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Dr. Amir Houshang Amini

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Address:

#1103, Sarve Sae Tower, 51 Shahid Akbari,
Vali-e-Asr Ave., Tehran 1433894651, Iran

Tel: (+9821) 88701280-88701295-88711793

Fax: (+9821) 88710473

Email: info@ibccim.org

Web site: www.ibccim.org

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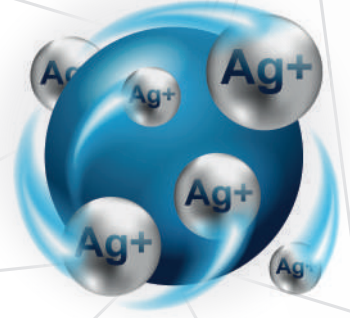
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Happy Nowruz

Congratulations to all Iranians, especially to the esteemed members of the Joint Chamber and all the subscribers to our quarterly magazine on the upcoming occasion of this year's Nowruz Festivities.

Nowruz is an unrivaled ancient celebration established by our ancestors to commemorate the spring equinox with a renewal of hope and the aspiration for peace and friendship amongst humankind free of violent and inhumane behavior.

It is my ardent wish that the coming new year will be one of a positive change from the current devastating indecent behavior all over the world and particularly in our region, a year of happiness, a year of prosperity for all, a historical year that will mark a lasting turning point for the improvement of prevalent conditions; and a year of distinction for Iran as a true harbinger of lasting peace and friendship in history.

Dr. Amir Houshang Amini

Iran's Foreign Trade during the Ten Months of the Year 1401

(20 March 2022 to 20 January 2023)

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

month of the year 1401 are as indicated in the following tables:

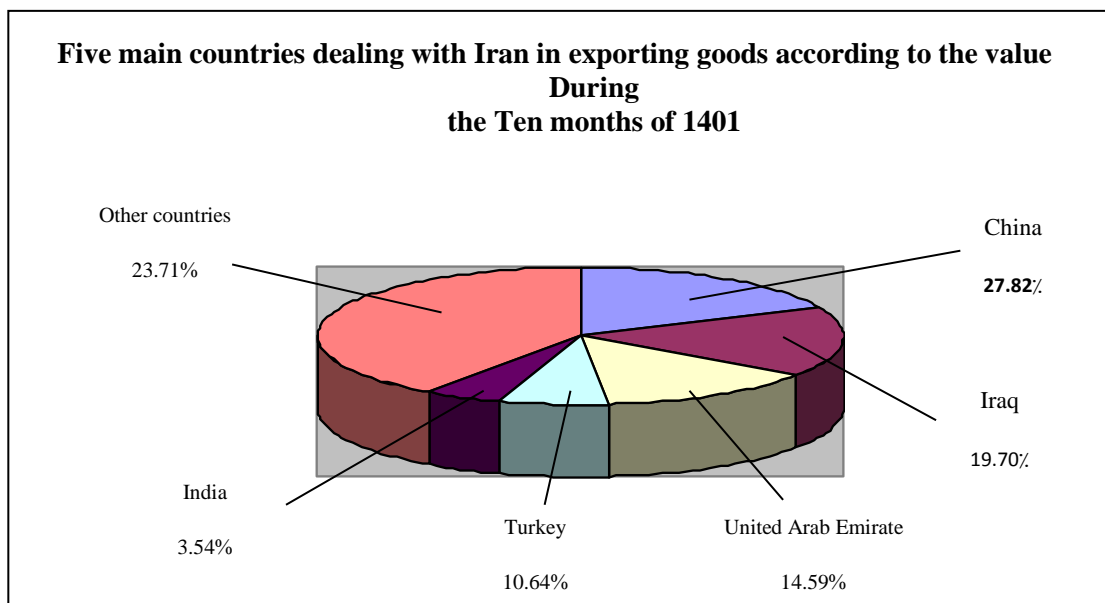
Primary import/export statistics of non-oil goods with the calculation of gas's Liquidities during the Ten month of 1401

Activity	Ten months of the year 1401		Ten months of the year 1400		Percentage of changes	
	Weight (Thousand tons)	Value (Million Dollars)	Weight (Thousand tons)	Value (Million Dollars)	Weight	Value
Import	102.995	45.319	100.062	38.516	2.93	17.66
Export	30.863	48.485	33.209	41.489	-7.06	16.86

Exports:

The most important exports during the Ten months of 1401, have been done with countries, as follows: 1) "China" with 12.608 million Dollars and 27.82 percent of value, 2) "Iraq" with 8.927 million Dollars and 19.70 per-

cent of value,3)"United Arab Emirate" with 6.612 million Dollars and 14.59 percent of value, 4) "Turkey" with 4.823 million Dollars and 10.64 percent of value and 5) "India" with 1.606 million Dollars and 3.54 percent of value.



Imports:

The most important imports during the Ten month of 1401, have been done with countries, as follows: 1) "United Arab Emirate" with 14.952 million Dollars and 30.84 percent of value, 2) "China" with 12.689 million Dollars and 26.19 percent of value,

3)"Turkey" with 5.085 million Dollars and 10.49 percent of value, 4) "India" with 2.406 million Dollars and 4.96 percent of value and 5) "Germany" with 1.549 million Dollars and 3.19 percent of value.



Sohrab Sepehri



The most eminent poet & painter of Modern Iran

(b. Qom, 14 Mehr 1307 Š/6 October 1928; d. Tehran, 1 Ordibehešt 1359 Š./21 April 1980)

Life. He was the third of five children. About three months after Sohrab's birth, his family went to Golpayegan and then to Khansar, before settling in the Darvazeh 'Attar quarter of Kashan. A painter, skilled calligrapher, *tar* maker and player, Sepehri's father worked for the telegraph and post office there until he became paralyzed early in Sohrab's adolescence, leaving Sohrab's mother to take a position in the same office to support the family.

For the first part of his life, Sepehri lived in their family home, which had a large orchard, an experience he would later recount in his posthumously published book *Otaq-e Abi* (The blue room, 2003). From September 1940 to June 1943, he attended Pahlavi High School where he briefly studied the *Santur* (hammer dulcimer) and continued painting. In September 1943, Sepehri moved to Tehran to attend the Teachers' Training School. Graduating in June 1945, he returned to Kashan and in December found employment at Kashan's Office of Education, where he met the poet Moshfeq Kashani (pen-name of 'Abbas Key-Manesh, b. 1925) who familiarized him with Persian prosody.

In summer 1948, Sepehri met the poet and painter Manuchehr Sheybani (1923-1991) who introduced him to the works of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890)



and Nima Yooshij (1897-1960), the first Persian modern poet successfully to break free of Persian classical prosody and its traditional imagery and conventions.

According to Sepehri himself, the impact of this meeting changed his course: he quit his job, moved to Tehran, and enrolled at Tehran University's Faculty of Fine Arts. While living in the capital, he worked for eight months for the then Anglo-Persian Oil Company and be-

came more immersed in the works of Nima Yooshij, as well as Fereyduun Tavallali (1919-1985), whose poetry was generally more lyrical than Nima's, with more regular stanzaic patterns. His first poem in the manner of Nima, entitled "Bimar" (The patient), was published in September 1948 in the journal *Jahan-e no*.

Founded in Tehran in June 1946, this modern literary journal was edited by Morteza Keyvan (1923 - 1954), an intellectual and political activist, who was later sentenced to death for collaborating with the military branch of Tudeh Party. Three other poems followed this one in 1949 in consecutive issues of *Jam-e Jam* (est. March 1949, Tehran), another literary journal that folded after six issues.

In fall 1951, Sepehri published his first collection of Nimaic poetry titled *Marg-e rang* (The death of



colour). The early 1950s also marked the beginning of his friendship and acquaintance with other notable poets and painters. Many of them would become important figures in Persian modernism in their own right, namely Forugh Farrokhzad (1935-1967), Marko Gregorian (1925-2007, painter), Parviz Kalantari (b. 1931, painter), Bahman Mohasses (b. 1930, painter), Nader Naderpur (1929-2000, poet), Nosrat Rahmani (1929-2000, poet), Sadeq Tabrizi (b. 1938, painter), and Parviz Tanavoli (b. 1937, sculptor). Around this time, he also met Biyuk Mostafavi (1925-1992), a life-long friend to whom Sepehri later dedicated *Hajm-e Sabz* (The expanse of green, 1967).

In June 1953, Sepehri completed his bachelor's degree with honours, took a position as a designer with the Organization of Public Health (Sazeman-e behdasht),

In January 1960, Sepehri briefly travelled to Tokyo before returning to Tehran to participate in the second Tehran Biennale, where he won the Grand Prize of Fine Arts. Very soon thereafter, Homayun San'atizadeh, director of the Franklin Book Program, purchased 150 of Sepehri's paintings. That August, Sepehri used the proceeds from this sale to return to Tokyo for nearly six months to study woodblock printing with Unichi Hiratsuka (1895-1997), one of the most noted names of the 20th century Japanese art. On his way home, in late winter 1961 he travelled to India for the first of several visits, completing a journey that would leave a permanent mark in his creative life. Back in Tehran, Sepehri had his first solo exhibit at Reza Abbasi Gallery, and a group show at The Export Bank of Iran (Bank Saderat Iran). In September, he took a teaching position at the School of Decorative Arts, and gave up his post six months later. This would be his last government or public service position. The same year, three of his poems appeared

in an anthology of modern Persian poetry called *Nemunaha-ye She'r-e Azad* (Examples of free verse, Tehran, 1960). He also published his next book of poetry *Avar-e Aftab* (The downpour of sunshine) with an introduction by himself. In May-June 1962, Sepehri had another solo exhibit at Farhang Gallery (Talar-e Farhang) and published, along with a number of his own poems, translations of Chinese poetry in *Sokhan* (est. June 1943, Tehran), a prominent academic literary journal edited by Parviz Natel Khanlari.

In 1963, Sepehri had six solo and group exhibitions, and one of his paintings appeared on the cover of Naderpur's selected poems entitled *Bar-gozida-ye Ash'ar-e Nader Naderpur, 1326-1341*. The same year, Abby Weed Grey purchased a number of his paintings for the Ben and Abby Grey Foundation. These pieces were subsequently included in a show called Fourteen Contemporary Iranian Artists, which opened in Tehran before circulating in the United States for four years under the auspices of the Western Association of Art Museums. A selection of these and other paintings by Sepehri were later included in other exhibits funded by the Grey Foundation, namely Contemporary Art of India and Iran, which circulated throughout the United States by the Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Programme from 1967 to 1969, and One World Through Art, at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds Gallery in 1972.

In 1964, the journal *Musiqi* (est. March 1939, Tehran), a prominent literary and cultural journal edited by Gholamhossein Minbashian, published Sepehri's translation of a Japanese play, and he designed the set for the production of the play *Ahan* (Iron) written and directed by Khojasteh Kia. The same year, he travelled extensively throughout India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. In 1965, he had one group and one solo exhibition in the Borghese Gallery in Tehran, and published his poem *Seda-ye Paye Ab* (tr. by Karim Emami as "The Sound of Water's Footsteps") in *Arash*, a popular modern literary journal of the 1960s edited by Sirus Tahbaz. The poem, which made a great impact at the time also,



showed that the poet had at last found his own voice and style. The year also marked the beginning of Sepehri's decade-long work on his famous tree trunk painting series. For the next two years, Sepehri continued his extensive travels, visiting Munich and London in 1965, and France, Spain, Holland, Italy, and Austria the following year. In 1966, he published *Mosafer* (Traveller), again in *Arash*, and translations of hymns from the *Rig Veda*.

The death of Forugh Farrokhzad in a car accident on 13 February 1967 had a profound impact on Iranian literati in general, and Sepehri in particular. As reflected in his famous elegy for her called *Doust* (Friend, *Hajm-e Sabz*, 1968), with her death, Sepehri lost not only a close friend, but a fellow poet who shared much of his world vision and sensibilities, both emotional and poetic. In 1968, Sepehri published *Hajm-e Sabz*. Its release coincided with the opening of his exhibit at Seyhün Gallery in February 1968. In the next decade, he published few poems, yet remained extremely active as a painter. In April and March 1969, he travelled to London, and then to Cagnes-sur-Mer in South of France where he exhibited his work at the town's International Art Festival. In late spring 1970, Sepehri went to New York and briefly stayed with his friend Manuchehr Yekta'i (b. 1921, painter and poet) in Long Island before moving to Manhattan in late August for eight months, during which time he had a group show in Bridgehampton. After a brief return to Tehran, he was back in Manhattan by mid-May 1971 for a solo exhibit at Elain Benson Gallery in Bridgehampton, which opened on 10 July. He had an extended stay in Paris in 1974 and travelled to Greece and Egypt on his way back to Iran. In 1975, he participated in Tehran's First International Arts Festival, and later that year he received the Forugh Farrokhzad Poetry Award. From 16-21 June 1976, he participated in a group exhibit of modern Persian art at the International Art Fair in Basel, Switzerland. In winter 1977, Sepehri moved back to Kashan, and published *Hasht Ketab* (Eight books), an almost complete collection of his published work since *Marg-e rang* with the addition of the new collection *Ma Hich*, *Ma Negah* (We nothing but Look). In 1978, Sepehri had another solo exhibit at Seyhün Gallery. This would be his last exhibit before his untimely death. In fall 1979, Sohrab Sepehri was diagnosed with leukemia. He travelled to London with his sister Paridokht in December 1979, where they stayed until January 1980 for treatment, before returning

to Tehran. On 2 April 1980, Sohrab was admitted to Tehran's Pars Hospital where he died at 6:00 PM on 21 April 1980.

Sepehri was buried on 22 April 1980 in Mashhad-e Ardahal, a village near Kashan.

Sepehri never married and had no children.

Poetry. In the course of his development as a poet and painter, Sepehri went through different phases of preoccupation with one or another tenet of his personal poetics and ultimate world vision. For practical purposes, we can break these down into five general periods, the first of which is a classical one comprising various *ghazals*, quatrains and, foremost, his first book *Dar Kenar-e Chaman ya*



Aramgah-e 'Eshq, a twenty-six page *masnavi* (a poem in couplet form) in the style of Iraj Mirza's (1874-1926) *Zohreh o Manuchehr*. Written in classical meter, these works are replete with traditional tropes and imagery, and reveal the sentimentality of a teenage poet emulating his late 19th century Persian predecessors. Though Sepehri would later discard all of these poems as naïve, they remain nevertheless critically valuable as they demonstrate both his familiarity with prosodic and imaginal staples of Persian classical poetry, and the span of his linguistic and stylistic trajectory as a poet.

The second phase of Sepehri's poetic development begins with his discovery of Nima Yooshij's poetry in mid-1948. The regular stanzaic form of his poem, "Bimar," portraying a hopeless man smoking in his sickbed, clearly reveal Nima's influence in structure, language, and conceit, as do *Zendegi* (Life), *Jazireh-ye Tala'i* (The golden island), and *Sham'-e Balin* (Bedside candle), all published in *Jahan-e no* in Spring 1949. Sepehri's Nimaic phase comes to full fruition in *Marg-e rang* (1951). With respect to meter, form, and subject matter, all the poems in the collection so self-evidently bear the stamp of Nima's influence. In the case of *Morgh-e Gharib* (The alien bird, reprinted with some changes in *Hasht Ketab* as *Morġ-e mo'ammā* (The riddle

bird), *Darya va mard* (The sea and the man), *Naqsh* (Design), and *Sargozasht* (Tale) one could easily mistake them for Nima's own. What distinguishes Sepehri from his predecessor, however, is the absence of Nima's urgent sense of social commitment, which is replaced in Sepehri's work by an introspective self-contemplation that gives his voice a quality and tone comparable to those of mid to late 19th century English poets. Thus, while in *Marg-e rang*, Sepehri's tone echoes the characteristic nostalgia and hopelessness of Nima's poetic language, Sepehri's symbols point to a romantic poet's existential despair with respect to his personal path in life, both as an artist and as an individual. This is while Nima's convey instead a socially committed poet's perception of a people lost in the course of history and a nation with little, if any, future prospects. *Marg-e rang* furthermore represents the height of Sepehri's romanticism, especially with respect to his use of elements of nature as mirrors of the poet's emotions. *Ru be Ghorub* (Facing sunset), a poem in which all the elements of the natural landscape at sunset uniformly reflect the persona's depressive state, is arguably the best example of this conceit. Though less obvious, the influence of Fereyduun Tavallali is also noticeable in this collection, especially with respect to language.

Sepehri's third period in poetry starts around 1951 and ends in 1961 with the publication of *Avar-e Aftab*, a compendium of three collections: *Zendegi-ye Khabha*, previously published as an autonomous volume in 1952; the title collection of poems written between 1952 and 1958; and *Sharq-e Anduh* (East of sorrow). The volume also includes an introduction by Sepehri himself, in which he argues for an inherent dichotomy between Eastern and Western worldviews, with the former being presented as one in which mankind's intuitive connection with the organic laws of the cosmos are more overtly cultivated by the values and nuances of their ancient myths and pervading philosophies. With numerous references to Hindu mythology, Taoism, Confucianism, and Zen Buddhism, Sepehri argues for the comparably more favourable nature of the Eastern *Weltanschauung*.

The decade of poetry comprised in this compendium constitutes the next and arguably richest formative period of Sepehri's development. Having completed his studies, Sepehri travelled abroad frequently and translated poems from French, English, Chinese, and Japanese, and experimented widely with language, writing blank and metered

verse, prose poetry (e.g. *Sayeh* 'Shadow'), and poems written in folk and nursery rhyme meters (e.g. *Morgh-e Seda Tala'i* 'The bird with a golden voice'). He even tried his hand at French poetry. During this decade, Sepehri also studied Hindu mythology and Eastern philosophy, all of which had a direct impact on his aesthetics as poet and painter, and informed the central tenets of his nascent worldview.

Sepehri followed the call and in 1952 published *Zendegi-ye Khabha*, a collection of sixteen poems in blank verse depicting the surrealist dreamscapes of an introspective poet in search of his personal voice. *Gol-e Kashi* (Tile flower), *Nilufar* (Lotus), and *Safar* (Journey) offer glimpses into the preliminary stages of a language that was to become his signature voice, with the last two also providing the first examples of Zen, Buddhist, and Taoist influences on Sepehri's worldview. In *Yadbud* (Memento), for instance, a clock pendulum's perpetual motion in space and time emerges as a symbol of the Buddhist principle of perpetual reincarnation. Irani's influence on Sepehri's language is easily recognizable in this collection, as is the absence of Nimaic poetics. The poems' often convoluted language and their surrealist imagery further offer one of the earliest examples of the burgeoning homogeneity between form and content in Sepehri's work, in this instance reflecting the Taoist principle that 'Truth' defies verbal definition and can only be hinted at in such a way as to lead to an intuitive or mystical understanding of it.

(The freshness of faces wilted in the air of dichotomy
Let us come leave the shadow-lights
Let us stand on the dewdrop's edge, let us land in the leaf.
And should we see a foot print, let us follow the



ancient traveller) (*Hasht Ketab*)

Here, as elsewhere throughout the collection, the poem's language reflects Irani's influence, while further showing Sepehri's growing connection with nature and his increased belief in mankind's purpose in the universe. Throughout the collection, this and other poems like *Ay nazdik* (O near), *Faratar* (Beyond), and *Ku Qatreh-ye Vahm* (Where is the illusion drop) call on the reader to embark on a quest for 'Truth' through an unmitigated connec-



tion with nature. And to realize that *Ramz ha chon anar-e tarak khordeh nimeh shekofteh-and* (Mysteries, like cracked pomegranates, are in half-bloom; *Hasht Ketab*).

Sepehri's own quest took on a more mystical dimension in *Sharq-e Anduh*, a collection of twenty-five poems, many of which reflect the obvious influence of Rumi's *Divan-e Shams*, influence as much in ideology and content as in rhythm and inner rhymes. As evidenced by titles like *Bodhi* and *Vid* (Veda), and a language that frequently recalls the minimalist simplicity of haikus, *Sharq-e Anduh* further forges a peculiar combination of Sufism and Eastern philosophy. It ultimately offers the first glimpses of Sepehri's vision of a higher spiritual being: an omnipresent yet ever fleeting god whose presence can be experienced in everything from nature to random objects of daily life. The poems in *Sharq-e Anduh* also reveal Sepehri's broad view of all religions, their basic unity, and the futility of doctrinal dispute. This ideology is epitomized in *Suram ra* (My fervor). There he writes: "*Qoran bala-ye saram, balesh-e man Enjil, bestar-e man Towrat, va zirpusham Avesta, mibinam khab: Buda-i dar nilufar-e ab / Har ja golha-ye niyayesh rost, man chidam.* (The Quran above my head; my pillow the New Testament; my bed the Hebrew Bible; my undergarment the Avesta; I dream: a Buddha in the water lotus / Wherever a flower of prayer grew, I picked it). These verses, more than anything else, distinguish Sepehri from his contemporaries not only as a poet ceaselessly searching for a

unique personal voice, but further as a thinker propelled by an urgent drive to conceptualize and convey an universal vision of existence above and beyond the mundane socio-political dynamics of daily life. In 1965, Sepehri published his watershed poem *Seda-ye Pa-ye Ab*, a loosely autobiographical work that introduced not only the fourth phase in Sepehri's poetry in particular, but a novel and hitherto unique voice in modern Persian poetry. The poem revolves around a central dichotomy between the restrictive formalities of received knowledge and the dehumanizing materialism of modern times, on the one hand, and the need to reevaluate preconceived ideas and ultimately to attain a closer connection with nature, on the other hand. "Chashmha ra bayad shost," Sepehri advises, "jur-e digar bayad did" (We must wash our eyes; we must learn to see otherwise). This urgent call to see everything anew emerged as one of the major themes of all of Sepehri's subsequent poetry.

In his next long poem, *Mosafer*, Sepehri turns to ancient Persian, Hindu, and Abrahamic mythologies within the panoramic context of the world history, to elaborate on the mystical dimension of his thought, carrying faint echoes of Coleridge's (1772-1834) "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner" and subtle affinities with Eliot's (1888-1965) "The Wasteland." *Mosafer* comprises the tale of its traveller-persona, who upon arriving at a friend's home, recounts the story of his spiritual wanderings, a mythical soul journey through time and across lands, which ends with the Ulyssean lesson that Ithaca is an ever-fleeting ideal in time and space, always longed for, but never reached. This soul journey, together with the urge to see anew, lie at the core of Sepehri's next and most famous collection, *Hajm-e Sabz*.

A collection of twenty-five poems written between 1962 and the summer of 1967, *Hajm-e Sabz* comprises virtually all of Sepehri's best-known and most anthologized works. The first edition has a run of two thousand copies, twice the average print run of the time. *Neda-ye Aghaz* (Primeval call), *Vaheh-i dar Lahzeh* (An oasis in a fleeting moment), *Posht-e daryaha* (Beyond the seas), and *Neshani* (Address) are among the book's best received poems, each one rendering various aspects of the above delineated themes with the simplicity, frankness, and subtle urgency that have become emblematic of Sepehri's voice. The striking shift in *Hajm-e Sabz* is Sepehri's existential awareness of his loneliness in the world. It is also in this collection that the new poetic language Sepehri originally

introduced in *Seda-ye Pa-ye Ab*, takes on many of its unique and characteristic features, subsequently to become unmistakably associated with him.

Sepehri's language at this stage is characterized by his forging of unorthodox associations of words, conceptually elusive images, and semantically 'non-logical' utterances, to create a crisis of meaning in language; a crisis that ineluctably mobilizes the reader to reach beyond the familiarity of ordinary language ultimately to conceptualize an otherwise indescribable abstraction. A closer look at a section of one of Sepehri's most characteristic poems, *Neshani*, will help clarify the point. Looking for a friend's home, a horseman asks a passerby for directions. The passerby points to a tall aspen and replies:

*Just before the tree,
there is a lane greener than God's dream
where love is as blue as the feathers of truth.
Go to the end of that lane that leads behind puberty
Turn towards the flower of solitude,
two steps before the flower,
you will stop next to the immortal fountain of
Earthly myths
where a translucent fear takes hold of you.
There, in the fluid sincerity of the atmosphere,
you will hear a rustling:
You will see a child,
who has climbed up a tall pine tree,
to take a nestling from light's nest.
And there you ask the child:
where is the friend's house?*

While the passerby's simple diction and unquestionably familiar syntax give any speaker of colloquial Persian basic and easy-to-follow directions, the poem's abstract imagery and elusive concepts make for road signs that are essentially impossible to follow. Nevertheless, the delicate balance between the syntax's simplicity and the images' abstraction mobilize the reader to interject meaning where none otherwise exists, ultimately to recognize that the friend's house is an otherworldly place beyond the familiar and ordinary perimeters of day-to-day reality. Unlike Nima, who often coins new symbols out of concrete objects to convey abstract notions, Sepehri generates meaning through an association of an abstract image with an equally abstract concept, both expressed in a simple language.

While other features further contribute to the novelty of Sepehri's language, his success in generating easily accessible abstractions in a simple and highly economical language remains at the core of

his success in coining a language that has become infallibly associated with him that the echo of its influence remains recognizable to any reader of Persian modern poetry. In spite of Sepehri's achievement to introduce a novel language in the then fervent atmosphere of Persian modern poetic production, the publication of *Hajm-e Sabz* was met with an onslaught of mixed reviews. Mirroring this split in the Persian literati, two popular newspapers *Ayandegan* and *Keyhan* named *Hajm-e Sabz* the best book of the year, while others called it the worst. Perhaps the most notorious critique of the book, and indeed of Sepehri's poetry in general, was written at this same time by Reza Baraheni (b. 1935). It was in three consecutive issues of *Ferdowsi*, in which he famously referred to Sepehri as "an aristocratic Buddha-boy", sitting high in his holly ivory tower of sanctity and peace. Explicitly intended as a scathing remark, the implications of Baraheni's commentary were potentially devastating, at a time when political commitment was a central issue for a literati who defined literature as a political vehicle. The term "aristocratic Buddha-boy" not only dismissed Sepehri as a child in an ageist patriarchal society where authority can only be gained by virtue of life experience, but it further disenfranchised him from the Persian literati by associating him with a Far Eastern, hence alien, mystical figure who stands as a universal emblem of passivity and political disengagement.

More poignantly still, the term "aristocratic" also carried the subtle connotation of associating Sepehri with royalty, hence the court and the Shah: the quintessential 'Other' of the *mote'ahhed* literati. Baraheni was not alone in his opinion. Many, including Nader Naderpur, Mehdi Akhavan Saless (1928-1991), and Ahmad Shamlu (1925-1999) followed suit, some of whom consistently held the party line on the issue of Sepehri's poetics until the end of their lives. History, however, would prove the short-sightedness of this school of criticism about



Sepehri's work. Starting with the presumption that Sepehri was disconnected from his time, his critics failed to understand not only the depth of his commitment but also its very nature.

Recognizing many of the same problems in his world, as did his contemporaries, Sepehri's commitment was not defined by a call for social upheaval and political change, but rather by a drive to reform society through the perfection of the individual from within, and the concomitant belief that society's problems will invariably correct themselves upon the spiritual and emotional awakening of its people.

In 1979 Sepehri published his famous *Hasht Ketab*, a compendium of his previously published books - with some omissions and revisions of earlier poems - and a new series of poems written between 1967-1979 called *Ma Hich, Ma Negah*. The most abstract of Sepehri's poems, *Ma Hich, Ma Negah* constitutes the fifth and final phase in his poetic development. While many have criticized Sepehri for excessive abstractions that allegedly render these poems incomprehensible, others have succeeded in revealing the elusive yet profound philosophy that underlies them.

The key to decoding these admittedly abstract poems lies in the collection's title and its not so faint echo of a quote from the American transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson's (1803-1882) essay *Nature*: "I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing, I see all".

Reverberating this echo, the poems in the collection reflect the Emersonian idea that a direct union with nature can take mankind back to an Edenic state, void of the fixed social structures and inflexible belief systems that hinder spiritual evolution. Sepehri's exceptional economy of words, unorthodox phraseology, and elusive imagery convey this philosophy by forcing the reader actively to engage with an excessively abstract text ultimately to forge a new subjective meaning of life. Though unfinished, Sepehri's final work *Otaq-e Abi* remains nevertheless an indispensable tool in any serious study of Sepehri's work, as it provides invaluable insight into the workings of his mind, and reveals the breadth of his knowledge about various ideologies ranging from Taoism and Sufism to Hindu mythology and Jungian analytical psychology. More importantly, *Otaq-e Abi* offers a wealth of intertexts to Sepehri's poetry with concepts that elucidate not only some of his more abstract poems but also the techniques and symbolism of his painting.

Painting. As was the case with his poetry, the developmental course of Sepehri's painting can also be divided into various phases, each with its respective aesthetic features and thematic characteristics. Sepehri's meeting with Sheybani and his subsequent affiliation with *Khorus Jangi* marked the beginning of the second period in his painting. Like Hushang Pezeshknia, Jalil Zia'pur, Mahmud Javadipur and other early Persian modernist painters who moved away from Kamal ol-Molk's realist style to follow post-impressionist techniques as seen in Paul Cézanne's landscapes, Sepehri was now relying on colour-contrast and simplified geometric forms with heavy black outlines to express depth and space, rather than defining form with perspective, light, and shade. And though Sepehri's post-impressionist period in painting would prove as short as his Nimaic one in poetry, its central principles would stay with him throughout the remainder of his life as a painter. These include: a) emphasis upon volumes of space through simple geometric forms as the basis of composition; b) definition of form through colour rather than light and shade; and c) the use of series of planes in conveying principles of space, depth, and structural development from a flat surface.

In his vision of the world and of mankind's place within it, Sepehri believed above all in the importance of people's direct relationship with nature, one unencumbered by the anesthetizing effect of daily habits and preoccupations with preconceived ideas. Unwavering in his belief in a delicate yet essential unity between mankind, nature, and a greater cosmic order, Sepehri spent the length of his artistic life in search of the most effective expression of this central belief. To this end, he freely crossed over to a variety of myths and philosophies ranging from Zen Buddhism and Taoism to Sufism and European Romanticism, retaining from each those tenets most organically suitable to his vision. From romantic poets and Far Eastern philosophers he came to understand creative imagination as a necessary antidote to the banalities of ordinary life and a conduit to a higher, ideal state of spiritual awareness. Symbolic interpretations of myths, faraway places, and the historic past, and a profound subjective connection to nature are also themes Sepehri retained from Romanticism. While the reason for Sepehri's growing popularity both as poet and painter remain perpetually open to investigation, his influence on generations of artists after him is irrefutable.

Why is the UK economy lagging behind the US, Germany and others?



By Lucy Hooker
Business reporter, BBC News

The UK economy is struggling - and people are feeling it in their pockets, as wages fail to keep up with rising prices.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts the UK economy will shrink this year while every other major economy will grow.

The Bank of England also forecasts a recession in the UK in 2023 - albeit one that is shorter and less severe than previously forecast.

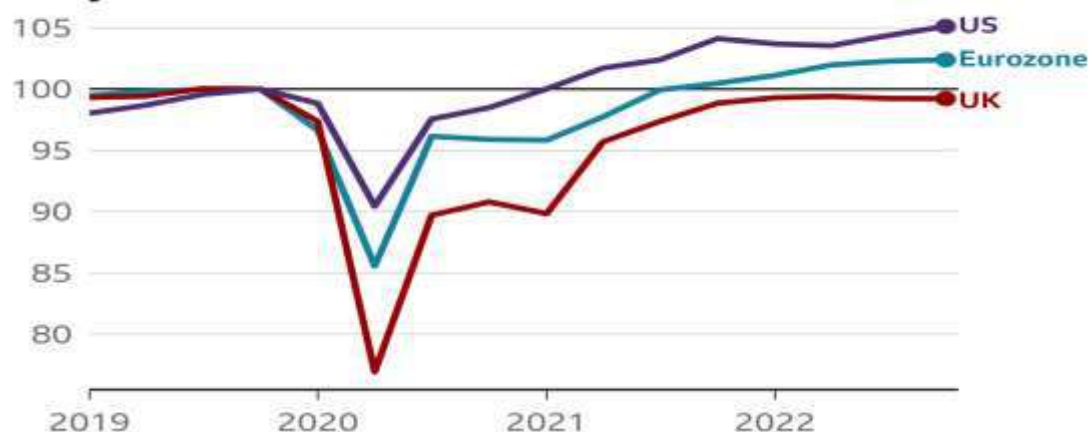
Perhaps it's not surprising the outlook is bleak given the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and soaring costs of both energy and food.

But why is the UK seemingly faring worse than other rich countries such as the US, Germany and France?

Is the UK really lagging behind?

Forecasts are never perfect. There are so many factors that affect economic growth - from geopolitics to the weather - that, inevitably, predictions often miss the mark. But they can point in the right direction. And the existing evidence shows other countries have taken less of a hit from the huge challenges of recent years than the UK has. Figures from the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which looks at how rich countries are performing, show the UK economy fell further than others in the first months of the pandemic. The UK's pace of recovery was fast once the economy reopened - but not fast enough to make up the lost ground.

Most major economies are now larger than they were at the end of 2019. The UK is not.

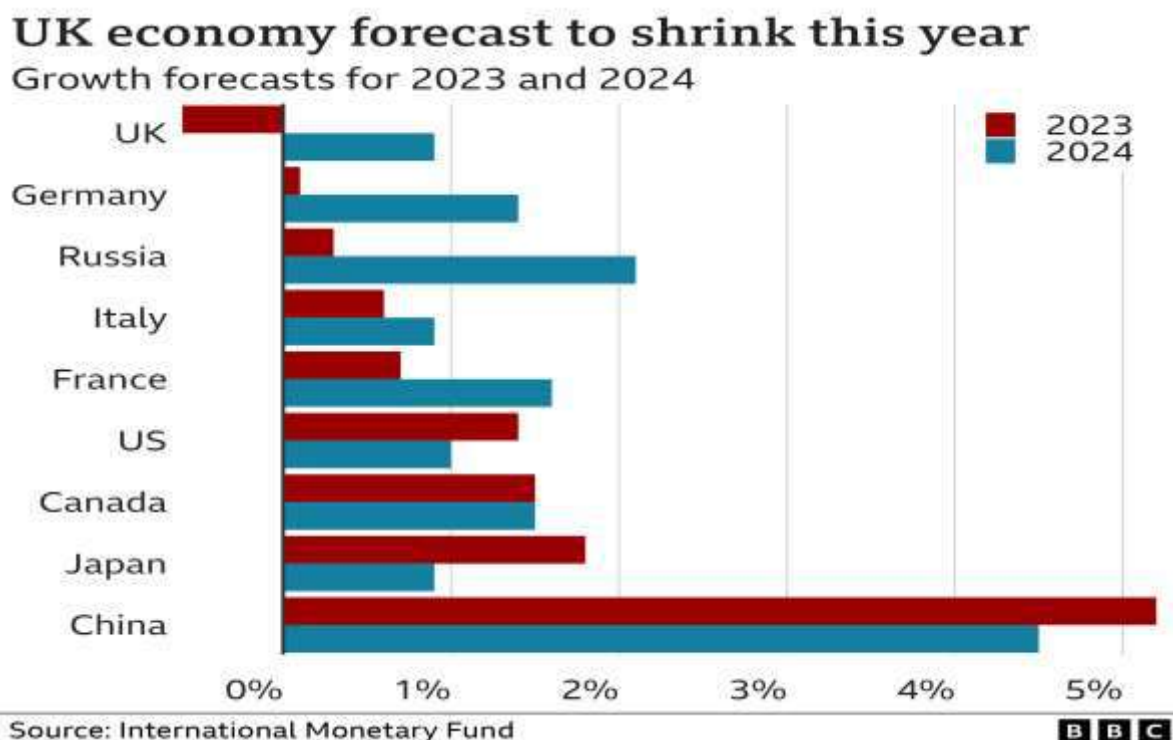


But the difference between the UK and others may not be quite as big as it appears.

That's because most countries measure the output of their public services, such as health and education, based on the costs - a nurse's wage, for example. In the UK they **are accounted for differently**, by valuing the services delivered - such as operations in hospital.

As a result, the UK's figures better reflect the impact of closed schools and cancelled operations during Covid, as well as disruption due to strikes.

The bigger picture, however, remains: the Bank of England and the IMF both expect the UK economy to shrink this year, while other G7 countries are expected to grow.



Some observers, including pro-Brexit economist Julian Jessop, believe the IMF was overly gloomy about the UK's prospects and that the differences under discussion - a percentage point here or there - are small.

Nevertheless, he says, there is still definitely "something to explain" about the UK's flagging economic performance.

Is it all down to Brexit?

Estimates about the cost of Brexit vary - according to a **report by Bloomberg** it is costing the UK economy roughly £100bn a year, and the economy is 4% smaller than it might have been if the UK had stayed in the EU.

"The EU is a very rich part of the world," says Carl Emmerson, deputy director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, an independent think tank. "And we've chosen, for better or worse, to make trade with that grouping of countries a lot more difficult, so it's clearly going to be something

that makes it harder for the UK economy to grow."

Business investment has stagnated since the referendum vote in 2016 too, he says - another "drag on growth". A Bank of England policymaker has said that **Brexit hit UK investment to the tune of £29bn**.

EU workers used to come freely to work in the UK but can no longer do so, making it hard for the hospitality, agriculture, and care sectors to find enough staff.

Julian Jessop is a fellow at the free market think tank the Institute of Economic Affairs and describes himself as a "Brexit optimist". He believes there are big potential gains from leaving the EU, but agrees there have been short-term economic costs.

"We're still in a sort of transition phase, where the negatives are dominating," he says. But he says those negatives are "smaller than people

have been arguing" and "more likely to be temporary, because a lot of them have to do with uncertainty and the process of adjustment".

What else is affecting the economy?

Energy costs

Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent global energy prices soaring - but the impact varies between countries.

The US has its own domestic sources of fossil fuels and some European countries have more alternative sources of energy, Mr Emmerson says. France, for example, has a large nuclear

network, and Norway has significant hydropower. "Britain is pretty exposed," he says.

Moreover, the way the UK prices electricity is based on the cost of gas, the most expensive form of electricity generation. That has pushed up bills across the economy and made inflation worse, Mr Jessop says.

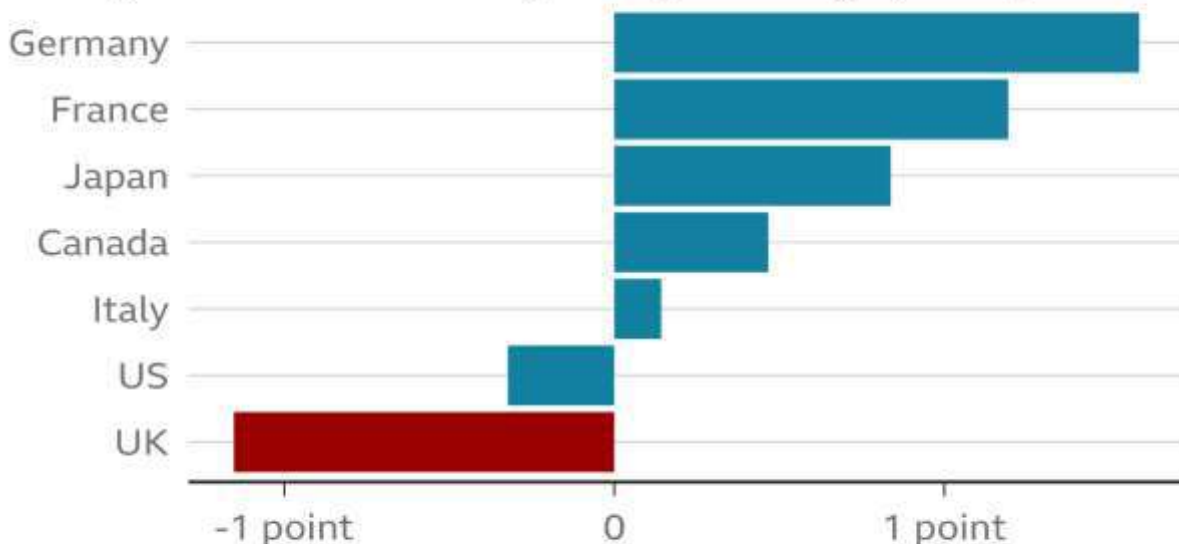
Workforce shortages

Most economies saw their workforce shrink during the pandemic.

But again, the UK is an outlier, with numbers failing to bounce back after the crisis.

UK's workforce not back to pre-pandemic size

Change in economic activity rate (percentage points)



Figures show the difference in economic activity rate between Q4 2019 and Q3 2022

Source: OECD data on 'G7' group of leading advanced economies.

BBC

Economists are still trying to work out why. It seems it is not just down to having fewer EU workers.

Young people have opted to study rather than work, older people have retired early, and more people are receiving long-term sickness benefits.

There are signs the workforce is starting to grow again, which could help boost growth and tax revenues later this year.

Long-term problems

There are also more fundamental reasons behind the UK's weaker performance, suggests Cambridge University economist Diane Coyle. While the economy has slowed since the financial crisis in 2008, the roots of the problems go

back much further, she argues, with investment in decline since the 1990s.

That left the economy lacking the resilience to cope with the triple shocks of Covid, Brexit and the war in Ukraine.

"That's down to the long-term weaknesses, long-term under investment, in the private and the public sector, [and] degradation of public services and infrastructure, which are just essential if the economy is going to grow," she says.

For its part, the government says the UK economy is resilient. Responding to figures showing that the UK narrowly avoided a recession in 2022, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt said the numbers showed "underlying resilience" - but added the country was "not out of the woods".

Pottery art in Meybod city of Yazd



Until now, Hamadan has enjoyed world fame as center for the production of all kinds of pottery, but according to the report of Majid Dehghanizadeh from Mehr News Agency :The art of pottery is one of the most beautiful and ancient crafts of Meybod city of Yazd province, showcasing the artistic taste of the people of Meybod.

In Meybod, the most commonly applicable potteries are made. One of the motifs used is Sun

depicted as a beautiful woman. Decorative foliage, birds, fish, and abstract motifs are some of the other designs of Meybod pottery.

After heating the products, they are covered with a layer of Doughab or slurry. Doughab is a mixture made of pure white clay, but its chemical components vary in each city. Different colors, glazed and heated for the last time then paint the potteries



Taq-e-Boustan

In

Kermanshah Province



Taq-e Boustan, a famous rock relief of Sassanid Persia



A Taq-e-Boustan carving depicts women playing changs (harps) while the king is hunting.

Taq-e-Boustan ("Arch of the Garden" or "Arch made by stone") is a site with a series of large rock reliefs from the era of the Sassanid Empire of Persia (Iran), carved around the 4th century CE.

This example of Persian Sassanid art is located 5 km from the city center of Kermanshah. It is located in the heart of the Zagros mountains, where it has endured almost 1,700 years of wind and rain. Originally, several sources were visible next to and below the reliefs and arches, some of which are now covered. Sources next to the re-

liefs still feed a large basin in front of the rock. The site has been turned into an archaeological park and a series of late Sassanian and Islamic column capitals have been brought together (some found at Taq Bostan, others at Mount Behistun and Kermanshah).

The carvings, some of the finest and best-preserved examples of Persian sculpture under the Sassanids, include representations of the investitures of Ardashir II (379–383) and Shapour III (383–388). Like other Sassanid symbols, Taq-e Bostan, and its relief patterns accentuate power,

religious tendencies, glory, honor, the vastness of the court, game and fighting spirit, festivity, joy, and rejoicing.

Sassanid kings chose a beautiful setting for their rock reliefs along an historic Silk Road caravan route waypoint and campground. The reliefs are adjacent to sacred springs that empty into a large reflecting pool at the base of a mountain cliff.

Taq-e Boustan and its rock relief are one of the 30 surviving Sassanid relics of the Zagros mountains. According to Arthur Pope, the founder of the Iranian Art and Archeology Institute in the United States of America, "art was characteristic of the Iranian people and the gift which they endowed the world with."

Description of the rock reliefs

The Taq-e Boustan complex comprise a rock relief standing on its own and several more reliefs associated with two rock cut arches. They illustrate the investiture ceremonies of the kings Ardashir II, Shapour, Shapour and Khosrow II. They also depict the hunting scenes of Khosrow II.

Investiture of Ardashir II

Main article: Coronation of Ardashir II

The Coronation of Ardashir II. Ardashir II appears in the middle, receiving the diadem from Shapour II on the right, with Mithra standing to the left. The fallen enemy is most likely the Roman emperor Julian.

The first Taq-e Boustan relief, and apparently the oldest, is a rock relief of the crowning ceremony of Ardashir II (379-383 AD) by his predecessor Shapour II or Ahura Mazda (although even the middle figure is wearing a Sassanian crown, with the balloon-like top/compartments [apparently to hold their hair in], and the figure to his left is the receiver of the ring; so he could not be Ahura Mazda, either). Researchers long debated the

identities of the figures in this relief but is now ascertained that Ardashir II receives the beribboned ring - symbol of royal investiture - from his predecessor Shapur II or Ahura Mazda. There may be a deliberate mixture of the iconography of both identities. The two main figures are standing on the fallen Roman emperor Julianus Apostata (361-363 AD). Ardashir played an important role in his defeat during the reign of Shapur II (309-379 AD). Exceptional within Sasanian art is the fact that this is a portrait, based on the image of Julianus Apostata as it appears on Roman coins. Ardashir II was installed as interim ruler, awaiting the coming of age of the royal heir Shapur III (383-388 AD). The fourth figure is the god Mithra who holds a barsom in his hands and stands on a lotus flower. He is the protector of oaths and is witness to this pact. Local beliefs and Persian folk tale interpreted the scene as the victory of the first Sasanian kings on Artabanus IV, the last king of the Parthian dynasty. The Mithra figure became the visual inspiration for representations of the prophet Zoroaster.

The relief panel is approx. 4.07 m wide and 3.9 m high.

Shapour II and Shapour III

The smaller arch or eywan (Taq-e Bustan II) has, on the upper part of the back wall, two Pahlavi inscriptions identifying two royal figures as Shapour II (Shapour the Great) and his son Shapour III. They are shown facing each other. The arch's vestibule measures 6 x 5 x 3.6 meters. It has been suggested as having been built during the reign of Shapour III and some put the date of its completion at 385 AD. However, the royal crown of Shapour III does not agree with those on his coins and is closer to that of his predecessor Ardashir II. It has been argued that the texts represent an usurpation of Artashat's relief by Shapour III. The translation of the inscriptions follows:

Shapour II inscription :

This is the figure of Mazda-worshipping Lord Shapour, the king of kings of Iran and Aniran, whose race is from the Gods. Son of Mazda-worshipping Lord Hormazd, the king of kings of Iran and Aniran, whose race is from the Gods, grandson of Lord Nersi, the Shahanshah (king of kings).

Shapour III inscription:

This is the figure of Mazda-worshipping Lord Shapur, the king of kings of Iran and Aniran, whose race is from the Gods. Son of Mazda-



worshipping Lord Shapur, the king of kings of Iran and Aniran, whose race is from the Gods, grandson of Lord Hormizd, the king of kings.



Medieval Sasanian Cataphract, Uther Oxford 2003 06 2(1)

The figures of the two kings have been carved in low relief, looking at each other. Each figure is ca. 2.97 meters. Shapur II is on the right and Shapur III is on the left. Their hands are placed on a long straight sword which point downwards. The right hand is holding the grip and the left rests on the sheath. Both figures wear loose trousers, necklaces, curled hair, and a pointed beard ending in a ring.

Eywan of Khosrow II

The three figures on the back wall of the large *ivan* are usually considered to represent Khosrow Parviz flanked by Ahura Mazda and Anahita. They are placed above a mounted Persian knight, thought to be Khosrow himself riding his favorite horse, Shabdiz. There is, however, no unanimity about the exact identification of this late Sasanian king. The two attending figures are sometimes considered to be a priest and a priestess, rather than the gods Ahura Mazda and Anahita themselves.

One of the most impressive reliefs inside the largest grotto or *ivan* is the gigantic equestrian figure of the Sassanid king Khosrau II (591-628 CE) mounted on his favorite charger, Shabdiz. Both horse and rider are arrayed in full battle armor. The front of the rock-cut arch bears delicately carved patterns showing the tree of life or the sa-

cred tree. Above the arch and located on two opposite sides are figures of two winged women with diadems.

Equestrian relief panel measured on 16.08.07 approx. 7.45m across by 4.25 m high

Scene of boar and deer hunting



Scene of boar hunting Khosrow II. The recurve bow used by the king is considered Hunnish.

On the right and left wall of the arch, there is a picture of the king's hunting measuring 3.8 X 5.7 meters. From the time of Cyrus the Great to the end of Sassanid period, hunting was one of the most favourite activities of Iranian kings. Therefore, scenes of hunting are frequently found next to those of crownings.

There are two hunting scenes on each side of the *ivan*. One scene depicts the imperial boar hunt, and in a similar spirit, the other scene shows the king stalking deer. Five elephants flush out the fleeing boars from a marshy lake for the king who stands poised with bow and arrow in hand while being serenaded by female musicians. In the next scene, another boat carries female harpists and shows that the king has killed two large boars. The next boat shows the king standing with a semicircular halo around his head and a loose bow in his hand, meaning the hunt is over. Under this picture, elephants are retrieving the game with their trunks and putting them on their backs. Several episodes of the royal hunt are thus shown at the same time. These royal hunting scenes are among the most vivid and highly narrative murals immortalized in stone. Panel depicting boar hunt measured on 16.08.07 as approx. 6.0 m wide x 4.25 m high Panel depicting deer hunt measured on 16.08.07 as approx. 5.9 m wide x 4.35 m high

Dowlatshah Relief

Jumping 1300 years in time the upper relief shows the 19th century Qajar Governor in Kermanshah city, Dowlatshah carving a relief in a big arch.

World Bank mulls capital increase, climate focus in new reform plan

By *Shabtai Gold* // 03 January 2023 *



The World Bank main headquarters in Washington, D.C. Photo by: Franz Mahr / World Bank / CC BY-NC-ND

The World Bank is weighing a potential one-time capital increase, along with the ambitious idea that donor nations create a new concessional lending fund to address severe development challenges across all its client countries, according to a reform roadmap sent to shareholders.

The goal is to accelerate efforts to tackle climate change, increase the lender's capacity to fight poverty, and boost support to middle-income countries — including doing regional projects on cross-border challenges, in what would be a huge shift for the bank.

Notably, the 20-page evolution roadmap obtained by Devex says the bank's mission needs to more clearly reflect a focus on "global public goods," such as climate change and pandemic preparedness. This would also mean stepping up support to climate-vulnerable countries, even if their income levels place them above the poverty lines for the most concessional lending.

"The effects of climate change on growth are becoming more visible," the bank wrote in the doc-

ument sent out in late December, noting that lower-income countries' economies are hit the hardest.

The bank put together the roadmap following a landmark speech on reforms by U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, as she and other key shareholders demanded an overhaul to make the lender fit to face global challenges such as climate change and the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the document, the bank lays out a framework for what it dubs an "iterative" back-and-forth with shareholders over the coming 10 months to work out the pathway to reform, including a set of negotiations due to take place before the bank's Spring Meetings in April.

In a letter to shareholders that was also obtained by Devex, bank president David Malpass said the roadmap is "a key step in the consultative process to update our mission, strengthen our operating model, and improve our financial model and capacity."

Additionally, the bank is considering ways to do more projects involving multiple countries while maintaining its core model focused on country-specific lending. The new approach could facilitate regional efforts to step up clean energy or health initiatives to mitigate cross-border risks, which are “increasing in frequency and intensity,” the report said.

Conflicts are also spilling over borders, with the bank saying such violence must also be addressed to shore up development gains.

The roadmap bluntly states that the bank “must evolve its mission.” The momentum for reform gained steam this fall in the wake of Malpass’ now-infamous fumble on climate change. Reuters first reported on the call for a capital increase for climate finance.

Keeping AAA, increasing staff levels

Despite some calls from activists, there appears to be no appetite for damaging the bank’s AAA credit rating, which allows the bank to borrow cheaply on capital markets and then pass on the savings to countries. It also helps ensure the bank is not taking excessive risks.

Critics say the bank could increase some risk-taking without harming its rating — though pinpointing the precise amount is hard to do.

Malpass has repeatedly tried to assure staff that any changes will not be disruptive to their work lives. The roadmap calls for an increase in staffing to support higher levels of lending.

A bank “with an evolved Mission will require increased staffing and budget resources to deliver high-quality operations with concrete country, regional, and global development outcomes,” the roadmap said.

Malpass had previously spelled out some of his plans in a note to staff in November. And in an interview with Devex just before the conference of parties COP 27, he insisted he embraced the calls for reform.

He is under pressure to move quickly, with a Treasury official saying the need to enact significant changes is “unequivocally clear.”

Yellen had even suggested the option of using more concessional finance to wean middle-income countries off coal, and recently the Group of Seven major economies has been supporting coal transition projects in South Africa, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

Middle-income country syndrome

In the roadmap, the bank said that middle-income countries are “instrumental to achieving progress on global challenges.” They also tend to have more private sector involvement, creating more opportunities for innovative finance like sustainable bonds and blended finance projects, which will let the bank leverage its role as a “trusted intermediary.”

The roadmap includes a section questioning whether country income levels should be the sole criteria for concessional lending, proposing that vulnerability to climate shocks could be substitutes for poverty criteria.

This lends itself to the option to create a new concessional fund that could be accessed by middle-income countries, which often end up unable to tap the cheapest loans from the development banks but often still face demands for high yields on capital markets, especially in the current interest-rate environment.

Reform benchmarks over the coming 10 months include workshops with shareholders on the “three building blocks” of the reform, defined as the bank’s mission, operating model, and financial model. These will effectively be negotiating tables for the proposals.

The bank will seek consensus on possible low-hanging fruit at the April meeting and then arrange another set of talks leading up to the Annual Meeting in October

Among the other options laid out in the document are “balance sheet optimization” — meaning unlocking more value from the current resources — and a “moderate reduction” to the minimum equity-to-loan ratio, a proxy measure for risk, which would “enhance the efficiency of capital utilization.”

About the author

***Shabtai Gold:**

Shabtai Gold is a Senior Reporter based in Washington. He covers multilateral development banks, with a focus on the World Bank, along with trends in development finance. Prior to Devex, he worked for the German Press Agency, dpa, for more than a decade, with stints in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, before relocating to Washington to cover politics and business.



The UK economy has a London problem

but it's not what you think



CHRIS GILES

In popular and political discourse, London is often portrayed as a giant leech, sucking the life out of the rest of the UK. It gobbles up the money, the public spending, the best jobs and talent from other towns and cities, creating the need for “levelling up”. If this was ever true, it could not be a worse description of UK economic trends over the past 15 years. Ever since the global financial crisis, London’s annual productivity growth of 0.2 per cent has been lower than the 0.3 per cent achieved in the rest of the UK. This contrasts with the decade before 2007, when the capital achieved annual productivity gains of 3.1 per cent, compared with 1.7 per cent elsewhere. The UK economy does therefore have a London problem. It is that the capital is no longer boosting output and incomes as it once did.

New research from the Centre for Cities think-tank shows that the collapse in London’s productivity growth accounts for 42 per cent of the UK’s overall productivity puzzle since 2007, even though it houses only 15 per cent of the population and accounts for 25 per cent of economic output. In many respects, the problem of weak productivity growth in the capital reflects the one clear finding about the causes of the UK’s growth slowdown since the global financial crisis. It has

been concentrated in the nation’s most productive sectors, best companies and most dynamic regions. The UK’s London problem is not part of a wider trend, according to the Centre for Cities, and has not been replicated in comparable cities such as New York or Paris.

This matters for everyone in the UK. With progressive taxation and higher incomes in the capital, economic weakness in London leads to worse public services across the country. Average Londoners paid £4,519 more in tax than they received in public spending in 2019-20 while Britons as a whole received a net government subsidy of £820. If you’re worried about being on an NHS waiting list in Leeds or burglaries in Bradford, you should be gunning for London’s economy to be stronger.

The Centre for Cities makes a strong case that catastrophic property policies lie at the heart of this new weakness. Commercial property rents have risen remorselessly even as productivity has stagnated, potentially squeezing money available for more productive investment and raising the share of London’s economy devoted to real estate management. High residential property costs — both rents and house prices — make the city less attractive to high-productivity migrants.

Half of world on track to be overweight by 2035

By Alys Davies
BBC News



More than half the world's population will be classed as obese or overweight by 2035 if action is not taken, the world obesity Federation warns.

More than four billion people will be affected, with rates rising fastest among children, its report says.

Low or middle-income countries in Africa and Asia are expected to see the greatest rises.

The report predicts the cost of obesity will amount to more than \$4tn (£3.3tn) annually by 2035.

The president of the federation, Prof Louise Baur, described the report's findings as a clear warning to countries to act now or risk repercussions in the future.

The report in particular highlights the rising rates of obesity among children and teenagers, with rates expected to double from 2020 levels among both boys and girls.

Prof Baur said the trend was "particularly worrying", adding that "governments and policymakers around the world need to do all they can to avoid passing health, social, and economic costs on to the younger generation" by assessing "the systems and root factors" that contribute to obesity. The effects of obesity's prevalence on lower-income countries is also highlighted in the report. Nine of the 10 countries with the greatest ex-

pected increases in obesity globally are low or lower-middle income states in Africa and Asia.

Reasons include trends in dietary preferences towards more highly processed foods, greater levels of sedentary behaviour, weaker policies to control food supply and marketing, and less well-resourced healthcare services to assist in weight management and health education.

Lower-income countries are "often the least able to respond to obesity and its consequences".

The findings estimate that rises in obesity rates around the world will have a significant impact on the global economy, equating to 3% of global Gross Domestic Product.

The report emphasises that its acknowledgement of the economic impact of obesity "is in no way a reflection of blame on people living with obesity".

The data published in the report will be presented to the UN on Monday.

Obese is a medical term used to describe a person with a high excess of body fat.

The report uses body mass index (BMI) to make its assessments. BMI is calculated by dividing an adult's weight by the square of their height.

Short Economic News

Iran Short Economic News:

Iran launches new private airline despite aviation sanctions

TEHRAN, Feb. 19 (MNA) – Iran has launched a new private airline despite American sanctions targeting the country's civil aviation sector.

Senior government officials from Iran's ministry of tourism attended a ceremony late on Friday to celebrate the launch of Yazd Air, a private airline which will be based in Yazd, a historic city in central Iran. The ceremony came after a first flight by Yazd Air from the capital Tehran landed at Yazd's Shahid Sadooghi airport.

The airline will use two Airbus A310s for flights to international destinations, which will include Najaf in Iraq, Dubai, Istanbul and Mumbai. Its fleet will also include two short-haul British Aerospace 146 planes for flights on domestic routes. Press TV quoted the IRNA news agency as saying that private investors had provided some 10 trillion rials (nearly \$22 million) for the launch of Yazd Air. It said the company will rely on Iran's second-largest airline Mahan Air for services in



its first two months of operation and then will set up its own offices after recruiting some 70 staff members. Head of the Iranian parliament's tourism committee Mohammad Reza Dashti said Yazd Air has major expansion plans to become one of the most reliable airlines in Iran. The launch of Yazd Air comes despite a series of unprecedented sanctions imposed by the US on the Iranian aviation industry. The sanctions have barred Iranian airlines from buying new planes or parts needed for aircraft repair.

Iran 2nd largest pistachio exporter to EU, China after US



Tehran, IRNA – Iran was the second largest pistachio exporter to European Union and China after the United States in 2022, according to a figure by the EU statistical office (Eurostat) and the Chinese customs office. The figures covered in a

Saturday report by the IRNA showed that Iran had exported 174 million euros worth of pistachio to the EU countries and China last year. Eurostat figures showed that Iran's pistachio exports to the EU had amounted to 111 million euros last year, down by more than 42% from 2021. Pistachio kernel exports to EU from Iran also declined by 25 million euros to 43 million euros in 2022, according to the same figures. The IRNA cited drought and declined production as main reasons for lower Iranian pistachio exports to the EU last year in 2021. It also cited figures by General Administration of Customs of China showing that exports of Iran's pistachio to the East Asian country had reached over 63 million euros last year, down by 82% compared to 2021.

Ongoing negotiations for Russian financing of Rasht-Astara railway

Tehran (ISNA) - Iran is considering the initial draft of the agreement for completion of Rasht-Astara Railway Project proposed on the part of Russia through the two ministries of Roads and Urban Development and Economic Affairs and Finance. The Russian's proposed draft of the agreement for financing construction of Rasht-Astara Railway is being considered at Iran Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance.

Iran deputy transport minister, Shahriyar Afandizadeh, informed of the news right after a video conference meeting with his Russian counterpart, stating that the initial draft of the agreement on the part of Russia for financing this strategic railway along the North-South Corridor with the length of 162 km is already under considerations by Iran.

In the meeting, the two parties decided to finalize the financing, design and implementation of the Astara-Rasht Railway project within three months. The technical issues related to the construction as well as the design of the technical structures throughout the route, including the bridges and tunnels, were also examined by the two sides which would be further discussed until reaching the final draft of the financing agreement, Afandizadeh explained. All the articles of the draft agreement should be subject to the regulations of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he further pointed.

After signing the above-mentioned agreement, the preliminary design should be done within 3 months and the final studies of the route within 6 months. The implementation of the project will begin at the end of 2023, and the Islamic Republic of Iran will also acquire the land needed for the construction of the railroad at intervals with-



out interrupting the implementation, Afandizadeh emphasized to his Russian counterpart during the virtual meeting.

Deputy Transport Minister of Roads and Urban Development, pointing to the geographical location of Iran at the center of the North-South and East-West transport corridors, said with current infrastructure, the use of multi-modal transport is an effective solution to improve transit throughout Iran which can be drawn on till the completion of the Astara-Rasht Railway.

He further mentioned that Iran expects the Russian Federation to make the necessary arrangements and commitments for at least 15 million tons of freight transit annually through this route in the future after the completion of Rasht-Astara section. He also said this necessitates a trilateral agreement between Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Moreover, Afandizadeh informed of the preliminary agreements reached in the meeting for a common tariff for freight transit along the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) in the territories of these three countries.

Non-oil exports from Chabahar Port grow by 3.5 times

Tehran (ISNA) - The non-oil exports from the Chabahar Port grew by 3.5 times and the loading/unloading operations showed 5.5 percent growth since March 2022 compared to the same period in the last year. The non-oil exports from Chabahar Port grew by 3.5 times during nine

months since March 2022 compared to the same period in the last year, according to the director-general of Sistan and Baluchistan's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO).

The loading and unloading operations have also had 5.5 percent increase. The enhanced coordi-



nation between the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line (IRISL) and the Ports and

Maritime Organization (PMO) has led to the launch of regular lines from and to the Chabahar Port and increase of container operations. Moreover, the costs of container operations have decreased along the routes of Southeast Asia, India, and the Persian Gulf countries.

In this sense, the first 6,500 TEU container ship from the Southeast Asia arrived at Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar on December 31.

Provision of good services for all commodities, reducing the costs, and increasing freight and ship transports in Chabahar are among top priorities of Chabahar Port for optimal use of current infrastructures and development of marine businesses.

Tehran-Mashhad high-speed rail on agenda

Tehran (ISNA) - After Isfahan-Qom-Tehran high-speed rail as one of the strategic infrastructural transport projects in Iran, Iranian Transport Minister informed of the start of the initial studies for Tehran-Mashhad high-speed rail.

Iran Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Rostam Ghasemi in his provincial visit to Mashhad on 27-28 October, informed of launching studies for the Tehran-Mashhad high-speed rail.

The initial study is to be finalized in two months, he added.

Isfahan-Qom-Tehran high-speed rail, as one of the strategic infrastructural transport projects in Iran, is currently under construction since 2015. Moreover, as another important infrastructural project, the construction of an airport city in Mashhad is also under study. The project is the second important project in Mashhad with national importance.

The deputy transport minister and head of the Construction and Development of Transporta-



tion Infrastructure Company of Iran, Kheirollah Khademi, also said that construction of 1300 km highways in Razavi Khorasan Province with 30 percent development will be completed in 3 years.

Khademi also informed of two freeways projects in this province. One of these projects will be financed with a 70% share from Khatam-al Anbiya as the investor and 30% from the government. The government provides its share through land acquisition and land barter.

Zahedan-Khash railroad inaugurated

Tehran (ISNA) - The seventh and eighth parts of Chabahar-Zahedan Railroad as the largest railway project in Iran was inaugurated, which stretches from Zahedan to Khash.

Zahedan-Khash Railway as a part of the largest infrastructural project in the east of Iran namely Chabahar-Zahedan-Sarakhs Railroad was inaugurated during a formal ceremony attended by

related officials including first vice president of Iran, Mohammad Mokhber.

Zahedan-Khash Railroad project is 155 km with 1 tunnel, 12 large bridges, 21 level crossings, and 7 stations.

‘It is expected that a significant part of the cargo and passenger transport on the Zahedan-Kash route will be transferred to the rail sector, so that while developing freight transit, we will witness a reduction in road accidents in this route’, the Deputy Minister and CEO of the Company of Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures, Kheirollah Khademi, added.

Khademi pointed out that Chabahar has a national and international role in the development of Sistan and Baluchistan Province and the connection of this region to the high seas provides a basis for development of different industries.

He continued: ‘considering that Chabahar would be a hub of trade and transit of the region, completing and launching the Chabahar-Zahedan Railroad will significantly expand commercial transactions and promote development of the southeastern provinces of Iran’.

Chabahar-Zahedan Railroad in Iran (about 630 km) is very strategic along the International



North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) as it provides rail connectivity to the ocean port of Chabahar.

According to the schedule, with allocation of 7,000 billion tomans credit, Chabahar-Zahedan Railroad will be finished within 2 years, according to the Governor of Sistan and Baluchistan Province.

The construction of Chabahar-Zahedan Railroad project started in 2013 in eight parts and with a physical progress of 62%, it is currently under completion. The Zahedan-Khash section, which was inaugurated, comprised the seventh and eighth parts.

IAEA Chief Grossi arrives Tehran for bilateral talks

TEHRAN, Mar. 03 (MNA) – International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi arrived in Tehran on Friday with discussing the Iranian nuclear program on agenda.

Upon his arrival at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport, IAEA chief Grossi was officially welcomed by Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

Grossi is scheduled to meet with Iranian officials and discuss issues related to the Iranian nuclear program during his two-day visit to Tehran.

Earlier this month, international atomic monitors in Iran claimed that they found uranium enriched to 84% of purity.

On Wednesday, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) rejected accusations that the country is enriching uranium to 84 percent purity, asserting that there has been “no deviation” in Iran’s peaceful nuclear activities. In relevant devolvement, also Behrouz Kamalvandi,



the AEOI spokesman said in an interview with Mehr correspondent in Tehran last week "It is normal to see 84% atomic particles in an enrichment process. It means that we may produce 5% [enriched uranium] and see 11% particles, or we may produce 20% but see 37% particles."

IBCCIM's New Members

Member Companies:

Iranian Sahand Generator Co.: Designing and producing all kinds of generators and motors and electrical and agricultural machines, M.D.: Majid Rostami, Address: Postal Code: 1387633141, No. 1, Fath 29 St., Fath Highway, Tehran, Tel: +98 (21) 66803100-66791387, Email: shina.gavari@irdgco.com .

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Fani & Sakhtemani Rad Mechanic Ahwaz Co.: Oil & Gas & Petrochemical Contracting, M.D.: Saeid Bahmanirad, Address: Postal Code:

1433674366, Flat No. 82, 8th Floor, No. 37, in the corner of 13th St., asad Abadi St., Tehran, Tel: +98 (21) 88554616, Fax: +98 (21) 88555680, Email: info@radmechanic.com .

Enison Phrmaceutical & Lab Ind. Co.: Pharmaceutical & Laboratory, M.D.: Saghi Bagherinia, Address: Postal Code: 1584843159, Second Floor, No. 43, South Kheradmand St., Karimkhan St., Tehran, Tel: +98 (21) 88842010, Fax: +98 (21) 88826341, Email: info@enidonlabs.com .

Saman Asa Co.: Research, industrial and commercial collection, in the field of production and distribution of orthopedic and medical aids, M.D.: Mehdi Gholizadeh, Address: Post-alcode: 154984855, Flat No.2, 5th floor, west entrance, Arian Tower, No. 232, Mirdamad Boulevard, Tehran, Tel: +98 (21) 22258264, Fax: +98 (21) 22258270, Email: info@paksama.ir .

Rabi Seir Hasti Co.: Tourism, M.D.: Mohsen Rabiei, Address: Postal Code: 1453746346, Flat No. 402, Forth Floor, Entrance B, Almas Building, Khosro Intersection, SattarKhan, Tehran, Tel: +98 (21) 44297026, Email: info@rabiseir.com .

Raze Aseman Paytakht Co.: Tourism, M.D.: Meisam Govahi, Address: First Floor, No. 32, Beheshti St., Shariari St., Tehran, Tel: +98 (21) 57691000 Fax: +98 (21) 57691000, Email: meisam.govahi@yahoo.com .

Key Economic Indicators			
Population and Labor Force			External Sector (million USD) (First three months 1401)
Population(1401)	84.7	Million	Current Account Balance 7.845
Urban	64.7	Million	Trade Balance (goods account) 9.157
Rural (2)	20.0	Million	Exports (FOB) 25.604
Population Growth	0.8	Present	Imports (FOB) 16.447
Population Density	51.4	Per. Sq. km.	Total External Debt (end of period) 7.246
Economically Active Population (1401, Q1)	26.0	Million	Exchange Rate (USD/Iranian Rial) Official Rate 42.000
Unemployment Rate(1401,Q1)	9.2	Percent	
Urban areas	10.1	Percent	
Rural	6.4	Percent	
Female	16.1	Percent	
Male	7.8	Percent	
Population of 18-35 years old	16.6	Percent	
Population of 15-24 years old	24.0	percent	
Source: Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) includes non-resident population.			Growth in Monetary and Credit Aggregates (percent) (Khordad 1401 compared with Esfand 1400)
			Broad Money (M2) 5.6
			Money (M1) 14.2
			Non-sight Deposits (Quasi-Money) 3.4
			Deposits of Non-public Sector 5.7
Real Sector (1401, Q1)			
GDP Growth (1395)			
Oil	2.3	Percent	
Non-oil	2.2	percent	
Performance of 1401,Q1 (current prices, million rials)	21.031		Tehran Stock Exchange (1401-Q1) Tehran Stock Exchange Price Index (TEMPIX) (end of the Period) 1.539.632
GDP (at basic price)	4.493		Value of Shares and Rights Traded Rls. 2.437.3 Trillion
Gross Fixed Capital Formation	4.493		
Private Consumption Expenditures	9.124		Number of Shares and Rights Traded 525.8 Billion
Public Consumption Expenditures	2.280		

Source: Central Bank

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info@britona.co.uk



239 High Street Kensington
London W8 6SN, UK

Parham Information

Registration Information

Name: Parham Construction Company (P. J. S.)

Head Office: 17, Varshow St. Nejatollahi (Villa Avenue), Tehran, Iran, Postal Code 15986-89611.

Telephone No: (+9821) 8890-1799, 8890-3389, 8890-0669

Fax No: +98-21-88905378

Web Site: www.parhamco.com

Email Address: Info@parhamco.com

Date of Establishment: Nov. 1959



Board of Directors & Senior Management:

Managing Director: Ali Akbar Khodabakhshi, M.Sc. in Civil Engineering, Tehran University, 1971

Chairman of the Board: Sadeh Adib Samii

Vice Chairman: Mohammed Reza Moussavi Kermani

Profile

Parham Construction Company, is one of most prestigious Iranian construction company was established in 1959, ever since it has been a leading and reliable heavy civil engineering contractor in the Iranian market. With having at its disposal, large fleet of construction plants and deep foundation machinery as well as technical expertises, Parham is capable of conducting all types of deep foundation works (even at the hardest conditions onshore and offshore).

Parham Construction Company, is also applying Dywidag System International of Germany (DSI) specifications; equipment and material for pre-stressing and post-tensioning works, related to Tie rods, Bridges, Buildings, Towers, Tunnels, Slope stabilization and other civil application above and underground.

Parham Construction Company, is the first Iranian Contractor for execution of in situ concrete piles with different types of excavation and also piling with soldier pile system, and equipped with different kind of machinery for deep foundation, piling, excavation, and insitu piles.

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

This system has been installed in basin No. 1 of Amirabad commercial port and all complementary design and construction stages were supervised & implemented by Parham's technical staff.

In recent years, Parham with emphasize on his experiences and technical staff, exerted the value engineering and offered optimum plan in big and important national projects, and caused quality improvement, cost benefit and reduction in time of projects. In this regard, Anzali port development (10 wharfs), Amirabad commercial port (9 wharfs) and multi purposes berth in South Pars Energy Special Economic Zone (5 wharfs) could be mentioned.

Field of Activities:

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

Qualification:

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

Class1: In The Field Of Road & Transportation.

Class5: Oil & Gaz.

