked out by Inter in the round of 16.

Should the deal eventually go through, Taremi will become the second Iranian

international to move to the Serie A this summer, following Sardar Azmoun.

AS Roma signed the Leverkusen forward, who had four goals and assists apiece in 33 outings for the Bundesliga side, on a season-long loan contract with the option to make the deal permanent.

Carlsen, Niemann settle cheating claims dispute



● SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB

THE GUARDIAN – A dispute that caused scandal in the world of elite chess appears to have been settled after the players involved said they have moved on from their rift.

Hans Niemann, a rising star in the chess world, filed a \$100m lawsuit against Magnus Carlsen, the website Chess.com and chess streamer Hikaru Nakamura after allegations he had cheated.

The allegations began after Niemann beat Carlsen, widely considered one of the greatest players in history, in a match at the Sinquefeld Cup last year. The Norwegian implied that the then teenager had cheated. A week later Carlsen refused to play in an online game against the American, opting instead to resign.

Niemann has admitted to cheating online when he was 12 and 16, but insists he has never done so over the board. He also promised to play naked to prove his innocence after unfounded claims he may have used vibrating anal beads were amplified by Elon Musk.

Chess.com, which has millions of users around the world, concluded in a 72-page report released last October that Niemann had "likely cheated" in online matches between July 2015 and August 2020. Niemann denied those allegations. The report did not find any evidence that Niemann had cheated in in-person matches. A US judge dismissed Niemann's suit in June.

On Monday, chess.com said the parties had agreed to move forward with no further threat of legal action. Carlsen, the world No 1, addressed the events at the Sinquefeld Cup in his own statement.

"I acknowledge and understand Chess.com's report, including its statement that there is no determinative evidence that Niemann cheated in his game against me at the Sinquefeld Cup," said the Norwegian. Niemann said he was looking forward to moving on from the lawsuit.

Djokovic back to world number one after US Open win

BBC – Novak Djokovic will replace young rival Carlos Alcaraz as the men's world number one after a routine win on his US Open return. Serbia's Djokovic, who lost the Wimbledon final to Alcaraz, won 6-0 6-2 6-3 against France's Alexandre Muller in Monday's night session in New York. Djokovic, 36, was not allowed to play in the United States last year because he was not vaccinated against Covid-19.

He has returned knowing another title will be a record-equalling 24th major. Matching Australian Margaret Court's all-time tally is Djokovic's target and he made a statement start by breezing past 84th-ranked Muller.

"We started quite late but nevertheless I was excited to go out on the court – it has been a couple of years. In the second and third sets I dropped the level of my serve and I had to work

for the points a bit more," said Djokovic, who will spend a record-extending 390th week at the top of the ATP rankings.

Djokovic, who won the Australian Open and French Open earlier this year, is aiming for a fourth title at Flushing Meadows and will play Spain's Bernabe Zapata Miralles in the second round. He will return to world number one after the tournament.

Alcaraz and Djokovic are

the joint favourites for the men's singles title having developed a fascinating rivalry over the past 12 months.

The match-up has ignited over the past few months following three compelling contests in the French Open semi-finals, the Wimbledon showpiece and this month's Cincinnati final. Alcaraz and Djokovic cannot meet at the US Open until the final as a result of being the top two seeds.

First Announcement


N.I.S.O.C
 NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
 AHVAZ, IRAN

TENDER NO.: 08-21-0140020

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
1	CASING 7". 35 PPF STANDARD DRIFT API GRADE CRA-125 SUPER, 13% CR. "VAM TOP" THREAD, RANGE 3 (MAX. LENGTH 40.5 FT)	500 LE

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 97,683/54 EURO or 40,022,802,240 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials through technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P.
NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN
PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
 Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management
 Complex, Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
 Tel. No.: 061 34 12 3589 Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37

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Hard times for historic mosque in the heart of Tehran

Social Desk

Recent Iranian kings, up until the Qajar era, had a person nicknamed Moayyer-bashi, who was highly trusted by the king. One such person was Hassan-Ali-Beyg Bastami, who served under Nader Shah. Due to his excellence, the Bastami family had control over the mint until the end of the Qajar era, and thus became known as the Moayyer ol-Mamalek family. Aside from their influence, the Moayyer ol-Mamalek family was also known for their generosity in creating endowments. They built various structures like mosques, schools, water reservoirs, drinking fountains, zoorkhaneh (gymnasiums), and bazaars, which still exist today. Notable landmarks such as "Takyeh Dowlat" and "Shams ol-Emareh" were constructed under their supervision – the former upon Nasser al-Din Shah's orders. One of their famous en-

dowments is the Moayyer ol-Mamalek Mosque that used to function as a school as well. If you visit Tehran's Sangelaj neighborhood on Mahdavian Ahadi Street today, you can see its historic brick building. However, recent news has circulated about its destruction despite being nationally registered and protected by law, Fars news agency reported. Sadly, this mosque has lost its original purpose. Even during prayer times, either it remains closed or only a small part becomes accessible temporarily through one door. In earlier days, though, it held great importance due to its central location in the city alongside beautiful architecture and spaciousness. Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Falsafi used to deliver sermons at this mosque for

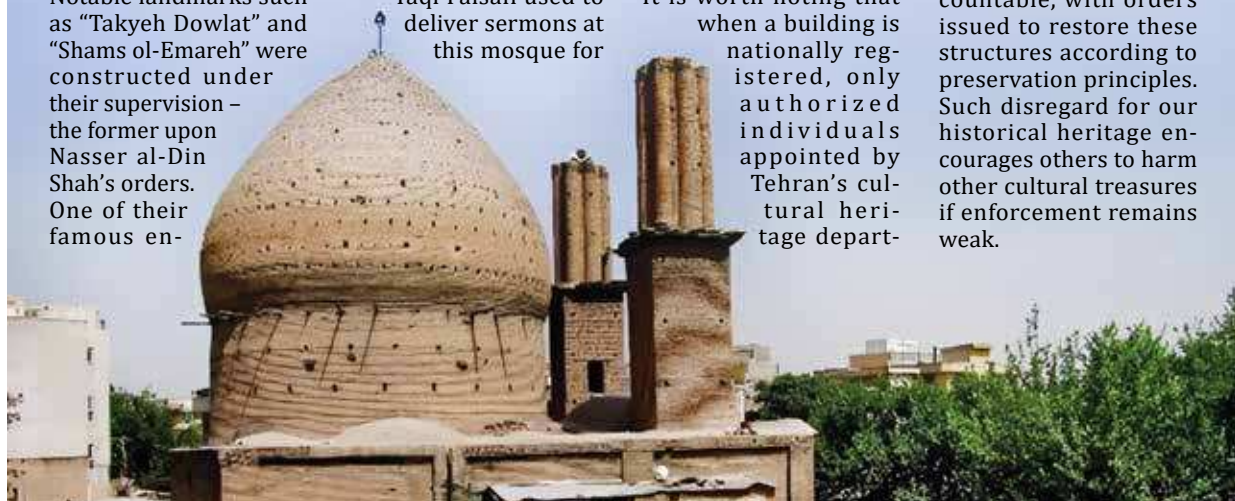
many years when it was one of the busiest places of worship in town. It also served as a gathering place for children who would come for religious education or engage in games during leisure hours—a safe haven appreciated by families. Until recently, grand Muharram ceremonies took place here with extensive distribution of Imam Hussein's (PBUH) votive offerings among locals nearby. Additionally, the water reservoir attached to this mosque provided relief to residents of Sangelaj neighborhood facing water shortages. Sadly, the reservoir has now been abandoned, and many are unaware that a drinking fountain and zoorkhaneh within the mosque complex have been completely destroyed.

It is worth noting that when a building is nationally registered, only authorized individuals appointed by Tehran's cultural heritage depart-



Arcades of Moayyer ol-Mamalek Mosque in downtown Tehran are in poor condition. **FARS**

ment should be involved in its restoration or reconstruction—never for destruction or change of use. What raises concern is the fact that those responsible for safeguarding the Moayyer ol-Mamalek Mosque have not only damaged its historical value, but also prevented public access at times of prayer. Authorities must address this negligence towards the law. The mere act of opposing will not suffice to halt further demolition. Those responsible for violating regulations regarding national heritage buildings must be held accountable, with orders issued to restore these structures according to preservation principles. Such disregard for our historical heritage encourages others to harm other cultural treasures if enforcement remains weak.



Half of Tehran residents' complaints are about an irritating phenomenon

Detrimental effects of noise pollution on our health

Social Desk

It is no secret that air pollution has turned into Tehran's public enemy number one. It's the talk of the town more than half of the year, especially in recent years, as pollution levels have risen. Yet, another, perhaps equally dangerous kind of pollution gets hardly any attention: noise pollution. However, yesterday, the head of the urban planning commission in Tehran's City Council highlighted the importance of addressing noise pollution as a major concern for citizens. During a public meeting, Mehdi Abbasi said that feedback from citizens received through the '137 plus' telephone system over the past year indicated various issues related to urban planning. Among these concerns, residential construction causing noise pollution, hindrances caused by construction activities, and ensuring safety during demolition were most frequently complained about. In fact, 51 percent of all messages received were related to noise pollution, according to ISNA. To address this issue and respond to citizens' priorities, an order was issued in April 2021 regarding regulations on construction workshops. Abbasi requested that the Tehran Municipality carefully consider and implement the guidelines stated in this announcement. Abbasi further emphasized that by adhering to these regulations and with efforts from the Tehran Municipality, they hope to witness a decrease in complaints regarding noise pollution. Also, Mehdi Chamran, head of the council, added that while air pollution has been a longstanding concern in Tehran, less attention has been given to noise pollution. In response to this issue

during their fourth term at City Council meetings, it was decided that a maximum limit of 60 decibels should be considered for noise pollution in Tehran; however, this limit was increased to 70 decibels after being submitted for government approval. In bustling Tehran, in the midst of constant hum and buzz of activity, we often overlook noise pollution, which is a significant threat to our well-being. While it may seem harmless, or even unavoidable, excessive noise can have detrimental effects on both our physical and mental health. To truly appreciate the need for silence in urban environments, let us explore the dangers posed by noise pollution. Firstly, prolonged exposure to high levels of noise can lead to various health issues. Studies have shown that continuous exposure to loud noises can cause stress, elevate blood pressure, and disrupt sleep patterns. This not only affects our daily lives but also increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks and strokes. Moreover, persistent exposure to noise pollution has been linked to hearing loss and impaired cognitive function over time. Furthermore, excessive noise can negatively impact mental well-being. Constant background noise from traffic, construction sites, or even crowded public spaces can increase feelings of irritability and anxiety among individuals trying to find solace within their cityscape. It hampers concentration levels and productivity at work, or while studying—ultimately hindering overall performance. Noise pollution also interferes with social connections within communities. Excessive sound limits meaningful interactions between neighbors or friends since communica-

tion becomes challenging due to raised voices being drowned out by surrounding clamor. Additionally, recreational activities like enjoying parks or simply relaxing outdoors become less appealing when tranquility is disrupted by an incessant racket. But what can we do about a problem that seems to be out of our control? To mitigate these risks associated with noise pollution in cities, embracing moments of silence becomes crucial for our well-being. We can create quiet zones by designating certain areas within cities where peace reigns supreme. This allows individuals seeking respite from relentless commotion a chance to unwind without disturbance. Additionally, authorities can implement stricter regulations regarding permissible decibel levels at construction sites or public events. Another crucial step that can be taken is promoting green spaces. Increasing the number of parks and gardens within urban areas provides an opportunity to escape the noise-filled concrete jungle and enjoy moments of tranquility surrounded by nature. And finally, awareness must be raised about the dangers of excessive noise. Educating citizens about the detrimental effects of noise pollution empowers individuals to take responsibility for reducing unnecessary noise in their surroundings. It is important to remember that silence is not merely the absence of sound; it holds immense value in our lives. By acknowledging the dangers posed by noise pollution and advocating for quieter environments, we can create cities that are more conducive to our overall well-being, where silence becomes a cherished commodity rather than an elusive luxury.



Construction sites are among the sources of noise pollution. **shahr.ir**

Date: 1402/06/08 - No.: 55/02/14206

INVITATION TO RENEWAL OF ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

First Announcement

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Jihad-Agriculture of I.R. of Iran, is considering the purchase of 2x30000±5% MTS of Granular Mono Ammonium Phosphate **GMAP (11-52)** through renewal of one step international tender.

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from **Wednesday** dated **30/8/2023** until **Tuesday** dated **5/9/2023** (5 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran). The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of Iranian Rial 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 358039782263500650000000000006.

The bidders are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on **Monday** dated **9/10/2023** (during official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on **Tuesday** dated **10/10/2023** at 14:00 with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

- 1- The bid bond value should be at **€ 306041** or in equal value of that in any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on the Telegraphic Transfer rate of the basic and essential commodities on CBI's ETS website, www.fxmarketrate.cbi.ir, on 14/8/2023 for each lot of 30000 MTS ± 5% in bank guarantee.
- 2- The bidders are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 30000 MTS ± 5% will be **IRR 95,771,609,562** which must be only submitted by the bidders.
- 3- After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as the bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and <http://iets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

Public relations and international affairs of agricultural support services company

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Mehr Iran Bank to reduce fees for interest-free loans to zero: CEO

The highest attraction of customers in the banking network of Iran is related to Mehr Iran Bank. The customers of Mehr Iran Bank have increased from 10.7 million to more than 15 million people in the last two years and almost daily, more than 12,000 people open accounts at the bank, which shows the popularity and service provision of the bank.

Economy Desk

The Qarz Al-Hassaneh Mehr Iran Bank (QMB) has plans to reduce fees for interest-free loans to zero in the future, announced the CEO of the bank. Saeed Shamsinejad added that currently, a 3.5-percent fee is charged for these kinds of interest-free loans, which will gradually decrease to zero in the coming years. The Mehr Iran Bank has targeted increasing its profitability by managing its costs, the CEO said, noting that the bank's income generation will be provided through economic information and services in the future. "We have proposed to the Central Bank of Iran that a fixed fee be charged from the borrowers' facilities every year. This means that, once, at the time of opening an account, the relevant fee is charged to

the customer," Shamsinejad stated. With the implementation of the proposed plan, it is expected that the cost of bank clients will decrease by 60 percent, the official said. He also added that considering the QMB's speed in attracting resources, we have decided to increase our resources to one trillion tomans (\$20 million) in three years. In the last two years, the QMB's share in the liquidity of Iran's banking network has more than doubled, from 1.4 percent to nearly three percent.

Highest customer attraction

Shamsinejad said that the highest attraction of customers in the banking network of Iran is related to Mehr Iran Bank. The customers of his bank have increased from 10.7 million to more than 15 million people in the last

two years, he said, adding, "Almost daily, more than 12,000 people open accounts at our bank, which shows the popularity and service provision of the bank." Based on the targets, we plan to make 50 million Iranians the owners of cards issued by Mehr Iran Bank, the CEO said, noting that, in this regard, we implemented a plan so that state-run organizations can pay their salaries through this bank. In recent years, the number of organizations that pay their salaries through Mehr Iran Bank has increased from 200 to 1,800.

Granting six million loans

A sum of 6.15 million loans, worth 222 trillion tomans (\$4.44 billion), have been granted by the bank in the last two years, setting a new record of loan payments in Iran.



● HOSSEIN NAQIZADEH/
IRAN DAILY

In the year to March 20, 2023, over 3.013 million loans, with a total amount of 114 trillion tomans (\$2.28 billion), were granted to clients, said Shamsinejad. The average amount of loans granted by the bank

in the Iranian year of 1400 (ended March 20, 2022) was 23 million tomans, while the figure hit 38 million tomans during the year to March 20, 2023. The CEO concluded that this Iranian year, it is esti-

ated that we will reach a record of 3.5 million loans, equivalent to 170 trillion tomans, with an average of approximately 50 million tomans per loan.

Greater share in South African market possible for Iran



Economy Desk

South Africa used to have a large share in buying oil from Iran, but after a halt in relations of the two countries, oil trade resumed as South Africa has boosted its imports since 2017. During 1976 economic relations between Iran and South Africa mainly focused on oil export as well as importing South African goods, including stone, iron, steel, corn and sugar. Iran was the second economic partner of South Africa in the mentioned year, according to ISNA. Tehran-Pretoria relations worsened due to apartheid system (1948-1994) in the African country, but in 1994, after the system collapsed, relations

were resumed in line with the economic relations to provide 70% of South Africa's oil needs in which Iran became the largest oil exporter to the country. However, Iran's high export share was just pertaining to oil products while, exporting of non-oil products did not increase at all. By the year 2022 the value of bilateral exchanges increased sharply and exceeded \$327million.

South Africa's trade in 2022

South Africa's annual trade stood at \$237 billion last year and currently the country's share of global gross domestic product (GDP) is 0.6 percent. The country has possessed trade protectionism with high tar-

iffs and extensive import restrictions so far. However, macro policy of the country gradually changed when the apartheid regime came to an end as well as reintegrated into the global economy in the early 1990s. Afterwards the country became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995. The export basket of South Africa is primarily the basic goods. The country's exports depend on specific structured markets. While high cost and inappropriate competitiveness of the economic environment have affected the country to experience limited exports growth. The main export destinations of South Africa in 2022 were

the European Union (18.9%), China (11.5%), the US (8.4%), the United Kingdom (5%) and Japan (4.5%). In addition, the European Union (26.2%), China (20.8%), the US (6.4%), India (5.2%), the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia (3.9%) are considered the largest trade partners of African state.

Iran's share in South African market

South Africa accounted for only 0.57% of Iran's total exports of \$53.16 billion in the [Iranian] year started in March 2022, which ranks 15th among Iran's trading partners. Vegetable extracts, manganese mineral and concentrate, various drilling tools,

rolled stainless steel, grease, stone crushers used in mines, pumps, petroleum-free lubricants, chrome ore concentrate, induction furnaces and ovens and ceramic magnets were Iran's most imported items from South Africa in 2022. As the significant products exported to South Africa were types of urea, sulfur, iron and steel profiles, bitumen, flooring, liquid butane, liquefied propane and polyethylene in 2022. Iran and South Africa have signed 23 contracts, none of which have been implemented. Initiating the Joint Economic Commission of the two countries can be put on the agenda to develop the co-operation with South Africa.

Iran's metals industries commit to tripling electricity output

Iran's mining and metals sector is planning to increase its production of electricity by nearly three times within a year as part of a government program to diversify electricity supply in the country. CEO of state-run IMIDRO, a holding company which controls Iran's mines and metals companies, said on Monday that electricity output from the sector would reach 2.0 gigawatts (GW) in mid-summer next year, up from a current capacity of 0.6 GW, Press TV reported. Mohammad Reza Movassaqi-Nia said that IMIDRO has committed to a target of 10 GW of new electricity generation capacity by 2026. He said the commitment is part of a plan to boost electricity supplies delivered to large industries in Iran to avoid power shortages that

normally affect production and exports in the sector. The Iranian government has introduced major incentives for industries to set up their own power plants. The policy is part of a larger drive to diversify Iran's power supply amid growing demand for electricity in the country. Iran has a total electricity generation capacity of 91 GW and a peak demand of 73 GW, which normally occurs during hot summer months, forcing the Energy Ministry to restrict supplies to industries. Iran's mining and metals industries have experienced a major boom in recent years amid growing exports from the sector. The government has supported plans for expansion of the sector by offering cheaper and larger energy supplies to industrial plants across Iran.

