

# TEHRAN TIMES

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## Further Progress in Vienna Hinges on Western Goodwill

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### Iran FM: Our neighbors have right to know what's going on in Vienna

TEHRAN — Speaking upon his arrival at Tehran late on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said Iran informs its neighbors about what is going on in the Vienna talks.

Amir Abdollahian went on to raise issues related to the Vienna talks in the capitals of Oman and Qatar, saying that Iran informs its friends in the region about the Vienna talks.

"They, as our neighbors, have the right to know what is going on between Iran and P4+1 in Vienna," he added.

The Iranian top diplomat noted that according to Iran, the achievements of Iran in peaceful uses of nuclear technology can be made available to all countries in the region and Muslim countries.

"Some of our partners in the Vienna talks are trying to cause concern to some of the neighbors by misreporting the news, but one of our goals in these talks and trips is to include them in our narrative of the Vienna talks and our friends in the region also give us advice that helps in the negotiation process," he added.

Regarding the achievement of his regional trip to Doha, Amir Abdollahian said that talks on various issues of Iran-Qatar relations were one of the topics of discussion.

According to the foreign minister, a group of Iranian ministers are scheduled to travel to Doha in the coming days at the invitation of the Qatari government.

"Trade, economic and cooperation issues in the field of technology and various areas of interest to both parties, including health and containment of coronavirus in Qatar, will be the most important topics of the trip, considering the experiences of Iran and Qatar," he noted. ► Page 2

### Opinion

### Gradual encouraging moves to use natural gas efficiently

By M.A. Saki

TEHRAN – To reduce consumption of natural gas by households in cold seasons there are signs in Tehran metro that instructs citizens to keep the temperature in houses between 18-21 degrees and that the natural gas is not "infinite".

This is a very encouraging move that is expected to be spread to other things as well, especially the use of water by households.

That there are signs urging people to use natural gas efficiently shows that its consumption, like gasoline, has increased incredibly. It is the first time that such signs are seen in the metro.

There are three major reasons for excessive consumption of natural gas: probably, the first important reason is this mindset among subscribers that Iran houses great reserves of natural gas. The second is the price. And the third is inefficient technology.

Hamed Houri Jafari, a senior expert in the energy economy, has said that per capita natural gas consumption in Iran is 6.7 times more than the global average. Jafari also says in comparison to European Union countries, Iranians consume three times more.

The expert says Iran holds the second-largest gas reserves in the world but the "main challenge is excessive use of it in different sectors and low technology." According to him, Iran is the largest consumer of natural gas after the U.S., China, and Russia. ► Page 7



### British PM Johnson has "become a threat"

Calls are growing for the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, to resign over his involvement in a Downing Street party that broke the government's own lockdown rules.

Under intense pressure, Johnson had

previously kept silent since a leaked email emerged last week over the scandal and his lack of comment to either confirm or deny the attendance has infuriated opposition parties and British public further.

However, addressing Parliament for the first time on Wednesday afternoon in a weekly session the PM had to attend, Johnson has admitted he attended the party and issued an apology; despite saying he believed it was "a work event." ► Page 5

### Iranian transport minister visits Syria to pursue expansion of trade ties

TEHRAN – Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi has traveled to Syria to discuss expansion of economic cooperation and trade ties between the two countries, the portal of the Transport and Urban Development Ministry reported.

Upon arrival to the Syrian capital on Wednesday, Qasemi stressed the two countries' determination for achieving true economic and trade partnerships.

The Iranian minister, who is visiting Syria on top of a high-ranking economic and political delegation, was welcomed by Syrian Economy and Foreign Trade Minister Mohammad Samer al-Khalil.

Speaking to the press at the airport, Qasemi said: "The end of the war in Syria is the

beginning of a new era of economic relations between the two countries, especially since Iran and Syria have been together during the years of the war against international terrorism."

Samer al-Khalil for his part referred to the inseparable ties between the two nations and said: "We in Syria want extensive cooperation with Iran." ► Page 4

### Water transfer plan from Sea of Oman takes effect

TEHRAN – The Iranian parliament (Majlis) has approved a bill, mandating the government to implement a plan for transferring water from the Sea of Oman to the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province which has long been grappling with water scarcity.

A budget of \$400 million was allocated by the government in March 2016 to the project which looked also to transfer water to the eastern provinces of South Khorasan and Khorasan Razavi.

The project aims to boost production, expand industries and agriculture, and provide potable water to residents in arid areas.

Once an efficient permanent solution, water supply schemes are now being considered as the main cause of environmental depletion haunting many parts of the country leading to dried up lakes and rivers, and poor water resources management resulting in excessive water withdrawal is also a major threat to the country's future. ► Page 7

### Iran sets new rules for inbound tourists from neighboring countries

TEHRAN – Iranian officials have announced new travel regulations for foreign tourists coming from neighboring countries.

The travel restrictions resulting from the coronavirus outbreak have been lifted for travelers from neighboring countries, the deputy tourism minister has announced.

However, it is only possible to cross land

borders with a negative coronavirus PCR test and documentation of vaccination, CHTN quoted Ali-Asghar Shalbfian as saying on Tuesday.

The ban on direct and indirect travel by passengers from eight African and two European ones, which was announced earlier due to the outbreak of Omicron COVID-19, will re-

main in effect until further notice, the official added.

To control and slow down the spread of the new variant of the coronavirus, tourists from Botswana, Swatini, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Namibia as well as England and France are banned from entering the country, he noted. ► Page 6

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### Interview

### U.S. not seeking to undermine Israel's military superiority in arms deals with Arabs: expert

By Zahra Samimi

TEHRAN – Ali Yahia, a Lebanese expert on international relations, says that Washington only cares about Israel's military superiority in its arms deals with Arab states.

"This is what Washington takes into account, as U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said during his visit to Malaysia, that Washington is ready to maintain the F-35 deal with the UAE, so long as it ensures that Israel continues its military superiority," Yahia tells the Tehran Times.

"This is despite the fact that Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi have signed a joint military cooperation agreement to design unmanned vessels capable of carrying out anti-submarine warfare," the Lebanese expert adds.

Despite the normalization of ties between Israel and a couple of Arab states, Israel is striving to maintain its military dominance when it comes to U.S.-Arab arms deals.

Many political pundits believe that this approach has pushed Arab states on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf to diversify their military alliances and collaborate with China and Russia.

Following is the text of the interview:

**What is your comment on missile cooperation between China and Saudi Arabia? Why are Persian Gulf states turning towards China?**

The world in general and West Asia in particular is witnessing a repositioning due to the new priorities set by Washington towards the Far East and Central Asia, i.e. towards China in terms of economy, and Russia geopolitically. ► Page 5

### Vahid Shamsaei named Iran futsal coach

TEHRAN – Ex-Iran futsal player was named as new head coach of Iran national futsal team on Wednesday.

The 46-year-old coach has replaced Mohammad Nazemosharia in the Iranian team.

As a player, he has won AFC Futsal Championship for eight times.

Shamsaei represented Iran national team for 18 years from 1999 to 2017.

He has coached Iranian clubs Tasisat Daryaei and Giti Pasand.

Under leadership of Nazemosharia, Iran won their first-ever medal in a Futsal World Cup. The Persians claimed a bronze medal in the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016.

Ali Sanei was also named Iran U19 futsal coach.

The former defender has also worked as Iran assistant from 2006 to 2013.



## Iran FM: Our neighbors have right to know what's going on in Vienna

*Qatar's Emir has 'good views for comprehensive regional cooperation,' Amir Abdollahian says*

From page 1 ► Iran's chief diplomat added that due to emergence of a strong wave of coronavirus in Qatar in recent days, Iran has announced its readiness to assist in this regard.

The foreign minister stated, "Dialogue and cooperation on important regional issues was another focus of the visit, and the Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly presented ideas to strengthen the process of cooperation and dialogue leading to cooperation in the Persian Gulf region, and the Emir of Qatar is one of the top regional officials who have always welcomed the ideas put forward by Iran."

Amir Abdollahian added that Iran believes that the solution to some crises in the region is simply to focus on a political solution.

"We should not resolve the region's problems through force, militarism and hegemony, and the experience of recent years has shown this is not beneficial to the region," he asserted.

According to the foreign minister, Iran, as a major country in the region, always has a fundamental role in any solution.



Whether in the fight against ISIS or in any regional dialogue, Iran is on the good side of developments and plays a constructive role, the chief diplomat remarked.

**"We should not resolve the region's problems through force, militarism and hegemony," Amir Abdollahian asserts.**

Referring to Iran's support for any initiative that contributes to stability, security and development in the region, Amir Abdollahian said, "Today we heard good points from the Emir of Qatar in this regard and he also has good views for the development of comprehensive regional cooperation and we also support these ideas."

The foreign minister expressed hope that the region would be more on the path of growth, development and cooperation.

## General calls U.S. biggest terrorism sponsor and source of insecurity



TEHRAN - The spokesman for the Iranian Armed Forces on Tuesday described the United States as the leading state sponsor of terrorism in the world, saying Washington is the source of insecurity across the globe.

Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi made the remarks at the 3r Divine Commander Theater Festival in the southern city of Kerman, Commander Qassem Soleimani's hometown.

General Shekarchi said the criminal U.S. regime exposed its true face before the world by its "brazen" assassination of Iran's top anti-terror commander Soleimani.

"The U.S. is the world's biggest terrorist-nurturing country and the looter of the property of the people and the oppressed," Shekarchi said while speaking.

"No insecurity happens in the world unless the United States is involved."

On January 3, 2020, the U.S. military conducted an air operation under former president Donald Trump's order targeting General Soleimani at Baghdad International Airport after his arrival. The attack also killed the general's companions, including Deputy Commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

Both commanders were highly popular because of the key role they played in eliminating the Daesh terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

Iran called General Soleimani's assassination "state terrorism" and vowed to put an end to the U.S. military's presence in the region as the ultimate act of revenge.

In retaliation, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched a volley of ballistic missiles at the Ain al-Asad airbase in Iraq's western province of Anbar on January 8, 2020, as a result of which 110 U.S. troops were diagnosed with "traumatic brain injuries".

The IRGC, in announcing the missile strikes, warned the "Great Satan" that repeating such mischievous act would lead to "a more painful and more decisive response." It also advised the American people to demand the pullout of their country's forces from the region in order to save their lives.

**"General Soleimani was and invincible"**

Elsewhere in his remarks, Shekarchi said General

Soleimani was kind and compassionate toward the people while being firm, brave, and invincible in the face of the enemy.

He also noted that General Soleimani stood up against the Daesh terrorist group and destroyed the "predatory animal."

"Who armed and supported this predatory animal?" he said, hinting at the U.S. government. "We should be careful not to confuse the martyr with the executioner."

He also asserted that the enemy suffered more from the martyrdom of General Soleimani compared to when he was leading the Resistance Front, pointing to the increasing public push to expel American forces from the region.

**MEP says Gen. Soleimani's 'heroic struggles' against terror will never be forgotten**

A member of the European Parliament has condemned the U.S. for assassinating General Soleimani and al-Muhandis, saying "their heroic struggles against terrorism will never be forgotten."

In a tweet on January 3, Clare Daly said the "legacy" of these two commanders "will prevail," Press TV reported.

"Thinking today of #GeneralSoleimani & #AbuMahdiMuhandis unlawfully assassinated by the #US on this day two years ago. #Anti\_terrorism\_hero. Their heroic struggles against terrorism will never be forgotten.their legacy will prevail," Daly wrote.

Dr. Alam Saleh, an international relations expert, says General Soleimani changed the rules of the game after the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003.

"Soleimani and his military fellows and theorists were worried about the U.S. presence as one of the most powerful military forces of history in the eastern, western and southern borders of the country," Saleh, a lecturer in Iranian Studies at the Australian National University, tells the Tehran Times.

Saleh believes that since the United States cannot be confronted in a "direct military clash," the Iranians tried to design the game in such a way that they have something to say.

He also says the structures that General Soleimani founded are "enduring".

These structures existed before Gen. Soleimani "but his military genius helped him identify these structures and deploy them to create a deterrent power against any potential enemy," Saleh notes.

He adds, "I think what made Soleimani distinguished was his capacity to strike a very good balance between Islamic-nationalistic ideology and pragmatism."

It is interesting that Soleimani's enemies and Western generals were praising him as a military and security figure, the Australian National University lecturer remarks.

TEHRAN — Abdul Qayyum Soleimani, caretaker of the Afghan embassy in Tehran, told a news conference late on Tuesday that Ahmad Massoud, the leader of Afghanistan's National Resistance Front (NRF), told acting Taliban foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in Tehran that he is not seeking a war in Afghanistan.

Muttaqi and his accompanying team visited Tehran late on Saturday (January 8).

"I am narrating the negotiations between the Taliban and Ahmad Massoud, and Ismail Khan (former governor of Herat) and I do not represent any party. It must be understood that the people of Afghanistan are not in a good situation. We in Iran are witnessing an increase in the number of Afghan refugees, and each has its own problems," Soleimani stated.

The diplomat noted that everyone must accept that negotiation is the best way to resolve the problems of Afghanistan.

"My narration of the meeting that took place between the veterans of the Islamic Emirate, Ismail Khan, Ahmad Massoud and Molavi Hessam (chief of the Afghanistan Islamic Brotherhood) on behalf of the politicians, is that these talks were initiated and hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran during Muttaqi's visit to Tehran. The Islamic Republic of Iran arranged the meeting for the Afghan parties to come and talk to each other" in Tehran, he stated.

Soleimani continued by saying that in his opinion the meeting was a good one because it lasted five hours and key issues were discussed and both sides spoke openly.

"Muttaqi, Ismail Khan and Massoud discussed the issues that was important and they suggested ways to solve it. The meeting was held in a calm, constructive and good atmosphere, and it is natural that the negotiations focus on solving problems, and both sides have their own opinions," the diplomat asserted.

**"Inclusive government should be formed"**

Soleimani continued by saying that Ismail Khan said that an "inclusive government" should be formed to solve the problem of Afghanistan. He discussed the constitution, women's rights and such issues that should be resolved within the framework of social justice.

According to the diplomat, Ahmad Massoud also raised good issues in the same direction.

"We are not for war and we are for peace," Soleimani quoted Massoud as saying.

The diplomat added Ismail Khan also said that the war does not bring any results because there has been war in Afghanistan for 40 years and the

## Iranian commander: We build highly advanced military equipment

TEHRAN — Brigadier General Mohammad Hossein Dadras said on Wednesday that today Iran has reached a degree of self-sufficiency that is able to produce technologically advanced arms.

"We do not buy weapons from outside and we make the best ourselves," he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the deputy commander of the Army said Iran is in a situation that it can respond to any military threat.

The general was indirectly referring to the Zionist regime which has intensified military threats against Iran as talks are underway in Vienna to restore the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The Army official said the complaints that Israel is making is because it does not have the power to face Iran militarily because it knows that if it receives a response from Iran, "it will not rise again."

**Threat of cyberspace**

In another part of his remarks, Dadras described cyberspace as a threat and an opportunity, saying, "Although we can learn a lot from cyberspace and the Internet, but in addition, the emergence of Satanism in cyberspace is more."

He said that cyberspace is

# Afghan diplomat: Ahmad Massoud says he's not seeking war



result is what "we are watching".

Soleimani continued by saying that the Afghan parties must reach a conclusion through negotiations.

"Muttaqi and his friends also expressed their views and the talks between the parties went well. Naturally, this was the first meeting, and more time is needed to reach a common point of view, and we should not expect a result in the Tehran talks soon," the diplomat noted.

He added that both sides expressed their readiness to work for the problems of Afghanistan and Iran also supported the continuation of these talks and announced that it is ready to host these meetings regardless of the number of participants and different political spectrums.

Soleimani pointed out that Muttaqi's words were also positive in the meeting.

The atmosphere of dialogue between Massoud, Ismail Khan and Amir Khan Muttaqi was also positive, according to the diplomat.

Soleimani also rebuffed some rumors about Muttaqi's anger at the end of the meeting, saying it is also a question for him that the issues raised to solve Afghanistan's problems are expressed in a different way.

"We must tell the truth if we really believe that the Afghanistan problem and its solution requires inter-Afghan dialogue. I did not see such a thing as the caretaker of the embassy and the representative of the Afghan people. When I talk about the intimacy of the

space, I mean the two sides sat at a table and talked for 5 hours," he added.

He said Afghanistan's embassy has to do its mission by telling the truth.

"I think maybe the initial request was that the details would not be announced until the negotiations have progressed, and after it was announced, everyone will take a stand, but the issue is important. The people of Afghanistan need to know that their leaders are working to solve their problems. On the first night, Ismail Khan, Ahmad Massoud, Molavi Hessam and Dr. Feizizadeh were present, and on the second night, Dr. Shams, the former governor of Badkheis, was present, and Massoud was absent due to his problems," he elaborated on the details of the meeting.

**"Serious discussions held about structure of constitutional system"**

The caretaker ambassador said that there were very serious discussions about structure of a constitutional system and the values that lead to a democratic system and formation of a "universal wisdom".

According to the diplomat, Muttaqi did not take a negative stance on the "allegations", believing them to be preliminary, and saying he would raise the issue in Kabul.

He added, "On the second night, it was concluded that after a re-examination, with the mediation of Iran, if this framework is recognized and the leaders were interested, these meetings will continue."

Regarding the differences between

the two sides, he said that there are definitely differences over issues that have led to the meeting, and to discuss them the parties themselves must comment, and everyone must move the discussion to a direction where the spirit of talks and positive negotiations are prevalent to solve problems.

He also said he did not know about Ahmad Massoud's residence, but said that Ismail Khan lives in Mashhad.

"I do not think that any political party came to this meeting. Ismail Khan is one of the prominent leaders of Afghanistan and he has played a role in the developments of Afghanistan over the last forty years, and as for Ahmad Massoud, he is also the son of the national hero of Afghanistan. These talks were about Afghanistan and ethnic groups," he stated, pointing that none of the opposition leaders represented a political party.

**"Iranian making efforts for dialogue between Afghan sides"**

The diplomat continued by saying that he has witnessed Iran's efforts to make the Afghan leaders negotiate.

"What I saw in the negotiations was that the Islamic Republic was trying to talk to the parties. This means that they were interested in the negotiations going to the next stage and the role of the Islamic Republic is positive." Regarding international aid to Afghan refugees in Iran, Soleimani said that about two weeks ago representatives of international organizations traveled to Tehran and talked about refugees.

"Assistance should be provided at two levels: assistance to refugees and assistance to the people of Afghanistan in order to prevent migration and poverty," he noted.

Regarding the rumors about the transfer of the Afghan embassy in Tehran to the Taliban, he said that during Muttaqi's visit to Tehran, the talks took place and other issues were raised, but this issue was not raised.

"After the ambassador left Iran, I legally became the head of the Afghan embassy," he said. "In line with Muttaqi's visit to Tehran, many controversies were made, one of which was the issue of the Afghan embassy in Tehran, and it was indicated that after Muttaqi's meeting with Ismail Khan, I was chosen as the caretaker of the embassy."

The diplomat added that he has been working in the Afghan Foreign Ministry for 13 years and he has been working as the deputy ambassador in Tehran for two years.

"I have been the head of the embassy since the day the ambassador resigned, and on November 20, I received a letter from the Afghan Foreign Ministry signed by Muttaqi stating that I am the head of the embassy," he told reporters present at the briefing.

## Iranian attorney general meets Russian counterpart

TEHRAN — Mohammad Javad Montazeri, Iran's attorney general, who is heading a delegation to Russia, met with his Russian counterpart on Wednesday.

In a meeting with the Russian Attorney General, Montazeri stressed the need for cooperation between the two countries' judiciaries in the fight against organized crime, especially terrorism.

The need to strengthen cooperation on extradition, assistance in transfer of convicts and the need to develop judicial cooperation in the framework of memoranda and judicial assistance were among the topics of the conversation.

Ali Akbar Bakhtiari, the head of the attorney general's office, is accompanying Montazeri in the visit to Russia.

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# Further progress in Vienna hinges on Western goodwill

TEHRAN – Intensive talks are underway between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries and they are making progress but only slowly. The plodding atmosphere in Vienna is largely because of U.S. unwillingness to constructively engage in the talks.

Unlike the relative silence at media level, the Vienna talks are going on with strident conversations between Iranian and Western sides. Press reports even suggest that the talks have reached a critical juncture.

Iran's state news agency, IRNA, said in a Tuesday dispatch from the Austrian capital, that the Vienna talks, aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA –, is getting closer to a “fateful and critical stages.”

In general, the talks are moving forward. Last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said the talks are moving in the right direction and in order for them to proceed better, a good faith is needed on the part of the Western side.

“Talks in Vienna are proceeding in the right direction. Iran's initiatives brought the talks back on track in a constructive atmosphere. It is now up to the Western side to show good faith and commitment for a good deal,” Amir Abdollahian said on Twitter.



The latest assessment coming from the West showed no sign of a Western willingness to break with past positions. In cautiously downbeat remarks on Tuesday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian complained about the slow process of the talks, while suggesting that time is running out to revive the JCPOA.

“The discussions are ongoing. They are slow, too slow and that creates a gap that jeopardizes the chance of finding a solution that respects the interests of all sides,” the top French diplomat said. “Bits of progress were made at the end of December, but we are still far from concluding this negotiation.”

Fostering a sense of urgency by

setting artificial deadlines, such as the end-January/early February one, is in part intended to put more diplomatic pressure on Iran's negotiating team in the hope of forcing it into making hasty concessions or at least making it accept marginal ideas such as an interim agreement.

Iran has made it clear that its top priority in Vienna is securing a reliable and viable deal that would stand a chance of surviving after Biden's presidency. A senior Iranian lawmaker confirmed this assessment on Wednesday by saying that the Iranian negotiating team has received instructions on negotiating such a deal.

Vahid Jalalzadeh, the chairman

of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said the instructions given to the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna prioritize a permanent deal that would best serve the interests of the Islamic Republic.

The lawmaker also said the P4+1 nations – China, Russia, France, Britain plus Germany – has proposed discussing an interim agreement but he suggested that Iran doesn't view such an agreement favorably, though the P4+1 proposal regarding the agreement has not been accepted or rejected.

According to press reports, the American side has floated the agreement as a way to relieve the pressure posed by time. The reports also said that it would likely involve Iran halting some of its nuclear activities in exchange for an affirmative nod from America at unblocking Iranian assets in frozen bank accounts.

While it remains to be seen if such an arrangement would ever take place, the U.S. can greenlight the release of Iranian assets as a goodwill gesture to pave the way for a lasting agreement, not an interim one that is unlikely to be accepted by Iran.

## Interim agreement in Vienna under consideration: senior MP

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian lawmaker has said Iran doesn't view the interim agreement proposed by the other side favorably, but such a proposal has been under consideration and is yet to be accepted or rejected.

In an interview with Iran's state news agency, IRNA, Vahid Jalalzadeh, the chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said the interim agreement has been proposed by the P4+1 group of countries – France, China, Russia, Britain plus Germany.

The lawmaker said the instructions given to the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna prioritize a permanent deal that would best serve the interests of the Islamic Republic.

The P4+1 proposals for interim agreement are not ideal for us, but they are under consideration and have not been accepted or rejected, Jalalzadeh said.

The Islamic Republic has experienced a unilateral withdrawal from the agreement without being paid political or economic damages, he said, adding that any agreement requires a building of trust to secure the interests of the Islamic Republic.

Emphasizing that any agreement requires the fulfillment of obligations, he said, “The West, by not adhering to the obligations of the previous agreement, has caused a distrust that it must take effective steps to restore it.”

Underlining that this round of negotiations is to punish the United States for trying to return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), he said, “The United States is practically behind the doors of the P4+1 talks; if this period of negotiations is in line with the interests of the Islamic Republic, we can think about their entry into the negotiations.”

## Hamas hails Iran's support for Palestinian resistance

TEHRAN – Palestinian resistance group Hamas has hailed the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in support of Palestine.

In a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in Doha on Tuesday, a high-profile delegation from Hamas, headed by its political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh, appreciated the Iranian backing.

The Hamas delegation addressed the developments related to the Palestinian cause, particularly with regard to the situation in Occupied Jerusalem and the West Bank, Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, and the 15-year Israeli siege on Gaza, according to the Palestinian Information Center.

The delegation hailed the Islamic republic's position in support of the Palestinian cause and resistance.

The Iranian minister, meanwhile, discussed the developments concerning a number of matters, including regional alliances and the Vienna talks, reiterating his country's

stance in support of the Palestinian people and resistance.

The Hamas delegation welcomed the endeavors being made to achieve unity among Arab and Muslim nations, especially the efforts being exerted by Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Besides the Hamas chief, the meeting was attended by members of Hamas political bureau Khalil al-Hayya and Mousa Abu Marzouq, in addition to Majdi Abu Amsheh, head of Haniyeh's office.

The Iranian Foreign ministry said in a statement that during the meeting, Amir Abdollahian outlined the Islamic republic's principled policy toward the issue of Palestine as a plight in the heart of the Islamic ummah created by the child-killing Zionist regime which enjoys support from the West.

He also condemned the brutal crimes of the Zionist occupiers against al-Quds, al-Aqsa Mosque, Gaza and occupied Palestinian territories as well as the regime's aggression and atrocities against the

Palestinian people and sanctities.

Amir Abdollahian reaffirmed Iran's support for the legitimate defense of the Palestinian people and resistance against the occupation of the Zionist regime.

Haniyeh, for his part, appreciated Iran's support for the Palestinian people in their struggle against the Zionist regime's continued aggression.

He also called on the Muslim and Arab world as well as the international community to adopt a decisive stance against the Israeli regime's violations.

The meeting was part of Amir Abdollahian's high-level meetings in Qatar, where he met with the emir and the foreign minister of the tiny Persian Gulf nation.

In his meeting with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir Abdollahian extended the Iranian president's greetings to the Qatari leader. He examined the latest developments in bilateral

minister on the status of talks came amid a remarkable media silence on the talks. The current round resumed in the early days of the new year after a short break due to the end-of-year holidays. Unlike the previous rounds, the negotiators have been getting down to brass tacks ever since they returned to the Austrian capital amid warning from the Western side that time is running out for a deal. Iran has said that it also wants a deal as soon as possible but it prioritizes substance over pace.

Due to Iran constructively engaging in the talks, progress is being reported by almost all concerned parties. Currently, the negotiators are focusing on four major points: Iran's nuclear activities, U.S. sanctions, verification, and guarantees. The progress in question has largely been made in the nuclear sphere, according to press reports.

Representatives from China, France, Germany, Russia, Britain and Iran are negotiating in Vienna to bring back the JCPOA back to life. The United States is involved in the talks indirectly. It is the eighth round of talks in Vienna, the Austrian capital, which started in April. Six rounds were held during the administration of Hassan Rouhani and two rounds in the new Ebrahim Raisi administration.

The Joe Biden administration imposed fresh sanctions on two Iranian government agencies and several officials on December 7 during the previous round of talks. In late December, Russian representative to the Vienna talks Mikhail Ulyanov urged patience and said now is not the time to put pressure on Iran.

Ulyanov said in an interview with Foreign Policy that now is not the time to threaten Iran with greater pressure. He added, “Even if they produce a significant amount of nuclear material, so what. It cannot be used without a warhead, and the Iranians do not have warheads.”

ties in political, security, trade and economic areas. Amir Abdollahian referred to the existing capacities for expanding economic relations between Iran and Qatar, underlining the need for forging cooperation in economic areas given the existing advantages of Iran in this regard.

The Iranian foreign minister further outlined the current Iranian administration's approach to relations with neighboring countries and emphasized the exchange of delegations at high levels between the two countries for consultations.

Amir Abdollahian also underscored the regional views of Iran and declared Tehran's readiness to develop interaction with regional nations in bilateral and multilateral ways.

The top Iranian diplomat then spoke about the Vienna talks over removing the oppressive sanctions against Iran as well as the issues related to Afghanistan and Yemen. The Qatari emir also outlined his views regarding these matters.

## IRAN IN FOCUS

JANUARY 13, 2022

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

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## SPORTS

### Pogon Szczecin complete signing of Yadegar Rostami

TEHRAN – Polish football club Pogon Szczecin have completed the signing of Iranian attacking midfielder Yadegar Rostami on Wednesday.

Rostami is a product of Kia Football Academy which was established by Mehdi Mahdavia in 2015 in southeastern Tehran.

“We are pleased that we have completed this transfer in formal terms. I hope that Yadegar will show his potential in our team and we look forward to seeing the player's progress in the future,” Patryk D?browski told sparkchronicles.com.

“At the beginning I missed my family, however, the training in Pogo? gave me a lot. After these few months, I feel that I am at home and they will help me develop. Coaching staff is great and all people are very helpful here. The training conditions are amazing too. When I was coming to Szczecin, I did not know what awaited me here. The first impression, however, was excellent. I felt lucky to be able to play here,” Rostami said.

Pogon, based in Szczecin, West Pomeranian Voivodeship, play in the Ekstraklasa, the top tier of the national football league system.

Pogon Szczecin sit second in the table, four points Lech Poznan.

### Reza Darvish appointed Persepolis general manager

TEHRAN – Reza Darvish was named as general manager of Persepolis football club by head of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports Hamid Sajadi.

Persepolis were without a general manager since September, when Jafar Samiei stepped down from his role as the team's GM.

On Tuesday, Majid Sadri, who was serving as Persepolis' acting general manager, announced his retirement from his role.

Darvish has previously worked as general manager of Saipa football club.

Persepolis, arguably the most popular Iranian football team, have been expelled from the 2022 AFC Champions League due to non-compliance of their obligations to the AFC's club licensing rules.

Persepolis are owned by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

### Iran 13th at beach soccer ranking

TEHRAN – Iran remained in 13th place in the beach soccer worldwide ranking.

Russia, Portugal and Brazil remained unchanged on top.

Japan are the best Asian team in the ranking, sitting in fourth place.

The BSWW World Ranking is a ranking system for men's national teams in beach soccer, calculated by the sport's developmental body, Beach Soccer Worldwide (BSWW).

The ranking system is based upon that which is used to produce the FIFA World Rankings in its parent sport, association football, and since its establishment has been used for such purposes as seeding teams at the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup.

### Allahyar Sayyadmanesh on Shakhtar's radar

TEHRAN – Ukrainian football club Shakhtar Donetsk have also set its sight on signing Allahyar Sayyadmanesh, Belgian site voetbalprimeur.be reported.

The Iranian 21-year-old winger has been also linked with a move to English Championship side Hull City and Belgium club Anderlecht.

Sayyadmanesh is not going to continue his career in the Ukrainian Premier League.

The attacker started his career as a youngster with spells at Saipa and Esteghlal before Fenerbahce swooped to sign him in May 2019 on a five-year deal. He has since played for Zorya Luhansk and fired 15 goals in 50 appearances for the Ukrainian Premier League outfit.

### Irandoost names Iran team for AFC Asian Cup 2022

TEHRAN – Maryam Irandoost has named her 23-member team for the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022.

The competition will begin when eight-time champions China PR face Chinese Taipei on Jan.20, with hosts India to kick off their campaign against first-time qualifiers Iran later that evening.

The final will be held at Navi Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium on Feb. 6.

The tournament promises to be a thriller with the continent's best players set to vie for the prestigious title and places in the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup Australia/New Zealand.

#### Iran Squad

Goalkeepers: Zohreh Koodaei (1), Maryam Yektaei (12), Arefeh Seyedkazemi (22).

Defenders: Fatemeh Amineh (2), Hadieh Kor (3), Melika Motevali (4), Ghazaelh Banitalebi (5), Behnaz Taherkhani (8), Zohreh Jalali (15), Fatemeh Adeli (19).

Midfielders: Zahra Sarbali (6), Sara Zohrabinia (10), Samaneh

Chahkandi (11), Yasaman Farmani (13), Elham Farahmand (14), Zahra Masoumi (16), Melika Mohammadi (18), Marzieh Nikkhal (21), Sana Sadeghi (23).

Forwards: Afsaneh Chatrehoor (7), Sara Ghomi (9), Negin Zandi (17), Hajar Dabbaghi (20).

### Zolfagharnasab appointed head of FFIRI Technical & Development Committee

TEHRAN – Bijan Zolfagharnasan was named as head of Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) Technical and Development Committee.

The former Iran coach was appointed to that role in the board of directors of the football federation meeting held in the FFIRI's headquarters on Wednesday.

Zolfagharnasab is one of the longest-serving coaches in Iran football.

He has coached so many Iranian football clubs including Saipa, Esteghlal, Bargh Shiraz, Zob Ahan, Gostaresh, Sanat Naft, Damash and Pas since 1998.

### Celtic still want Mehdi Ghaedi

TEHRAN – Celtic have reportedly had a bid for Shabab Al Ahli star Mehdi Ghaedi rejected but it's claimed the Parkhead side are prepared to return with a fresh offer to the Iran international forward.

Ghaedi, who can play as a left winger or second striker, only joined the UAE Pro League club on a five-year deal in August 2021, Daily Record reported.

Ghaedi has eight caps as a senior international and previously played for Iranjavan and Shahin Bushehr in his homeland.

The 23-year-old international is set to be officially unveiled as Ange Postecoglou's fifth signing of a busy January window.

It's understood the manager took a hands-on approach to negotiations and that hands-on approach was pivotal in bringing McGree to the Premiership.



## Iranian transport minister visits Syria to pursue expansion of trade ties

From page 1 ► “We hope that the meetings between Mr. Qasemi and Syrian officials will lead to agreements to reach economic and trade partnerships between the two sides,” he added.

During his three-day visit to Damascus, Qasemi, who chairs the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, is scheduled to meet with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, the country's prime minister, and the ministers of foreign affairs, economy, transport, labor, and housing, as well as the head of the central bank of Syria.

According to the transport and urban

development minister, during the visit, serious talks are going to be held between the two sides in various fields, including industry, construction, and infrastructure facilities.

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 considering Syria's efforts for reconstructing the country's war-torn infrastructures, 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.

## Tehran hosting 3 international exhibitions



TEHRAN - Three international exhibitions are being concurrently held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, IRNA reported.

As reported, the 11th International Exhibition of Mother, Baby and Child (MBC 2022), the Eighth International Exhibition of Footwear, Bag, Leather, and Related Industries (MPEX 2022), and the 12th Iran's International Exhibition of Architecture, Interior Design, and Modern House (MIDEX 2022) are the exhibitions that kicked off on Tuesday and will continue until Friday.

The opening ceremonies of the mentioned exhibitions were attended by senior officials including Deputy Industry, Mining

and Trade Minister Mehdi Baradaran, and Managing Director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) Homan Razdar.

Some 171 Iranian companies active in various areas including interior design, decoration equipment, flooring, wall coverings, curtains, decorative accessories, outdoor furniture, lighting equipment, smart house equipment, new building technologies as well as specialized and academic fields are showcasing their latest products and achievements at the MIDEX exhibition,

The MBC exhibition is participated by 65 exhibitors that are presenting the latest products, goods, and services related to the field of mothers, children, and infants.

Hosting 190 Iranian companies and two exhibitors from China and Turkey, MPEX is aiming to provide the latest technologies in developed countries to domestic producers and introduce new machinery for the production of leather products for bags and shoes, while creating a platform for communication and interaction between domestic and foreign manufacturers active in the leather.

## New IRICA head appointed

TEHRAN - Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi appointed Alireza Moghadasi as the new head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), IRIB reported on Tuesday.

Holding a PhD degree in Strategic Management from National Defense University, and Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Business Administration from Tehran and Islamic Azad Universities, Moghadasi has been working with the IRICA for over 25 years in various positions.

Moghadasi, who had been appointed as the acting head of the organization since December 18, replaced Mehdi Mirashrafi who was the IRICA head since November 2018.



*Finance Minister Ehsan Khandouzi (R) hands new IRICA Head Alireza Moghadasi his decree of appointment in Tehran on Tuesday.*

## NIOC head outlines company's operational strategies



TEHRAN - Head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr outlined his company's new operational and development strategies in a meeting with NIOC's senior managers on Wednesday, Shana reported.

Speaking in this gathering, Khojasteh-Mehr emphasized the need for full compliance with operational and strategic requirements at all levels and said: “We should try to implement the theory of

optimal corporate governance system at the National Iranian Oil Company.”

He stressed that the managers in the company should mainly focus on overcoming the shortcomings by following new governance models.

“Managers should note that the approach adopted to lead their companies must be a knowledge-based one and all operations should be conducted according to program-based models,” the official stated.

Finally, to be able to control the outcomes, it is necessary to adopt a system so that the results of the implemented programs can be quantitatively observed and measured, he added.

Khojasteh-Mehr further pointed to the need to manage companies based on up-to-date models and added: “Technological approaches should be considered not only at the level of plans and projects but also at management levels”.

# Iran's 1st geothermal power plant to come on stream by late June

TEHRAN - Iran's first geothermal power plant, with the primary electricity generation capacity of five megawatts (MW), is going to go operational before the next Iranian calendar year's summer peak consumption period (summer starts on June 22), an official with the Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH) announced.

According to Hamidreza Azimi, the project is mainly completed and the only remaining part is related to the washing of the power plant's steam wells for which the relevant contract has been concluded and the selected contractor has started the process of equipping the workshop, the Energy Ministry's news portal Paven reported.

According to the plan, the equipment related to the washing of the power plant's wells will enter the workshop within the next month and the operations related to this section will be carried out



within 45 days so that the process of the power plant's synchronization would be started, Azimi explained.

Located in Meshgin Shahr County in the northwestern Ardebil province, the country's first geothermal power plant is being constructed by TPPH.

Back in October 2020, Deputy Energy Minister Homayoun Haeri had put the project's physical progress at 71 percent,

saying: “[implementation of] This project was put on the agenda in order to evaluate and exploit the geological resources in the northwest of Sabalan while indigenizing the technical knowledge of design, construction, and commissioning of geothermal power plants, as well as capacity building and empowerment of skilled manpower.”

The first stage of the plant

development is going to feature a five MW turbine, while a total of 50 MW is targeted to be reached at later stages.

The power plant is being built at the foot of Mount Sabalan, about 85 km northwest of Ardebil. The current investment is reported at around \$40.4 million.

Geothermal power refers to the use of underground hot steam to drive turbines which in turn generate electricity. It is cheaper and more reliable than other renewable energy sources, such as thermal or hydropower.

Greenhouse gas emissions in geothermal power plants are a small fraction of those produced in gas-powered stations and even far less in coal-powered facilities.

Besides power generation, geothermal energy will be used for heating purposes in the region's harsh winters and cooling in the summer.

## 17 idle industrial units revived in Bushehr in 9 months

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 17 idle industrial units returned to the production cycle in Bushehr province, in the southwest of Iran, in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021).

Mehdi Safavi, the managing director of the province's Industrial Parks Company, said that the mentioned units returning to the production cycle created jobs for 310 people.

The official put the number of idle units returning to the production cycle in the province at 30 in the past Iranian year, and said that it was more than the planned figure by six.

He also announced that contracts for implementing 71 production projects worth 8,386 trillion rials (about \$29 million) to create jobs for 1,208 people were signed in the industrial parks and zones of the province in the first nine-months of the current year.

As announced by the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), in the last Iranian calendar year, 1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to the production cycle in the industrial parks with a financing of 35 trillion rials (over \$120.6 million), providing employment for 27,000 people.

With the aim of reactivating stagnant units or units that are operating below capacity, 900 consultants from the private sector and



knowledge-based companies were selected in the form of industry clinics across the country to recognize the weaknesses of these units, Ali Rasoulzadeh has previously stated.

“Despite the two major challenges of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic, which imposed severe restrictions on the country, we tried to activate domestic capacities by turning to localizing the technology of manufacturing parts and equipment”, he added.

Sanctions have caused problems for financial exchanges and the export of goods to other countries, he said, adding, “The negative effects of coronavirus pandemic on various parts of the country, including industry, are not hidden from anyone, and the economic growth of some countries has reached below zero during this period.”

Iran is proud that despite these restrictions and pressure from these two important challenges, its industry has grown by more

than seven percent, according to the statistics and reports from various sectors, the official further highlighted.

Also, as announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, over 6,500 new industrial units were established across the country during the past year which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of “Production: support and the elimination of obstacles” by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the official has said: “In the year that has been dedicated to the production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and executive bodies should be towards supporting the country's industrial and mining units.”

Niaraki pointed to a 40-percent increase in the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the previous year, saying: “The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest in the productive sectors.”

He also mentioned an 85-percent rise in the allocation of land for establishing industrial units across the country and noted that over 4,500 hectares of land were handed over to applicants in the previous calendar year.

## TEDPIX falls 420 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 420 points to 1,334 million on Wednesday.

Over 4,051 billion securities worth 23.66 trillion rials (about \$81.58 million) were traded in TSE.

The first market's index fell 98 points, and the second market's index dropped 1,494 points.

The budget bill, submitted by president to the parliament on December 12, has paid special attention to the capital market and bourse companies.

The measures considered in the budget bill and its overall positive effects on the capital market includes 1- Reforming the price of gas feed, as well as electricity, water, oxygen and other utilities for the petrochemical units, refineries, steel reduction units, and downstream industries 2-Reducing taxes on production units active in the stock market 3- Strengthening Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund 4- Reducing the government's revenue from selling bonds 5-Eliminating subsidized foreign currency allocations 6- Eliminating pre-ordered pricing.

Reducing the taxes imposed on production units will make them more profitable and therefore their performance in the stock

market will improve.

Also, the direct taxes collected from production units is expected to be injected into Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund in order to be used to improve and develop the market.

Based on the next year's budget bill, no subsidized foreign currency will be allocated to special entities to import certain goods. Experts and analysts believe that this decision is going to have a very positive impact on the stock market since it will prevent rent and unrealistic pricing.

The draft of the national budget bill also indicates that the government will be less reliant on the stock market to compensate deficits and fund various development projects, which is another positive aspect of the mentioned bill since the stock market will be less affected by the politics and will follow a normal trend created by supply and demand.

The government's second measure, which is also for the profitability of production activities and bourse industries, and a promising market outlook, was approving a 10-article package to support this market.

The ten strategic decisions made in the mentioned headquarters



are as follows:

1- Next year, the price ceiling of petrochemical units' gas feed will be 50,000 rials (17 cents) per cubic meter, ie the export rate. Also, gas fuel for steel mills will be 40 percent of the price of petrochemical feed, previously this reference was 100 percent, which has now reached 40 percent, ie each cubic meter will be a maximum of 20,000 rials (six cents). And, the rate for the cement industry's feed is equal to 10 percent of the feed rate of the petrochemical industry. Of course, all this requires the approval of the budget bill.

2- The production units' tax will be reduced by five percent next year.

3- The formula for the government's earning from the mines will not change next year.

4- Equivalent to the stock market transfer tax is allocated to strengthen Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund.

5- In addition to the previous securities, 300 trillion rials (about \$1,034 billion) will be allocated for Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund, provided that the market situation is suitable.

6- 10 percent of the state-owned shares in the initial public offering market will be used for the stock marketing of the same shares.

7- The issuance of government bonds in the market is done by observing 50 percent of the inflow of resources to the capital market. That is, government bonds are issued in the months when the cash flow is higher

8- Central Bank of Iran (CBI) is required to announce the forex rate of government assets equal to 90 percent of the rate of the Nima system (Forex Management Integrated System, locally known as NIMA) in the last six months, which has been demanded by those active in the banking and stock exchange sectors.

9- The head of Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) is invited to the meetings of Economic Headquarters and the committee of “V” of paragraph 5.

10- CBI sets an interbank interest rate of 20 percent to intervene in the secondary securities market.



# U.S. not seeking to undermine Israel’s military superiority in arms deals with Arabs: expert

From page 1 ▶ Attempts to revive the JCPOA in Vienna and to reinforce attempts to resolve the Yemeni crisis diplomatically, and the withdrawal of the Patriot defense systems from Saudi Arabia, can be understood in this context.

It prompted some countries that are interlinked with each other regionally to interact bilaterally and trilaterally such as Iranian-Saudi, Egyptian-Qatari, and Emirati-Turkish, Emirati-Iranian, and Emirati-Syrian meetings, etc.

Not to mention the increasing desire of other countries to diversify their protection networks to avoid any possible invasion.

These states have resorted to intensifying their networks of interests through investments and purchases with countries outside the American orbit, in parallel with a French-Chinese focus on the region.

France is trying to fill the void of power after the American withdrawal from Afghanistan and compensate for the cancellation of its submarine deal with Australia.

But China wants to secure its increasing energy supplies from the Middle East (West Asia).

These developments pushed the United Arab Emirates and France to sign an arms deal that will see the (Persian) Gulf state acquire Rafale fighter jets, besides an increasing desire for the (Persian) Gulf states to deal with China; not just through a joint ballistic missile production project. However, this trajectory has faced stumbling blocks from Washington, which succeeded in canceling the construction of a Chinese facility in a port near the UAE capital.



## What about Emirates’ threat to suspend talks on F-35 jets? What are its implications?

The main driver of the U.S.-Emirati arms deal was political; the deal was inked two months after the Abraham agreement, and on the last day of Trump’s departure from the White House.

But new considerations by the Biden administration led to the freezing of the deal in light of U.S. new posture on Yemen.

Add to it the technical-security considerations that were represented in tough conditions due to U.S. concerns about a leaking of F-35 technology to Russia and China.

Not to mention the U.S. efforts to restrict the growth of Chinese investments in the UAE.

All these factors led the UAE that the deal has a negative effect on its sovereignty and independence.

It should also be recalled what U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said during his visit to Malaysia, that Washington is ready to maintain the F-35 deal with the

UAE, so long as it doesn’t violate Israel’s military superiority.

This is despite the fact that Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi have signed a joint military cooperation agreement to design unmanned vessels capable of carrying out anti-submarine warfare.

## Do you think China is going to extend its military influence in West Asia after economic deals?

First, we should recall that there is no bloody history between the peoples of the Middle East (West Asia), the Mediterranean and China, even during the Tang Dynasty, which turned into the largest economy in the world.

China’s military history was mostly defensive, and Japan’s recent invasion (of China) cost between 30 and 35 million Chinese lives, which created a national wound that contributed to crystallizing the modern Chinese anti-colonial awareness.

This history nominates China to be the most suitable ally for our East, as China does not adopt a policy of undermining the infrastructure of states and societies through invasions or setting them

into a debt trap.

Not to mention the growing need of China and India for the oil of Iran and the Middle East (West Asia), that most of which will go to China and India in the future, after the United States approaches the stage of self-sufficiency, and Europe’s shift towards alternative energy.

However, the political influence of the United States, and its influence among the Arab elites, will make China’s task difficult, and most of the Middle East (West Asia) and all the (Persian) Gulf states, will remain an American sphere of influence for coming years.

## Do you think Israel will turn a blind eye on military developments in Saudi Arabia and the Emirates?

Despite what the recent period witnessed in the development of relations between Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi and the signing of joint military cooperation agreements to build unmanned anti-submarines and unmanned aircraft, Saudi Arabia maintained a distance with Tel Aviv due to the opposition of the traditional forces in the Kingdom to normalization.

Tel Aviv is striving to maintain its superiority against its foes and rivals, and even against new allies alike, in light of a changeable political geography, especially in a hostile environment.

This is what Washington takes into account. And I quote what U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said during his visit to Malaysia, that Washington is ready to maintain the F-35 deal with the UAE, so long as it ensures that Israel continues its military superiority.

# British PM Johnson has “become a threat”

From page 1 ▶ Acknowledging the “rage [the public] feel with me and with the government” the PM says “with hindsight, I should have sent every-one back inside”.

Responding to the prime minister’s admission, the main opposition Labour Party leader, Keir Starmer, called on Johnson to “do the decent thing and resign”, describing his defense as “so ridiculous that it is actually offensive to the British people”.

Starmer added Johnson is a “pathetic spectacle of a man who has run out of road. The party is over prime minister”.

He further said “When the prime minister’s former health secretary broke the rules, he resigned and the prime minister said he was right to do so.

“When the prime minister’s spokesperson laughed about the rules being broken, she resigned, and the prime minister accepted that resignation. Why does the prime minister still think that the rules don’t apply to him?”

Conservative Party Members’ of Parliament have also expressed their anger over the Prime Minister’s failure to address the allegations until now.

Tory MP Roger Gale says the PM is on “very thin ice indeed”, saying Johnson misled parliament and politically is a “dead man walking”.

Gale says “unfortunately what the Prime Minister has said today leaves people like me in an impossible situation. We now know that the prime minister spent 25 minutes at what was quite clearly a party. That means that he misled the House”.

He adds “I fear that it is now going to have to be the work of the 1922 [Committee] to determine precisely how we proceed. If you look at the twittersphere after prime minister’s question time today, it sounds to me I am afraid very much as though politically the prime minister is a dead man walking”.

This is while the Metropolitan Police faces legal action for its failure to investigate the Downing Street Party Scandal.

The Good Law Project says it has started legal proceedings over the police’s refusal to investigate reports of the Downing Street Party last year.

According to British media, the campaign group says the metropolitan police told them it had “relied on the government’s assurances that no rules had been broken” and “there would have been no point in interviewing Number 10 staff about the parties because they would have refused to answer questions that exposed them to a risk of prosecution”.

The Good Law Project has hit back saying: “You can have the rule of law, or you can defer to the powerful. But you can’t have both.

The campaign group says the police “will know that multiple criminal offences were committed. It shames the Met, and ultimately all of us, that [the



Met chief] refuses to investigate.”

Analysts say allegations of the Metropolitan police “deferring to the powerful” will be met with anger by the British public.

Data from the National Police Chiefs’ Council shows police fined hundreds of people for breaking lockdown rules during the week of the Downing Street garden party. There were 807 fixed penalty notices issued for in England and Wales from 15 May and 21 May 2020.

The Metropolitan Police face further questions about whether its officers knew of the gathering at the time it took place and why it did not take any action then.

The Green party pointed out how troublesome the May 2020 party was for the police force saying “this garden party raises big questions for the Met police, as their officers must surely have monitored this gathering via their security cameras and been aware of the rules in place at the time”

“The police are losing public trust with their attitude that there are lots of rules for us and no rules for Conservative ministers. Did Martin Reynolds consult with Met police officers about the Covid restrictions, or inform them of the event?” the party added.

The fluid developments and outrage come following the leak of an email from one of the prime minister’s top officials inviting more than 100 Downing Street staff to a party during the first coronavirus lockdown.

Labour’s deputy leader Angela Rayner has warned Johnson’s position is “completely untenable” saying he “not only broke the rules, but he’s lied to the British public” adding the fact Johnson has yet to come forward to explain his account of the event “shows the measure of the man”.

The Liberal Democrat Party is calling for the PM to resign, saying he has “become a threat to the health of our nation”.

In a statement, the party’s leader Ed Davey said “Boris Johnson is now incapable of leading our country through this public health crisis - I actually think he is a threat to the health of the nation, because no-one will do anything he says because he has now shown to have been deceitful, so Boris Johnson must now resign”

“He said to parliament and to the country before Christmas when he was apologising that he didn’t know about the parties, and now we know he was at at least one of those parties”.

“So, he has clearly lied, he has broken the ministerial code, he has broken the law, he’s misled parliament - any prime minister in the past would resign for just one of those offenses.

“If he has a shred of decency left in him, I think he must resign today”.

This is while, the Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross, asked by British media if the PM should step down, Ross replied “yes, because you cannot put in place these rules, you cannot be the head of the government that is asking people to follow these rules and then breaking those rules yourself.”

According to legal scholars, Johnson could be prosecuted as an “accessory to crime” if he is found to have attended a rule-breaking Downing Street party.

Meanwhile, in a sign of the British public turning on their Prime Minister, for the first time more than 50% of the public has called on Johnson to resign.

A YouGov poll showed 56% of respondents believed Mr Johnson should resign over the fresh allegations, with 27% saying he should remain.

This is while a Savanta ComRes study found 66% of British adults thought he should quit as prime minister, with 24% saying he should stay.

Given the similar results, it is more difficult to understate the potential significance of the latest snap survey from Savanta ComRes.

This indicates two thirds of the population believe Boris Johnson should resign over the scandal.

But perhaps more importantly, 42% of Conservative voters also think he should quit. The Prime Minister has become an electoral liability for the ruling party.

The double standards in government rules can be highlighted by the campaign group ‘COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice’, which has written to Johnson urging him to “do the right thing” and apologise for attending the Downing Street garden party.

The letter was signed by Hannah Brady, who said her father’s death certificate was being signed on the day of the Number 10 gathering.

It stated: “It is now clear that whilst my dad’s death certificate was being signed and me and my younger sister were grieving alone, dozens of people were gathered, clutching a bottle they had been invited to bring, in the same place you told me you had done everything you could”

“You can only imagine the pain, anguish and anger this news has brought to me and those of us lost a loved one to COVID-19. To make matters worse, when asked about this event you laughed, smirked and seemed to treat it as one big joke.”

## US urged to close ‘secret prisons’ worldwide

According to a Russia Today report, the Chinese foreign minister has called on the US to close all of its “secret prisons” around the world as it labeled the Guantanamo detention center a “dark page” in the history of human rights.

Speaking during a regular press briefing on Wednesday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said that 20 years after its creation, Guantanamo is still a cause of “great indignation” among the international community.

He stated that despite numerous US promises to close the Cuba-based jail, it still holds 39 people, and only a handful of them have been charged or convicted of any crime.

Wang claimed that if there is a “detention camp for Muslims in the world, it is Guantanamo,” seemingly a reference to accusations that China is abusing the human rights of the Uighurs.

“In fact, the secret prisons set up by the United States are all over the world, and Guantanamo is just the tip of the iceberg,” Wang said, citing reports. He noted that the US has set up a large number of secret prisons in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“The atrocities, torture and murder of Iraqi civilians by the US military after the invasion of Iraq caused a world uproar over the scandal of the abuse of prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison,” he said.

Wang concluded that the US’s “black prisons” are a stark reminder that America’s operations globally in the name of human rights are entirely misleading.

He called on the US to reflect on its actions and “immediately close Guantanamo and secret prisons around the world.” Wang added that the arbitrary detention and torture of prisoners must immediately stop.

## Biden labels January 6 riot ‘attempted coup’

U.S. President Joe Biden has said that Donald Trump supporters wanted to subvert the will of voters when they stormed the US Capitol building in Washington last year. The speech came as investigators subpoenaed Trump allies, RT reported.

“That’s why we’re here today: to stand against the forces in America that value power over principle, forces that attempted a coup, a coup against the legally expressed will of the American people by sowing doubt, inventing charges of fraud and seeking to steal the 2020 election from the people,” Biden said in a speech in Atlanta, Georgia, on Tuesday.

“They want chaos to reign. We want the people to rule.”

The president referred to the January 6, 2021 events as an “armed insurrection” last week, when the country marked the first anniversary of the riot. Biden allies and some media organizations have been long using the word “coup” to describe the seizure of the Capitol.

Biden’s Tuesday remarks came as the House of Representatives select committee investigating the riot subpoenaed two strategists with links to Donald Trump Jr, as well as a former White House official “who helped draft the former President’s January 6th speech.”

On January 6, 2021, a crowd of Trump supporters broke through police barricades and briefly overturned the Capitol compound seeking to stop Congress from certifying Biden’s win against Trump in the presidential election.

Trump repeatedly claimed that the election was stolen from him, but the many lawsuits his campaign filed failed in court. Trump was ultimately banned from Twitter and Facebook for his alleged role in inciting the riot.

## India’s top court intervenes in hate speeches against Muslims

India’s Supreme Court has issued notice to a northern Himalayan state following a petition that sought to prosecute several Hindu religious leaders for allegedly calling for a “genocide” of Muslims at a closed-door meeting last month.

Three Supreme Court judges on Wednesday said they were notifying the Uttarakhand state government that they will investigate the case next week, Al Jazeera reported.

According to a police complaint, the religious leaders called on Hindus to arm themselves to kill Muslims during a meeting in the northern holy town of Haridwar, in Uttarakhand, in December.

The police said they were questioning suspects over the hate speech, but no arrests have been made.

Videos of the event had sparked outrage, prompting demands for action. In one clip that went viral, a speaker at the gathering told the crowd that people should not worry about going to jail for killing Muslims.

“Even if just a hundred of us become soldiers and kill two million of them, we will be victorious ... If you stand with this attitude only then will you able to protect ‘sanatana dharma’ [an absolute form of Hinduism],” the woman said.





## Lt.Gen. Soleimani's paternal house added to national heritage list



TEHRAN – The paternal house of Iranian popular commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani has recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

Located in Kerman province, the old house has been evaluated worthy of achieving the national tag by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

The inscription was announced in a letter to the governor-general of the southern province, the report added.

Lieutenant General Soleimani was assassinated in a U.S. drone strike on January 3, 2020 near Baghdad's international airport along with his longtime comrade Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, the former deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).

As the commander of the Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force, Soleimani was considered

one of the most powerful Iranian figures as he played a prominent role in the country's foreign policy in West Asia for years. He was internationally recognized as a legendary commander in the fight against terrorist groups.

The martyrdom of General Soleimani and al-Mohandes generated new momentum in the region among resistance groups to achieve the goal of getting rid of America's military presence. This was partly generated due to the two men's sacrifices during the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

The two commanders enjoyed enormous popularity not just in Iran and Iraq but in entire West Asia and beyond for the major role they played in the successful battles that ultimately put an end to the territorial rule of Daesh, the world's most notorious terror group.

The big and sprawling province of Kerman is something of a cultural melting pot, blending various regional cultures over time. It is also home to rich tourist spots and historical sites including bazaars, mosques, caravanserais, and ruins of ancient urban areas.

Kerman province is bounded by the provinces of Fars on the west, Yazd on the north, South Khorasan on the northeast, Sistan-Baluchestan on the east, and Hormozgan on the south. It includes the southern part of the central Iranian desert, the Dasht-e Lut.

## Iranian handicrafts on show at Zanjan exhibit

TEHRAN – Collections of Iranian handicrafts and traditional arts are on display in an exhibition, which is currently underway in Zanjan, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Artisans and crafters from 12 provinces across the country have participated in the four-day sales exhibition, Amir Arjmand announced on Wednesday.

It is important to hold such exhibitions during the outbreak of the coronavirus as it will benefit the handicraft industry and introduce travel and sales methods during the pandemic, the official added.

Organized by the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, the exhibit is running following strict health protocols and social distancing rules, he explained.

Zanjan is known for exquisite handmade products including knives, Giveh (a kind of traditional footwear), copper dishes, and filigree.

Knifemaking is one of the oldest handicrafts practiced for centuries in several Iranian cities, of which the northwestern city of Zanjan is the most famous.

Knives, swords, and daggers were produced and a lot of knife making workshops were active in these cities. But due to their design, cut, diversity, and durability, Zanjan knives have been the most successful.

This traditional footwear of Giveh, which is produced in the Iranian plateau for millennia, is very light and durable. However, it was more common in the past and was worn by farmers and villagers. This clothing has very unique features. For example, it is highly suitable for arid



and mountainous climates, it is very light which decreases the sweating of the feet. It does not have a left foot or right foot, both of them are the same. These features have given the footwear international popularity and made it a unique product.

In the past, giveh did not have specific sizes, but they were made in 3 general sizes of small, medium, and large. They are most commonly white. However, sometimes the craftsman makes them in colors like blue, red, or black based on his own taste or at the request of the buyer.

Hand-made copper dishes are very popular in the central province of Isfahan and Zanjan. In addition to being useful for human health, these products can also be used as decorative pieces and are considered to be superb works of art.

In January 2020, Zanjan was designated as a "world city of filigree" by the World Crafts Council after the WCC assessors visited various craft workshops, stores, exhibits, and bazaars of the city in a two-day itinerary.

Filigree consists of curling, twisting, or plaiting

# Iran sets new rules for inbound tourists from neighboring countries

From page 1 ▶ Back in December the official announced that air passengers are allowed to enter Iran except those whose departure would be from the mentioned African and European countries.

The official said that land and sea borders will be closed to all travelers excluding those who have specific visas for medical tourism, trade, business investment, and education.

Over the past month, several travel insiders have lamented that pauses for arrivals had caused many problems for the ones who had pre-arranged to visit the Islamic Republic.

Late December, Hormatollah Rafiei who presides over the Association of Air Transport and Tourist Agencies of Iran said some foreign travelers stayed outside Iran's borders and failed to enter the country as the result of the ban. "None of the tourist-friendly countries have implemented such restrictions and bans," he said, calling the new regulations and instructions 'unprofessional' and 'wrong'.

"While we support the ban on the entry of citizens of the few African countries that were sources of the new variant of the coronavirus, we object to the suspension of tourist visas for all foreign nationals." The decision is wrong and will cause damage to the country once again as well



as create distrust towards Iran on the global tourism market, he lamented.

Some believe that preventing the spread of new variants of the virus and maintaining public health is preferable to the benefits of tourism.

The new regulations and restrictions on travel to Iran have been put into place just a few months after the visas were issued for foreign visitors after almost 19 months of suspension.

Back in November, Iranian officials announced that in addition to providing proof of vaccination or a negative PCR, inbound passengers must have coronavirus insurance, which differs from the routine insurance coverage purchased by all tourists before the coronavirus era.

Iranian Tour Operators Director Ebrahim Pourfaraj said in November that the restoration

of tourism flow to the country is very important for Iranian tour operators and travel insiders. "At the moment, we are not thinking about revenues, but we are looking for the beginning of the tourist flow to the country and renew our links [with international fellows]," Pourfaraj said.

His comments came after months of steep recession triggered by massive coronavirus restrictions which led many travel insiders, hoteliers, and tour operators towards bankruptcy, unemployment, debts, and the prospects of not being competitive on the international level.

As mentioned by Pourfaraj, Iran has made its best to maintain contact with global tourism markets and companies that worked with Iran in the past, especially since virtual communication and meetings have thrived.

"Following the resumption of the tourist visa, visitors from Russia and France have traveled to Iran and we are currently expecting a smaller number of tourists in Iran due to the current situation in the world," he explained.

In November 2020, the World Tourism Organization announced that international tourist arrivals to Iran plunged 72% during the first eight months of 2020 when compared to 2019, highlighting the severe impact of COVID-19 as the main factor.

The pandemic has taken a huge toll on Iran's civil aviation sector. For instance, airlines reportedly lost hundreds of millions of dollars because of flight cancellations during the busy New Year travel season last March.

Some experts say Iran has the potential to experience a tourism boom after coronavirus is contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

Iran is potentially a booming destination for travelers seeking cultural attractions, breathtaking sceneries, and numerous UNESCO-registered sites. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

## Historical sabat in central Iran undergoes restoration

TEHRAN – A historical sabat in the ancient neighborhood of Bazaamo in the central city of Yazd has undergone some rehabilitation works, Yazd's deputy tourism chief has said.

Sabat is an arched structure built between the opposite buildings on both sides of a narrow street in tropical and desert areas and it creates shade and a cool place for passers-by. Due to its semi-covered nature, this structure creates air blinds in summer, which cools the air inside sabat and in winter makes the air warmer.

The restoration project aims at replacing worn-out bricks, strengthening the structure using cob material and repairing the rooftop and walls of the historical sabat, which has been damaged over the time, CHTN quoted Ali-Asghar Samadiani as saying on Wednesday.

In July 2017, the historical structure of the city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, Yazd enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. The city is full of mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

It is a living testimony to the intelligent use



of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center.

The use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs by the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

Partially covered alleyways together with streets, public squares and courtyards contribute to a pleasant urban quality. The city escaped the modernization trends that destroyed many traditional earthen cities.

It survives today with its traditional districts, the qanat system, traditional houses, bazaars, hammams, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and the historic garden of Dolat-Abad. The city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

## Iranian police arrest 5,000 excavators, antique smugglers

TEHRAN – Iranian authorities have arrested 5,000 illegal diggers and antique dealers across the country since the beginning of the current Iranian year 1400 (March 21, 2021), a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage said on Wednesday.

Over 4500 historical objects have also recovered during the mentioned time, Hassan Mehri said, ISNA reported.

More than 5,000 metal detectors have been confiscated from unauthorized diggers in the past few years, the official added.

Several exquisite and priceless relics that represent various eras of the country's rich history, have been unearthed in various excavations in the country's historical sites, and are mostly being kept in different museums.

Iran is home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to 4000 BC.

It also hosts some of the world's oldest

cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 26 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The name of Iran, formerly known as Persia, mostly conjures up the first Persian Empire, ruled by the Achaemenids (550 – 330 BC) and sites such as Pasargadae and Persepolis. However, there are tens of prehistorical sites as the Burnt City in Sistan-Baluchestan, Tepe Sialk in Kashan, Susa and Chogha Zanbil in the Khuzestan province and Ecbatana in Hamedan which predate the Achaemenid period.

From a wider point of view, Iranian history can be divided into Pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. The Medes unified Iran as a nation and empire in 625 BC. The Islamic conquest of Persia (633–656) that put an end to the mighty Sassanid Empire (224–651) was a turning point in the history of the nation.

## Persian handicrafts: Rashti-duzi of Gilan

TEHRAN – The Rashti-duzi is a traditional crochet and sewing work of Rasht, the capital of the northern province of Gilan, and it is considered one of Iran's most beautiful and valuable handicrafts. It has a very long history, like many other handicrafts.

The history of this type of handicraft dates back to 550 to 330 B.C. according to Visit Iran. The crocheting is done with a special hook that creates patterns with silk yarns on Mahut fabric, a wool worsted material.

Iranian textiles were exported all over the world during the Sassanid dynasty in the 5th century. Iran's textiles and carpets were so popular in Europe that most of the tombstones of European monarchs and elders were covered with Iranian textiles and carpets. In the Hermitage Museum is a piece of



the finest Sassanid fabric decorated with crocheting.

During the Safavid, Afsharid, Zand and Qajar dynasties, when the artists made a variety of products, this handicraft flourished. The number of products is high during these years.

The crocheting was done by craftsmen after sketching and drawing the patterns with various social, political, cultural, religious,

and economical subjects. Crochet and needlework were combined by the masters to enhance the beauty of their products, resulting in very elegant patterns.

In Gilan, most of the motifs were derived from the memory and imagination of their makers, and were passed on from one generation to the next. The most popular and most in demand motifs are

old motifs such as "Kaj Butehee", paisleys and circles.

Rashti-duzi is divided into three categories: 1. simple crocheting, in which the fabric is crocheted with colored silk yarns after a pattern is drawn.

2. Crocheting combined with the "Tekeh-duzi" method. After the artist applies the pattern to the Mahut fabric, he cuts out a specific portion, replaces it with a piece of another color, and then crochets it.

3. Crocheting combined with the "Moaragh" method. Among all kinds, this is the most elaborate. Using colorful Mahut pieces, the artist patches them together by crocheting their edges together. This technique has been used to make products such as table cloths, drapery, bedding, cushions, coasters, bags, luggage, and floor coverings.



# Environmental houses, solar power plants launched to mark ‘Clean Air Day’

TEHRAN – Several environmental houses and a solar power plant have been opened in Tehran on the occasion of National Clean Air Week, Shina Ansari, chief of environment and sustainable development at the Municipality of Tehran has announced.

Every year, January 19, is the National Clean Air Day in Iran in order to remind and highlight the main factors in maintaining air quality, as well as promoting a sense of responsibility and citizen participation in protecting the urban environment and fulfilling social responsibility for the environment.

This year, Clean Air Week will be held from January 15 to February 1, with the theme of “Clean Air, Public Rights, National Will”.

Keeping the environment clean to maintain the health of all living creatures and improve the quality of human life as well as having better tomorrows for future generations are our main tasks, she emphasized.

Involving citizens in environmental protection is one of the main approaches of National Clean Air Week. To this end, special training booths will be set up to inform citizens about clean air issues and make them aware of their civic and social responsibilities, she explained.

Opening “environmental houses”; holding entertainment events and competitions related to the subject of children, adolescents, and adults; holding conferences, workshops, and online educational webinars by experts, professors, and environ-



mental centers; planting native and climate-friendly seedlings, and setting up car engines free of charge by volunteer repair shops, are among other activities to be carried out this week in all 22 districts.

Referring to the operation of a solar power plant in District 20, she stated that “Using renewable energy is a good solution to overcome environmental problems such as air pollution and Tehran has a significant capacity to use this type of energy.”

Abbas Shahsavani, head of the air and climate change department of the Ministry of Health, said in November 2021 that expenses related to deaths attributed to air pollution are estimated at \$4.3 billion over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2020-March 2021).

About 10 percent of deaths are caused by air pollution nationwide.

Air pollution is responsible for around 40,000 premature deaths in Iran annually, Mohammad- Sadeq Hassanvand, head of the air pollution research center at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, said in July 2020.

## Air pollution kills 7m people worldwide

Air pollution is the contamination of the indoor or outdoor environment by any chemical, physical or biological agent that modifies the natural characteristics of the atmosphere. Household combustion devices, motor vehicles, industrial facilities, and forest fires are common sources of air pollution. Pollutants of major public health concern include particulate matter, carbon monoxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide. Outdoor and indoor air pollution cause respiratory and other diseases and is an

important source of morbidity and mortality.

Air pollution kills an estimated seven million people worldwide every year. WHO data shows that almost all of the global population (99%) breathe air that exceeds WHO guideline limits containing high levels of pollutants, with low- and middle-income countries suffering from the highest exposures.

From smog hanging over cities to smoke inside the home, air pollution poses a major threat to health and climate. The combined effects of ambient (outdoor) and household air pollution cause millions of premature deaths every year, largely as a result of increased mortality from stroke, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, and acute respiratory infections.

## Greece to provide Iran with 200,000 doses of COVID vaccine

TEHRAN – The Embassy of Iran in Athens has announced that the government of Greece will donate a consignment of the AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine to Iran on Thursday.

Following a meeting between Iranian Ambassador Ahmad Naderi and Greece Foreign Ministry's Secretary-General for International Economic Affairs Ioannis Smyrlis, 200,000 doses of the vaccine will be sent to Tehran on Thursday morning.

Recently, Italy and Japan respectively donated 1.2 million and 700,000 doses of the vaccine under the COVAX facility to Iran.

COVAX is a partnership, co-led by Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi-The Vaccine Alliance, and the World Health Organization (WHO), alongside key delivery partner United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Iran is one of the few countries that has all vaccine production platforms, Mohammad

Reza Shanehsaz, former head of the Food and Drug Administration, said in June 2021.

Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has said five coronavirus vaccines have been so far produced domestically.

Meanwhile, World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Iran Jaffar Hussain said in September 2021 that the Organization was collecting the necessary information for the registration and certification of Iranian-made coronavirus vaccines.

## Gradual encouraging moves to use natural gas efficiently

From page 1 ► He says Iran is paying 82-83 billion dollars in energy subsidies annually that most of it go for natural gas.

According to the naftonline.ir, in the last Iranian calendar year (March 2020-March 2021) the households burned 630 million cubic meters of natural gas per day.

Of course, the huge consumption is not just related to households. Industries such as cement and steel are also among the main consumers of natural gas, which their consumption should be reduced through pricing and tapping modern technologies.

At the same time that the National Iranian Gas Company

(NIGC) is encouraging households to use natural gas efficiently, gas bills should also be considered as a tool to control consumption. However, in this regard, there is a serious problem. There are numerous apartments all across the country which their consumption is not calculated based on each household. In these apartments, the consumption is measured based on a “single” gas meter.

Unfortunately, this has created fewer incentives among the residents of apartments with one gas meter to use natural gas efficiently. It is not clear which household consumes more or less.



Though over the recent years housebuilders have been tasked to use separate gas and water meters for each house, most apartments still use just one gas meter or water meter.

To put a brake on the excessive use of natural gas and water by households, the responsible bodies should try to iron out a mechanism in which each family or household pays separately for

natural gas and water utility bills, like electricity. Doing this may be costly, however, it will benefit the energy sector and households as well.

Responsible bodies, including the ministries of housing, energy, and oil, should also set rules to make houses energy efficient. If this applies, houses will need less energy to heat in the winter-time and cool in the summer-time.

In addition to these steps, citizens should also be trained that the more we use energy, even natural gas, the more emissions will be released into the atmosphere to the detriment of our environment.

# SOCIETY

JANUARY 13, 2022

Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

7

## Water transfer plan from Sea of Oman takes effect

From page 1 ► Iran started water desalination and transfer project in recent years aiming at alleviating and meeting the urgent need of central arid areas for water.

Another project for transferring water from the Persian Gulf to the southern Fars province is in its pipe-laying phase.

The project with the aim of supplying water for drinking, agriculture, and industry of Fars province started in February 2019.

However, redistribution of water resources is inevitably involved in changes in the ecological environment and endangering nature.

Experts believe that these projects entailing economic and environmental burden are no solution to droughts, and demanded the water transfer projects to be dismissed due to the irreparable damages to the environment namely deforestation, wildlife habitat destruction, biodiversity degradation, improper land change use, and contaminated seawater.

Changes are divided into two negative and positive impacts, including water supply in water-deficient areas, facilitating the water cycle, improving meteorological conditions in the recipient basins,



mitigating ecological water shortage, repairing the damaged ecological system, and preserving the endangered wild fauna and flora.

## The project aims to boost production, expand industries and agriculture, and supply potable water.

The negative impacts include salinization and acidification of the donor basins, damage to the ecological environment of the donor basins, and both sides of the conveying channel system, an increase of water consumption in the recipient basins, and spread of diseases, etc.

Desalination plants in southern Iran are currently providing 600,000 cubic meters of drinkable water for the region's coastal provinces, and the figure will be increased to one million cubic meters in the near future, IRIB reported in August 2021.

## Ocean temperatures ‘relentlessly increasing’ due to climate crisis

The world's oceans are hotter than ever before, continuing their record-breaking temperature streak for the sixth year in a row, US and Chinese scientists have said.

The upper 2,000 metres of water in all oceans absorbed 14 times as much energy over 2021 than they did over 2020, with the difference equal to 145 times the entire world's energy generation for 2020, researchers said.

“The ocean heat content is relentlessly increasing, globally, and this is a primary indicator of human-induced climate change,” said paper author Kevin Trenberth, distinguished scholar at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Colorado.

The rapid heating of the oceans as the planet warms also has a major impact on future warming, making it increasingly difficult to slow down, the Independent reported.

Lijing Cheng, lead paper author and associate professor at the Chinese Academy of Sciences said: “As well as absorbing heat, currently, the ocean absorbs 20 to 30 per cent of human carbon dioxide emissions, leading to ocean acidification.

“However, ocean warming reduces the efficiency of oceanic carbon uptake and leaves more carbon dioxide in the air. Monitoring and understanding the heat and carbon coupling in the future are important to track climate

change mitigation goals.”

The researchers also assessed the role of various natural variations, such as the warming and cooling phases known as El Niño and La Niña, which greatly affect regional temperature changes.

These regional analyses revealed that “robust and significant ocean warming since the late 1950s occurs everywhere”.

Nevertheless, regional marine heat waves are also a consequence “with huge impacts on marine life”, the researchers said.

“Our previous work showed that scientists need less than four years of ocean heat measurements to detect a human-induced warming signal from natural variations,” said Professor John Abraham from the University of St Thomas, in Minnesota.

This is much less time than the almost three decades of records required to detect global warming using air temperatures near the Earth's surface.

“Ocean heat content is one of the best indicators of climate change.” Professor Abraham added.

As well as warming oceans being unable to absorb humanity's spiralling carbon dioxide output, the increase in energy as a result means the oceans are physically expanding, adding to sea level rise, and raising the risk of extreme weather

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

### ‘Water transfer from Sea of Oman entails no considerable environmental risk’

Transferring water from Sea of Oman to central drought-ridden provinces of the country, provided that the environmental requirements are met, will not poses threats to the environment, Issa Kalantari, the Department of Environment (DOE) chief has announced.

To provide the amount of water needed for the country, agriculture and industries, there is no choice but to use seawater, the incredible and abundant resources, now and in the future, Kalantari stated, IRNA reported on Monday.

He went on to say that Iran located in an arid and semi-arid area, is facing environmental problems including water shortage, sand and dust storms due to low precipitation amounts coupled with climate change.

### شیرین سازی و انتقال آب دریای عمان مشکل زیست محیطی ندارد

رئیس سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست کشور گفت: شیرین سازی و انتقال آب دریای عمان به استان های مختلف به شرط رعایت الزامات محیط زیستی، جانمایی مناسب در ساخت آب شیرین کن و رهاسازی پساب آن مشکل و مانع زیست محیطی ندارد و از نظر این سازمان بلامانع است. عیسی کلانتری دوشنبه شب در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: برای تامین آب کشاورزی، آشامیدنی و صنایع کشور چاره ای جز استفاده از آب دریا نداریم و باید چه اکنون و چه آینده به این منابع بیکران و بسیار فراوان رجوع کنیم.

وی افزود: ایران کشور پر آبی نیست و سالهای سال با بحران بی آبی، خشکسالی و مسائل زیست محیطی، گرد و غبار و ریزگردها مواجه است.

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON JANUARY 12

New cases	2,089
New deaths	32
Total cases	6,212,387
Total deaths	131,972
New hospitalized patients	284
Patients in critical condition	1,619
Total recovered patients	6,056,633
Diagnostic tests conducted	43,069,904
Doses of vaccine injected	124,519,130



