



Islamic Republic of Iran  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



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# MFA DIGEST

CENTRE FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY



Issue #36, April 01-15, 2021

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## MFA NEWSLETTER

### MINISTER ZARIF RECEIVES RUSSIAN COUNTERPART IN TEHRAN



Minister Zarif held talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov who has travelled to Iran heading a delegation on April 13, 2021.

In the meeting, the two top diplomats exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international cooperation in a range of areas as decided by leaders of both countries.

Dr. Zarif underlined that Tehran and Moscow enjoy strategic relations, adding Russia is an important neighbor for Iran and has political, cultural, economic, security and strategic ties with the Islamic Republic.

Minister Zarif also expressed gratitude to Russia for providing Iran with coronavirus vaccines. The Iranian foreign minister expressed hope that the two countries will reach agreement on the production of the Sputnik-V vaccine in Iran and pave the way for the Islamic Republic to purchase more doses of COVID-19 vaccines from Russia to meet its needs.

The Minister said the two countries are also working together to prevent and stop bloodshed and fight terrorism and extremism in the region. “Our cooperation in the region will help promote peace and security, and we will move forward with this cooperation within the framework of the

Astana talks and otherwise,” Dr. Zarif noted. The two foreign ministers also exchanged views on security, cooperation and dialogue in the Persian Gulf region.

Minister Lavrov, in turn, hailed the political dialogue between the two countries as regular and full of substance.

Mr. Lavrov also urged Tehran and Moscow to forge closer cooperation within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union.

As for the fight against the coronavirus, said the top Russian diplomat, every effort will be made to provide Iran with the Sputnik-V vaccine and to jointly produce the vaccine in Iran.

Lavrov then touched upon the current negotiations in Vienna, and said all parties should be urged to implement the JCPOA.

Minister Lavrov said Russia has presented a collective initiative to provide collective security in the Persian Gulf, adding Moscow believes the differences which have piled up in the Persian Gulf region can only be resolved through overarching talks and mutual respect while taking into account the interests and concerns of all sides.





## MINISTER ZARIF CALLS NATANZ INCIDENT 'NUCLEAR TERRORISM'



In a letter to Antonio Guterres on Monday (April 12, 2021), Minister Zarif said the blackout at the facility was “dangerous, reckless sabotage” and held archfoe Israel responsible for it.

The Minister said the “timely and professional containment measures” by the staff at the facility in central Isfahan province helped avert “what could have been a human and environmental catastrophe.”

“The deliberate targeting of a highly sensitive safeguarded nuclear facility—with the high risk of a potential release of radioactive material—constitutes reckless criminal nuclear terrorism,” Minister Zarif wrote in the letter.

Dr. Zarif went on to say that those who “planned, ordered, participated in and carried out” the action committed a “grave war crime” that must “not go unpunished.”

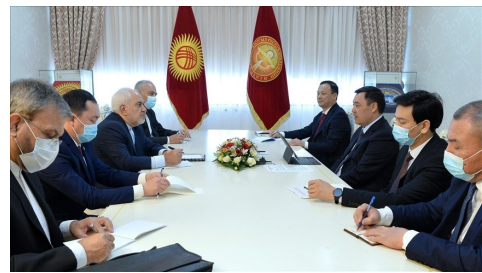
“The Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its right under international law to take all necessary measures to protect and defend its citizens, interests and installations against any terrorist or disruptive acts,” the Minister wrote further.

## MINISTER ZARIF TOURS CENTRAL ASIA

Minister Zarif, concluding his Central Asian tour, met on April 8 with his Turkmen counterpart, Rasit Meredow, during which he praised Tehran-Ashgabat political, economic and cultural relations as positive.

The Iranian foreign minister underlined the necessity of boosting the two countries’ environmental ties, especially with regard to the Caspian Sea, as well as bilateral cooperation in transportation.

The Iranian foreign minister also met with Turkmenistan’s President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow to discuss political, economic and cultural relations.

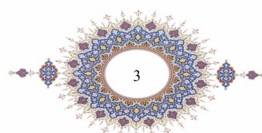


During the meeting, Dr. Zarif stressed the importance of ties between the two neighboring countries.

For his part, Mr. Berdimuhamedow voiced his support for bilateral ties in political, economic and cultural spheres.

Minister Zarif visited Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan before heading to Turkmenistan as the last leg of his tour aimed at enhancing bilateral and regional cooperation.

In a tweet on April 8th, Dr. Zarif wrote that he concluded his Central Asian tour with a “superb” visit to Turkmenistan. The Minister also said Central Asian nations are not just neighbors, but they are also kin.





## TWIPLOMACY

### Supreme Leader Advises Iranian Diplomats in Their Negotiations with JCPOA Signatories



**Khamenei.ir**  
@khamenei\_ir

Our officials must be careful that the [#negotiations](#) do not become draining. It should not reach a point where the other signatories wish to keep drawing it out, because that would be detrimental to the country.

8:36 PM · Apr 14, 2021 · Twitter Web App

### Minister Zarif Felicitates Muslims on Ramadan



**Javad Zarif** ✓  
@JZarif  
Iran government official

Wishing all Muslims across the globe—and especially my compatriots at home and abroad—a blessed, peaceful, and safe Ramadan.

This holy month will give us pause to reflect on our contribution to peace, with ourselves, our community and our world.

[#RamadanKareem](#) 🌙

6:06 PM · Apr 13, 2021 · Twitter for Android

### MFA's Spokesperson Khatibzadeh Shares His Interview with CNN's Amanpour on JCPOA



**Saeed Khatibzadeh**  
@SKhatibzadeh

In interview with [@camanpour](#), clarified that [@POTUS](#) has a choice to make:

He can stick with Obama's deal. Or he can cling to Trump's sanctions, incl those anti-JCPOA designations with faux labels.

What he can't do is to simultaneously pursue both.

[edition.cnn.com/videos/tv/2021...](https://edition.cnn.com/videos/tv/2021...)



5:52 PM · Apr 10, 2021 · Twitter for Android



### Ministry of Foreign Affairs Shares Photo of Meeting between Iranian-Russian Spokespersons in Tehran

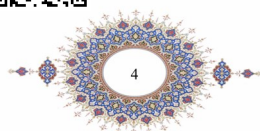


**Iran Foreign Ministry** 🇮🇷  
@IRIMFA\_EN

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh held talks with Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, who was accompanying the visiting Russian delegation in Tehran.  
[en.mfa.gov.ir/portal/NewsVie...](https://en.mfa.gov.ir/portal/NewsVie...)



6:38 PM · Apr 14, 2021 · TweetDeck



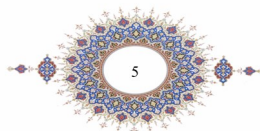


Islamic Republic of Iran  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



**April 9, 2021**

**NATIONAL NUCLEAR ENERGY TECHNOLOGY DAY**





## Society & Culture

### ANNUAL BUDGET FOR FOREST PROTECTION DOUBLES



**I**ran has increased the budget for forest protection by two folds in the national budget bill for the current [Iranian calendar] calendar year (started on March 20), head of the Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization (FRWMO) has said.

A total of 5.3 trillion rials (around \$126 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been proposed for forest protection in the budget bill, which shows an increase of 50 percent compared to the last year's budget, Masoud Mansour stated, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

According to the budget bill, the FRWMO budget should be used for different measures of watershed management, soil protection, desertification, rehabilitation, development and proper exploitation of forests and rangelands, empowerment of local communities and etc.

Last year, about 47,000 hectares of damaged forests were covered by a development and reforestation plan, he said.

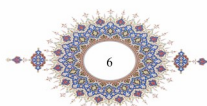
### IRANIAN DIRECTOR ASGHAR FARHADI HONORED AT SPANISH FESTIVAL

**T**wo-time Oscar winner Asghar Farhadi received an honorary award at the opening ceremony of the 20th edition of the Las Palmas de Gran Canaria International Film Festival in the Spanish island on Friday as a significant figure of the history of the festival.

The festival, which will run until April 18, plans to pay tribute to the Iranian director by programming a brief retrospective made up of four of his films, "Fireworks Wednesday", "About Elly", "Nader and Simin, A Separation" and "The Salesman".

In an interview with the Spanish newspaper Canarias7 before receiving the award, Farhadi said that there is no single language spoken in the whole world, however, the language of feelings including violence, love, and hatred is shared among all people.

"There are two types of filmmakers. Some make their movies from their heart and the unconscious. Others make them from logic and reason. The latter has the ability to change things. I make them from the heart and the unconscious, so I cannot control everything," he added.





## OVER 35,000 HOUSING UNITS TO BE BUILT FOR THE DEPRIVED



**T**he Welfare Organization will provide 35,169 residential units for the underprivileged families across the country over the current [Iranian calendar] year (started March 20).

Also, the construction of 10,000 housing units will also begin this year, Zolfaqar Yazdanmehr, deputy head of the Organization said.

In the Iranian calendar years of 1398 (March 2019- March 2020) and 1399 (March 2020-March 2021), 14,700 and 16,500 residential units have been provided to the deprived, respectively, he noted.

Earlier in April, some 5,700 residential units were inaugurated and provided to deprived families residing in rural areas of the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province.

These units have been built under a joint memorandum of understanding between the Management and Planning Organization and the Housing Foundation to build 115,000 residential units for low-income families across the country.

## CHILD ADOPTION UP BY 10% IN IRAN

**C**hild adoption has increased in the country by 10 percent, following the actions taken to speed up the process, Habibollah Masoudi-Farid, deputy head of the Welfare Organization, has stated.

Following the Law on Protection of Children and Adolescents in [the Iranian calendar year] 1392 (March 2013-March 2014), adaption experienced an upward trend.

Welfare efforts to fulfill this basic slogan that children must grow in the family led welfare experts to identify children who can be fostered by the families through regular inspections, he said.

The adoption system officially started operating in May 2020, people who signed up for adoption were asked whether they are willing to adopt a disabled or older child. Families could also track their cases.



The system facilitated access, and the important point is that the adoption rate increased by 10 percent over the last year (March 2020-March 2021) compared to a year before, he highlighted.

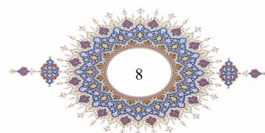
Since 2014, the number of adoption cases has increased and 2,000 children are placed for adoption annually, some of whom are placed under temporary custody because a temporary trustee is better than care centers.





## NORTH KHORASAN BEAUTIES

**N**orth Khorasan Province is a province located in northeastern Iran. It is one of the most diverse territories in Iran today, largely reflecting the ethnic make-up of Iran.







## TRADE AND ECONOMY

### 'IRANIAN FREE ZONES REGISTER POSITIVE TRADE BALANCE OVER PAST 2 YEARS'



The Secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council Hamidreza Mo'meni said the trade balance of the country's free and special economic zones has been positive in the past two years despite the negative balance of the country's foreign trade..

"Today, the free zones are in a good condition trade as wise and positive development measures have been taken which have led to significant growth in these zones," the official said.

He further announced the establishment of a finance council in the Iranian Free Zones High Council, saying that soon advisory groups will be sent to all of the country's free zones and the zones can access sustainable financial resources for implementing new development programs.

The development of free trade zones and special economic zones through production, exports, and investment is one of the goals of creating these zones in the country.

### FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN INDUSTRIAL, TRADE SECTORS RISES NEARLY 190% IN A YEAR

The Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has approved 158 foreign investment projects valued at about \$2.469 billion in the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20), up 189 percent compared to its preceding year.

According to the latest data released by the ministry, the number of approved projects has also increased 92 percent in the previous year.

Of the total number of investment projects in the past year, 90.5 percent (143 projects) was the share of industry sector, 4.4 percent (seven projects) was the share of mining sector, while trade-related projects accounted for 5.1 percent (eight projects) of the total figure.

China, Germany, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Canada, and Austria were the top five countries with the highest volume of investment, while, Khuzestan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Fars, Hormozgan, and East Azarbaijan provinces were the top five provinces in terms of the volume of approved foreign investment.





## IRAN'S FREIGHT WAGONS ARRIVE IN TURKMENISTAN: OFFICIAL



**D**irector-General of Iran's North East Railway Line 2 based in Gorgan Mohsen Etemad said that the Iranian freight wagons arrived through Incheboron to Turkmenistan railway for the first time.

Iran exported some 16,000 tons of goods through Incheboron to Turkmenistan railway during Nowruz holidays this year, he added.

Iran Railways (Incheboron)-Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan was inaugurated in 2014 in the presence of the presidents of the three countries but there are some problems due to the lack of bridges for the train crossing and the width of Turkmenistan railroad for the exchange of goods and the movement of wagons.

Earlier, Etemad highlighted the width of the Turkmenistan railroad that is larger than the global standard making a stumbling block for railway trade among the two countries, stating that Iran had solved the problem with a 200-meter bogie, but the Turkmen side has yet to address the issue.

Turkmenistan connected its railroad to Iran's railways after discussing and resolving legal and financial problems in March 2021.

## 1B TONS OF NEW COPPER RESERVES DISCOVERED IN IRAN

**M**anaging Director of National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICIC) has announced the discovery of one billion tons of new copper reserves in Iran.

NICIC carried out 101,000 meters of deep drilling to identify new copper reserves across the country in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), which resulted in the discovery of one billion tons of new reserves, Ardeshir Sa'd-Mohammadi said in a press conference.

Sa'd-Mohammadi put the value of the discovered reserves at 350 trillion rials (about \$8.3 billion).

According to the official, NICIC had also discovered 523 million tons of copper reserves across the country during the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019- March 2020).



Considering the new discoveries, NICIC's total copper reserves across the country have currently surpassed eight billion tons.

The official put the country's total copper reserves at 40 billion tons, saying that Iran currently has the world's seventh-largest copper reserves, and hopefully the country will climb to sixth place in the current Iranian calendar year.





## KHUZESTAN BEAUTIES

**K**huzestan Province is in the southwest of Iran, bordering Iraq and the Persian Gulf.

As the Iranian province with the oldest history, it is often referred to as the “birthplace of the nation”.





## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### IRAN TO START 2ND PHASE OF CORONAVIRUS VACCINATION IN MAY



Iranian Deputy Health Minister Alireza Rayeesi said that the second phase of public vaccination against COVID-19 in Iran will start early in May.

Rayeesi said that around 1.3 million people will be inoculated against COVID-19 by early next month when the government plans to announce the end of the first phase of vaccinations.

Iran estimates that some 13.3 million people will be immunized against COVID-19 during the second phase. The population includes six million people who are above 65 and those between 16 and 64 who have at least one underlying condition.

The nationwide vaccination campaign against COVID 19 began in Iran in late December after the country took delivery of a first batch of Sputnik V vaccines from Russia. The campaign has also used jabs developed in China and India although some shipments have failed to make it into the country because of tight supplies in the countries of origin.

Rayeesi said ending the first round of

vaccinations, which has covered frontline healthcare workers and people with very high risk of catching COVID-19, had been made possible after Iran received a shipment of 700,000 vaccines from COVAX, an international vaccine project sponsored by the World Health Organization.

Iran has placed orders for 16.8 million doses of vaccines under COVAX despite restrictions facing the country because of US sanctions which make it almost impossible to transfer funds through the international banking system.

Iran would need 29.5 million vaccine doses to finish the second round of inoculations and authorities hope they would be able to use home-made jabs to deliver on the job

A major Iranian factory mandated to produce the country's main coronavirus vaccine (COV-Iran) is nearly ready as officials promise it would reach a production capacity of 12-15 million doses per month in late June.

Head of the COV-Iran Barekat vaccine project at the Headquarters for Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order (HEIKO) Hassan Jalili said earlier this month that the construction of buildings and premises of the factory that will manufacture the vaccine has already finished, adding that the factory will produce 12-15 million doses of the vaccine per month in early summer.

"As we had promised, we will bring the semi-industrial production capacity of the vaccine to three million doses per month in the spring," Jalili said.



## IRANIAN UNIVERSITIES HOSTING STUDENTS FROM 133 COUNTRIES

**S**tudents from 133 countries are currently studying in Iranian universities, Afshin Akhoundzadeh, head of the office for non-Iranian students at the Organization of Student Affairs said on Thursday, April 15, 2021.



Some 25,000 of the students are studying in universities affiliated with the Ministry of Science (4,000 with scholarship, 16,600 without a scholarship, and 10,000 through the Iranian national university entrance exam), while 25,000 others are receiving education in Azad University, and about 2,000 in medical universities, Mr. Akhoundzadeh explained.

He went on to say that law, Persian literature, and computer engineering are the top three fields of study for foreign students in Iran, while civil engineering, business management, political science, English language and literature, Quran and hadith sciences, international relations, and electrical engineering and other majors with the highest number of non-Iranian students.

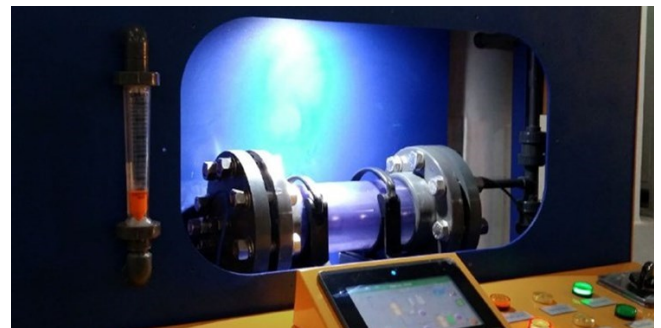
In 2013, 35 centers were allowed to admit foreign students, which has increased to 77 in 2021, he added.

## IRANIAN RESEARCHERS MAKE, EXPORT ADVANCED WATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

**I**ranian researcher at a knowledge based firm developed a sea water electrolyzer system and managed to export it to foreign countries.

“Seawater electrolyzer produces chlorine from seawater that contains salt water, which is used as a disinfectant to kill harmful microbes,” Mehdi Shafiyee, the CEO of the company, said.

“In this system, seawater is received as input and during the electrolysis process, sodium hypochlorite (javelin) is produced and injected with a free chlorine concentration suitable for disinfecting water so that proper water conditions can be provided for shrimp and fish farming,” he added.



Shafiyee said that the system has various applications, and added, “It can be used instead of gas chlorine, which is dangerous, to make urban and rural drinking water safer; other applications of this system are in the sanitation of pool water and shrimp and fish farms; this capacity can be used wherever shrimp and fish are farmed.”

Meanwhile, last April, Iranian experts for the first time produced a high-pressure pump for seawater desalination system through reverse osmosis method.





## SISTAN AND BALUCHESTAN BEAUTIES

**S**istan and Baluchestan Province is the second largest province of Iran. It is in the southeast of the country, bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan and its capital is Zahedan.





## SPORTS

### IRANIAN GRECO-ROMAN WRESTLERS CLAIM ASIA TITLE IN KAZAKHSTAN



**T**eam Iran staged a superb performance at 2021 Kazakhstan Asian Championship in Kazakhstan, claiming the Asia title.

The Iranian Greco-Roman wrestling won 4 gold, 2 silver, and 3 bronze medals, ranking first in Asia.

The 34th Almaty Asian Championship ended in Kazakhstan's capital city with Iranian athletes gaining 4 gold, 2 silver, and 3 bronze medals and 194 points, making them the top winners of the latest Asian competitions quite mightily.

At the end of the games the Iranian athletes Pezhman Pashtam, Nasser Alizadeh, Mahdi Bali, and Ali-Akbar Yusefi won the gold medals of the 77, 87, 97 and 130-kilogram weights, Mahdi Mohsen-Nezhad and Meysam Delkhani won the silver medals of the 60 and 63-kilogram weights, and Puya Dadmarz, Hossein Assadi and Amin Kaviani-Nezhad won the bronze medals of the 55, 67 and 72 kilogram weights.

In the 55-kilogram weight, Puya Dadmarz became the finalist since his rival, Jin Huk Kim had failed to weigh appropriately to compete, and in the final beat his Mongolian competitor Safar Davabandi Anil.

### IRAN'S TAREMI WINS UCL GOAL OF THE WEEK

**I**ranian international forward Mehdi Taremi scored an extraordinary last-minute goal for Porto but it was not enough for the Portuguese giants to book a place at the UEFA Champions League semifinals.

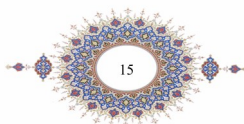
Taremi played in the last 30 minutes and did something magical.

"I think we played a good match but we were a little bit unlucky. Porto had a good performance against Chelsea but it was not enough to qualify for the next stage," Taremi said in the post-match news conference.



Meanwhile, Mehdi Taremi's overhead kick goal against Chelsea was elected the "Goal of the Week" in the competition.

"This spectacular shot of Mehdi Taremi wins the goal of the week!", Can be read on tweet shared this Friday (April 16, 2021) in the official Champions League account.





## IRANIAN AIR GUN ATHLETE STANDS FIRST ON ISSF AIR PISTOL WORLD RANKING



Iranian athlete Javad Ferooghi who became the champion at ISSF Shooting World Cup 2021 (18-29 March) stands first in the most recent ranking of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF).

Golnoush Sebqatollahi, another Iranian athlete, stood seventh in the air pistol and 10th in the 25-meter pistol sections in the woman's part.

On March 21, the Iranian air gun team stood fourth in International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup.

On the third day of the contests, Iran's Pourya Norouziyan, Hossein Bagheri, and Amir Mohammad Nekounam played the South Korean team for the bronze medal but was defeated and stood fourth.

The United States, India, and South Korea stood first through third.

The event was held in India on March 18-29 with 53 countries.

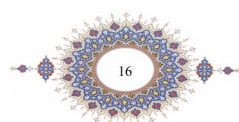
## IRAN TO HOST ASIAN HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

With the announcement of the Asian Handball Federation (AHF) on Tuesday, Iran will be hosting Asian Men's Handball tournament in January 2022.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Handball Federation (IRIHF) sent a letter to AHF and announced its readiness to host the 20th Asian Men's Handball Championship officially.

Following contacts and follow-ups by Iran's federation officials with Asian officials, today (Tuesday) the AHF sent a letter formally introducing Iran as the host of the 20th Asian Men's Handball Championship and the 2023 Swedish-Poland World Championship qualifiers.

According to the announced schedule, the competition will be held in January 2022.







## FOREIGN MISSIONS IN IRAN

### UNDP Resident Representative in Iran Takes Part in 'Tuesdays without Car' Initiative in Tehran



Claudio Providas  
@cprovidas

Today along with @UNDPIran colleagues we biked to work in support of #Tehran Municipality & Mayor @pirouzhnachi Tuesdays without car initiative. Green mobility helps to reduce air pollution, traffic and related health risks.

#سه\_شنبه\_های\_بدون\_خودرو  
#تهران\_شهری\_برای\_همه



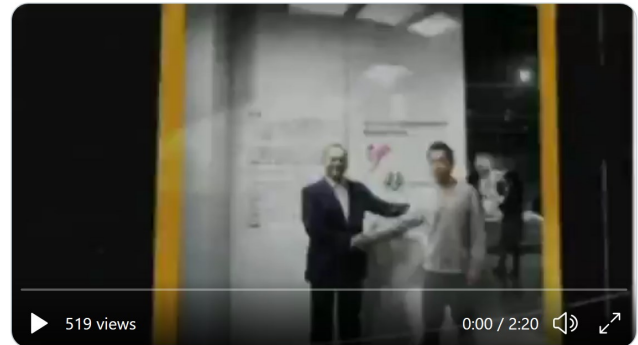
4:20 PM · Apr 6, 2021 · Twitter Web App

### Chinese Ambassador Shares Clip on Iranian Art Exhibition in China's Nanjing



Chang Hua  
@AmbChangHua

#CHINA\_IRAN\_50\_VLOG  
نمایشگاه آثار هنری ایران در نانجینگ چین



9:10 PM · Apr 13, 2021 · Twitter for Android



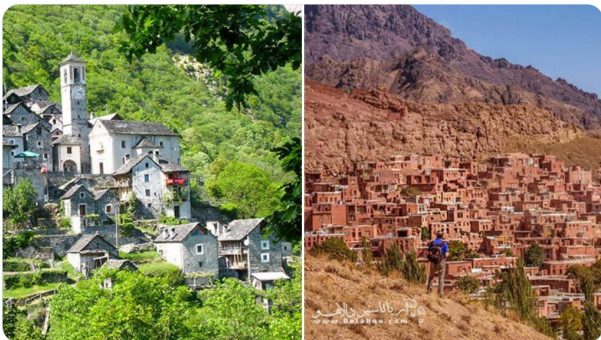
### Swiss Embassy Juxtaposes Two Districts in Iran and Switzerland



Swiss Embassy Iran  
@SwissEmbassyIr

Well hidden in the mountains, just like Abyaneh in Isfahan province, Corippo in Canton Ticino shows striking similarities. When the village risked to become abandoned, the "scattered hotel" project was launched to revitalize culture, tourism + social activities

@ticinoturismo



9:53 AM · Apr 13, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

### French Embassy Hints at Iranian and French Impact on Both Nations



France en Iran  
@FranceenIran

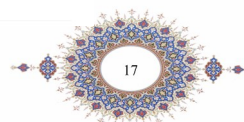
گشت و گذار ادبی در خیابانهای تاج آباد سفلی (استان همدان) و پاریس.

Escapade littéraire dans les rues de Tadjabad Sofla (province de Hamedan) et Paris

@IrnaFrench



10:07 AM · Apr 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App





## DISCOVER IRAN IN PICTURES

### OFF-ROAD TOURS ON YAZD DESERT

Off-road tours were held on Yazd desert and dunes during the Nowruz holidays. Since 2017, the historical city of Yazd has been recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

(Photo credit: MEHR News Agency)

