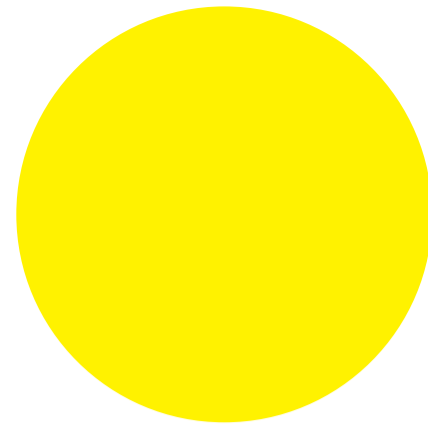


On the Way to Corridorization

SPECIAL ISSUE 4-5 >



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Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (R) shakes hands with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan in Tehran, Iran, on September 3, 2023.
● ALI HASSANPOUR/IRAN DAILY

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran's envoy to
assume office
in Riyadh

National Desk

Iran's new Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Alireza Enayati held a meeting with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian before his departure for the kingdom to lead Tehran's diplomatic mission.

Enayati presented a report to Amir-Abdollahian about the plans for expansion of bilateral ties between the two countries.

Amir-Abdollahian underlined the importance of strengthening of relations between the two countries.

Breaking a seven-year diplomatic rift, Tehran officially reopened its embassy in Riyadh in June, followed by its consulate in Jeddah and its representative office with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The two countries had severed diplomatic relations in 2016 after demonstrators stormed Saudi missions in Iran following the kingdom's execution of a prominent Shia cleric.

'US does not
deserve roles
in UN Human
Rights Council'

Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva Ali Bahreini said the United States with its dark human rights record does not deserve roles in the Human Rights Council. Bahreini made the statement in a post on his X account on Saturday in reaction to remarks by the US ambassador against Tehran, who is set to chair the UN Human Rights Council Social Forum this November, Press TV reported.

He attached a video clip to his post showing some cases of the US human right crimes, including the downing of an Iranian passenger plane by a US Navy guided-missile cruiser over the country's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf in 1988, which killed all 290 people on board. Bahreini added that Washington "continues to occupy undeservingly a seat in the UN Human Rights Council." The Iranian envoy's post came after US Ambassador to the UN's Human Rights Council Michèle Taylor claimed that Iran has an appalling human rights record and should not have any place in leadership roles within the UN human rights ecosystem.

Iran, Turkey considering trilateral
trade meeting with Saudi Arabia

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (1st L) and his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan (1st R) hold talks in Tehran, Iran, on September 3, 2023.

● ALI HASSANPOUR/IRAN DAILY

International Desk

Iranian and Turkish foreign ministers held a meeting in Tehran on Sunday, which lasted nearly four hours. According to Iran Daily's reporter, the two sides discussed a range of issues, including bilateral cooperation, developments in the Caucasus region, Syria, and Afghanistan.

During a joint press conference after their meeting, the Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that delegations of the two sides discussed the follow-up of the agreements reached during a recent meeting between the presidents of the two countries.

He also referred to the two countries' goal of reaching a 30-billion-euro trade volume, saying, "We are now in the middle of the road." Amir-Abdollahian

added that the two sides announced their readiness to sign a comprehensive document on joint cooperation.

Water dispute

They also emphasized the resolution of the water shortage which has created problems for both countries. In this regard, a joint technical committee, which was formed last year, is scheduled to meet in Tehran to continue consultations on the issue, the Iranian foreign minister said.

Amir-Abdollahian emphasized that the two sides agreed on the fair use of the water of the Aras River, which rises in eastern Turkey and separates Iran from Armenia and Azerbaijan. Iran's top diplomat said that his Turkish counterpart is set to issue the necessary orders to re-

solve the concerns in this regard.

The Iranian official said that the Turkish side gave assurance that there is no plan in Turkey to limit or reduce the amount of water flowing towards Iran's northwestern provinces. Following the restoration of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and considering the Arab country's desire to increase economic relations with Iran, Tehran and Turkey agreed to arrange a trilateral meeting with Riyadh to expand economic cooperation between the three countries, he said. Regarding the ongoing tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Caucasus region, Amir-Abdollahian said that time is ripe to ease tensions and establish peace and enhance cooperation in the region.

Tensions in Caucasus
region

The Iranian foreign minister also reiterated Tehran's support for peace talks between Yerevan and Baku. However, Amir-Abdollahian noted that Iran does not allow any changes in the region's geopolitics. Armenia and Azerbaijan fought a brief but bloody war over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region in 2020. The ex-Soviet countries have been locked in a decades-old conflict over the region.

The Iranian foreign minister also welcomed the constructive positions and positive ideas of his Turkish counterpart regarding the security of common borders, the fight against terrorism, and the return of Syrian refugees to their country, stressing that concerns of Turkey and Syria regarding these is-

suces should be addressed through diplomacy and dialogue.

The Turkish foreign minister Hakan Fidan, for his part, said that Ankara is waiting for Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi's visit to Turkey to participate in the meeting of the two countries' Supreme Council of Strategic Relations.

Fidan also expressed his satisfaction with the détente between Iran and Saudi Arabia, noting that friendly relations between Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, as the region's major countries, is important for the stability of the region. He also said that resumption of negotiations on Iran's nuclear program is important for Ankara.

Later in the day, the Turkish foreign minister also held a separate meeting with the Iranian president.

Setting the stage for Tehran-Ankara ties



By Firouz Dolatabadi
Iran's ex-ambassador
to Turkey

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

The first visit of Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan to Tehran after President Recep Tayyip

Erdogan secured another term in highly contested election is significant as it sets the groundwork for the future prospects of Tehran-Ankara relations. It is important to understand the purpose and agenda of Fidan's visit to Iran. Talks between Iran and Turkey have always been crucial, encompassing various

areas of bilateral, regional, and international cooperation. Available information about Fidan suggests that he is a reserved politician, not particularly fond of media attention. His focus is mainly on political and security matters, and he has shown an interest in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This raises hopes that he has flown to Tehran with a logical and strategic agenda to foster cooperation.

Iran always welcome the development of relations with its neighbors. While Iran's foreign policy in the past 15 years lacked cohesion in the region, it seems that President Ebrahim Raeisi's government has a greater inclination toward strengthening ties with the regional nations and neighbors. Iran has initiated a de-escalation process in the region in recent months, which promises greater peace and stability in the future, potentially encouraging economic cooperation. Turkey, on the other hand, has not maintained a steadfast position on regional developments, changing its stance every now and then. Therefore, even though Turkey might not actively engage in the regional de-escalation process, it is unlikely to obstruct it. As increased stability in the region would also

serve Turkey's interests and improve the investment climate in regional countries, including Turkey itself.

In Iran-Turkey relations, political, security, and military matters have always been prioritized alongside economic issues. Therefore, negotiations between Turkey's top diplomat and Iranian authorities will undoubtedly include topics such as developments in the Caucasus region and the contentious issue of the Zangezur corridor. Syria's developments, Turkey's positions and actions in that country, as well as Iran's relations with Russia and the presence of Kurdish militias in Iraq are also expected to be on the agenda. Iran has already voiced its vehement opposition to the establishment of the Zangezur corridor, as it disrupts the land connection between Iran and Armenia, altering the geopolitical landscape of the region. Turkey had also previously rejected Iran's plan

to export natural gas to Europe through its territory, proposing to buy the commodity and then transport it. It is natural for Iranian authorities to remind Turkey's foreign minister that the altering geopolitics of the region and the creation of the Zangezur corridor, if not under Armenian control and ownership, are non-negotiable for Iran. Economically, Iran and Turkey do not currently have any major new projects on their agenda, as both countries are not in favorable economic conditions. However, they have always maintained their traditional economic ties. In addition to these ties, Tehran and Ankara share many common interests in bilateral cooperation, energy exchange, and trade, which can be further promoted in the future. Therefore, Fidan's visit can be seen as a step toward improving future cooperation and a platform for discussing regional developments, particularly in Syria.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Unique artifacts on display in Museum of Antique Gems and Jewelry



hamgardi.com

Iranica Desk

The archeological discoveries show that Iranian women have used jewelry for over 5,000 years. High-ranking men also wore jewelry, from golden necklaces and bracelets to bejeweled scepters and swords.

The Museum of Antique Gems and Jewelry, located in Mirdamad Boulevard in Tehran, is a place where you can visit a luxurious and unique treasure of ancient Iranian jewelry and ornaments, ISNA wrote.

About 800 objects are on display in the museum, some of which were collected from the museums of Mostazafan Foundation.

The first section of the museum, called "Gems and Jewelry of Ancient Iran," features women's jewelry made of shells and stones. For many visitors, it is awe-inspiring to see so much delicacy in jewels dating back thousands of years.

As time progressed, the jewelry production technique advanced and new pieces were made of bronze, glass, gold and baked clay, with colorful patterns.

In the showcases of the museum, displaying ornaments made during the Parthian, Sassanid and Achaemenid periods, the progress gained by the jewelry-making industry is much more tangible.

Some objects of the museum are unique including a piece of a gold-made scepter, dating back to the Achaemenid era, decorated with lapis lazuli. Some other gold cups and bracelets, being showcased in the museum, show off the artistic elegance of this historical period as well.

In the next section of the museum, the jeweled weapons of the Safavid and Qajar kings are exhibited,

the most unique of which is the golden sword of Fat'hali Shah Qajar (1772-1834 CE).

The sword's hilt, having a purple velvet sheath, is made of bone, decorated with diamonds, emeralds and rubies. The diamond sword of Mohammad Shah Qajar (1808-1848 CE) and the golden sword of Shah Abbas Safavid (1571-1629 CE) are other outstanding artifacts exhibited there.

Another section, featuring gems, watches, pearls and diamonds is also very eye-catching, especially the items made by the world's most famous jewelry brands.

All works have been authenticated and dated before putting on display. You are recommended to visit the Museum of Antique Gems and Jewelry with a guide who would tell you the story behind the jewels and ornaments on display.

The Museum of Antique Gems and Jewelry offers a new discourse in its field of specialization and has a different view from other museums in its field; a perspective that can have important effects on the country's jewelry industry.

Like other forms of art, jewelry is a reflection of the feelings and intelligence of its creator. When human beings began to live collectively, they paid more attention to adornment, beauty, and the use of accessories to beautify themselves and their living environment. Search for beauty was one of their inner needs. The first pieces of jewelry made by human beings were inspired by nature, but gradually, through their creativity and innovations, more sophisticated pieces were made, some of which were magnificent and spectacular works of art.

Spend 'Art Evenings' on Tabiat Bridge of Tehran



IRNA

Iranica Desk

Craft artists gather on Tabiat Bridge (Nature Bridge), located in the Abbas Abad district of Tehran, Thursdays and Fridays, to participate in an event named "Art Evenings".

During the event launched on Aug. 24, artists show how their works of art in various fields are created, according to IRNA.

On the opening day, embroidery artisans exhibited their works for four hours.

On the second day, 21 craftspeople engaged in woodworking showcased their handmade works. Tabiat Bridge is the largest pedestrian overpass in Iran. The 270-meter (890 ft.) bridge connects two public parks — Taleghani Park and Ab-o-Atash Park — by spanning Modarres Expressway, one of the main highways in northern Tehran.

The bridge was designed by Diba Tensile Architecture (Leila Araghian and Alireza Behzadi). It has won several awards, including the Popular Choice Prize for Highways & Bridges from the Architizer A+ Awards, a global architectural competition based in New York. Also the bridge won the 2016 Aga Khan Award for Architecture (from Bangladesh) for its exemplary approach to an infrastructure project, "a breath of fresh air" according to the award jury.

Not only does the bridge connect two parks, but it is a popular gathering place for the community in its seating areas and restaurants, serving as a place for people to spend some time, rather than just pass through. Some have described walking on the bridge as feeling like walking through a forest, a place of positive energy where they can come to rejuvenate. Four million people visited the bridge the first year it was opened, on October 12, 2014.

Al-Biruni, Iranian polymath who first determined Earth's radius



Compiled by
Sahba Saffary

Guest
contributor

Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni, commonly known as al-Biruni, was a prominent Iranian scholar and polymath who lived during the Islamic Golden Age. He is often referred to as the "founder of Indology," the "father of comparative religion," the "father of modern geodesy," and even the first anthropologist.

As one explores the history of science, al-Biruni stands out as one of the earliest figures to capture attention. He was a highly accomplished scientist with extensive knowledge in various branches of science.

Al-Biruni was born in the town of Kath, a village near Khwarazm, on September 4, 973. At the young age of 17, he eagerly immersed himself in scientific pursuits. It was during this time that he calculated the latitude of Kath by carefully observing the maximum altitude of the sun.

In 998, he found himself at the court of Qabus, the ruler of Gorgan and Tabaristan in me-

dieval Iran. It was there that he penned his first significant work, titled "al-Athar al-Baqqiya 'an al-Qorun al-Khaliyya" or "the remaining traces of past centuries," on historical and scientific chronology, likely around the year 1000.

In 1017, the political landscape underwent a dramatic change as Mahmud of Ghazni, the first sultan of the Ghaznavid Empire, captured Khwarazm. Al-Biruni, along with a group of scholars, was taken to Ghazni by Mahmud.

Sultan Mahmud recognized al-Biruni's reputation as a keen observer of natural phenomena and had a strong desire for his presence at his court. He granted al-Biruni a suitable position and employed him as an astronomer and astrologer in his palace. However, Mahmud never fully acknowledged his talents, and due to differences in their scientific beliefs, al-Biruni was imprisoned by Mahmud on several occasions.

In one of their debates, al-Biruni asserted that the Earth was round and supported his argument with abundant and convincing evidence. However, Mahmud of Ghazni opposed this notion because of

his insatiable desire for absolute authority. He insisted that al-Biruni must mention in his thesis that the Earth was round only with Mahmud's authorization.

Al-Biruni accompanied Mahmud on his invasions into India when he was 44 years old. While Mahmud sought to annihilate Indian culture through pillaging and looting, al-Biruni made earnest efforts to preserve its rich heritage. He doc-

umented the people, customs, and religions of the Indian subcontinent, much like a modern anthropologist. As an indologist, he authored an encyclopedic book on India known as "Tahqiq mā li-l-Hind" or "the study of India."

Through this encyclopedia, al-Biruni introduced India to the ancient world, highlighting that ancient Greece was not the sole repository of knowledge.



Statue of al-Biruni in Laleh Park, Tehran



Al-Biruni was a remarkable figure in the world of knowledge, known for his dynamism, inventiveness, and exploration. He was a true innovator and developed various instruments for applied mathematics and astronomy.

One of his ingenious achievements was his explanation of how artesian wells work. He used the concept of connected vessels to illustrate how water naturally rises to the surface due to pressure. Also, he was a pioneer in making a globe to represent the Earth's geography and meticulously calculated the latitude and longitude of numerous cities to be marked on this sphere.

Al-Biruni was the first person to suggest the existence of a

continent like America through map projections.

Out of the 146 books authored by Al-Biruni, a significant 95 of them were dedicated to the study of astronomy.

He also devised an innovative method to determine the Earth's radius. Using trigonometry, he calculated the Earth's radius by measuring the height of a hill and the dip in the horizon observed from its summit. His calculated radius, 3928.77 miles, was slightly higher by 2% than the actual mean radius of 3847.80 miles.

Al-Biruni died on December 13, 1048, at the age of 75, leaving behind a lasting legacy. His work and ideas inspired future scientists like Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, and Torricelli.

On the Way to Corridorization

A glance at politico-economic trends of Iran becoming corridor hub

Corridor as a political issue

Corridors should be looked at first from a geopolitical and political point of view, and then from an economic point of view, as the construction of a corridor brings geopolitical and strategic consequences more than economic consequences.

For a long time the issue of corridors and transit in Iran has been discussed at different levels, and the significance of Iran's geography in international transit along with the positive role it can play in this regard have brought the discussion to a social demand in the public opinion. But care must be taken to ensure that public opinion is directed in the right direction; that is, the expectations that have been formed regarding the consequences of the corridor's construction should be in accordance with the facts.

When it is said to be in accordance with the real function of the corridors, it means that the economic benefits and forex revenues of the corridors should not be magnified too much because, basically, such attitude towards corridors is not comprehensive and correct. Due to the political developments in the Iranian decade to 2021, and the events that occurred during the years regarding energy production and the distribution market in the world, Iran's role and position in the global supply chain has become weaker than before.

Undoubtedly, the political statement that "Iran has been removed from the world chain" does not hold true in any sense, as the term "removal" from a chain is not suitable for Iran,

nor can it be applied to any other country.

Iran cannot be ignored in global equations because of its unique geography, rich resources, and political power, based on thousands of years of history and culture. However, Iran's role has faded in the past few years and needs to be restored.

Restoring Iran's regional and global role is manifested in the best way in the corridor sector, as it can provide the security of roads and goods, and in terms of time of goods transfer, due to the unique geography and existing infrastructure, it can speed up the transfer of goods. Therefore, corridors can reshape Iran's role in the global supply chain. The same issue leads to the second result and positive consequence, that is, creating deterrence against sanctions.

For example, the amount of goods transferred between China and Europe by rail stands at 100 million tons per year. If the transit goes through Iran, it will no longer be easy to bring Iran into the economic war and the game of sanctions, as the world powers' dependence on Iran will not give them too much leverage on the economic war.

In this case, the disruption in Iran's relations will be, for example, the disruption in China's relations with Europe, while the relationship between China and Europe is just an example.

As a result, if Iran establishes its position as a cost-effective and safe way, this corridor can no longer be easily blocked.

Politico-economic links of corridors

Due to the prevalence of the economic aspects of corridors, issues such as the relationship of governance with the corridorization of Iran have been neglected. There are a series of principles that form the foundation of governance in the Islamic Republic, as some may raise the doubt that the country won't be able to set up corridors to turn Iran into a transit hub due to its security and ideological considerations.

On the one hand, some of our borders are closed and the transit of some goods is prohibited; on the other hand, we have political and border tensions with some countries, and these factors collectively make Iran known as an unattractive way. But the opposite is true. The most

important preliminary condition for a country to become a corridor is not the legal restrictions it imposes on its customs regulations. Instead, it primarily hinges on not exploiting the capacity of its roads.

When a country becomes a corridor or a hub, industries and services related to the corridor are established in that country. Services such as warehousing, re-exporting, loading and unloading equipment are among the said industries, and all of these create a power and possibility that makes other countries dependent on the corridor hub, and on an extended level, it will influence regional and global equations. Moreover, it also indicates that Iran does not have a "non-technical" or politi-

cally motivated approach toward other nations.

Enjoying corridor status can establish a new relationship between Iran and the world; that is, a state of adhesion and economic connection. However, the economic link does not fetch an eye-catching amount of forex or special economic achievement. The important thing is that the economic adhesion and connection can lead to a kind of deterrence in the US economic war against Iran.

For example, if we increase the transit of goods to 50 million tons per year, its direct revenue may reach \$10 billion, which is not a high figure for a country like Iran. But the depth of dependence it creates on Iran can be very im-

portant.

Therefore, in governance, it is better to adjust some views and policies by avoiding a one-dimensional economy-oriented view. By the way, along with their economic benefits, corridors are also cost-generating and create traffic or speed up the depreciation of roads and equipment. But the problem is that a strategic look at corridors requires not to focus only on their direct economic benefits. The passage of every truck through the country requires jobs and products that will necessarily be created, including repair shops, spare parts plants, road development, re-exports and dozens of other things that complement each other in a cycle.





Sea connection to Russia

The stance of Iran on the maritime domain is a strategic view, and under political and security relations, the economic interests of the country can be secured in this way. Before the start of war in Ukraine, Russia used to export more than 800 million tons of goods from its ports; after the war, the figure has dropped to less than 400 million tons. Even though our northern ports en-

joy the capacity to clear nearly 30 million tons of cargo, in the last Iranian year of 1401, less than 20% of the amount, equal to less than six million tons of goods, were imported from Russia. While Russia's trade with India, after the Ukraine war, has reached nearly 80 million tons, which has increased by nearly 100%. In other words, before the war, about 40 million tons

of goods were sent from Russia to India, while after the war, the figure has reached 80 million tons. This is an economic opportunity that we can use, even with the current infrastructure, we can actually send 30 million tons of Russian cargo through the Caspian Sea. This is excluding the other border capacities such as the borders of the Caucasus and Incheboroun.



Role of the incumbent Iranian gov't

The main change of attitude that occurred in the current government compared to previous governments was the emphasis on the good neighborliness policy. The emphasis has and will have a positive effect on facilitating Iran's transit connections with neighboring countries. Along with China and Russia, Iran is a country with many neighbors. But more importantly, in addition to the multiplicity of neighbors, it also has a unique advantage that distinguishes Iran from China and Russia, and that is the multiplicity and diversity of neighborhoods. In eastern and northeastern Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia are located, which connect us to the Indian subcontinent and China, from the south to the Arab countries along the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and

Bab al-Mandeb, and from there to Africa. From the northwest, we are connected to the Caucasus and Eurasia, and from the west we have access to the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. All these neighbors and the geopolitical capacity represent diversity, simultaneous with multiplicity, while each of the neighboring countries is a so-called special economic, political and cultural geographical "plate", which may not be able to get connected with each other, except for Iran. For example, without Iran, the relationship between the Central Asian countries and the Persian Gulf littoral states cannot be formed in many cases, or due to their geographical positions, they cannot have easy access. But due to its cultural and geographical location, Iran can communicate directly with

each of its neighbors. Or, for example, Turkey and Central Asia can get connected, or this connection is very costly, but Iran is located in the middle and can connect them much more easily. This connection is not only a geographical connection, but also a meaningful connection; that is, our northeastern provinces can be socially and culturally connected with Central Asia, the same connection exists in other regions, including our Khuzestan, with Iraq or Kuwait, and the same regional relationship can facilitate the principle of connection with these countries. Therefore, the most important measure of the incumbent government on Iran's corridor connection is the "good neighborliness" policy, which is pursued both by the president and the cabinet.



Geopolitical challenges, threats

What is indisputable about the corridor known as Zangezur is that the connection of Zangezur to the Republic of Azerbaijan and the blockade of the Lachin route will be detrimental to Iran - both a security and an economic loss. Regardless of Iran's redlines and the fact that the geopolitics of these regions should not change, the corridor's view is basically a competition-oriented view. Iran's concern is not only about passing a transit corridor through the Republic of Azerbaijan, but about the disruption of the geopolitical stability of the Caucasus and the influence of the Zionist regime in the region.

Iran supports the stability and security of its surrounding countries and has no problem with a competitive environment; high-ranking officials of the country have repeatedly emphasized, in direct and indirect meetings, that they consider the security of their neighbors as their own. The concept of corridor has been formed so that every actor plays its role actively. If we have a passive policy on the corridor known as Zangezur, or the Dry Canal of Iraq, or the Lapis Lazuli Corridor in Central Asia, we will suffer in all cases. For example, regarding the Dry Canal of Iraq, some people have claimed that "by con-

necting to Zangezur, it bypasses Iran", while the tact of our governing body on the corridor would be to manage its connection with our active policy. It is Iran that can be the best and most economical route to connect Arab countries to Central Asia, and connect Russia to the high seas. Therefore, if we are passive about the formation of the Zangezur Corridor and stand idly by, it is clear that we will lose the economic and geopolitical competition. But with an active approach by Tehran, regardless of the security-creating power of Iran, it is clear that the economic preference in the region is undoubtedly Iran.



Legendary Haddadi bids farewell to international duty

Sports Desk

Iconic Hamed Haddadi, probably the greatest Iranian basketball player in the history of the game, brought the curtain down on an illustrious career with the national team.

The 7-foot-2 center called time on two decades with the Iranian jersey after an 81-73 defeat against Lebanon in a classification contest at the FIBA World Cup in Jakarta, Indonesia.

"No-one knew about the decision except some of my teammates. I wasn't sure about until the last moment. To say goodbye to the national team after 20 years was really a tough decision to make," said Haddadi, who had 14 points and eight rebounds in his last outing for Iran.

"It is time for the young generation. They need to get more time and experience with more game-time," said the Sichuan Blue Whales player.

"I know I gave everything for my country, even when I was injured or out of shape. I feel good, but I also feel upset because I have to leave my team and my young teammates," added the former Memphis Grizzlies center.

Haddadi finished his final World Cup with an average 10.0 points, 6.3 rebounds, 3.5 assists, and 1.6 blocks per game – moving into the top-five for blocks in World Cup

history with 31 rejections.

"I wish the best of luck for the Iran national team. We have talent, but we need to be patient with our younger players. They came here and played. Some players improved, while others are still a work in progress."

The 38-year-old was surrounded by his teammates at the final buzzer, as well as the entire Lebanese team, with Wael Arakji – an MVP in last year's Asia Cup – paying tribute to the Iranian by wearing his No. 15 jersey.

Haddadi was part of the Iranian team that grabbed the silver medal at the 2022 FIBA Asia U18 Championship – a first-ever podium finish in the competition for the country.

He won the Asian under-20 title two years later and the rest is history for the Iranian, who featured in every one of the Asian side's World Cup participations as well as two Olympic Games in Beijing 2008 and Tokyo 2020.

A memorable campaign in 2007 saw Haddadi lead Iran to a maiden crown at the FIBA Asia Cup, before he repeated the success with the country in 2009 and 2013 – coupled with a 2017 silver and a bronze in 2015 – winning the MVP award on four occasions.

He also claimed back-to-back silver medals at the Asian Games in 2014 and 2018, with a 2006 bronze in Doha also under his belt.



Iranian center Hamed Haddadi is surrounded by teammates and the Lebanese players after a classification match at the FIBA Basketball World Cup in Jakarta, Indonesia, on September 2, 2023.

FIBA

World Taekwondo GP: Barkhordari bags second gold for Iran



Iranian Mehran Barkhordari (red) is in action against Apostolos Telikostoglou of Greece in the men's -80kg final at the World Taekwondo Grand Prix in Paris, France, on September 2, 2023.

WORLD TAEKWONDO

Sports Desk

Iran continued a glittering run at the World Taekwondo Grand Prix as Mehran Barkhordari walked away with the ultimate prize of the men's -80kg contests. Having outclassed American world No. 4 Carl Alan Nickolas in straight rounds for a place in the final, Barkhordari – a world bronze medalist last year – came out victorious against Apostolos Telikostoglou in the showdown to earn 60 Olympic qualification points.

The Iranian won a thrilling first round 8-6 but was stunned by a late fightback from the Greek, who landed a turning kick with 10 seconds left on the clock

for a 9-7 win, forcing the bout into the decider.

Barkhordari shook off the second-round disappointment with three successive punches for a three-point advantage and then never looked behind as back-to-back head kicks extended his advantage to 9-0.

A former silver winner at the event, Barkhordari rounded off a 12-0 triumph with a final head kick to grab the gold. Matin Rezaei, meanwhile, finished his -68kg campaign empty-handed after a defeat against Jordanian Ziyad Kareem in his second bout.

Barkhordari's gold came after the Iranians had scooped three medals on the

preceding night.

Mahdi Hajimousaei and Abolfazl Zandi completed a one-two in the men's -58kg event, with the latter withdrawing from the final showpiece to boost his fellow 19-year-old's chances of securing a berth in next summer's Olympics in the French capital.

Iranian teenage girl Mobina Ne'matza-deh got off to a brave start against Tokyo Olympic silver medalist Adriana Cerezo of Spain in the -49kg semis, winning the first round, but eventually fell to a 2-1 defeat and settled for a joint bronze – alongside China's Xiaolu Wang.

Turkey's Merve Dincel defeated the Spaniard for the gold.

Ronaldo celebrates 850th career goal in Al-Nassr win

REUTERS – Cristiano Ronaldo celebrated his 850th career goal as Al-Nassr won 5-1 at Al-Hazm in the Saudi Pro League on Saturday.

Ronaldo scored his sixth goal in his last three games and claimed two assists as Al-Nassr recorded a third straight league victory. Sadio Mane was also on the scoresheet.

"Another great team performance! We keep improving. Let's go @AlNassrFC..

850 career goals and still counting!" the 38-year-old Ronaldo posted on social media.

After Al-Nassr lost their first two league games this term, last season's runners-up, who have scored 14 goals in their last three games, are now just four points off leaders Al-Hilal.

Ronaldo is the league's top scorer this season with six goals, one ahead of former Liverpool forward Mane.



Al-Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo (R) celebrates after scoring in a 5-1 victory over Al-Hazm in the Saudi Pro League in Buraidah, Saudi Arabia, on September 2, 2023.

TWITTER



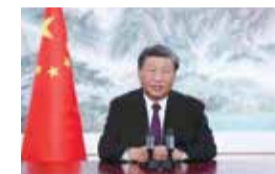
NEWS IN BRIEF

Conference held on dryland agriculture productivity

IRNA - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations held the first national conference on enhancing productivity in dryland projects in Tehran to discuss achievements within the project titled "boosting productivity and unlocking the potential of dryland agriculture."

The two-day conference which ended on Sunday was held in cooperation with Iranian Ministry of Agriculture.

China to widen market access for service industry: Xi



REUTERS - Chinese President Xi Jinping said that China would widen market access in the service industry and promote cross-border services trade.

Speaking via video at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) in Beijing, Xi said China would focus on expanding the domestic market, increasing imports of high-quality services and reforming the country's basic data system. Xi said China will promote the integrated development of high-end manufacturing and modern service industries.

Barriers to export of Iranian agricultural goods to India lifted

Economy Desk

Obstacles for exporting Iranian agricultural products to India have been eliminated, announced the deputy agriculture minister on Sunday.

Alireza Peymanpak added that thorough the agreements made with the minister of agriculture of India, the ground has been paved for the imports of a larger amount of the basic goods for Iran from the country, according to ISNA. India is one of the main food and agriculture export destinations for Iran since it is the fifth destination for Iranian agro-products.

India has bought \$33.7 million of agricultural and livestock products from Iran during March 2022 to July 2022.

Five-month exports of agro-products rise 19%

The head of the Department of Monitoring and Foreign Trade of the Central Organization for Rural Cooperatives (CORC) announced a 19% growth in the export of livestock,

fisheries, agricultural and food products in the first five months of the current Iranian year. Iran's export of agricultural and food products from March 21 to August

22 registered a 3% rise in weight, and 19% rise in value, compared to the same period of last year, said Rouhollah Latifi, according to IRNA. Of the total volume of

products exported in this period, 2.86 million tons, valued at \$1.68 billion, were exported to 15 neighboring states, he said. The neighboring countries' share of Iran's exports

of agricultural and food products stood at 90% in weight, and 80% in value, in the first five months of the previous Iranian year (March 21 to August 22, 2022), Latifi highlighted.

Iran exported 1.319 million tons of agricultural and food products to neighboring Iraq, valued at \$729.6 million, meaning that Iraq was Iran's first export market in the period.

Shalamcheh-Basra railroad to connect Iran to Mediterranean: Minister

Iran and Iraq are determined to complete the construction of the Shalamcheh-Basra railroad, said Iran's minister of roads and urban development adding that this giant project is 'important' for the two countries. Once the Shalamcheh-Basra Railroad project is completed, Iran will be connected to West Asia and the Mediterranean, which is promising news, Mehrdad Bazrpash emphasized, Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday. Iran had previously decided to complete the construction operation of the Shalamcheh-Basra railroad with its own investment, but since this giant project was very important and strategic for Iraq, the Iraqi government approved about \$200 million for launching this railroad project

as a joint venture. Accordingly, it was agreed that the construction of the railroad will be carried out by Iraqi investors, while Iran will carry out demining 16 kilometers of the rail line, Iran's minister of roads noted. Bazrpash pointed to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and said that Iran has taken serious steps to contribute to the launch of this strategic corridor.

After an agreement reached with Russia on the construction of the Rasht-Astara Road, Iran agreed to complete the construction operation of the North-South Corridor with neighboring Iraq, the minister added.

Khaf-Herat railroad Meanwhile, the head of Afghanistan's railroad

department visited the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad to coordinate efforts to complete the final section of the Khaf-Herat railroad project.

Speaking to reporters on Sunday, Bakht-ur-Rahman Sharafat said the railroad project is pivotal for both Afghanistan and Iran as it provide a vital connection to Europe and the Indian Ocean.

Iran and Afghanistan inaugurated their first joint railroad network in December 2020 to link Khaf in northeastern Iran with the Afghan town of Rozanak. However, plans for extending the project to reach Herat, Afghanistan's third-largest city, were stalled following the collapse of the former US-backed government in Kabul.

Sharafat said the prima-

ry goal of his visit to Iran was to form a consortium aimed at completing the final section of the crucial railroad line. The Herat-Khaf railroad, spanning 226 kilometers, connects Afghanistan to Iran's extensive railroad network.

The railroad line from Khaf to Rozanak in Herat Province has been successfully completed, with the remaining segment from Rozanak to Herat city currently being under construction.

The Khaf-Herat railroad is also a key part of a 2,000-kilometer-long rail network that spans from China, passing through Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, and ultimately connecting with Europe.

MP: Crude sales not tied to JCPOA revival, sanctions removal



Iran's incumbent administration has never tied oil sales to revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and removal of sanctions imposed on the country, said a member of Parliament on Saturday.

Talking to Shana, Hossein Hosseinzadeh added, "Although sanctions have their own impacts, the current government has managed to carry out acceptable measures through great efforts and determination."

The country's oil sales stood at less than 0.5 million barrels per day (bpd) when the current administration took over," recalled the lawmaker, "but now we have witnessed an increase in oil and condensate exports thanks to the Oil Ministry's positive approach and firm decision on promoting energy diplomacy."

A member of Parliament's Energy Committee, Hosseinzadeh continued, "As the oil minister announced, the country's oil exports doubled through strong diplomacy under the harshest conditions possible during the 13th administration."

The parliamentarian pointed to expansion of relations and commercial cooperation with regional and Latin American countries as other factors behind the hike in oil production and exports under the incumbent administration.

The legislator also referred to exports of technical and engineering services in the energy sector and concluded, "We should not be ignorant of domestic capacities for developing, supplying, maintaining, renovating, and rebuilding the oil, gas, and petrochemical fleet."



Iran, Russia ink agreement



Arts & Culture Desk

ILNA— In a significant move aimed at fostering scientific and research cooperation in the field of cultural heritage, the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism of Iran signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Russia's renowned State Hermitage Museum.

The agreement, inked on September 2 in Russia, seeks to facilitate collaborative efforts between the two institutions in the realms of archaeology, architecture, conservation, history, and written heritage.

The MoU was signed with the goal of enhancing bilateral cooperation in a humanitarian and scholarly manner, as well as facilitating educational exchanges and sharing of expertise.

The agreement was signed by Mostafa Dehpahlavan, the president of the Iranian institute, and Mikhail Pitrovsky, the director of the State Hermitage Museum. Interdisciplinary studies, archaeology, document archives, preservation, architectural restoration, landscapes and historic gardens, linguistics, anthropology, ethnography, and tourism were identified as key areas of mutual interest, all of which will be explored under the auspices of the newly-established partnership. This collaboration promises to unlock a wealth of cultural knowledge and promote cross-cultural understanding.

Iran to hold conference on Parvin Etesami



IRNA—Allameh Tabataba'i University in Tehran is set to host the first international conference dedicated to the renowned contemporary poetess Parvin Etesami.

Scheduled for November 15, this significant literary gathering is a collaborative effort between Allameh Tabataba'i University and the Shahriar Foundation.

In response to overwhelming interest from authors and researchers, the deadline for paper submissions has been extended to November 6.

Born in the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz in March 1907, Parvin died in Qom, situated 140 kilometers southwest of Tehran, in April 1941. Widely hailed as the most celebrated Iranian poet of the 20th century, Etesami's poetry adheres to the classical Persian tradition in both form and substance.

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Iran Daily

Ancient Iraj Castle to undergo restoration and preservation in Tehran

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

The Director of Shahr-e Rey's National Cultural Heritage Base has officially initiated a significant restoration and preservation project for Iraj Castle, recognized as the world's largest adobe castle.

Situated in Shahr-e Rey, in southern Tehran, this historic effort, as disclosed by Qadir Afrund in an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, will encompass architectural reconstruction and rescue missions aimed at revitalizing sections of the castle that have endured substantial damage over the years. Iraj Castle, renowned as both the largest adobe castle in the world, and one of the world's oldest ancient fortresses, has faced extensive deterioration, particularly in recent decades. As a result, urgent preservation measures are essential, with some sections of the castle having suffered such extensive damage that even experts and visitors struggle to discern architectural elements, making architectural reconstruction an imperative step, Afrund emphasized.

Elaborating on the initial phase of this operation, Afrund revealed that a budget of approximately 10 billion Iranian rials (about \$20,000) has been allocated to kick start this ambitious



undertaking. Initial preservation and conservation activities are already in progress.

According to Afrund, Iraj Castle's historical significance traces back to the Parthian and Sassanian eras, classifying it as a hill-fort city from that time, as indicated by archaeological assessments. Spanning an impressive 200 hectares, the castle's construction was a complex and resource-intensive endeavor, employing locally available natural materials to accommodate its vast size.

Breaking down the castle's dimensions, Afrund explained that it encompasses an internal area of 175 hectares, with an additional 25 hectares dedicated to towers and trenches, resulting in a total castle area of 200 hectares. The remaining sections of the castle reach a towering height of up to 15 meters. Along

the castle's perimeter, there were originally 148 semicircular towers, spaced at 30-meter intervals, though some have been lost to time.

Furthermore, Afrund noted that the castle's length extends to approximately one and a half kilometers, with a width of 1.2 kilometers. The longitudinal walls contain 36 semicircular towers, while the transverse walls feature 32 towers, all integral to the castle's defensive mechanisms. Additionally, four prominent circular towers of considerable size grace each corner of the castle, with two additional towers flanking the entrance gate, bringing the total number of towers to 148.

Afrund continued, providing insights into the castle's construction, explaining that the wall thickness measures about 20 meters, comprising an initial six meters of clay and a subsequent nine meters constructed using adobe bricks measuring 40 x 40 x 10 centimeters. A broad and deep trench encircles the castle, collectively emphasizing its vastness and grandeur.

A corridor and walkway encircle the castle's walls, commencing from the half-wall upward. This corridor once served as a secure location for guards to monitor and protect the castle. Interestingly, certain sections of this corridor and guard rooms have endured, offering

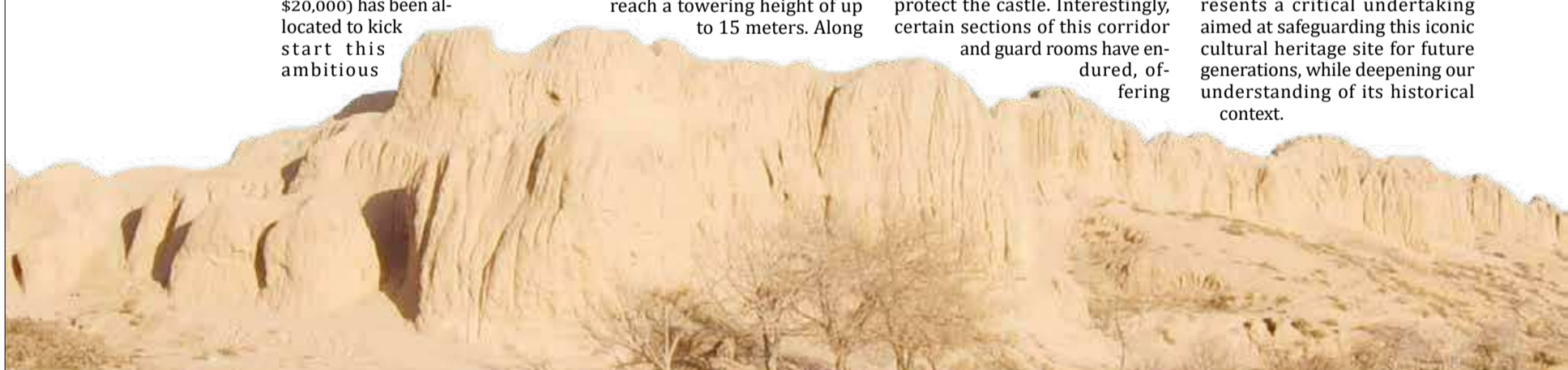
an appealing experience for modern-day visitors.

Speaking about the history of Iraj Castle, Afrund said, "The castle derives its name from Iraj, the son of Fereydu, a legendary figure in Iranian mythology, which underscores its ancient lineage." However, further archaeological and research endeavors are required to uncover the precise purpose and origins of the castle.

Afrund added, "In the Avesta, the primary collection of religious texts in Zoroastrianism, there is mention of a city or land called 'Varena,' or 'Four-point Varena,' identified as the 14th city created by Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord. Many mythologists and archaeologists posit that Iraj Castle corresponds to the 'Four-point Varena,' as referenced in the Avesta."

In conclusion, Afrund speculated that architectural structures may not have initially existed within the castle's enclosure, possibly serving as a campsite where tents were pitched. This conjecture suggests that the castle functioned as a central military command center, obviating the need for extensive architectural construction within its walls.

The restoration and preservation initiative for Iraj Castle, with its rich historical significance, represents a critical undertaking aimed at safeguarding this iconic cultural heritage site for future generations, while deepening our understanding of its historical context.



2nd IROMEDIA event showcases int'l video and NFT art

Arts & Culture Desk

The 2nd annual IROMEDIA event is set to be held with an array of international video and NFT (Non-Fungible Token) art, running from September 1 to 15.

Held at the TECH_FAC New Media Arts Museum in Tehran, this dynamic exhibition will feature video and video installation works from acclaimed artists hailing from Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, and Chile, alongside a compelling collection of 13 video artworks by Iranian new media artists.

The Latin American artists on the invitee list include renowned names such as Gabriela Golder, Kika Nicolau, Eder Santos, Lucas Bambozzi, Enrique Ramirez, and Usurla San Cristobal, curated by Gabriel Soucheyre. In addition, the event will showcase works from Elcio Miazaki, Ana-Paula Mathyas, Isabel Rodriguez Ramos, and Franco Paliuff as part of the collection.

Iranian artists joining the exhibition include Behnam Kamrani, Mehrnoosh Roshanaei, Shirin Abedinirad, Dorsa Basij, Melina Clade, Mohammadi Ali Famori, Sadeq Majlesi, Rosie Taheri, Babak Sepanta, Arezou Ramezani, Soheil Kheirabadi, Samira Pahlavani, Elham Kazemi, and Elmira Abolhasani.

The curatorial team for the 2nd Annual IROMEDIA event boasts an international blend of talent, featuring Gabriel Soucheyre (Permanent Co-Curator of IROMEDIA and Founder & Director of the International VIDEOFORMES Digital Arts Festival in France), Saeed Khavar Nejad (Curator and Founder of IROMEDIA Platform & Artistic Director of SAFPEM Institute), Giovanna Rombaldi (Co-Founder & Director of The Double Face/TDF in Europe and Brazil), Carola Del Pizzo, and Marta Bianchi (Directors of Exoart_Lab Society in Italy), and Monika Gille (SAFPEM

Coordinator in Europe).

This year's IROMEDIA event will also showcase NFT art from internationally renowned artists like Patrick Amadon, PHO (Photonis-dead), Joe Pease, and Ali Sabet, with all NFT works licensed by the International IROMEDIA Platform and Middle East & Europe Specified Institute of Contemporary Arts (SAFPEM). The artistic direction for the NFT department is under the guidance of Ali Sharafi, Ehsan Nasri, and PIRArt Studio in Germany.

Spanning over 2,400 square meters at the TECH-FAC Center, the 2nd Annual IROMEDIA event is made possible through the support of the DAS Foundation. TECH-FAC will serve as a specialized hub for local, regional, and international digital art and new media events.

The first opening ceremony took place on Friday, September 1, 2023 and the 2nd opening ceremony is scheduled for Friday, September 8, 2023 in the exhibition hall of TECH-FAC

