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Iran's Balanced Position Debunked Western Narrative of Vienna Talks

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Macron phones Raisi, says Biden firm to bring Vienna talks to result

TEHRAN — Moments after the first day of the talks in Vienna ended on Monday, French President Emmanuel Macron called his Iranian counterpart, Ebrahim Raisi to discuss points raised during the talks.

In the phone call, Raisi said Iran has always adhered to its nuclear commitments and “the International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly confirmed Iran’s adherence.”

Raisi said sending a well-staffed team to the negotiations shows the serious will of Iran in putting the JCPOA on the right track.

Raisi urged the French president to work with other countries in Vienna to conclude negotiations and lift sanctions on Iran.

“Sanctions have not been able to stop Iran on the path of progress, and today the whole world knows who the violators of the JCPOA are and they must return to their obligations,” the president emphasized.

Raisi stressed that the current situation is the result of the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal and failure by Europeans to fulfill their obligations under the JCPOA. ► Page 2

Op-ed

Thanksgiving massacre in America

TEHRAN – A video that has gone viral showing machine gun fire erupting in Chicago reflects the reality of gun violence on the streets of the United States. As the quite long “thanksgiving” holiday celebrations subdues; police and medics are left to pick up the pieces. But ever since the Coronavirus Pandemic, police and medics are working overtime as gun violence incidents are spiking and breaking records once again. Unfortunately that means more casualties, more victims and more parents without children and more children without parents.

Following this year’s thanksgiving holidays in Chicago, apart from the sounds of machine gun fire terrifying families in the middle of the night, at least five people have been killed in separate shooting incidents while 41 others have been injured (that’s in Chicago alone). It’s the kind of news you tend to hear from a war zone or the aftermath of a terrorist attack. But this unfortunately has become the norm in America. It should perhaps be labeled as acts of terror, but that designation has been left out for political reasons. America with this much acts of terror means the country isn’t exactly a secure, safe place to visit and that doesn’t look well for America’s image on the international arena.

Other footage coming out of Chicago shows a vehicle overturned at an intersection with two people inside. So far this year, shooting incidents in the city have seen a nine percent spike, jumping to 3,221 from 2,960 in 2020. Police say shootings in the Chicago area have been made more dangerous by cheap and easy to buy metal switches that turn guns into even more lethal automatic weapons. Another “scary and dangerous” threat police will now have to face and confront on the streets. ► Page 5

Iran-EU 9-month trade up 2% yr/yr

TEHRAN – The value of trade between Iran and the European Union reached €3.4 billion during the first nine months of 2021, a two-percent growth compared to the same period last year.

According to the data released by the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), Iran exported €554 million worth of commodities to the union during the said nine months, while importing goods valued at €2.7 billion, Mehr News Agency reported.

The trade between Iran and the European Union during the first nine months of 2020 stood at €3.345 billion, the TCCIMA data showed.

Based on the mentioned data, the exports from Iran to Europe in the said nine months increased by 14 percent, while the imports have dropped 0.6 percent year on year.

Iran had exported €563 million worth of commodities to the European Union states in the nine-month period from January to September 2020, registering a 13-percent rise compared to the same period in 2019.

Meanwhile, Iranian exports to the union in September declined 23 percent as compared to the figure for the previous months, the data showed.

20% of homegrown COVID vaccines permitted for export

TEHRAN – The Ministry of Health has issued a license to export 20 percent of the domestically produced coronavirus vaccines, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Given that the country’s need is met in terms of vaccination, the Ministry of Health approved to export 20 percent of domestically produced vaccines, Kamal Heydari, the deputy health minister, said.

“We intend to use domestic products in the reminder dose and measures have been taken in this regard,” he stated, adding, homegrown vaccines have good immunogenicity and efficacy to be booster doses.

Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has announced on Sunday that from now on no coronavirus vaccines will be imported to the country, emphasizing that the priority is given to domestic products.

Homegrown vaccines

According to the Food and Drug Administration, 14 vaccines are being domestically developed in the country which are in different study phases.

Made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, COVIRAN

Foodstuff and livestock, beverages and tobacco, raw materials, mineral fuels, and vegetable oils have been the main commodities Iran exported to the European countries during the said time span, while foodstuff, beverages and tobacco, mineral fuels, vegetable oils, and chemicals also accounted for the largest share of imports.

Germany, Italy, and Spain have been the main export destinations for Iranian goods, while Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands were the top exporters to Iran among European nations. ► Page 4

BAREKAT was unveiled on December 29, 2020, and received the license for public use on June 14.

It proved effective against Indian strain, according to Hojjat Niki-Maleki, head of the information center of Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam.

Developed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, Razi Cov Pars is the second Iranian-made vaccine that started the clinical trial on February 27.

Fakhra vaccine, the third domestically-developed COVID-19 vaccine, was unveiled and started the clinical trial on March 16.

Lately, the Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use license for two other domestic vaccines of Razi Cov Pars and Fakhra.

The Iranian-Australian Spikogen vaccine and Pastu Covac, developed jointly by the Pasteur Institute of Iran and Cuba’s Finlay Vaccine Institute, are other homegrown vaccines, which have received the emergency use license.

Iran is one of the few countries that has all vaccine production platforms, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, former head of the Iranian Food and Drug Administration, said in June.

Iran has entered Vienna talks in good faith, Iran FM tells UN chief

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and UN Secretary General António Guterres have held talks over the phone about regional and international issues including the developments in Afghanistan and the nuclear talks in Vienna.

The phone conversation came after Iran and the P4+1 group of countries – Russia, China, France and the UK plus Germany – resumed the Vienna talks on how to remove U.S. sanctions on Iran after a months-long hiatus.

Amir Abdollahian reiterated in the telephone call that despite the violation and inaction of the U.S. and the European troika, Tehran has attended the Vienna talks in good faith and is trying to reach a good agreement, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

The Iranian foreign minister enumerated the characteristics of a good deal, saying the other side must return to full compliance with its obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). ► Page 3

Doc on how Gen. Soleimani broke ISIS’ Amerli siege produced

TEHRAN – Iranian filmmaker Hamed Hadian has made a documentary portraying how General Qassem Soleimani, the martyred Quds Force chief, led the massive operation to break the 89-day siege of the northern Iraqi town of Amerli by the ISIS terrorists.

He attended a press conference held on Tuesday at the School of Hajji Qassem Foundation in Tehran to brief the media about the documentary entitled “360° Siege”.

Elamite clay tablet discovered in southwest Iran

TEHRAN – A clay tablet, estimated to date from the Elamite era (c. 2700 – 539 BC), has recently been discovered in southwest Iran.

The tablet which bears cuneiform inscriptions was found during a cultivation process on a personal farm in Ramhormoz county [of Khuzestan province], a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage said on Monday.

“According to examinations conducted by experts of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the object has been assessed to date from the Elamite era,” the

police commander said, CHTN reported.

The official, however, did not provide further detail about the prehistorical piece of document.

Last November, French archaeologist Francois Desset publicized that he had deciphered a 4400-year-old cuneiform bas-relief in a study, which he said might be a “cultural revolution” in the history of writing in the world scene. This writing system was practiced for more than a century, at the end of the third millennium and the beginning of the second millennium BC, on the vast plateau of Iran and Elam territory. ► Page 6

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Interview

Any forum about security in West Asia without Iran is futile: Singaporean professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Bilveer Singh, a Singaporean professor, believes that any dialogue about security of the region without Iran is time wasting.

“Iran is a key state in the Middle East (West Asia) and by excluding Iran from the Manama Dialogue, any discussion on comprehensive security makes a mockery of the concept and intent to create and establish anything to do comprehensive security in the Middle East (West Asia),” Singh, who specializes in international relations, tells the Tehran Times.

The Manama Dialogue 2021 was held recently in the Bahraini capital under the leadership of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Bahraini Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

U.S. Secretary of Defense, Lloyd J. Austin, said in the forum that Washington is not going to quit West Asia.

The three-day conference brought military and political leaders from the GCC and other countries together to discuss issues relevant to the Persian Gulf region.

“This type of comprehensive security is illusory and delusional,” Singh notes.

Pointing to Iran’s crucial position in West Asia, he says. ► Page 5



Taremi shortlisted for FIFA Puskas Award 2021

TEHRAN – Iranian forward Mehdi Taremi has been shortlisted for the FIFA Puskas Award 2021.

The star’s sensational bicycle kick goal for Porto against Chelsea has been short-listed for the award.

His goal came deep into added time in the UEFA Champions League quarter-final second leg on April 13, though it was not enough to prevent Porto from being eliminated by the eventual winners. ► Page 3

Macron phones Raisi, says Biden firm to bring Vienna talks to result

From page 1 ► Referring to the recent visit to Tehran by Rafael Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency and his admission that Iran is adhering to its nuclear obligations, the president said that the IAEA chief did not say anything about Iran's non-compliance while he was in Iran.

"We are ready to continue our full cooperation with the Agency," Raisi reiterated.

Raisi then emphasized that those who have started violating the JCPOA, must gain the trust of the other side so that the negotiations can proceed in a productive manner.

Referring to his conversation with the head of Iran's negotiating team in Vienna and the clear prospects for resolving the sanctions issue, the president said, "If the Americans lift the sanctions and the Europeans live up to their commitments, do not worry about fulfilling Iran's commitments. Because we have shown many times in practice that we are committed to our commitments."

Raisi reiterated that Iran is seeking result-

oriented negotiations and the talks must lead to the lifting of sanctions.

The president said, "If you believe in the International Atomic Energy Agency as a reference, the same Agency has repeatedly stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran has complied with its nuclear obligations."

Raisi also called on the French president to work for the lifting of the oppressive sanctions and the fulfilment of the commitments made by the Americans and the Europeans.

For his part, Macron said that France considers the JCPOA as a "common responsibility."

"I have always tried to get all parties back to the deal framework," Macron said.

He added that he has spoken to Biden.

"I have had talks with U.S. President Joe Biden in this regard and we are determined to continue the talks to reach a conclusion."

In the end, the French president stated that France intends to continue talks with Iran to make progress in resolving issues.

Iranian team must only focus on result-oriented negotiations, MP says

TEHRAN- A member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian Parliament has said the new round of the Vienna talks, which started on Monday after a five-month break, must prove "fruitful" in lifting sanction on the Islamic Republic.

"The new message of this round of negotiations is that the talks must be fruitful and not as attritional and time consuming as before," Fada-Hosseini Maleki said, IRNA reported on Monday.

Maleki added, "In this round of talks, an effort is being made so that the Iranian negotiating team to manage the atmosphere of the talks."

The MP went on to say that the Western media outlets have launched a disinformation campaign to portray Iran as a side which is not serious in the talks.

On the contrary, he said, it is the European and American sides which have never been serious and refused to fulfill their obligations.

The U.S. under former president Donald Trump quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and returned the previous sanction that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear agreement and imposed new ones under different pretexts. The European signatories to the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also failed to honor their obligation in normalizing economic and financial sanctions with Iran.

The MP from Zahedan also assessed the foreign policy strategy of the new Iranian administration in line that of the parliament.

Maleki reiterated Tehran's position that the JCPOA is an agreement that has already been concluded and no negotiations are being held on it.

Iran has been insisting that the talks in Vienna must primarily focus on a verifiable lifting of sanctions.

"With regard to the JCPOA, only Iran fulfilled its obligations and none of the signatories fulfilled their obligations, and we witnessed that even some members of the deal did not condemn the U.S. action for withdrawing from this agreement."

Iran remained fully loyal to the JCPOA for a complete year after the U.S. quit the agreement. However, in May 2019 Iran started to gradually lift bans on its nuclear program as the European sides (France, Germany and Britain) failed to compensate Iran for the U.S. sanctions. At the time Iran announced if the Europeans honor their obligations under the agreement, it will reverse its decision.

'Composition of negotiating team an advantage for Iran'

Iran has sent a 40-member strong team consisting of diplomats as well as experts in financial, monetary, banking, and legal affairs to the Vienna talks, something which Maleki said is an "advantage" for Iran.

To underscore Iran's emphasis on lifting economic sanctions, the team includes deputy foreign ministers for economic and legal affairs, the deputy governor of the central bank and



its former chief, the deputy economy and oil ministers and the economic adviser to Iran's vice president.

The strategy is being adopted by the Supreme National Security Council and the chief negotiator had to use all the country's capacities so that the West does not have any excuses, MP Maleki said when asked about the composition of the Iranian team.

Maleki, a former diplomat, also said there should be an atmosphere of calm so that the negotiating team can ensure Iran's national interests based on its serious mission.

Mikhail Ulyanov, the Russian diplomat representing his country in the Vienna talks, in a tweet on Monday called the atmosphere both "heated" and amicable.

"Different. Different. Sometimes heated debates, sometimes very amicable discussion. But...the result is...the work will continue from where we left off on 20th June."

According to the New York Times, Enrique Mora of the European Union, who is chairing the talks, said that Iran "recognizes the work done in the past six rounds and the fact that we will be building on that." But he said that Iran was "insisting on sanctions lifting" immediately.

Iran's chief negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, the deputy foreign minister for political affairs, told reporters after the talks on Monday that Iran is insisting that the United States and its allies promise never to impose sanctions on Iran again.

An important step to keep the negotiations alive, Iran agreed to resume talks on Tuesday in one of three working groups established in earlier rounds — on which sanctions would eventually be lifted by the United States, the Times said.

The other two working groups, on the nuclear issue itself and on implementation and the sequencing of each country's actions in the event of a new deal, will not resume talks Tuesday.

Mora said the nuclear working group would meet on Wednesday. "There is a sense of urgency" to restore the nuclear deal, he said, but "there is no fixed timeline in my mind."

In an opinion article in the Financial Times on November 28, Bagheri Kani said his view that the very term "nuclear negotiations" is itself "rife with error."

Iran's first goal, he wrote, is "to gain a full, guaranteed and verifiable removal of the sanctions that have been imposed on the Iranian people." The talks, he said earlier this month, are "negotiations to remove unlawful and inhuman sanctions."

Vienna meeting left everyone optimistic

TEHRAN — While Iran, the United States and P4+1 resumed the Vienna talks on Monday, the whole world was eagerly waiting what would come out of Palais Coburg.

While the negotiations concluded in the evening, Russian envoy to the Vienna talks Mikhail Ulyanov tweeted that the meeting was "quite successful."

He then said that the sides agreed on "further immediate steps."

Later, the European Union coordinator Enrique Mora spoke to reporters waiting outside Palais Coburg.

He said that the meeting took longer than usual, since Iran's top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani discussed his points at length, clarifying where the new administration stands politically.

He further informed the press that Iran has agreed to resume the talks where it stopped on June 20th, yet has insisted to incorporate the new Iranian administration's "political sensibilities" into the talks.

Late on Monday, the Chinese envoy to the talks posted a series of tweets, clarifying Beijing's position.

"WANG Qun, at today's Joint Commission meeting of the #JCPOA, stressed that dialogue & negotiations are the only right way



to solve the #Iran #nuclear issue, & the US should lift all sanctions, inconsistent w/ JCPOA, against Iran & 3rd parties, including #China.

#China has always been committed to upholding the JCPOA & has worked hard to promote the early resumption of the above negotiations.

China hopes that all parties will seize the opportunity, adhere to the direction of political & diplomatic solutions, fully reflect goodwill & flexibility, respect each other's interests, create a good atmosphere & creatively resolve outstanding issues through negotiations.

#China will continue to practice genuine #multilateralism, participate in the next phase of negotiations in a constructive

manner, and work with all parties to promote the early achievement of results in this negotiation."

Reporters present in Vienna asked Ulyanov about the mood in the meeting and he said that the mood was different.

"Different. Different. Sometimes heated debates, sometimes very amicable discussion. But...the result is...the work will continue from where we left off on 20th June," Ulyanov stated.

When Iran's chief negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, came out of the hotel, a reporter loudly asked him, "Mr. Bagheri, are you optimistic?" He said "yes" and he got into the car.

Later, he gave a brief video statement to the Iranian foreign ministry reporter present in Vienna,

AEOI chief says U.S. must lift all sanctions

TEHRAN — The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has noted that the Vienna talks are about return of the United States to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), reiterating Tehran's long-held position that the U.S. must lift all sanction against Iran.

"These talks are about the return of the United States to the JCPOA, and they should lift all sanctions, and this should be practical and verifiable," Mohammad Eslami told IRNA on Tuesday.

Iran, Russia, China, Germany, Britain, France resumed talks Palais Coburg in Vienna on Monday to assess ways to lift sanctions imposed on Iran. The United States is participating in the talks indirectly. The talks were resumed after a five-month hiatus due to the presidential elections in Iran in June.

The Iranian negotiating team is led by Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani. He is accompanied by officials and experts from different fields which analysts say shows Iran's seriousness.

After the end of the opening session of the talks, he said, "At this meeting, we emphasized that the main factor in the current situation is the action of a country that withdrew from the agreement in violation of the agreement and the Security Council resolution, and in violation

of international law and regulations, reinstated previous sanctions, as well as new sanctions against the Iranian nation."

The chief negotiator added, "Finally, it was decided that the issue of lifting sanctions should be the first agenda of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA. On this basis, a working group was scheduled to begin on Tuesday morning to review the issue of lifting illegal and oppressive sanctions against the Iranian people."

Bagheri Kani also said it is noteworthy that all the remaining parties to the JCPOA back a demand by Iran that the issue of sanctions must be addressed first.

"This is a remarkable achievement that all the member states of the P4+1 group have accepted the demand of the Islamic Republic and have emphasized that the status of the U.S. regime's illegal sanctions against our people should be clarified first and then discuss and review and decide on other agendas."

The P4+1 group refers to the four permanent members of the UN Security Council (Russia, China, France, Britain) and Germany that are still party to the JCPOA.

The U.S. under the Donald Trump presidency unilaterally quit the JCPOA in May 2018 in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 endorsing



the agreement. The U.S. not only returned the previous sanctions lifted under the JCPOA it also introduced new ones on Iran under different pretexts. Trump himself described the sanctions as economic war and unprecedented in history.

'Nothing special between Iran and China'

Eslami also said cooperation between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is routine.

IAED director general Rafael Grossi visited Tehran last week for talks with Eslami and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

"Our meeting with Rafael Grossi was about our issues with the Agency and it is quite routine and we have nothing special or additional," Eslami said when asked about interaction between Iran and the IAEA.

Foreign Ministry says most families of Ukraine plane victims have been compensated

TEHRAN — In response to the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry statement about the Ukrainian plane crash incident, the Iranian Foreign Ministry released a statement on Tuesday clarifying on the latest developments surrounding the issue.

The statement said that following the accidental downing of the Ukrainian plane in January 2020, Iran, based on good faith and in efforts to clear up possible misunderstandings in bilateral relations, made every effort to interact appropriately with the Ukrainian government in a constructive and professional atmosphere on the various dimensions of the accident.

Following is an excerpt of the statement:

According to the data, in addition to several meetings and contacts at different levels between the relevant officials in the two countries, the delegations of the two sides met with the presence of representatives of all relevant departments in three rounds of bilateral talks, August 2020 in Kiev, October 2020 in Tehran and June 2021 in Kiev and in the form of technical, military, legal, criminal and payment negotiations in detail and in accordance with international obligations and even beyond.

The Iranian delegation, in good faith, informed the Ukrainian delegation of all its findings and provided a detailed description of the measures taken and tried to provide the necessary answers to the questions of the Ukrainian delegation within the framework of laws and regulations.

Despite the reluctance of the Ukrainian side to negotiate the harms to the families of the victims and the Ukrainian International Airlines (UIA), the foreign ministry announced in the second round of bilateral talks that necessary coordination is needed to begin as soon as possible. Negotiations have been held between the mentioned airlines and the government of Iran (on behalf of the Center for International Legal Affairs) and the first round of negotiations was held in 2021, and contacts between the parties continue in this regard.

Regarding the technical aspects of the accident, by reading the black boxes in Paris in accordance with the relevant international regulations and with the participation of the relevant governments, in accordance with Annex 13 of the Chicago Convention, the accident investigation team has completed the investigation

and report process. The technical information of the accident was published in due time, after making the necessary coordination with the relevant governments, and was duly submitted to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). This issue was announced to the participating governments during the speech of the then Deputy Foreign Minister on June 2020, during the participation of the Iranian delegation in the ICAO Council meeting.

In the criminal and judicial fields, the Islamic Republic of Iran, taking into account all legal and criminal aspects and in accordance with its laws and regulations, has taken the necessary measures to conduct criminal investigations and investigations through the Tehran Military Prosecutor's Office against the defendants. The indictment was submitted to the court by the prosecutor. The first court hearing was held on November 21, 2021. The court hearings will be held in due time in accordance with the opinions of the esteemed judges and in compliance with all legal standards, and will continue until the result is achieved and justice is done.

On the other hand, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in good faith and

saying that the Iranian delegation clarified that addressing the "oppressive and illegal" sanctions should be the first top issue on the agenda of the JCPOA Joint Commission, which a working group meeting is scheduled to be held on it on Tuesday.

Regarding the future perspective of the negotiations, Bagheri Kani noted the point that they emphasized was that the indicators, criteria and criteria that Iran should consider in order to reach a fruitful and lasting agreement should be considered.

Many of the criteria and indicators that Iran briefly outlined at the Monday meeting were welcomed by other parties, including the fact that the United States must ensure that new sanctions that have already been imposed are lifted and not re-imposed, Bagheri underlined.

He also highlighted the need for guarantees for non-withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

According to reporters present in the media tent set up in front of Palais Coburg, the Western diplomats looked optimistic as well, yet, they spoke off the record.

The ground is prepared for a "good agreement". It's time for Rob Malley to step up his game.

on an ex-gratia basis and in order to appease the families of the victims, set a figure to be paid to the families of all victims (without any discrimination such as their nationality). It has taken action and with the formation of the payment headquarters in the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, a large number of families have been paid so far and legal steps are being taken to pay the rest. In this regard, in addition to informing and paying Iranian citizens, in some notes, the governments of Ukraine, Canada, Afghanistan and Sweden, some of whose citizens are among the victims, have been informed and the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to pay to families their loved ones have been declared dead.

As a result, as is clear from the above, the foreign ministry believes that all aspects of the Ukrainian plane crash in the form of three rounds of talks between the delegations of the two sides and other formal contacts between the two sides have been considered adequately. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran is always ready to continue bilateral interactions through the embassies of the two sides or other meetings and interactions between the officials of the two countries.

Iran's balanced position debunked Western narrative of Vienna talks

TEHRAN – Despite Western propaganda campaign in the run-up to Monday's Vienna talks, Iran adopted a carefully crafted position during the talks amid muted hopes for a good, swift agreement.

Diplomats from Iran the P4+1 group of countries –China, Russia, France, and the UK plus Germany – gathered at the Palais Coburg hotel in Vienna amid global fanfare. It marked the resumption of the talks after a break of more than five months.

Ali Bagheri Kani, the deputy foreign minister of Iran, and Enrique Mora, EU deputy foreign policy chief, jointly chaired Monday's plenary session.

Western media outlets purposefully depicted the overall situation in Vienna as somber, even before the negotiators reconvene the much-awaited meeting. They warned of Iranian “maximalist demands,” broached the idea of an interim agreement, and accused Iran of not being serious.

But the meeting debunked all these narratives. Iran's seriousness became clear as soon as the Iranian negotiating team arrived in Vienna. It soon came to light that Iran has sent a 40-strong team comprised of seasoned experts from many sectors in the country's economy, an indication that Iran was all-prepared to make a good deal even in the first round of talks, unlike the U.S. which, expecting unseriousness on the part of Iran, dispatched a small legal and political team.

During the meeting, Iran once again showed its seriousness. Contrary to the fears of the West, Iran presented what it has been publicly saying over the past weeks: a verifiable and effective lifting of all U.S. sanctions on



Tehran, a guarantee that the U.S. won't back down on its word again.

Addressing the meeting, Bagheri Kani stressed the need to lift all inhumane and coercive U.S. sanctions against the Iranian people, saying the lifting of sanctions must be the top priority in the talks.

While noting that the Islamic Republic has demonstrated its adherence to its obligations in practice, the head of the Iranian delegation stressed Tehran's determination to reach a just understanding that serves the legitimate interests of Iran.

Prior to the meeting, Western diplomats expressed pessimism. But after the meeting, many diplomats came out with cautious optimism. “I feel extremely positive about what I have seen today,” Mora said after the meeting, noting that there is “clearly a will” by the Iranian side to revive a 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The Russian envoy to the talks, Mikhail Ulyanov, described the

resumption of Vienna talks as “quite successful.”

The lead Iranian negotiator also said that he was optimistic about the talks.

The optimism is a result of Iran's balanced position in Vienna that set things straight and addressed the root cause of the current situation. Bagheri Kani spoke of claims by some Western parties about revival of the Iran nuclear deal, stressing that a revival of the JCPOA is nothing more than an exaggeration as long as the U.S. campaign of maximum pressure is alive.

The Iranian position led to a number of things that would help pave the way for more result-oriented talks. First, Iran made it clear that U.S. sanctions should be lifted at once, not in a phased-out way.

In remarks to Iran's state TV, Bagheri Kani underlined this position, saying that sanctions must be removed all at once. This simply means that there would be no such thing as an interim agreement that is being raised by Western diplomatic

circles. Because an interim agreement would require partial removal of the sanctions. And this would run counter to Iran's core position of the need to lift all sanctions at once.

On Tuesday, the Qatari-owned Al Jazeera new television quoted an Iranian official as rejecting the idea of reaching an interim government with the negotiating partners in Vienna.

The unidentified official also said Iran has other options if negotiations fail, and the other parties know that. This brings us to another outcome of the talks.

Iran has shown its seriousness and willingness to reach a good deal. But would be extremely parochial not to have a plan B.

The principles and requirements of the new round of talks featured high in the Monday talks. The Iranian negotiating team sought to set out the principles and foundations of talks, and it did it successfully.

But what if the West violated these principles. Herein lies the importance of Iran's plan B. So far, Iran has refrained from laying out its plan B but a senior Iranian lawmaker has said that Iran does have “other scenarios” if the West violates the principles set out during the negotiations. “If the West does not implement the principles of negotiation, including the implementation of agreement and mutual respect, and abuses again, Iran has other scenarios on the table,” the lawmaker, Mahmoud Abbas Zadeh Meshkini, the spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said in remarks to Mehr News on Tuesday.

Iran has entered Vienna talks in good faith, Iran FM tells UN chief

From Page 1 ► He said in that case, the Islamic Republic of Iran will reverse its remedial measures. Amir Abdollahian added that the key point is that any resulting deal must be effectively verifiable.

The top Iranian diplomat went on to refer to the constructive and progressing talks between the director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi, saying Tehran will continue its technical cooperation with the IAEA.

Regarding the 6 previous rounds of talks, Amir Abdollahian pointed out, “We will not ignore the negotiations, but as a new administration, we reserve the right to review the disputed issues and discuss them in light of our own considerations.”

Antonio Guterres also welcomed the start of the new round of talks and threw his full support behind the full revival of the JCPOA. The UN chief also expressed hope that the talks will produce results.

Guterres also described Iran's demand for a verification of removal of sanctions as reasonable.

The UN secretary general said it is necessary that all sides make efforts to take confidence-building measures and reaffirmed the UN's full support.

Amir Abdollahian also spoke with the UN chief regarding the Afghanistan issues.

Amir Abdollahian underlined the need for the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan and described the dangerous humanitarian situation on the eve of the cold season as worrisome. He cited the existence of the refugee crisis, the freezing of the Afghan financial resources, and Daesh's acts of terrorism as crisis

factors in Afghanistan.

Antonio Guterres voiced concern over the profound crisis, particularly the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and underlined the necessity of a cash injection into the economy of the country.

The world's top diplomat said the UN is making an effort to set up an international monetary fund with the help of the World Bank and several countries with the aim of creating a mechanism for cash injection into the Afghan economy despite the sanctions.

The opening session of the talks aimed at lifting anti-Iran sanctions was held on Monday evening in Vienna.

During the negotiations chaired by Ali Bagheri, head of the Iranian Delegation, and Enrique Mora, the EU deputy foreign policy chief, the Iranian diplomat outlined the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Bagheri stressed the need to lift all inhumane and coercive U.S. sanctions against the Iranian people, saying the lifting of sanctions must be the top priority in the talks.

While noting that the Islamic Republic has demonstrated its adherence to its obligations in practice, the head of the Iranian delegation stressed Tehran's determination to reach a just understanding that serves the legitimate interests of Iran.

Bagheri also spoke of claims by some Western parties about revival of the Iran nuclear deal, JCPOA. He stressed that a revival of the JCPOA is nothing more than an exaggeration as long as the U.S. campaign of “maximum pressure” is alive.

spokesman added if the West wants to settle the sanctions issue with Iran, it must first clarify its position toward the JCPOA, the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal.

The European countries easily allowed Donald Trump to leave the JCPOA, and not only did they not lift the sanctions, but they also increased the sanctions.

Pointing to the cruelty of sanctions on Iran amid the deadly Coronavirus pandemic, the MP also said, “According to international law, civilians are safe from attack in war, but the Iranian people

were not safe from attack in the economic war. The United States and the West did not allow Iran to import vaccines and drugs.”

He concluded by saying that if the West does not observe the principles of negotiations, including the implementation of agreement and mutual respect or invent pretexts again, Iran has other options on the table.

“We will force the West and the United States to accept the Iranian nation as a global superpower. Some major Asian countries have accepted this reality today,” he concluded.

SPORTS

Taremi shortlisted for FIFA Puskas Award 2021

From Page 1 ► Erik Lamela (for Tottenham versus Arsenal – Premiere League), Luis Diaz (for Colombia away to Brazil – Copa America), Gauthier Hein (for Auxerre away to Chamois Niortais – Ligue 2), Valentino Lazaro (for Borussia Mönchengladbach away to Bayer Leverkusen – Bundesliga), Riyad Mahrez (for Algeria away to Zimbabwe – Africa Cup of Nations qualifying), Sandra Owusu-Ansah (for Supreme Ladies away to Kumasi Sports Academy Ladies – Ghana Women's Premier League), Vangelis Pavlidis (for Willem II versus Fortuna Sittard – Eredivisie), Daniela Sanchez (for Queretaro versus Atletico de San Luis – Liga MX Femenil), Patrik Schick (Czech Republic versus Scotland – Euro 2020), Mehdi Taremi (for Porto away to Chelsea – Champions League) and Caroline Weir (Manchester City Women versus Manchester United Women – FA Women's Super League) have been nominated for the award.

The prestigious individual prize has been given to some of the top players in the world over the years, including the likes of Mohamed Salah, Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Cristiano Ronaldo.

The FIFA Puskas Award is an annual prize given to a player from the men's or women's game who has been judged to have scored the best goal of the year. The winner is selected by an international jury comprising a panel of FIFA Legends and registered fans from all over the world on FIFA.com.

Last year, Heung-Min Son was awarded the prize for his stunning solo effort against Burnley in December, 2019.

The winner of the award will be revealed at The Best FIFA Football Awards in Zurich on Jan. 17, 2022.

Two Para snowboarders qualify for 2022 Paralympics

TEHRAN – Two Iranian Para snowboarders Sedigheh Rouzbeh and Pouria Khalitash booked their places at the 2022 Paralympic Winter Games in Landgraaf in the Netherlands.

Rouzbeh clocked 52.77 second in the women's SB-LL2 class and won a berth in the Games. Khalitash also booked his place in the prestigious event with a time of 43.69 in the men's SB-UL class.



Athletes from 24 countries competed in two banked slalom races from Nov. 28 to 30 in the Netherlands.

The 2022 Winter Paralympics, officially known as the XIII Paralympic Winter Games and commonly known as Beijing 2022 Paralympic Games is an international winter multi-sport event for disabled athletes that is scheduled to take place in Beijing, People's Republic of China, from March 4 to 13, 2022.

Hazfi Cup round of 32 draw to be held on Wednesday

TEHRAN – Iran's 2021-22 Hazfi Cup Round of 32 draw ceremony will be held on Wednesday.

The draw ceremony will be held in Iran's league Football Organization's headquarters.

All 16 teams of the Iran Professional League will learn their rivals in Round of 32.

The Iran's Hazfi Cup was founded in 1975 and Esteghlal are the most successful club with seven titles, followed by Persepolis who have won six titles.

Foolad are defending champions of the competition.

Aluminum miss chance to move second place: IPL

TEHRAN – Aluminum football team missed the chance to move up second place in the Iran professional League (IPL) on Tuesday.

The Arak-based football team were held to a goalless draw against Zob Ahan and remained in fourth place, three points behind leaders Sepahan.

In Ahvaz, Foolad were held to a goalless stalemate in Ahvaz.

Padideh and Fajr Sepasi also shared the spoil in a 0-0 draw.

Iran defeat Bahrain at 2023 FIBA World Cup qualifier

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Bahrain for second time in three days in a FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 Asian qualifier on Monday.

The Persians emerged victorious over Bahrain 100-64 in Group D.

Mostafa Hashemi's meh had defeated Bahrain 82-66 on Friday in Tehran.

Syria and Kazakhstan are also in the group.

The next edition of the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 will take place from Aug. 25 to Sept. 10, 2023 in Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines with seven nations from Asia and Oceania qualifying for the 32-country field.

The 2023 FIBA World Cup will serve as qualification for the 2024 Summer Olympics, where the top two teams from each of the Americas and Europe, and the top team from each of Africa, Asia and Oceania, will qualify alongside the tournament's host France.

Al Hilal, Al Jazira learn FIFA Club World Cup 2021 opponents

TEHRAN – Al Hilal SFC and Al Jazira were presented the opportunity to lock horns with European champions Chelsea following the conclusion of the FIFA Club World Cup UAE 2021 draw at the home of FIFA in Zurich.

Both, however, will have to navigate through earlier matches if they are to set up the plum meeting with the current Premier League leaders.

United Arab Emirates champions Al Jazira will face Oceania's Auckland City FC in the tournament opener in Abu Dhabi on February 3.

Victory will set them up against Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal, who won the 2021 AFC Champions League title last week, with the winners to face Chelsea in the semi-finals. Africa's representatives Al Ahly SC, meanwhile, face Mexico's CF Monterrey in the second round, with the winners to play South American champions SE Palmeiras in the semi-finals.

The final is scheduled for February 12.

MP says provocative act won't affect Iran's position in Vienna

TEHRAN — A senior Iranian MP has said certain provocative acts by the West, such as creating unrest in the country or making borders insecure, will not affect Tehran's position in the Vienna talks.

“These measures will have no effect on the talks,” Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, spokesman for the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, told Mehr on Tuesday.

Meshkini also said, “The Islamic Republic does not negotiate in Vienna. It only asks questions and the P5+1 must answer.”



The talks for lifting sanctions on Iran were resumed on Monday after a five-month break. The talks are chaired by Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani and Enrique Mora, the European Union political director.

The parliamentary committee

Iran-EU 9-month trade up 2% yr/yr



From page 1 ► The Islamic Republic had also imported €2.783 billion worth of goods in the first nine months of 2020, a 15-percent decline compared to the corresponding period in 2019.

The data provided by the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agri-

culture (ICCIMA) indicate that in January 2020, when the coronavirus had not been widespread in different parts of the world, trade between Iran and Europe grew by more than 17 percent, but the figure has been following a downward trend since then.

Pakistani traders call for early implementation of barter trade with Iran

TEHRAN - The chairman of the Pakistan Businessmen Panel has called on his government to implement the Barter Trade Mechanism with the Islamic Republic of Iran as soon as possible, the daily newspaper Business Recorder reported.

"All concerned departments, particularly the central bank should start working on the implementation of the barter trade through approved crossing points without any further delay," said Mian Anjum Nisar.

He appreciated Islamabad, as well as Tehran, to take serious initiatives to remove obstacles in the path of bilateral trade, asking Iran to also take benefit of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects.

Anjum Nisar said that due to a lack of banking channels with Iran, some issues existed in trading with Tehran. The barter trade issue with Iran has now been resolved, which is a welcome step for both Muslim neighboring nations.

The BMP chairman said that the governments of Pakistan and Iran have decided that a barter trade mechanism will be established between Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Zahedan Chamber of Commerce and Industry or any other counterpart cham-



bers, identifying over 50 items for bilateral trade with rice and petroleum products at the top of the list.

He said that under the arrangement, the barter trade could be done via land route through legal customs and notified border crossing points without any monetary transaction.

Earlier this month, Iran and Pakistan inked an agreement to initiate barter trade during a visit of Pakistan's Adviser to Prime Minister for Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood to Tehran.

Dawood paid an official visit to Iran to participate in the ninth meeting of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Trade Committee held in Tehran November 6-7 during which both sides agreed to increase the bilateral trade volume to \$5 billion.

Nearly 4m tons of minerals extracted from Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari mines in H1

TEHRAN - As announced by a provincial official, 3.874 million tons of minerals were extracted from the mines of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22).

Sajad Rostami, the head of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said the figure shows 26 percent growth from 3.080 tons of extracted minerals in the same period of time in the past year.

Putting the number of mines which have operation permits in the province at the moment at 154, the official said that it is 12 percent less than the number in the past year (175 mines).

He also said that there are now 121 active mines in the province, which shows 22 percent rise as compared to the previous year.

The director of the Iranian In-



dustry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's plan for reviving and developing small mines has said over 670 idle mines have been revived in the country since the launch of the program in late March 2019 until September 22, 2021.

"Since the beginning of the program until the end of [the Iranian calendar month of] Shahrivar (September 22, 2021), the identification, monitoring and prioritization of 7,000 mines, and mineral zones were done based on the comparative advantage of each province," Reza Azimi told IRNA

last month.

According to Azimi, of the said number, clinical operations were carried out on 1,713 mines, and solutions were provided, of which a total of 670 mines were revived and developed.

Some 15 mineral processing units were also supported and developed across the country under the framework of the program.

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) which is in charge of implementing the reviving program, has also inked 37 memorandums of understanding for investment in infrastructure, scientific, research, and knowledge-based projects under the framework of the mentioned program, the offi-

Exclusive exhibit of Iranian products kicks off in Damascus

TEHRAN - The second exclusive exhibition of Iranian products was opened in the Syrian capital Damascus in a ceremony on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin and Syrian Economy and Foreign Trade Minister Mohammad Samer Al-Khalil.

As reported, the exhibition features 164 Iranian companies active in a variety of fields including medical equipment, medicine, construction, architecture, agriculture, livestock and poultry, oil, gas and petrochemicals, police and security equipment, as well as food, water, and electricity.

The steel industry, informatics, doors and windows, eleva-

tors, shop equipment and chain stores, motorcycles, automotive industry, textile industry, home appliances, and banking and insurance are also among the areas represented in the mentioned exhibition.

Speaking on the sidelines of the opening ceremony, Fatemi Amin expressed Iran's interest in cooperation with Syria for reactivating the country's economic and industrial potentials and restoring the economy.

He further announced the Islamic Republic's readiness for joint investment in Syria to meet the domestic market needs and also to export to other countries in the region.

The first exposition of Iran in Syria after the defeat of the U.S.-backed ISIS terrorist group was held from December 25 to



Iranian Industry Minister Reza Fatemi Amin cutting the ribbon at the opening ceremony of the Iranian exclusive exhibition in Damascus.

28, 2018.

Over the past few years and since the end of the war in Syria, Tehran and Damascus have been taking major steps for expansion of mutual trade ties, and Syria has become one of the major focal points regarding the Iranian government's plans for boosting non-oil exports to the region.

The two countries have been pursuing the implementation of a free trade agreement signed between the two sides back in 2010 after years of postponement.

According to Farzad Piltan, the director-general of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Office of Arabian and African Countries, the implementation of this agreement with Syria, which Fatemi Amin is scheduled

to pursue during his visit to Syria, means that the two countries' traders will be exempt from current export and import restrictions and bans in their exchanges.

Considering Syria's efforts for reconstructing the country's war-torn infrastructures in recent years, the construction sector has been one of the major areas that Iran has been focusing on for the expansion of ties with the Arab country.

Head of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce Keyvan Kashefi has said that currently, commodity items in the fields of housing construction, bridge and dam construction, electricity supply, and technical and engineering services are at the top of the list of exports to this country.

TEDPIX falls over 6,800 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 6,845 points to 1.357 million on Tuesday.

As reported, over 4.215 billion securities worth 29.628 trillion rials (about \$705.4 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index fell 2,932 points and the second market's index declined 20,357 points.

Over the past 15 months, continuous fluctuations in the Iranian stock market have led shareholders, experts, and scholars to believe that the government should not interfere in the stock market, saying the government's pre-ordered and unrealistic pricing of some state-owned shares is the main reason for the capital market's current downward trend.

In this regard, head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), has said the government is following new strategies to avoid pre-ordered pricing in the stock market



in the long term.

"The government's policy, in the long run, is to avoid pre-ordered pricing. This policy has been repeatedly stressed by the president and the government's economic team and has been placed on the government's agenda," Majid Eshqi said on November 14.

According to the official, supply and demand should be the only determining factor for setting the price for a share.

"We need to move away from imperative policies so that companies can be profitable

in the long-term," he said.

Over the past 15 months, continuous fluctuations in the Iranian stock market have led shareholders, experts, and scholars to believe that the government should not interfere in the stock market, saying the government's pre-ordered and unrealistic pricing of some state-owned shares is the main reason for the capital market's current downward trend.

The government has been claiming that the decisions made for this market are not aimed at interfering in stock exchange transactions or directing the market, but are efforts for reducing the bubble created in the market and to prevent further decline of the stock market index.

Despite the skepticism, after the supportive measures taken by the government, the stock market has been gradually getting back on track and experts believe that the market is regaining people's trust.

Gas swap deal with Azerbaijan expected to turn Iran into region's energy hub

TEHRAN - A deal that Iran signed with Azerbaijan to swap Turkmenistan's gas to Azerbaijan is believed to make the Islamic Republic the region's energy hub in the long run, Shana reported.

Under the framework of the mentioned deal which was signed by the oil ministers of Iran and Azerbaijan on Sunday evening after the end of bilateral meeting between Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Azeri President Ilham Aliyev, 1.5 to 2 billion cubic meters of gas a year was agreed to be transferred from Turkmenistan to the Republic of Azerbaijan via Islamic Republic Iran.

Experts believe that the implementation of this deal could encourage other countries in the region to ink similar deals and to use the Islamic Republic's capacities in this regard.

Having the largest high-pressure gas pipeline network after Russia, Iran can play a key role in transferring gas from east to west of Iran and to the neighboring countries such as Azerbaijan.

This deal is also a big step for Iran as it would ensure stable gas supply to the country's northeastern regions which are far away from the sources of natural gas in the country.

Iran has major natural gas fields in the south, but has imported gas from Turkmenistan since 1997 for distribution in its northern provinces, especially during the winter.

The deal was signed on the sidelines of the 13th ECO summit in the Turkmen capital Ashgabat.

Commodities worth over \$250m exported from Anzali Free Zone in 7 months

TEHRAN- Products worth \$254 million were exported from Anzali Free Zone in the north of Iran during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), the managing director of Anzali Free Zone Organization announced.

Ali Osat Akbari put the worth of the export of services and products produced inside the zone at \$9.32 million during the mentioned time span.

He named MDF sheet wall coverings, animal feed additives, as well as chemical and cellulose products as the main exported items, and

Iraq, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirate (UAE) as the major export destinations.

The official also announced that commodities worth over \$130 million were exported from the zone to the mainland during the first seven months of the current year.

As reported, 156 production units are active in two industrial parks of Anzali Free Zone.

Located in Gilan Province, north of Iran, Anzali Free Trade-Industrial Zone is the sole free zone in the southern part of the Caspian Sea

with an area of 9,400 hectares and 40 kilometers shoreline.

It is one of the country's seven free trade-industrial zones.

Located on the North-South International Corridor, having a special position in connection with the Caspian littoral states, proximity to the ports of Astrakhan and Lagan in Russia, Aktau in Kazakhstan, and Baku in Azerbaijan, access through convenient routes to the consumer markets of CIS countries, and proximity to Rasht International Airport are some advantages of Anzali Free Zone.

Any forum about security in West Asia without Iran is futile: Singaporean professor

From page 1 ▶ “By excluding Iran, there was nothing comprehensive about security discussion at the Manama Dialogue, demonstrating again that politics and emotions continue to drive the security considerations in the Middle East (West Asia).”

Following is the text of the interview:

What is your comment on the Manama Dialogue 2021 forum? What are the implications of such forums?

Any forum that is high-powered and international in character is definitely important, especially politically, militarily and diplomatically. The Manama Dialogue 2021, which has been held annually in Manama in Bahrain, qualifies as an important forum in this regard.

It brought together key leaders of the world, especially the important defense ministers and foreign policy leaders who spoke at the forum. The speakers included Lloyd J. Austin III, Prabowo Subianto and Hishamuddin Hussein, the U.S., Indonesian and Malaysian Defense Secretary/Ministers respectively, key political and foreign policy leaders such as Dr. Abdullatif Rashid, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Bahrain, and Sameh Shoukry, the Egyptian Foreign Minister. There were many other Middle Eastern (West Asian) leaders.

Do you think Persian Gulf states can talk about a comprehensive security in the region by ignoring Iran as a regional player?

Comprehensive security is a concept that has been loosely and vaguely parried to suit all kinds of needs and interests. In contrast to national and collective security, comprehensive security aims to go beyond the traditional state-centric, military-focus of the past, to highlight the growing importance of new issues such as the environment, economic, climate and even human security issues linked to diseases, poverty and repression. It was an attempt to go beyond the realist understanding of security, largely expounded by American theorists after the Second World War to justify U.S.'s supremacy based on military power. While there has never been a universally accepted definition of security, comprehensive security aimed to look at for whom security was to be provided – the state or individual; the kind of threats that were to be identified, whether they were traditional military dangers or non-traditional new concerns; and finally, how these threats and concerns were to be addressed, all the more, the non-military concerns, including diseases, floods, etc.

Underlying this approach was the idea that security can only be comprehensively addressed if it involved all the key actors, both state and non-state actors. Hence, in the Middle East (West Asia), for any security concern to be addressed, it has to be ‘comprehensive’ in definition, which means, it must first and foremost, involve all the actors, if not, at least, all the key actors. By looking at just two indicators in 2020 - GDP and Population statistics - one gets a sense of the key states in the Middle East as follows:



	GDP	Population (million)
Iran	635	85
Saudi Arabia	701	35
Israel	402	8.7
Egypt	361	102
UAE	354	9.9

Similarly, looking at military statistics, for the same countries, the following statistics stand out:

	Military Spending	Armed Forces (000)
Saudi Arabia	55.5	227
Iran	12	523
Israel	21	176
Egypt	3.8	438
UAE	20	63

Statistics do not lie. Clearly, looking at the above statistics, Iran is a key state in the Middle East (West Asia) and by excluding Iran from the Manama Dialogue, any discussion on comprehensive security makes a mockery of the concept and intent to create and establish anything to do comprehensive security in the Middle East (West Asia). This type of comprehensive security is illusory and delusional.

In short, by excluding Iran, there was nothing comprehensive about security discussion at the Manama Dialogue, demonstrating again that politics and emotions continue to drive the security considerations in the Middle East (West Asia).

What does history tell us when we look back on U.S. presence in Afghanistan and Iraq?

History tells us, if one adds Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, etc. to the list of Afghanistan, is that the U.S. is a failed state when it comes to long-term military commitments overseas and a state that cannot be trusted.

After expending trillions of American taxpayers' money, enriching the capitalist Military Industrial Complex, killing and maiming thousands of American soldiers, killing and maiming many thousands more, probably close to a million Afghans, the Americans, after a policy failure of 20 years in Afghanistan, simply packed their bags and left, that too hurriedly and in some bases such as Bagram Airbase, without telling the local commanders that they were doing so, abandoning their erstwhile freedom-loving allies, who badly failed the Afghan people.

Clearly the U.S. is big in rhetoric – it treats the world like Hollywood, which is devoid of reality and the White House and Pentagon try to ‘Hollywood’ the world when it comes to

political and security policies, and this is why it is a failed state, compared to China and Russia.

The U.S.'s credibility has been so badly punctured by these failures that we in Asia simply do not trust the U.S., which after every 4 years, has to realign its policies, often at the expense of the world. Clearly, it is the least trusted power and the key reason it is a declining power and will probably be the shortest-lived great power in modern history. We in Asia are more comfortable with China and Russia than the U.S.

Why do Persian Gulf states prefer betting on U.S. support rather than reaching a compromise with regional powers?

The Persian Gulf states are anachronistic states and as such they can only survive with the help of external security providers such as the U.S. and to some extent, the UK and France. On their own, these anachronistic kingdoms will never survive; it is indeed strange that the U.S. goes round preaching democracy, freedom, accountability, transparency, etc. all over the world except in the Persian Gulf states.

The reason is that the U.S. does not want the world to know how feudalistic and anachronistic these left-over states of history are and once they are without oil, they will be deserted by the U.S.; what an irony – will be deserted in a desert!

The U.S. secretary of defense said in Manama that Washington is not going to quit the Middle East (West Asia). However, many say the U.S. is turning towards the East Asia. What is your comment?

I don't think the U.S. will quit the Middle East (West Asia). As a dirty capitalist, it gains so much with so little investment. The U.S. will only quit the Middle East (West Asia) once the region becomes costly for the U.S. in terms of politics, economics and military insecurity.

Once more Afghanistans, Iraqs, Syrias, Somalias, Sudans and Libyas emerge, not to mention Vietnams, then only will the U.S. quit the Middle East (West Asia). So, if you want the U.S. to quit the Middle East (West Asia), raise the costs and the U.S. will run away – that is what history has taught us. The U.S. cannot take punishment over a long period as the U.S. public is inward looking.

As long as the Middle East (West Asia), especially the anachronistic Persian Gulf states are prepared to subsidize cheap oil and gas for Americans, the U.S. will stay; once this is lost and U.S.'s engagement in the Middle East (West Asia) becomes costly, regardless of what Blinken said, without a Blink, the U.S. will abandon the Middle East (West Asia) and only then will these anachronistic Persian Gulf states, including the Saudis face the day of their reckoning with no foreign cowboy to protect these backward and antiquated aristocrats.

Thanksgiving massacre in America

From page 1 ▶ The gun related violence was not just limited to Chicago of course. Similar incidents have been reported across the country. Officers responded to an “active shooter situation” after a gunman opened fire on a bus leaving multiple victims with gunshot injuries. The shooter is reported to have been onboard the bus. In New York, a 5-year-old boy was has been shot dead in what police are describing as “a very unfortunate accident”. In Houston, Texas at least six people have been killed and three others injured, all from separate incidents. In the city of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, eight people have been shot dead and at least seven others injured. The list is endless.

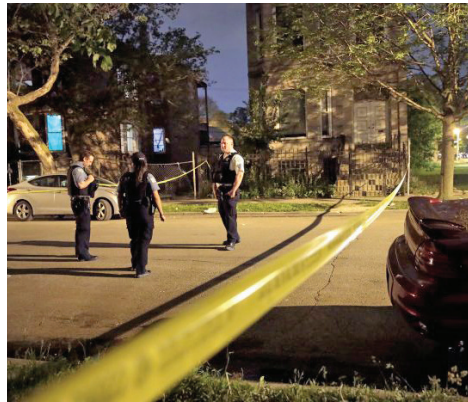
In fact, according to the Gun Violence Archive, so far this year, from January 1 to September 15, a total of 14,516 people have been killed from gun violence in the U.S., the number will break the record with a figure not seen for several decades. Last year, there was shock in America when a new record was registered for the worst year concerning gun violence. But this year's figures means there are 1,300 more deaths than during the same period last year (January 1 to September 15 in 2020). Gun Violence Archive has also documented an increase in mass shootings this year. Until September 15, there have been 498 mass shootings across the U.S., that's a 15 percent increase from last year.

Also this year, according to the same research group; the total number of killings related to gun violence through November 28 have been 40,940. All the deaths are related to causes including homicide, murder, unintentional shootings and defensive firearm usage. Another 37,274 people have been injured. The monitoring group registered 22,044 suicides.

Surprisingly, mass shooting have risen during the Coronavirus Pandemic, according to research.

Again the deadly news has polarized the country further. With many more gun control advocates and gun control advocacy groups sounding the alarm. On the other hand, the National Rifle Association has added a quarter of a million members from January to June this year. It's a powerful group that demands everyone is entitled to carry fire arms and support for the NRA appears to be increasing sharply; again strongly dividing the country on the matter. The NRA is also powerful lobby group that has many congress members on its payroll. So don't expect any legislation to pass the House or the Senate on the issue as lawmakers haven't budged for decades on gun control nor are they expected to, unless lawmakers in congress want to lose their money from the NRA, which just happens to have millions of members too so lawmakers will essentially lose voters.

Then comes of course the issue of the second amendment, a bill passed during the French Revolution or the year 1791 to be more precise. The second amendment reads “a well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” Those 25 words have been killing Americans



for 230 years. Of course the debate will never end over the wording of the text which clearly states “militia” and not “an average citizen” has the right to bear arms as the NRA will have you believe. For arguments sake, let's take the NRA and other gun advocates argument that the second amendment gives Americans a legal right to bear arms. The law was ratified 230 years ago, so while you can keep your hunting rifle to shoot animals in the wild; but on the streets of Chicago? Shouldn't a law passed 230 years ago that has seen an unknown number of civilians, possibly in the hundreds of thousands, maybe more gunned down to death be changed?

It's a complicated matter but it's not that complicated for the loved ones of gun violence victims who now have to bury their sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, friends and colleagues all because those in power are in support of more firearms on the streets.

Of course you can't have so much shootings if there are NOT so many guns on the streets.

The total number of killings related to gun violence through November 28 have been 40,940.

In 2020, sales of firearms soared to an all-time high. This was widely attributed to anxiety across the nation because of the pandemic and possible lockdowns as well as the months of violent unrest that followed the murder Black American George Floyd by a white police officer. This year, as the United States has made progress when it comes to vaccinating its population, reports indicate that the sale of guns are expected to surpass their peak at the height of the pandemic crisis in America. According to the National Sport Shooting Foundation, nearly 5.5 million guns have been sold in the country in the first three months of 2021. If those sale figures continue then this year, firearm sales will be slightly more than 2020; a year that saw a record 21 million guns purchased. That number was already more than double the number of firearm sales in the U.S. two decades ago in the year 2000 when just under 8.5 million guns had been purchased.

All the indications are that the country is facing a dangerous task ahead with not much that those in power or influence can do to prevent this tragic deadly path to the streets of Wild West.

And looking at all this from a wider angle, with America's military adventurism, sailing around the world (the self-chosen world police officer) supposedly trying to keep the peace and security around the world; critics would argue that just as it has failed abroad, it can't bring peace and quiet to the streets of the United States of America back home.

Iraq opposes any form of normalization with Israel

A prominent Iraqi Shia cleric has said his country vehemently opposes any form of normalization of relations with Israel as well as attempts to deprive the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights.

“The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People draws attention to the humane and justice-seeking dimensions of the issue of the oppressed Palestinian nation,” leader of the National Wisdom Movement, Ammar al-Hakim, said in a message on Monday evening.

The occasion “emphasizes the fact that the issue is in the hearts and minds of Arabs and Muslims and will not fade into oblivion with the passage of time,” Hakim

noted.

He underlined that Palestinians reserve an inalienable right to their lands, history, and future, which can only be established through the support of Arabs, Muslims, and the international community, as well as the settlement of internal disputes and an active resistance against the Israeli regime.

“On this occasion, we reaffirm our opposition to any form of normalization of relations with the occupying Israeli regime and demand the rights of the Palestinian people to a dignified and sovereign state and a return to their homes and homeland,” Hakim asserted.

The top cleric further stated that “the Iraqi government and



nation, together with the religious authority and various political factions, support the Palestinian cause and oppose any attempt aimed at depriving Palestinians of their national identity, lands, freedom, and dignity.”

Earlier this month, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry reiterated Baghdad's support for the Palestinian cause, stressing that the Arab country categorically rejects any normalization scheme with the Tel Aviv regime.

“We renew the stance of the Foreign Ministry, as it was known, Iraq's firm and supportive stance towards the Palestinian cause, the implementation of the full legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and the categorical rejection of the issue of normalization with Israel,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed al-Sahaf said in a statement on November 21.

Sahaf noted that Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein had underscored the Palestinian people's rights and Iraq's rejection of any form of normalization with Tel Aviv during the IISS Manama Dialogue forum and other international meetings.

The foreign minister

stressed “his saying of “No to Normalization”, both at the Manama conference and in televised interviews,” the spokesman noted.

Back in September 2020, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed normalization deals with Israel. Morocco and Sudan later signed similar agreements with the Israeli regime as well.

The so-called Abraham Accords were pushed by the US under former president, Donald Trump.

Palestinians have denounced the normalization deals, describing them as a “stab in the back” and a “betrayal” to their cause.

(Source: Press TV)

‘Handicraft industry can play key role in creating employment, attracting tourists’



TEHRAN – The handicraft industry can play a key role in creating employment, promoting business prosperity, and attracting tourists, the deputy tourism minister has said.

Iran is home to wide-ranging handicrafts including embroidery, metalwork, woodwork, wickerwork, miniatures, and jewelry, Ali Darabi announced on his Instagram page on Monday.

Though the country is the third-largest producer of handicrafts in the world, it ranks the forty-fifth exporter of handicrafts, the official added.

One of the key grievances of the Iranian craftspeople is this great backwardness and the need to expand their share of the world's large export market, he noted.

Among the criticisms of artisans and craftsmen are the lack of law to protect them, the poor state of their insurances, the very low budgets and credit lines, and some inefficient government management methods, he explained.

Moreover, there is a lack of comprehensive statistics in the handicrafts sector, as it is estimated that over two million people work in this industry while only 530,000 have work permits, he mentioned.

Sassanid fire temple demarcated to receive better care

TEHRAN – A team of archaeological and cultural heritage experts has defined boundaries for an ancient fire temple, which is situated in central Iran.

Khorramdasht Fire Temple has been demarcated to protect and prevent any possible destruction of the Sassanid-era monument, ILNA reported.

The fire temple is an example of the Chahar-taqi buildings which is an architectural unit consisting of four mudbrick barrel vaults and a dome.

The Sassanid era (224 CE–651) is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan that are amongst highlights of the ensemble.

According to UNESCO, the architecture of the Sassanid monuments in the property further illustrates early examples of construction of domes with squinches on square spaces, such as in the Chahar-taqi buildings, where the four sides of the square room show arched openings: this architectural form turned into the most typical form of Sassanid religious architecture, relating closely to the expansion and stabilization of Zoroastrianism under Sassanid reign and continuing during the Islamic era thanks to its usage in religious and holy buildings such as mosques and tombs.

The Sassanid archaeological landscape also represents a highly efficient system of

He also noted that as part of the tourism ministry's future policies and programs, the handicrafts sector is set for a major change.

Wide-ranging handicrafts

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC-Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

The value of Iran's handicrafts exports stood at \$120 million during the first eleven months of the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – February 18, 2021), Mehr reported. The country's handicrafts exports slumped during the mentioned months in comparison to the same period last a year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.



land use and strategic utilization of natural topography in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization. Crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region"-- to its World Heritage list. The ensemble is comprised of eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan.

The World Heritage reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

destination offers them unique and new experiences, the official explained.

The events such as flower festivals have a precise effect on minimizing the effects of seasonal tourism and ensuring equitable distribution of resources, he added.

In Persian culture and literature, the daffodil symbolizes the eye, usually the eye of the beloved. In poetry, the beloved is likened to the daffodil because of its leafless and green stem, which is hollowed out, straw-like, and

From page 1 ► The study suggests ‘Mesopotamia’ (present-day Iraq / former Babylon) is no longer the world's first cradle of writing, the news agency reported. It took the French archaeologist and Iranian fellows some ten years to [completely] discover the mysteries of the cuneiform inscription, which is hand-carved on clay tablets and were found in the ruins of the ancient city of Susa, southwest Iran.

Elamite language, extinct language spoken by the Elamites in the ancient country of Elam, which included the region from the Mesopotamian plain to the Iranian Plateau. According to Britannica, Elamite documents from three historical periods have been found. The earliest Elamite writings are in a figurative or pictographic script and date from the middle of the 3rd millennium BC.

Situated in a region inside the modern-day provinces of Ilam and Khuzestan, Elam was one of the most impressive civilizations of the ancient world. It was never a cohesive ethnic kingdom or polity but rather a federation of different tribes governed at various times by cities such as Susa, Anshan, and Shimashki until it was united during the Middle Elamite Period, briefly, as

Elamite clay tablet discovered in southwest Iran



an empire.

The name Elam was given to the region by others – the Akkadians and Sumerians of Mesopotamia – and is thought to be their version of what the Elamites called themselves – Haltami (or Haltamti) – mean-

ing “those of the high country”. ‘Elam’, therefore, is usually translated to mean “highlands” or “high country” as it was comprised of settlements on the Iranian Plateau that stretched from the southern plains to the elevations of the Zagros Moun-

tains.

Susa was once the capital of the Elamite Empire and later an administrative capital of the Achaemenian king Darius I and his successors from 522 BC. Throughout the late prehistoric periods, Elam was closely tied culturally to Mesopotamia. Later, perhaps because of domination by the Akkadian dynasty (c. 2334–c. 2154 BC), Elamites adopted the Sumerian-Akkadian cuneiform script.

Documents from the second period, which lasted from the 16th to the 8th century BC, are written in cuneiform; the stage of the language found in these documents is sometimes called Old Elamite. The last period of Elamite texts is that of the reign of the Achaemenian kings of Persia (6th to 4th century BC), who used Elamite, along with Akkadian and Old Persian, in their inscriptions. The language of this period, also written in the cuneiform script, is often called New Elamite.

Although all three stages of Elamite have not been completely deciphered, several grammatical features of the language are known to scholars. These include a plural formation using the suffix -p, the personal pronouns, and the endings of several verb forms.

Louvre considers joint exhibit of Sialk objects, documents

TEHRAN – The Louvre and Sialk archaeological consider holding a joint exhibit on French excavations at the prehistorical settlement which is situated in the heart of Iran.

“The Louvre and Sialk archaeological site were supposed to hold an exhibition to feature both magnificent objects discovered at the site and manuscripts of [the renowned French archaeologist] Roman Ghirshman,” ILNA quoted Sialk's director as saying on

However, the exhibit was postponed to a later time due to the coronavirus pandemic, Javad Hosseinzadeh said.

The relics were unearthed during several excavation projects at the site, which is one of the oldest and richest archaeological sites in central Iran, mostly by Ghirshman during the 1930s.

“About 800 objects from Tepe Sialk are being kept in the Louvre museum... There are also similar objects being kept in the homeland,” the official said.

“Therefore, we hope to hold this exhibition next year, concurrent with the 91st anniversary of the discovery of Sialk.”

Because it is not possible to enter and exit museum objects at the moment [due



Ceramics from Tepe Sialk. In the centre, chalice decorated with leopards; 4000-3800 bc; Louvre Museum

to COVID restrictions], this exhibition may be held virtually, he explained.

Situated halfway between Kashan and Fin in Isfahan province, Tapeh Sialk has yielded interesting pottery pieces, metal tools, and domestic implements made from stone, clay, and bone that date from as early as the 4th millennium BC.

Excavation projects at the site began in 1933 by a Louvre delegation led by Ghirsh-

Ground broken for tourism complex near UNESCO-registered tower

TEHRAN – Construction of a recreational and hospitality center officially began on Sunday in a ceremony held in Gonbad-e Kavus, which is home to a UNESCO-registered tower of the same name in northern Iran.

A total investment value of 70 billion rials (about \$1.7 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been channeled through the project, CHTN quoted Ahmad Tajari as saying.

Covering an area of three hectares, the complex will include accommodation suites and a horse-riding complex with equestrian tracks, the official added.

The center is expected to generate 20 job opportunities upon its completion, he noted.

Thanks to the province's good capacities, the development of tourism in various sectors, such as agritourism and sports tourism, can make it a destination for both domestic and foreign tourists, he mentioned.

The construction of accommodation and hospitality units can greatly benefit the stay of tourists in Golestan in addition to increasing income and employment in the province, he explained.

He also noted that the possible registration of Turkmen horses as part of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage could help develop sports tourism as well as horse breeding as a tourism attraction.

Earlier this month the official announced that Iran and Turkmenistan will jointly put forward the Turkmen



horses and their safeguarding practices as a candidate for inclusion in UNESCO's list for Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Turkmen horse is noted for endurance, bravery, smartness, and slender body. Many locals believe that breeding such horses is one of the toughest jobs in the world.

Such animals are dominantly found in the pasturelands of Turkmen Sahra, a region sand-

wiched between Iran and Turkmenistan.

Located in the lush green Golestan province, Gonbad-e Kavus is home to many historical sites and monuments including the UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus, which is a one-millennium-old brick tower known as an exemplar and innovative design of the early-Islamic-era architecture.

Experts believe the majestic tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. According to UNESCO, Gonbad-e Qabus bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

Fars province to host daffodils festival

TEHRAN – A flower festival dedicated to the daffodils is planned to be held in Khatir county, southern Fars province, on December 8, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The festival, which will run for four days, aims at promoting travel attractions and tourism potentials, Hadi Shahdoust Shirazi said on Tuesday.

A destination has a crucial role in the development of the tourism industry, and tourists are more likely to be attracted to it if the



curved, which is associated with humility and dignity.

Flowers have also thrived into the Persian language. Many girls are named after flowers: Ra'na (Blanket Flowers), Shaghayegh (Anemone), Banafsheh (Violet), Yaasaman (Jasmine), Niloofar (Lotus flower), Nastaran (Eglantine), Laleh (Tulip), Narges (Daffodil), etc.

The ancient region of Fars also spelled Pars, or Persis was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (550–330 BC), which was founded by

Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

The capital city of Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital which was the literary capital of Persia during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

No evidence of Omicron reported in Iran



TEHRAN – To date, no cases of the new coronavirus strain, which is prevalent in South Africa, have been reported in the country, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi announced on Tuesday.

First identified in South Africa on November 24, Omicron mutant has been designated as a variant of concern by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Alireza Zali, head of the coronavirus control working group in Tehran said that Omicron has

been reported to have 50 mutations, 30 of which are key and highly contagious, which is why

There are no direct flights from Iran to South Africa and travelers are not allowed to enter Iran.

it has attracted global attention.

It will take time to learn more about the biological behavior and response to vaccine and immunity of this strain, there is still no evidence to confirm the observation of this strain in the country and basic preventive measures should be taken to control and monitor borders and airports, he explained.

The sixth wave of the pandemic has not hit the country yet if

people follow the health procedures, he stated, IRNA reported.

Preventive measures to deal with the new strain must be taken strictly in the country, and adherence to health practices is necessary, he concluded.

On November 27, the health ministry has said it has adopted new regulations to prevent the new variant.

There are no direct flights from Iran to South Africa and travelers are not allowed to enter Iran, Iranians who want to travel must also be quarantined at the border to have two negative PCR tests.

Foreign tourists must buy coronavirus insurance from authorized companies when entering the country, and if they suffer from the pandemic in Iran, they will be provided with a place and treatment for 14 days.

Inbound passengers must have coronavirus insurance, which differs from the routine insurance coverage purchased by all tourists before the coronavirus era.

Biographies published to honor school-building benefactors

TEHRAN – Some 55 biography books have been compiled, 46 of which published and unveiled so far to honor school-building benefactors, according to the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools.

School-building donors have made a significant contribution to providing students with the opportunity to study in all parts of the country.

Some 30 percent of the country's schools have been constructed by school-building benefactors; there are 450 school-building charities in Iran.

These philanthropists deserve to be honored, appreciated, and introduced as celebrities who have invested their resources in building the future of children. Therefore, compiling and publishing a biography of self-sacrifice and charity in society, in addition to introducing the noble thought and great spirit of these benefactors and role models for adolescents and young people, will promote and spread the culture of good work.



Iran has many school-building benefactors amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country.

About 10 percent of charitable schools are built with the participation of charities abroad. This is a valuable asset, which should be promoted.

A total of 36 trillion rials (nearly \$857 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to renovate the schools nationwide over the past 8 years, Seyed Mohammad-Ali Afshani, former head of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, said.

IRCS in Sierra Leone to combat typhoid, malaria

TEHRAN – The medical team of the Red Crescent Society (IRCS) started to provide services in order to fight the spread of typhoid and malaria in Sierra Leone.

Due to the high prevalence of typhoid and malaria in East Africa, the IRCS health team, in order to combat the spread of the disease, transferred the suspected cases to medical centers, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Teaching personal hygiene, the IRCS deployed a fully equipped medical team to provide free health services and attend schools to identify people with symptoms of fever, headache,



Nausea and diarrhea and refer them to medical clinics.

IRCS services worldwide

At present, the Iranian Red Crescent Society provides medical services to people in 13 Asian, African, and Latin American countries.

Currently, some 14 medical fa-

cilities are offering humanitarian, relief, and health services to the deprived people in 13 countries, including Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Bolivia, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Congo, Kenya, Lebanon, Mali, Niger, and Ecuador.

The IRCS polyclinic center includes various departments such as laboratory, pharmacy, radiology and physiotherapy, and general practitioners along with obstetricians, gynecologists, internal medicine, pediatrics, ophthalmologists, and dentists.

One of the most important points in establishing medical

The Iranian Red Crescent Society provides medical services to people in 13 Asian, African, and Latin American countries.

centers abroad is that all of these centers are self-governing and earn their income by providing services to patients in the mentioned countries," Karim Hemmati, IRCS head, noted on January 13.

Great Barrier Reef faces frequent extreme coral bleaching at 2C heating, research finds

Parts of the Great Barrier Reef would be hit with extreme levels of coral bleaching five times each decade by the middle of this century if global heating was kept just below 2C, according to "confronting" new research.

Even under the most ambitious scenario where heating is kept to 1.5C, coral bleaching strong enough to kill corals would hit somewhere on the reef more than three times a decade, the study predicts.

Allowing global heating to go beyond 2C would bring unprecedented levels of heat stress. "It's hard to imagine what that would look like" said Prof Peter Mumby, one of the study's authors.

Using the latest climate models, the scientists added extra information about the depth, tides and winds around reefs to give a more detailed projection of how much bleaching could occur over different areas.

Lead author of the study, Jen McWhorter, said the modelling suggested warming above 2C would be "very, very bad" for corals along the reef.

But she said keeping temperatures to 1.5C – the most ambitious target in the Paris climate change agreement – meant corals were

exposed to far less heat stress.

"The stress we see above 2C under these higher [greenhouse gas] emissions scenarios is three to four times greater than present day conditions," said McWhorter, who has a combined role at the University of Exeter and the University of Queensland.

Coral reefs are considered one of the most sensitive ecosystems to global heating. If corals sit in warmer than average water for too long, they lose the algae that provides much of their colour and nutrients, leaving a visible white skeleton.

If water temperatures are not too severe, then corals can recover from bleaching. Higher temperatures or prolonged exposure can cause coral death.

The Great Barrier Reef, off the Queensland coast, experienced three mass outbreaks of coral bleaching in 2016, 2017 and 2020.

University of Queensland's Prof Peter Mumby, a co-author of the study said the findings were "confronting".

"It tells us that even with the most optimistic scenarios, we are still looking at one bleaching event somewhere every three years."

A glimpse at Iran's north-central national parks

North-central Semnan province is home to two extraordinary arrays of wildlife and natural landscapes, from Touran to Kavir National Parks, areas with the largest population of endangered Asiatic cheetah. Here, we take a glimpse at these wild, wonderful places.

To preserve the existing biodiversity over the wide geographic expanse of Iran, four types of areas have been designated for preservation and protection, including, national parks, wildlife refuges, protected areas, and natural national monuments. In 1997, the Department of the Environment (DOE) held supervision over 7,563,983 hectares of such areas. By the year 2003, the size of the DOE supervised areas reached 11,791,788.225 hectares.

The national park is a designated part of Iran's environment - including forests, rangelands, woodlands, prairies, water or mountains - that is an outstanding representation of Iranian nature. As such, it is brought under protection in order to permanently preserve its natural ecology and to create a suitable environment for the flourishing of wildlife and the growth of flora under natural conditions. The national parks currently cover 1,649,771 hectares of the country's area.

Protected areas also are significantly important natural resources due to its impact on wildlife breeding, preservation of plant life or its natural state. The total area of regions protected is 6,600,601 hectares.

A Wildlife refuge has natural habitats and special climate qualifications, which brought under protection in order to revive wild animals and is stretching to 3,524,181 hectares.



Khar Turan National Park

Khar Turan National Park or Touran Wildlife Refuge, situated in the southeast of Shahrud city, stretches to 1,400,000 hectares while being the second largest reserve in the country after Naybandan Wildlife Refuge.

Defined a protected area in 1972, the region also received the title of biosphere reserve by UNESCO and ranked the second biosphere in the world after the Serengeti ecosystem (a geographical region in Africa).

A wide range of flora and fauna, valuable genetic resources are seen in the area, more importantly, the precious species of Asiatic cheetah inhabit in the area.

National Park, Wildlife Refuge, and Protected Area constitute 8, 17, and 75 percent of the entire area. Ghosts have been nicknamed Iran's Africa.

Some 41 species of mammals, 167 bird species, 42 reptile species, and 2 amphibian species have been identified in Touran.

The reserve also hosts wild sheep and goats, the goitered gazelle and Indian gazelle, in addition to the largest population of Persian onager.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON NOVEMBER 30

New cases	4,253
New deaths	119
Total cases	6,117,445
Total deaths	129,830
New hospitalized patients	801
Patients in critical condition	3,334
Total recovered patients	5,883,470
Diagnostic tests conducted	38,763,945
Doses of vaccine injected	105,892,663

ENGLISH IN USE

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%97 of Iran affected by long-term drought: expert

Based on the data collected over the past decade approximately 97 percent of the country is affected by long-term drought, director of the national drought warning and monitoring center, Sadeq Ziaiean, has said.

Some 12.7 percent of the country is hit by extremely severe drought, 53.6 percent of the country is affected by severe drought while 24.8 percent of the country is facing moderate drought and 5.9 percent of the country is withstanding mild drought, ISNA news agency quoted Ziaiean as saying on Wednesday.

He went on to say that extremely severe long-term drought has had negative effects on 14.2 percent of the country's total population, severe long-term drought has hit 47 percent of the country's population, 30.7 percent of the country's population is affected by moderate long-term drought and 5.1 percent of the population is stricken with mild drought.

۹۷ درصد مساحت ایران تحت تاثیر خشکسالی است

صادق ضیائیان رئیس مرکز ملی خشکسالی و مدیریت بحران سازمان هواشناسی اعلام کرد: بررسی داده‌های ۱۰ ساله خشکسالی بیانگر آن است که ۹۷ درصد مساحت ایران تحت تأثیر خشکسالی بلندمدت است.

ضیائیان در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا گفت: از این مقدار ۵۳.۶ درصد مساحت کشور با خشکسالی شدید، ۱۲.۷ درصد با خشکسالی بسیار شدید، ۲۴.۸ درصد مساحت با خشکسالی متوسط و ۵.۹ درصد مساحت با خشکسالی خفیف مواجه هستند.

وی ادامه داد: ۲ درصد جمعیت ایران با خشکسالی بسیار شدید بلندمدت است همچنین ۴۷ درصد جمعیت کشور با خشکسالی شدید، ۳۰.۷ درصد جمعیت با خشکسالی متوسط و ۵.۱ درصد جمعیت با خشکسالی خفیف دست و پنجه نرم می‌کنند.

Front cover of the Persian translation of Lydia Davis's novel "The End of the Story".