

U.S. Artificial Move

TEHRAN – The United States has restored a controversial sanctions waiver that was designed to restrict Iran's peaceful nuclear program in the first place.

American media reported that the U.S. State Department notified U.S. Congress Friday that it is waiving sanctions on Iran's nuclear program. The waivers are intended to allow other coun-

tries to cooperate with Iran on modifying certain segments of Iran's nuclear program.

The U.S. move comes at a critical time. Chief negotiators from Iran and the P4+1 group of countries

as well as the U.S. are preparing to return to Vienna to resume multilateral talks aimed at reviving a 2015 nuclear deal officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). ▶ Page 3

Report

No country for spies - part 3

TEHRAN — The true nature of the U.S. government's approach to its spies is rarely portrayed in the Western media outlets, which plays a key role in trying to keep the public in the dark about what occurs to those who act as spies for Washington.

Spies, who had worked for the U.S. government and are now in shambles, have been given the silent treatment by the United States. It takes advantages of their personal problems in order to push them to stay focused on doing the same work that caused them to go broke in the first place: subterfuge.

It's customary for the U.S. to let down those who put their lives in mortal peril undertaking dangerous work for it, such as spying.

A perfect example of this would be Wang Xiyue, a naturalized American citizen who does not hold Chinese citizenship according to the Chinese foreign ministry.

Wang was granted a visa to study in Iran in 2015. He entered Iran with a plan, and a cover: a PhD candidate of the History Department of Princeton University. Wang received fat fees from Princeton to do research work. He did so, but a different kind of research.

He received \$17,800 to do research on the Qajar Dynasty in Iran. \$8,500 was given to Wang by the Princeton history department, as well as no more than \$8,800 from the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies. ▶ Page 2

Opinion

Time to reach World Cup second round

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN – Iran football team have a 'Mission Possible' in the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The Asian heavyweights must qualify for the FIFA World Cup's second round for the first time ever.

The 'Persian Leopards' will compete in the World Cup for the sixth time and must bring an end to their qualifying drought.

The football federation must do their best to pave the way for the National Team to make it happen; finally.

Iran, as the best Asian team in FIFA ranking, need to book a place in the knockout stage since it could be the last chance for several players including, Vahid Amiri, Mehdi Taremi, Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Shoja Khalilzadeh, Karim Ansarifard and Ehsan Hajsafi.

From now on, the Iranian federation must arrange the good friendly matches as part of preparation for the World Cup.

Sports diplomacy will help the Iranian federation to find the team who are helpful.

Iran must aim to advance to the next stage because the team have the potential to do that based on the experts' opinion and the results the team have earned in the previous matches.

There is a balance between all lines in Dragagan Skocic's team and the friendly match can help the coaching staff to know more about the team's weaknesses and strengths.

Iran must just concentrate on qualifying for the next stage.



Ex-NATO deputy chief says he doesn't think Russia will invade Ukraine

By M.A. Saki

TEHRAN - Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo, the former NATO Secretary General and current President of the NATO Defense College Foundation, says he does not think that Russia will invade Ukraine.

"I don't think that in the end Russia will invade Ukraine," Minuto-Rizzo tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

Minuto-Rizzo, an Italian diplomat, also says the dispute between the West and Russia

"can be solved through diplomacy and a common understanding."

Following is the text of the interview:

The Kremlin has repeatedly denied planning to make an incursion ▶ Page 5

Exports from mining sector up 90%

TEHRAN – Iran exported around \$9.489 billion of mining products in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021), registering an increase of 90 percent year on year.

The exports amounted to 42.214 million tons in weight, showing a 9.5 percent rise compared to the same period last year, IRNA

reported.

Steel chain and related products had the biggest share of exports in the mentioned nine months with 55.6 percent, equaling \$5.28 billion of the total value of exports.

Copper products and other minerals were in the second and third places with \$1.409

billion and \$651.33 million shares of the exports, respectively.

In the meantime, the exports of aluminum products registered the biggest growth among other mining products, with \$541.57 million of exports and a 212-percent growth year on year. ▶ Page 4

Report

Fresh wave of Tories tell UK premier to leave

More Tory rebel MPs angry with the scandal-hit British Prime Minister have publicly called on Boris Johnson to resign from his post.

There are now at least 14 Conservative Party MPs who have publicly stated they have submitted a letter of no confidence to the chairman of the 1922 Committee, Graham Brady.

Although one British newspaper says it has been informed privately and directly by an MP that he/she has also submitted a letter which would take the number to 15.

Johnson faces a vote of confidence in his leadership if 54 Tories – 15% of the party's 360 MPs – send letters to Brady.

If that threshold is reached and he loses the vote, his premiership will be over and a leadership contest would automatically be triggered. ▶ Page 5



Fajr Festival of Visual Arts opens in Tehran

Art aficionados visit an exhibition of the 14th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts at the Saba Art and Cultural Institute in Tehran on February 4, 2022.

Several other centers across the capital are also playing host to exhibitions of the festival running until February 19.

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Interview

Ansarallah's missile attacks on UAE redefines West Asia: Singaporean researcher

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN- A Singaporean researcher says that Ansarallah's missile attacks on the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has redefined West Asia.

"Ansarallah's missile attacks on the Emirates in recent weeks have redefined the Middle East (West Asia) in a way that the old tools of analysis will not be sufficient to explain the fast-paced regional phenomena," Asif Shuja tells the Tehran Times.

The senior research fellow at the Middle East Institute of the National University of Singapore believes that "this event has highlighted most forcefully that the military might of external players do not guarantee a change in the internal dynamics of a country in matters where people's aspirations of governance is concerned, and such ambitions of the external players may incur high costs."

The Ansarallah's attacks on the UAE on January 17 were part of a larger response to the aggressions being committed daily by the Saudi-led coalition.

These attacks also highlighted the potential for the UAE to suffer economic as well as physical damage.

"UAE's continued involvement in Yemen through its proxies is reflective of Abu Dhabi's decision to enter the offensive domain despite huge risks of exposed vulnerabilities," Shuja adds. ▶ Page 5

Leader praises Moustapha Akkad, Anthony Quinn for "The Message"

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has praised Syrian-American director Moustapha Akkad for his 1976 movie "The Message" and Mexican-American actor Anthony Quinn for playing the role of Hamza in the epic on the rise of Islam.

He made the remarks during a meeting in Tehran with the organizers of an international conference on Hamza (AS), uncle of the Prophet Muhammad (S), held by Al-Mustafa International University in Qom last Thursday.

"Actually, God bless Moustapha Akkad, and we should thank him for making 'The Message', a great film in which part of the life story of the great personality [Hamza] is portrayed by a celebrated and wonderful actor. It's really amazing; he has been able to depict part of the life of the great man rather well," the Leader said. ▶ Page 8



MP: U.S. mixes politics with sports

TEHRAN — The spokesman for the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has said the United States wants immediate talks with Iran, but on the other hand it does not issue visas for the Iranian wrestling team.

Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini told IRNA on Saturday that these measures, which are a manifestation of double standards, send a message to the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna that the U.S. is not trustworthy.

The U.S. has refused to issue visa for some members of the Iranian national wrestling team.

Abbaszadeh Meshkini said that the United States' policy toward the Iranian nation has been hostile since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and this has not changed.

"Therefore, the United States has used every opportunity to deal a blow at the Islamic Republic of Iran," he added.

The MP said the U.S. move in refusing to issue visa for the Iranian athletes was not surprising.

"They (the athletes) are under the most severe sanctions and hostilities from the United States," he regretted.

Abbaszadeh Meshkini reiterated that in the American ruling system, athleticism is not separate from politics, and if their policy requires them to take action against Iran in every sector and impose various sanctions, they will certainly show no mercy on the Iranian sports.

Emphasizing that the Wrestling Federation of Iran should deal with this issue through international organizations, the Meshkinshahr representative in the parliament said that



this problem should be pursued through the Wrestling Federation because the U.S. Wrestling Federation and ultimately the government of this country had to issue visa for all the members of the national wrestling team in accordance with the regulations.

"Of course, Iran's pursuit of this behavior of the Americans in the international community may not be successful. But it is very effective in clarifying public opinion about the U.S. policy towards Iran, and it will cause the world sports foundations and athletes to become more aware of the U.S. treatment towards the Iranian athletes," he continued.

On whether the parliamentary committee will take a special position on the matter, the MP said the issues to be discussed in the committee are clear.

"Of course, this issue may be considered in the future," he added.

The Iranian and the U.S. wrestling teams were supposed to take part in an exhibition meet in Arlington, Texas on February 12.

The U.S. State Department has not granted visa to head of Iran wrestling federation Alireza Dabir and five other members of team, the Iranian Wrestling Federation said.

Health minister calls on Japan to unfreeze Iranian assets

TEHRAN — Bahram Eynollahi, Iran's minister of health and medical education, hopes that a portion of Iran's assets in Japan will be released and spent for the health sector.

According to a Saturday report from the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Eynollahi made the remarks during a meeting with Kazutoshi Ikawa, the Japanese ambassador to Tehran.

The minister, while describing the sanctions against Iran as unfair, stated that the country makes every effort to ensure that the bans do not have a negative impact on people's health.

Eynollahi also expressed gratitude to Japan for assisting Iran during the coronavirus pandemic, which has claimed the lives of about 5,750,000 people worldwide since its onset in December 2019.

The minister also termed Tehran-Tokyo ties as "historical and amicable,"

expressing hope that the two countries would witness an increase in scientific cooperation and exchange of university students and professors.

The minister emphasized that the two sides could demonstrate that their good relations would be beneficial to the scientific progress in the world.

The health minister emphasized the importance of enhancing medical cooperation

between the two countries, citing the recent acceleration of the vaccination process in Iran.

The Japanese envoy, for his part, stated that there are significant capacities for strengthening Tokyo-Tehran medical collaboration.

Ambassador Kazutoshi also rated the Iranian health personnel's medical knowledge and passion as "amazing".

Because the new coronavirus type is very contagious, he hoped Japan's cooperation with Iran and other nations in the fight against it will grow.

The envoy stated that it is critical for Japan to continue collaborative work with Iran and to have more intense negotiations with the country.

He went on to say that his government appreciates Iran's efforts and assistance in aiding Afghan refugees.

During the last four decades, Iran is said to have hosted millions of Afghan refugees.

In Iran, the refugees have benefited from educational and health services.

Since the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in August 2021 the number of Afghans who are seeking refuge in Iran has been increasing incredibly.

Japan is the main donor to Afghan refugees in Iran.

Leader of Tondar terrorist group to face trial on Sunday

TEHRAN — The first session of the trial of Jamshid Sharmahd, leader of the Tondar terrorist group, will be held on Sunday in Tehran's revolutionary court.

The Tondar group began its activities in 1999. It was founded by a person named Fathollah Manouchehri, nicknamed Farvand Fooladvand. But after Manouchehri's disappearance in 2006, Sharmahd became the leader of the group, which was strongly supported by the United States and Israeli intelligence services.

Sharmahd left Iran in 2003 and migrated to Germany, where he continued to work in the field of programming and technical services. He traveled to the United States from Germany in 2003 under the pretext of starting a business and stayed there for some time.

After a decade of activities, Sharmahd

was arrested in August 1399 by intelligence forces of the Islamic Republic.

The first terrorist operation of the Tondar group in Iran was on April 15, 2008 in Shiraz, during which the terrorist agents linked to the group planted a bomb among the mourners of the Shiraz martyrs Husseinieh, killing 14 people and injuring 200 others.

In another operation, the terrorist group, which was building a bomb in a hotel in Tehran, was revealed due to an abrupt explosion of the bomb and was arrested by security forces.

The second terrorist operation by the group took place on June 20, 2009 in the shrine of Imam Khomeini in south Tehran.

However, the bomber did not manage to take the explosive device to the shrine and detonated the bomb in front of the mausoleum, which injured eight people.

No country for spies - part 3

From page 1 ► According to the Iranian authorities, he had spent thousands of dollars for access to restricted areas of Tehran libraries and had stored 4,500 pages of digital records.

However, he was detained in 2016 on the charges of espionage, as truth never remains hidden.

A spokesman for the Iranian Judiciary said at a news conference in 2018 that he was one of the "infiltrators of the United States, who ... entered Iran with a certain influence.

This person was led directly by the Americans and was arrested after being identified."

He also announced that Wang had been sentenced to 10 years in prison.

On December 7, 2019, Iran announced the release of Wang.

What is intriguing is that the United States is giving the same silent treatment it gave to Nizar Zakka and other dual citizens. After his release, Wang sought to return to Princeton, the Tehran Times has learned.



However, Tehran Times sources in the U.S. have informed us that Princeton University has refused Wang from entering the university, as he was charged with espionage in Iran.

Reports suggest that Wang has been seeking opportunities in some extremist American think tanks.

Seemingly, in January 2021, he joined the American Enterprise Institute, as a fellow to Jeane Kirkpatrick.

Per its Wikipedia article, the

American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI) is a right-leaning think tank established in Washington, D.C. that studies government, politics, economics, and social welfare, but we all know what is behind the AEI.

The message behind the U.S. actions regarding those who work "tirelessly" to obtain secret documents for it is loud and clear.

If you're a spy with a mixed background, reading this article, this is the future before you.

Raisi condemns destabilizing actions in Iraq

TEHRAN — Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and the Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi discussed bilateral and regional issues in a phone call on Saturday.

During the conversation, the two top officials put an emphasis on expanding cooperation and coordination between the two neighboring countries in various fields.

Al-Kadhimi stressed that the relations between Iraq and Iran are distinguished.

The Iraqi premier said that Baghdad aspires to expand these relations, pointing to the importance of regional initiatives aimed at converging views.

President Raisi praised Iraq's efforts for bringing views closer together and strengthening the region's security and stability.

Raisi reiterated his condemnation of any action by any party aimed at destabilizing Iraq and its security, and affecting its regional and



international standing.

The president added that a strong and cohesive government and a strong and united society in Iraq have always been emphasized by Iran.

Pointing out that Tehran and Baghdad had a successful experience in dealing with Daesh and Takfiri groups, which could continue in the field of strengthening regional security and stability, Raisi said that all problems and

issues in the region can be resolved provided that the intervention of the transregional powers stops.

"The problems in the region are the result of the Americans' extravagance, and if they are truly expelled from the region, we will see that the countries of the region themselves can fully establish peace, stability and security by working together," he asserted.

Raisi praised the Iraqi government's efforts to hold talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia and noted, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to continue these talks until a result is achieved, provided that the Saudis are willing to continue the talks in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect."

Recalling the difficulties inflicted on the Yemeni people, the president expressed hope that the Iraqi government would be able to take the lead in a regional initiative to lift the siege and restore the rights of the Yemeni people.

Iran and Russia seek to topple the petrodollar's dominance: National Interest

TEHRAN – In a commentary on February 4, The National Interest said Iran and Russia, as two countries subject to U.S. sanctions, are seeking to undermine the petrodollar's dominance in global finance and trade.

Following is an excerpt of the article:

During Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi's recent visit to Moscow, a number of agreements with Russian oil and gas companies related to constructing petro-refineries and transferring technology and equipment were signed.

Vladimir Putin is the first Russian president to visit Iran since Josef Stalin's visit in 1943. Since 2007, Putin has traveled to Tehran twice to attend a summit of Caspian littoral states, and in each visit, he met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

In 2007, Ayatollah Khamenei told Putin that "a powerful Russia is in Iran's interest," to which Putin replied that "The interest of [the] Russian nation lies in a powerful and influential Iran in [the]

international scene."

Prior to the 1979 Revolution, the United States had total domination over Iranian politics. After the revolution and during Saddam Hussein's protracted war against Iran, both Washington and Moscow heavily supported Iraq's invasion of Iran. But, after the Iraq-Iran War, Moscow changed its policy toward Iran and sought to build a friendship while the United States and the West embraced hostility. The détente between Tehran and Moscow has had significant consequences for the region's geopolitics.

Ayatollah Khamenei made it clear that "Tehran and Moscow must step up cooperation to isolate the United States and help stabilize the Middle East." As a result, Tehran and Moscow have directed their policies in West Asia to isolate the United States. Tehran and Moscow's full-blown support

prevented the Assad government from collapsing, while the United States and its allies supported the war in Syria aimed at overthrowing Bashar al-Assad.

There are numerous areas that Iran and Russia can find common ground. To elaborate further, both combat extremist groups, such as

Both Iran and Russia "admonish the United States' hypocrisy on human rights, terrorism, and unilateralism."

ISIS and al-Qaeda; both admonish the United States' hypocrisy on human rights, terrorism, and unilateralism; both grapple with U.S. sanctions and hope to topple the petrodollar's dominance in global finance and trade. On the economic front, geographical proximity and transit connections are likely to strengthen trade and business between the two countries. In some ways, the North-South corridor of trade, which passes through the historic cities of the Caucasus through the Persian Gulf and India will be restored. The old Russian dream

to access the warm waters of the Persian Gulf may soon materialize.

Nevertheless, there are also divergences between Iran and Russia on some issues. For example, Russia has close ties with Israel while Iran considers Israel an enemy. Russia also seeks to attract Turkey and Saudi Arabia away from the United States.

Kazem Jalali, Iran's ambassador to Russia, emphasizes how President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Moscow is a "turning point" in relations between the two countries. "Iranians begrudge the Tsarist Russia" but "today's Russia is different from the Tsarist Russia."

Jalali added, "Russia is facing the West, and Putin and his close associates look positively at Raisi's presidency," Jalali added.

Today, Iran is dealing with the "White Tsar" (current Russia), which is different from "Red Tsar" (the old Russia).

In his meeting with Putin, President Raisi said, "The relations between Tehran and Moscow are on the path towards strategic ties."

Iran's security chief sets conditions for agreement in Vienna

TEHRAN— In a tweet on Saturday afternoon, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) dismissed the recent move by the United States State Department to partially waive some sanctions on Iran's civil nuclear program.

"Real, effective and verifiable economic benefit for #Iran is a necessary condition for the formation of an agreement. Show of lifting sanctions is not considered constructive. #ViennaTalks," tweeted Admiral Ali Shamkhani, the SNSC secretary.

On February 4 the Biden administration restored partial sanctions relief to Iran's nuclear program. The move comes as discussions to lift all sanctions imposed on Iran have reached a critical juncture.

A senior State Department official told Reuters that the waiver would assist technical

discussions in the last weeks of the talks, but that it was not an indication that Washington was close to strike an agreement to return to the accord, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"The waiver with respect to these activities is designed to facilitate discussions that would help to close a deal on a mutual return to full implementation of the JCPOA and lay the groundwork for Iran's return to performance of its JCPOA commitments," a State Department notice to Congress reads, according to official documents obtained by the Associated Press.

According to the AP report, Secretary of State Antony Blinken has signed several sanctions waivers related to Iran's civilian nuclear activities.

At the same time, the Washington Post

reported that the move would also facilitate the cooperation of companies from Russia, China, and Europe with the non-military sectors of Iran's nuclear program under the terms of the 2015 deal.

The State Department waivers will specifically allow foreign countries and companies to work on civil projects at Iran's Bushehr nuclear power facility, Arak heavy water plant, and Tehran Research Reactor.

According to one senior State Department official knowledgeable with the waivers who spoke to AP on the condition of anonymity, the action is not a "concession" to Iran and is being made "in our essential national interest as well as the region's and the world's."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Saturday that the move was "good, but not enough."

From Page 1 ▶ A U.S. official argued that the U.S. move would enable other partners in Vienna to pursue cooperation with Iran that serves U.S. interests. “We are issuing the waiver now for a simple reason: it will enable some of our international partners to have more detailed technical discussions to enable cooperation that we view as being in our non-proliferation interests,” the official told CNN.

The official added, “The technical discussions facilitated by the waiver are necessary in the final weeks of JCPOA talks, and the waiver itself would be essential to ensuring Iran’s swift compliance with its nuclear commitments.”

The waiver in question was canceled by the Trump administration. In its step-by-step strategy for eating away at the JCPOA, the Trump administration scrapped many parts of the JCPOA but it kept in place an array of sanctions waivers even after withdrawing from the JCPOA.

The Trump administration walked out of the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, but it continued to renew the sanctions waivers up until May 2020, when it finally decided to end them in a



bid to make it difficult for the next administration to rejoin the JCPOA.

The reason for the U.S. to keep those waivers was that they served U.S. interests.

The U.S., however, seems to be trying to tout the restoration of a waiver as a goodwill gesture that should be reciprocated by Iran.

The nature of the waiver in question and the U.S. insistence on keeping its economic pressure have led Iran to coldly receive the U.S. move, which was dubbed by some Iranian analysts as an empty overture.

Seyed Mohammad Marandi, a U.S. expert, described the media fuss about the U.S. move as “extremely misleading.”

“Extremely misleading. The US has done absolutely nothing to end ‘maximum pressure’ sanctions targeting innocent citizens,” he said on Twitter. “While preserving Iran’s rights, any deal must comprehensively & verifiably remove all of the barbaric sanctions & credible assurances must also be provided.”

Also, Nour News, a news website close to Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, described the

U.S. move as a “puerile zero-sum game.” The website said the U.S. can show willingness for a deal by taking effective steps such as lifting economic sanctions.

The U.S. move, therefore, is by no means a goodwill gesture, at least from the Iranian perspective. If the U.S. is really eager to get a deal, it should prove its willingness by removing the economic sanctions that were imposed by the Trump administration.

By restoring the nuclear sanctions waiver, the Biden administration did only serve its interests. Experts believe that the U.S., through the waiver, seeks to pave the way for converting heavy water in the Arak reactor, supply enriched uranium to the Tehran research reactor, and transfer fuel waste abroad.

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, rejected the U.S. move as a “show of sanctions lifting.”

He said on Twitter that Iran benefitting economically in a real, effective and verifiable way is a necessary requirement of a deal in Vienna. He added that the U.S. show of sanctions lifting is not constructive.

Iran seriously seeking guarantees in Vienna: FM

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has reiterated that Iran is “serious” about getting guarantees in the Vienna nuclear talks that the U.S. won’t renege again on its commitments.

Amir Abdollahian described the issue of getting guarantees as “a basic” one and said that Iran’s negotiating delegation in Vienna is seriously seeking to get “tangible guarantees” and bring the Western side back to compliance with the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The foreign minister made the remarks during a visit to the shrine of Imam Khomeini on Saturday.

He also said that Iran has partly succeeded in securing some economic and political guarantees.

“What the Iranian negotiating team is seeking at all levels is political, legal and economic, in parts of which agreements have been reached, but still the Iranian negotiating team is serious about taking a tangible guarantee from the Western side,” he said, according to state news agency IRNA.

He added, “We have made it clear to the American side, which conveys messages through intermediaries these days, that they must show their good faith in action. Goodwill in practice, in our view, is something tangible happening on the ground.”

The Iranian foreign minister noted, “The lifting of some of the sanctions, in an objective and real sense,

can be a translation of the goodwill of the Americans of which they talk. What is happening on paper is good but not enough.”

In a recent phone call with Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi Yoshimasa on Thursday morning, the Iranian foreign minister said Tehran stands ready to reach a good, lasting and reliable agreement in Vienna.

The talks will resume in the next few days after a weeklong break that was meant for consultations in capitals.

Iran has assessed the situation in Vienna as “forward-moving” and “positive” but it said the ball is in U.S.’s court in terms of reviving the 2015 nuclear deal.

The heads of delegations of Iran and the P4+1 group of countries as well as the U.S. are planning to return to Vienna soon. Before returning to the Austrian capital, Iran’s chief negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani briefed the members of the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on the latest developments

in the Vienna talks.

After the briefing, Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, the spokesman for the Committee, said the time is ripe for reaching a good and win-win deal on the condition that the West shows seriousness and goodwill.

Speaking to the Islamic Consultative Assembly

News Agency (ICANA), the spokesman gave some details about the Tuesday meeting that the Committee members held with Bagheri Kani.

During the session, the spokesman said, a report on the Vienna negotiations has been presented and the questions of the lawmakers have been answered.

According to Meshkini, Bagheri Kani assessed the negotiations process positively and said that Iran is participating in the talks with goodwill and seriousness.

Bagheri also pointed out that Iran and the U.S. have not held any direct talks so far, the lawmaker said.

Meshkini said that the Committee concluded from the session that basically the results of direct negotiations with the U.S. are not clear.

“Although there are signs of progress in the Vienna talks, still there are outstanding issues that need to be negotiated and dealt with,” he said.

Iran is entitled to enjoy full sanctions removal but the other side has so far accepted partial removal of sanctions, the lawmaker added.

Meshkini noted there are indications that the current conditions for a good and win-win deal have been provided on the condition that the West shows seriousness and goodwill.

The remarks came days before the return of Bagheri Kani and other delegations’ heads to Vienna, meaning that Iran is making clear that making further progress in Vienna or conclusion of the talks rest on seriousness and flexibility on the part of the U.S.

Iran has already said that it is in no rush to make a deal, though it prefers to achieve a good agreement as soon as possible. Basically, the pace is not as important to Iran as substance. Furthermore, some believe Iran is not in urgent need of a deal as much as the U.S.

Iran’s nuclear R&D achievements can’t be restricted by any deal: top official

TEHRAN – A top Iranian security official has underlined that Iran’s achievements with respect to nuclear research and development (R&D) can’t be limited by any deal.

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said on Twitter that Iran’s right to move ahead with its nuclear R&D activities should be protected in case a deal was reached in the Vienna talks aimed to revive a 2015 nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“Iran’s legal right to continue research and development and to maintain its peaceful nuclear capabilities and achievements, along with its security against supported evils, cannot be restricted by any agreement,” the top security official tweeted on Saturday.

The tweet was published in four languages– Persian, English, Arabic, and Russian.

Shamkhani said in late January that the way of interaction with the Americans will change only if “a good agreement” is possible.

“So far contacts with the American team present in Vienna have been through unofficial letter and there has been no and there will be no need for something more than this. This way of contact will be replaced with other ways only when a good agreement is within reach,” Shamkhani tweeted.

Shamkhani’s latest tweet came amid preparations for a resumption of the Vienna talks which have been on pause for a week.

The heads of delegations of Iran and the P4+1 countries are

planning to return to Vienna soon. Before returning to the Austrian capital, Iran’s chief negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani briefed the members of the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on the latest developments in the Vienna talks.

After the briefing, Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, the spokesman for the Committee, said time is ripe for reaching a “good and win-win deal” on the condition that the West shows seriousness and goodwill.

In his recent phone call with Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian emphasized that the Islamic Republic welcomes and emphasizes the achievement of a good agreement in the talks.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, cordially congratulating him, the Sri Lankan government and the friendly nation on the anniversary of the country’s independence.

“Given the close and friendly relations between the two nations and the existence of favorable grounds

for bilateral cooperation in various fields, I am confident that in the future we will witness, further strengthening of cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, regionally and internationally,” Amir Abdollahian’s message said.

SPORTS

Saleh Hardani signs for Esteghlal

TEHRAN – Foolad right-back Saleh Hardani joined Esteghlal football club on Saturday.

The 23-year-old right-back has penned a 2.5-year contract.

Two Esteghlal players Aref Aghasi and Arash Rezavand also joined Foolad.

Esteghlal goalkeeper Rashid Mazaheri has also reached an agreement with Sepahan football team.

The Blues look to win the Iran Professional League (IPL) after nine years.

Boxing, weightlifting in doubt for 2028 LA Olympics

TEHRAN – The International Olympic Committee has approved the initial sports program for the 2028 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

Boxing, weightlifting and Modern Pentathlon have been dropped from the initial program, but could yet be added.

LA can add additional sports to the list in 2023 where Boxing, weightlifting and Modern Pentathlon will be considered if they can successfully address issues within their sport.

While weightlifting has historically suffered from doping, an independent panel found in September that Boxing at the Rio 2016 Olympics was subject to manipulation by officials.

Modern Pentathlon, meanwhile, must replace show jumping as one of its five events and prove that it is working on its appeal to young people.

Iran has a brilliant history in weightlifting in the Olympics.

Iranian weightlifters have so far won 20 medals, including nine gold, six silver and five bronze medals in the Games.

Sayyadmanesh makes Hull City transfer admission

TEHRAN – The Iranian hotshot was one of three new additions on deadline day last Monday.

Hull City fought off intense competition to sign highly-rated Iranian striker Allahyar Sayyadmanesh, and the 20-year-old says moving to the Championship club was a no-brainer.

Ratified by the EFL on Monday, Sayyadmanesh has moved from Fenerbahce on loan until the summer, though the Tigers have the option to make it permanent.

Though other European clubs were keen to snap up the talented youngster, Sayyadmanesh says the chance to play in England was too hard to resist.

“It’s a great feeling to be here, I’ve known about the club since I was a young boy and I can’t wait to start playing for this big club,” he told City’s website.

“I had some options from other teams but I think coming here is the best move for me to improve myself and to go forward.”

Sayyadmanesh was at the MKM Stadium last weekend to watch his new teammates beat Swansea City 2-0 in Shota Arveladze’s first game in charge of the Tigers, before posing for pictures with new owner Acun Illici on the pitch after the game.

Boss Arveladze says the young striker could feature against Preston North End this weekend having settled in well to his new surroundings, and the Iran international admits the close-knit dressing room has helped prepare him.

“They’ve been warm and welcoming, I’m happy to be here with them,” he said.

“The team played really well (against Swansea) and I liked it, the atmosphere was great with the amazing fans, it was so good.

“It really was amazing, in my first message to the fans I told them I can’t wait to play in front of them in our stadium.”

During his loan spell with Zorya Luhansk last term, Sayyadmanesh hit the net with a degree of regularity, and that’s something he hopes to continue in the black and amber of City.

“First of all, I always try my best. I want to help the team. I am quick, and I will show other things on the pitch.

“Last season was great for me in Ukraine, I played 20 games and scored nine goals in the super league two in the (UEFA) Conference League, I made four assists and I want to continue this here for Hull City.

“I’m really excited to play here.”

Iran to send eight wrestlers to Bulgarian tournament

TEHRAN – Some eight freestyle wrestlers will represent Iran at the Dan Kolov & Nikola Petrov Tournament.

The 59th edition of the event will be held in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria between 17 and 20 February.

This tournament is held in honor of Dan Kolov who was the first European freestyle wrestling champion from Bulgaria and European and World Champion Nikola Petroff.

Iran squad:

57kg: Reza Momeni, 61kg: Dariush Hazratgholizadeh, 70kg: Yousef Kamrani, 79kg: Mostafa Ghiasi, 86kg: Mohsen Mostafavi, 92kg: Mehdi Hajiloueian, 97kg: Meysam Abdi , 125kg: Yadollah Mohebi

Azmoun is a bit like Klose: Anatoliy Tymoshchuck

TEHRAN – Former Bayern star Anatoliy Tymoshchuck, who has been an assistant coach at Zenit St. Petersburg since 2017, says Sardar Azmoun is a bit like Klose.

In the BILD interview, the former Bayern star explains the Iranian as a player and a person with all his strengths and weaknesses – and even compares him to a German goalscorer icon.

“A goalscorer with a good finish with both feet who is unpredictable in his movements and actions. One more goal and he would have become the only foreigner with the most goals in Russian league history. It makes me a little sad that he didn’t break the record,” Tymoshchuck said.

“Sardar is so fast despite his size (1.86m). He uses this to sprint into free spaces again and again. He also jumps incredibly high and has a good header – which may be due to the fact that he played top-class volleyball as a child. He’s a real athlete! I think Leverkusen’s fast attacking football will suit him well. I have to congratulate Bayer on this transfer.”

“He’s a bit like Klose. Miro was also fast, strong with his head and clever in his movements...”

Iran-China trade reaches \$14.8b in 2021

TEHRAN- The value of Iran-China non-oil trade stood at \$14.8 billion in 2021, according to the data released by China's customs administration.

The value of trade between the two countries during January-December 2021 declined by less than one percent in comparison to 2020 in which the figure was reported to be \$14.9 billion, Tasnim news agency reported.

Based on the mentioned data, China's imports from Iran in 2021 grew by more than one percent compared to the previous year and reached \$6.5 billion. China had imported \$6.4 billion worth of goods from Iran in 2020.

However, China's exports to Iran in January-December 2021 fell by about two percent to \$8.3 billion from \$8.5 billion in the previous year.

Iran mainly exports foodstuff and agricultural products to China while importing machinery



and industrial raw materials, medical equipment, fabrics, and auto parts.

Iran and China officially signed the document for 25-year comprehensive cooperation in March 2021.

The document was signed between Iran's former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Knowledge for domestic production of gas turbo compressor control system achieved



TEHRAN - Experts and engineers at Iranian Gas Transmission Company (IGTC) have managed to achieve the knowledge for the domestic production of a turbo compressor control system used in gas pressure boosting complexes.

The mentioned system was put into operation in a pressure boosting station near Yasuj city in Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad Province in a ceremony attended by IGTC Head Mehdi Jamshidi-Dana, Shana reported.

According to Jamshidi-Dana, the Turbo Compressor Control System is an advanced software system that has been completely designed and created by local engineers.

The use of more advanced control systems leads to longer device life, higher efficiency, lower environmental pollution, and more efficient protection while ensuring speed of operation and accuracy of usage, the official said.

He noted that one of the ways to increase productivity and efficiency in the gas transmission industry is to design new systems or upgrade the existing systems.

Among gas transmission equipment, turbines are among the most widely used, and having modern systems to monitor them would be a great step forward in this industry.

The above-mentioned system has been created after months of study, research, and analysis of various charts, and graphs, according to Jamshidi-Dana.

Back in December 2021, Jamshidi-Dana had said that gas transmission in Iran hit a new record of over 844 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) in the Iranian calendar month of Azar (November 22-December 21, 2021).

Earlier in November 2021, the official had said his company was completely prepared for sustainable gas supply throughout the country during winter.

Gas to be supplied to 14 cities, 1,459 villages during Ten-Day Dawn

TEHRAN- As announced by an official with National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), gas will be supplied to 14 cities and 1,459 villages across the country during the current year's Ten-Day-Dawn celebrations (February 1-11), which marks the 43rd anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Jalal Nour-Mousavi, the NIGC's director for gas supply, also said that 140 trillion rials (about \$52 million) has been invested for gas supply in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21, 2021).

Meanwhile, as announced by the NIGC's managing director, all of the country's rural and urban population will have access to natural gas through the national gas network within the next two years.

Majid Chegeni said currently over 98 percent of the urban population, as well as 90 percent of the country's rural population, have access to natural gas through the national network.



According to the official, currently, only a few cities and about 7,000 villages across the country have not been supplied with gas through the pipeline network.

"Currently, 1,260 cities and more than 35,000 villages in the country enjoy natural gas through the national network," Chegeni said.

Exports from mining sector up 90%

From page 1 ► During the period under review, 3,098 million tons of mining products worth \$2.691 billion were also imported into the country, indicating an 11.4 percent and 0.8 percent rise in terms of value and weight, respectively.

Steel and steel products were the top imported items in the mentioned time span with \$916.3 million worth of imports.

Having 81 different types of minerals, including the world's largest copper, zinc and iron

reserves, Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries across the globe. In this regard, the Iranian government has been seriously pursuing several programs for promoting the mining sector as a major contributor to the country's economic growth.

Iran's proven iron ore reserves are 2.7 billion tons (about 0.8 of the world's total reserves), while the country's copper reserves are 2.6 billion tons (about 0.4 of the world's reserves). The country also has 11



million tons of zinc reserves (about four percent of the world's total reserves).

The total proven reserves of Iran's mines are estimated at about 60 billion tons, which is expected to reach more than 100 billion tons with the implementation of the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's exploration programs over 500,000 square kilometers of new mineral zones.

Despite the country's huge potential in this area, due to some

issues like the lack of necessary machinery and equipment and the lack of access to financial resources and foreign investment because of the U.S. sanctions, the Iranian mining sector has been struggling to operate at its maximum capacity over the past few years.

So, the government programs for promoting this industry are mainly focused on relying on domestic sources for helping the mining sector overcome its current problems and hit its ideal targets.

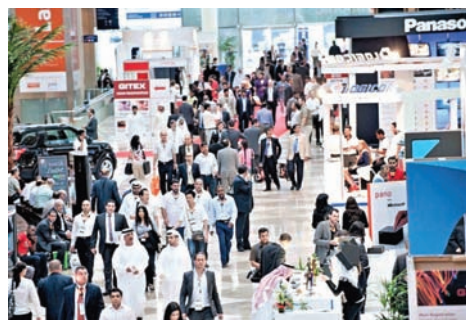
Over 100 companies expected to attend Iran-UAE trade conference in Dubai

TEHRAN - Head of Iran Trade Center in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Mohammad-Reza Talaei has said over 100 Iranian and foreign companies are expected to attend an Iran-UAE trade conference which is set to be held at the mentioned center in UAE.

As reported by the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), the conference is scheduled to be held on Tuesday and a virtual exhibition is also going to be held alongside the conference during February 8-19.

According to Talaei, a trade delegation comprised of 25 Iranian companies will embark on a trip to Dubai on Sunday to first visit Expo Dubai and then participate in the Iran-UAE Business Opportunities Conference on Tuesday.

"We estimate that by Tuesday, over 50 Iranian



companies based in the UAE and as many foreign companies will be present at the conference," Talaei said.

"The event will be attended by Iranian companies residing in the UAE, the Iranian trade delegation, and the representatives of the UAE companies as well as foreign firms based in the UAE," he added.

Export from Golestan province up 68% in 10 months on year

TEHRAN - The value of export from Golestan province, in the northeast of Iran, rose 68 percent in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-January 20, 2022), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Ebrahim Hosseini, the director-general of Golestan province's Customs Department, said that commodities worth nearly \$150 million were exported from the province in the ten-month period.

The official further announced that the ten-month export also indicates 92 percent growth in terms of weight year on year.

He said polystyrene, cheese, dates, pistachios, pipes, cement and tomato paste were the most exported goods, and named Kazakhstan, Iraq, Turkmenistan, Bulgaria, Afghanistan, Romania, Poland, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia as the major export destinations.

As previously announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil exports rose 38 percent during the first 10 months of the current year, as compared to the same period of



time in the past year.

Alireza Moghadasi said Iran exported over 100 million tons of non-oil products worth \$38.763 billion in the mentioned period.

According to the official, the weight of exports in the mentioned period also grew by seven percent in comparison to the figure for the previous fiscal year's same 10 months.

He said major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China, Iraq, and Turkey during the said 10 months.

The IRICA head further announced that the Islamic Republic imported 33 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$41.473 billion in the mentioned period, with a 34-percent growth in value and a 17-percent rise in weight, year on year.

The United Arab Emirates was

the top exporter to Iran in the said period, followed by China, Turkey, Germany, and Switzerland, he stated.

According to the official, out of the total non-oil goods imported into the country in the first 10 months of this year, 25 million tons worth \$15 billion were basic goods, which indicates an increase of 26 percent in weight and 56 percent in value, year on year.

Moghadasi noted that currently about five million tons of commodities are stored at the country's customs for which the clearance procedures will be carried out soon.

"There are 160 customs active in the country, and this number is increasing with the creation of new free zones and economic areas," he added.

IRICA has previously announced that the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

IRICA former Head Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi had put the weight of non-oil trade at 146.4 million tons and said that the figure showed a 25-million-ton annual decline, which is the result of sanctions

and coronavirus pandemic.

Iran's non-oil export was 112 million tons valued at \$34.5 billion, and that of import was 34.4 million tons worth \$38.5 billion in the past year, the official added.

Among the country's non-oil export destinations, China was the first, with importing \$8.9 billion worth of products, Iraq was the second with importing \$7.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates the third with importing \$4.6 billion, Turkey the fourth with importing \$2.5 billion, and Afghanistan the fifth with importing \$2.2 billion, Mir-Ashrafi announced, and named gasoline, natural gas, polyethylene, propane, and pistachio as Iran's major exported products during the past year.

He further named Iran's top sources of non-oil imports in the said time, as China with exporting \$9.7 billion worth of products to the Islamic Republic, the UAE with \$9.6 billion, Turkey with \$4.3 billion, India with \$2.1 billion, and Germany with \$1.8 billion, respectively, and mentioned corn, cellphone, rice, oil meal, and oilseeds, wheat, and raw oil as the major imported items.

TEDPIX gains 3,000 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 3,260 points on Saturday.

The index closed at 1,304 million points, as over 5,528 billion securities worth 37,095 trillion rials (about \$137.3 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 3,558 points, and the second market's index increased 2,945 points.

TEDPIX rose 92,000 points (5.8 percent) to 1,301 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

During the past week, the indices of Mobarakeh Steel Company, Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, Isfahan Oil Refinery, Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Company, and National Iranian Copper Company were the most widely followed ones.

The government has applied several new changes in the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21) which according to experts and analysts will ensure the stock

market's stability and growth in the coming years.

Reducing taxes on production units active in the stock market, strengthening the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund, eliminating subsidized foreign currency allocations, and stabilizing the ownership interest of the mines are some of the measures considered in the budget bill to support the capital market.

Allocating a 20-percent tax on legal entities is considered in next year's budget bill which is less than the previous years. 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 the 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.

As stated by Market Analyst Peyman Hadadi, the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year indicates that the government has a more positive view of the market for the upcoming year.

According to Hadadi, the allocation of a separate budget for the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund shows that the government is taking the necessary measures to provide stronger support for the market and to ensure its growth in the future.

"The allocation of a budget line for the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund is considered one of the most important points of the [Iranian calendar year] 1401 budget bill," Hadadi said.

The expert also pointed to the imposition of tax on rival markets including the housing market as another important and influential change in the

next budget bill and said: "Taxation of luxury cars and expensive housing, along with taxation of bank deposits of legal entities, is also one of the important issues that should be appreciated about the budget bill"

He also mentioned the elimination of subsidized foreign currency allocations and noted that this would create huge changes in the market and will be the starting point for some positive progress in some industries active in the market.

The elimination of subsidies on foreign currency is not only beneficial for the country's macro-economy but also has a positive effect on the capital market transactions, the analyst said.

He further pointed to the reduction of taxes on manufacturing companies and added: "The important action of the government in reducing the tax on production units from 25 percent to 20 percent will largely offset the increase in energy costs."

Ex-NATO deputy chief says he doesn't think Russia will invade Ukraine

Minuto-Rizzo warns against “alarmist remarks” by anybody over the Ukraine crisis.

From page 1 ► **into Ukraine. What do you think? Don't you think that a possible invasion of Ukraine by Russia is being inflated?**

I don't think that in the end Russia will invade Ukraine. But the issue has not been inflated because there has been an exceptional display of troops, planes and ships, right on the border. Obviously, this is not a normal situation by all standards and it looks as a very serious threat.

What do you think of Russia's demand that NATO should cease its eastward expansion, roll back its deployments in Eastern Europe and pledge never to admit Ukraine?

Russia is unhappy since the dissolution of the Soviet Union that has diminished the power of the country, creating new national entities. Putin has said several times that this is one of the greatest tragedies of the past century.

He also says that Russia is not sufficiently respected and that the claims of his country are not taken into serious consideration.

In other words, he thinks that he can have a serious dialogue and a true negotiation only by raising the stakes to the maximum. The Americans and NATO, he thinks, are obliged in this case to negotiate with him a new order in Central Europe. And in terms of conventional forces Russia has a strong margin of superiority in this theatre for the time being.

A first observation is that Ukraine is not a candidate to become a NATO member. There is no application in existence. We are speaking about a future possibility. I don't think that Ukraine will become a member of the Atlantic Alliance, at least not in the medium term.

On the other hand, Russia has to understand that it is impossible to write in an official document that a sovereign country of more than 40 million people cannot decide its own foreign policy options. It would be a return to the



Soviet Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty, that is simply unacceptable today.

Russia has deployed more than 100,000 troops close to its border with Ukraine. Some NATO members are also sending fighter jets to Eastern Europe or deploying frigates to the Baltic and Black Seas and taking other steps. What is your analysis of such moves?

NATO has at present some symbolic deployments in its member countries in Eastern Europe. It can well decide to maintain the status quo.

Again, it is difficult to imagine a formal treaty limiting what sovereign countries can do for the future. Especially if they belong to the same organization.

On the other hand, this issue can be solved through diplomacy and a common understanding. With a long-term dialogue in good faith. With an exchange of serious information about reciprocal moves and intentions. Why to have nuclear weapons? against whom? Nobody has aggressive intentions against the Russian nation and nobody in America and in Europe wants to encircle Russia. It would be against the course of history to have such policies in the heart of Europe!

I think that we have to enter the time of good diplomacy, written in capital letters. And some good practical compromise can be welcome if basic principles are not forced. It is true that the dissolution of the Soviet Union has

been a very difficult moment, but this is now history, it was an independent decision and we have inevitably to start from there.

Are there any differences between the U.S. and the Europeans over the Ukraine issue? Also, how do you assess the NATO Secretary General's remarks in comparison to European Union foreign policy chief in regard to the crisis?

It is clear that the United States is much superior vis-à-vis Europe from a military point of view. On the other hand, the European Union is a formidable superpower in terms of soft power. The language is sometimes different between America and Europe, but in the end, history is telling us that there is a basic communality of purposes. Of course, NATO and the European Union are very different and their language is different. But I don't see them going in opposite direction.

Let's not forget that the sanctions on Russia, after the occupation of Crimea, started in Brussels with the EU.

How do you assess the German position in the dispute between Russia and Ukraine?

Germany has a very long tradition of relations with the Russians in a long history with bad and good chapters.

It is understandable that its reflections may have a different intensity. However, Germany, like Italy, have always joined the others when decisions are taken.

How do you think Russia should be treated?

It is out of question that Russia deserves respect, a great country with a great culture. At the same time, it does not mean that we have to agree with Russian political initiatives. Especially if they look extreme.

Don't you think that alarmist remarks may make the situation blow up?

It is always dangerous to raise tensions because an incident cannot be ruled out. It could provoke an unplanned escalation. I think that alarmist remarks should be avoided by everybody and the heat in the discussion should be reduced.

In this context it is useful to notice that the Secretary General of NATO has officially declared that troops would not be sent to Ukraine under no circumstances. The basic fact is that the country is not a NATO member. It seems to me to be a very reasonable and conciliatory statement. Other measures previously taken by some countries were of a symbolic nature. On the other hand, I am afraid that the Russian pressure against the government in Kiev will produce a nationalist reaction and reinforce the identity of that country with a distinct anti-Russian streak.

Aren't you surprised that NATO and Russia are showing teeth to each other? How can the situation be deescalated?

I would never have thought that in 2022 we could see such a dramatic situation in a very dangerous context. With the possibility of unforeseen consequences.

Again, it is understandable that Russia resents losing the Cold War (to use a term once in use) with many new countries coming into existence. On the other hand, Russia remains, and it openly recognized, a very important international actor. Evidence comes among also by the direct unambiguous dialogue with the President of the United States.

International security is a priority, we cannot change past history and we have to look at the future more in spirit of cooperation for a lasting peace.

In conclusion, I have the opinion that there will be no war in the end, because it will be against the basic interest of everybody and common sense should prevail.

Ansarallah's missile attacks on UAE redefines West Asia: Singaporean researcher

“MBS’ wishes of a quick Saudi victory in Yemen fell victim to time”

From page 1 ► Following is the text of the interview:

How do you see the repercussions of Ansarallah's missile attacks on the United Arab Emirates in recent weeks? What are its implications for the UAE, Israel, and the region?

Ansarallah's missile attacks on the Emirates in recent weeks have redefined the Middle East (West Asia) in a way that the old tools of analysis will not be sufficient to explain the fast-paced regional phenomena. This event has highlighted most forcefully that the military might of external players do not guarantee a change in the internal dynamics of a country in matters where people's aspirations of governance are concerned, and such ambitions of the external players may incur high costs.

In the short term, Ansarallah's missile attacks on the UAE would expedite the deepening of strategic and defense partnerships between Israel and the UAE. Israel had earlier shown reservations in transferring its high-end missile air defense systems to the UAE, a position that is bound to change under the backdrop of these attacks as the UAE can now assertively demand it in lieu of normalization of its relations with Israel. It is also likely that the Houthis will see more attacks on their own installations in Yemen by the combined efforts of the UAE and Israel. Signs of these developments have started becoming visible within days of the first Houthi attack last month.

Despite these short-term gains, the fundamentals of national security imperatives would gradually become visible, including 1) Israel's efforts to successfully transfer part of its vulnerabilities to the UAE; and 2) the futility of over-dependence on borrowed security. UAE's continued involvement in Yemen through its proxies is reflective of Abu Dhabi's decision to enter the offensive domain despite the huge risks of exposed vulnerabilities. This may also



became independent in oil, which completely changed its Middle East (West Asian) priorities. For the U.S., rapprochement with Iran appeared the easiest recipe to offload its burdens of the past, a realization that culminated in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in July 2015. This was also the time when the U.S. realized that it could not continue to pursue George W. Bush's grandiose plan of democratization and hence sped up exiting from Afghanistan. Consequently, the level of U.S. support that MBS was anticipating did not come and the Saudi-led efforts not only in Yemen but also against Qatar and Iran lost traction. MBS' wishes of a quick Saudi victory in Yemen fell victim to time.

Biden had pledged in his electoral campaigns that Washington will stop military aid to Saudi Arabia unless it ends the war in Yemen, but the American administration is keeping arm sales to Riyadh under the pretext of “defensive” operations “to support and help Saudi Arabia defend its sovereignty and its territorial integrity and its people.” There's just one problem: The line between “offensive” and “defensive” support is murky, and critics argue even the limited support the U.S. is providing still helps Riyadh carry out its offensive bombing campaign in Yemen. What is your comment?

Indeed, President Biden had picked up Yemen as his first Middle East (West Asian) mission, as reflected in his first foreign policy speech delivered on 4 February 2021. The task was assigned to Tim Lenderking, the U.S. special envoy for Yemen, who pursued a UN-led peace process with due recognition of the urgency to mitigate the humanitarian crisis. However, Yemen was linked to the Saudi-Iran rivalry and the U.S. could not afford to let go Saudi Arabia from its sphere of influence until a U.S.-Iran rapprochement was in sight, which was made extremely difficult by his predecessor Donald Trump. Therefore, due to the U.S. hedging strategy, arms supply to Saudi Arabia could not be completely halted.

It is true that the “offensive” and “defensive” armaments are not watertight compartments; still, a differentiation can be made. For example, air missile defense systems can be clearly categorized as defensive armaments, which the U.S. never put off the table. Also, arms supply from one nation to another is not philanthropy, but a tool to achieve a predetermined foreign policy objective. U.S. transfer of military armaments to Saudi Arabia has a long history, which is linked to a wide military-industrial complex and cannot be suddenly dispensed with.

Why are the Western media outlets silent when it comes to the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen?

Western media outlets are not silent when it comes to the Yemen humanitarian catastrophe. Prominent Western media outlets have regularly carried out reports chronicling the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, with particular focus on the implications of bombings of the civilian targets by the Saudi-led coalition. Such reports have continued even after the Houthi's attack in the UAE last month, which was followed by heavy retaliation by the Saudi-led coalition. Apart from including the oft-repeated phrases such as “world's worst humanitarian disasters” and “millions rendered in famine-like conditions”, these reports have also included the concerns of international humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. Notwithstanding such mentions in the Western media, it is true that these reports could not become as “trending” as deserved.

Fresh wave of Tories tell UK premier to leave

From page 1 ► While 14 or 15 Tory MPs have come out in public and called on the Prime Minister to resign, the true number is believed to be higher.

Only Brady knows the real number of letters submitted to him.

The fallout from the Downing Street parties scandal has become a growing threat to the British Prime Minister as well as the ruling Tory party who are stuck between a scandal-hit PM and domestic as well as international crises that are being overlooked.

With public attention focused on the PM, the damage from resignation or even calls for the PM's resignation is also hurting the image of the government and the wider ruling Conservative Party who face losing power.

Observers say those who call for Johnson's resignation in public are inflicting more damage to the ruling conservative party's reputation.

However, reports suggest other Tory MPs are expected to consider, over the coming days, whether to write to Brady and make it known publicly in an attempt to force a leadership contest.

The mounting anger among Conservative MPs is a sign of division within the party that analysts say is now in crisis mode.

On Thursday evening, there was also departures from Boris Johnson's own team which left the PM without a director of communications, a principal private secretary, or a chief of staff. One former cabinet minister speaking on condition of anonymity says this could hasten Johnson's own exit. “The mass exodus is obviously bad for Boris and may bring forward decision day”.

Another unnamed former minister is reported to have said “I think there are probably a lot of people who are going to be wrestling with their consciences over the weekend”.

He/She says the exodus from Downing Street “all looks a little bit like panic”.

Elena Narozanski, a special adviser to the Prime Minister became the fifth aide to depart on Friday morning.

Johnson's spokesman says new appointments would be made “in the coming days”.

Former Minister, Nick Gibb, is among the latest MP to heap pressure on Johnson.

Speaking to British media, he has denounced the PM saying “my constituents are furious about the double standards, imposing harsh and to my mind, necessary restrictions as we and the world sought to defend ourselves against this new and deadly virus, while at

the same time flagrantly disregarding those rules within the fortress of Downing Street”

He says “to restore [public] trust, we need to change the prime minister”.

Gibb claims that Johnson has been “inaccurate” when delivering statements to parliament.

The MP says “the Prime Minister accepted the resignation of Allegra Stratton (former senior government spokeswoman) for joking about a Christmas party that she hadn't attended, but he won't take responsibility for those that he did attend”.

“I am sorry to say that it is hard to see how it can be the case that the prime minister told the truth”, he added.

Gibb has also confirmed he submitted a letter of no confidence to the chairman of the 1922 Committee.

Another Tory MP, Aaron Bell also revealed he has handed in a letter of no confidence, saying the PM's position is “untenable”.

Earlier, three other high-profile MPs had also publicly stated their disapproval with Johnson calling on him to go. Gary Streeter, Tobias Ellwood, and Anthony Mangnall made their positions clear in a single day in a show of growing anger.

Speaking to British media, former Defense Minister, Ellwood says it is “just horrible” for Tory MPs to “continuously have to defend this to the British public”.

He says “I don't think the prime minister realizes how worried colleagues are in every corner of the party, backbenchers, and ministers alike, that this is all only going one way and will invariably slide towards a very ugly place”.

Ellwood also stressed “I believe it's time for the prime minister to take a grip of this; he himself should call a vote of confidence, rather than waiting for the inevitable 54 letters to be eventually submitted.

“It's time to resolve this completely, so the party can get back to governing, and, yes, I know the next question you will ask, I will be submitting my letter today to the 1922 Committee”

One of the most high-ranking government figures to express frustration with Downing Street is the current Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt, who has been quoted as telling a member of the public that she wants assurances about the “competence and integrity” of “how Downing Street is operating”.

Reports have cited her as saying “like you, I am shocked at the stupidity of what has taken place against a backdrop of sacrifice and discipline from

the country. As well as the issues Gray is looking at, I want to be assured of proper oversight, competence and integrity in how Downing Street is operating. It is critical to a functioning government and the trust of the public.”

Johnson continues to try and rally for support from staff as pressure mounts over Downing Street parties and gathering during COVID lockdown restrictions in 2020 and 2021 imposed by Downing Street itself, a dozen of which under Metropolitan Police investigation.

The Met Police is investigating a dozen parties in Downing Street and Whitehall and has been handed a bundle of evidence including 300 photographs. One person who has reportedly seen some of the evidence says “It looked like a party to me”.

Johnson is losing both trust and allies by the day as his own aides, cabinet ministers and Tory MPs distance themselves from the Prime Minister wary that the whole situation may reach a stage of calling a snap election.

Analysts have also argued that behind the front door of Downing Street are offices where hundreds of people work; a mixture of politicians, political appointees, and civil servants and it has become clear that the whole of Downing Street has become riddled with a culture of contempt.

A contempt which says laws are only for the working class, while those inside Downing Street enjoy a certain degree of arrogance that makes them believe they are better than the rest of society because they are representing the interests of a tiny elite that are getting richer by the day.

As the wealth gap rises along with the unemployment rate, observers say if Johnson does leave, he will be replaced with somebody that represents the same approach but conducts themselves better in the public eye.

Nevertheless, critics say what happened during Johnson's self-imposed Covid-19 lockdown rules on the British public was shocking.

The rules meant the loved ones of those who were dying could not say goodbye and bid them farewell at hospital or attend their burial; while the PM and his inner circle were breaking the rules regularly with parties.

Critics also say that lack of empathy by the PM for the whole situation where people's parents were dying and friends getting ill and all the stress that occurred during the government imposed lockdowns is at the heart of the issue here.

National webinar to discuss inscriptions, oral heritage of Iran



TEHRAN – A national webinar has invited linguistics, historians, anthropologists, and experts of other disciplines to discuss characteristics and changes of texts and oral heritage of Iran from prehistorical times to the present.

Dialectology, which is the study of dialect variation that commonly occurs as a result of relative geographic or social isolation and may affect vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation, is one of the topics of the virtual webinar to be held on February 21.

Moreover, the experts will debate linguistic features of inscriptions from various epochs of Medes, Achaemenids, Sassanids, Elamites, Islamic era, to name a few.

The history of coins and coinage, linguistic features of historical documents, manuscripts, and oral heritage of the nation are amongst other issues to be discussed by the experts.

Iranian languages have been written in many different scripts during their rich yet stormy history of the nation. Old Persian was written with a cuneiform syllabary, the origin of which is still hotly disputed. Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, and Old Khwarezmian were recorded in various

forms of Aramaic script.

Furthermore, it benefited from the Pahlavi language, which is currently an extinct member of the Iranian language group, a subdivision of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. Pahlavi is a Middle Persian (sometimes called Middle Iranian) language, meaning that it was primarily used from the end of the Achaemenian dynasty (559–330 BC) to the advent of Islam in the 7th century CE. Modern Persian is written in Arabic script, which is of Aramaic origin.

In terms of coins and coinage, the Sasanian dynasty of Iran introduced the concept of thin flan coins in about 220 CE. The conquering Muslims at first mimicked the coinage of their predecessors. In the western provinces, they issued gold and copper pieces imitated from contemporary Byzantine coins, modifying the cross on the reverse of the latter somewhat to suit Muslim sensibilities. In the eastern provinces, the Arab governors issued silver dirhams that were copies of late Sasanian coins (mostly of those of Khosrow II; with the addition of short Arabic inscriptions on the margin and often the name of the Arab governor in Pahlavi; even the crude representation of the fire altar was retained.

German mine relics returned home after major Iran exhibit



TEHRAN – A collection of relics, which was on loan from the German Mining Museum at a major Tehran exhibit, has recently been returned home.

The exhibit titled “Human Search for Recourses” was held at the National Museum of Iran from November 3, 2021, to January 14 in parallel with an Iranian exhibition of ancient mining named “Death by Salt”.

The German show put the spotlight on the appropriation of humans to mineral resources and the development of the history of human experiences and achievements in mining, which led to the development of technologies, the formation of professions, trade, and specialization of industries.

“Death by Salt” showcased arrays of personal objects, tools, and corpses once belonging to the famed Iranian salt mummies discovered in the

Chehrabad Salt Mine of Zanjan province.

Last year, a team of experts from the two countries started a project for purifying, cleansing, and restoring garments and personal belongings of the mummies which were first found in the salt mine in 1993.

What was a catastrophe for the ancient miners has become a sensation for science. Sporting a long white beard, iron knives, and a single gold earring, the first salt mummy was discovered in 1993. He is estimated to be trapped in the mine in ca. 300 CE. In 2004 another mummy was discovered only 50 feet away, followed by another in 2005 and a “teenage” boy mummy later that year.

The oldest-known mine on archaeological record is believed to be the Ngwenya Mine in Eswatini (Swaziland), which radiocarbon dating shows to be about 43,000 years old. At this site, Paleolithic humans mined hematite to make the red pigment ochre. Moreover, mines of a similar age in Hungary are believed to be sites where Neanderthals may have mined flint for weapons and tools.

The National Museum of Iran is somewhat chock-full of priceless relics that represent various eras of the country's rich history. Massive and tiny statues, ceramics, potteries, stone figures, bas-relief carvings, metal objects, textile remains, rare books, and coins are amongst objects that build up the innumerable collections inside.

11 historical monuments demarcated in South Khorasan

TEHRAN – A total of 11 historical structures and monuments have recently been demarcated in South Khorasan province.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has announced the exact legal boundaries of the monuments in separate letters to the governor-general of the eastern Iranian province, CHTN reported on Saturday.

Akbarieh qanat, Tabas Citadel, Alavi Caravanserai, and Charsu cistern are among those demarcated recently.

The demarcation projects aimed to prevent further destruction and damage and to curb illegal constructions within the boundaries of the historical sites.

South Khorasan is home to many historical and



natural attractions such as Birjand Castle, Dragon Cave, Furg Citadel, and Polond Desert. It is also known for its famous rugs as well as its saffron and barberry which are produced in almost all parts of the province.

Archaeologist finds bizarre object in Persian Gulf

TEHRAN – An Iranian archaeologist has accidentally discovered a bizarre object while diving into the coral seabed of the Persian Gulf in southern Iran.

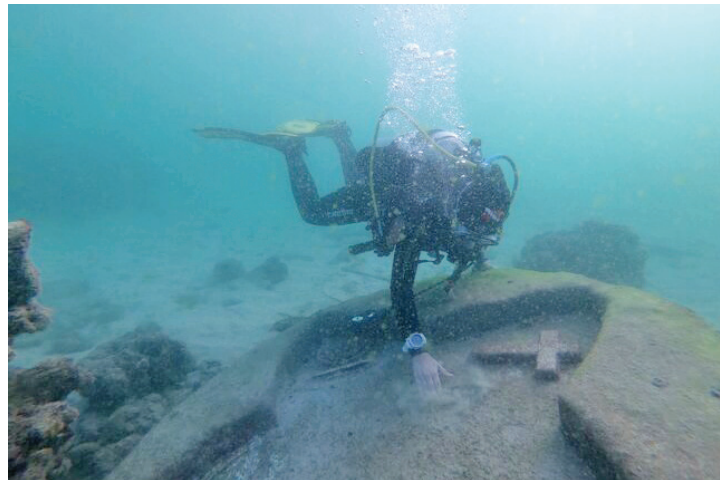
Initial estimates suggest the sunken object may have a spiritual significance as it bears religious shapes and motifs.

“Coincidentally, while diving on the shores of the Persian Gulf near Qeshm Island, I found an unknown object on the seabed. At first, I thought it was made of stone,” ISNA quoted archaeologist Samaneh Lashgari as saying on Saturday.

“In secondary and more specialized inspection, it was found that the object is something similar to fiberglass with a white-colored layer, which is, geometrically, in the form of a cylindrical disk.”

A significant feature of the object is the existence of religious motifs such as a cross, a Jewish-shaped candlestick, a flame, and an arched structure all of which are engraved on a four-petal flower, she explained.

The object will undergo a thorough examination by a team of archaeologists and cultural heritage



experts under the supervision of the provincial department of cultural heritage and tourism, the report said.

Qeshm Island is a heaven for eco-tourists as it embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines. The island also features geologically eye-catching canyons, hills, caves, and valleys, most of which are protected as part of the UNESCO-tagged Qeshm Island Geopark, itself a haven for nature-lovers.

The Persian Gulf is a shallow, epi-continental sea approximately 1,000 km long and 200-350 km wide, narrowing to about 60 km across at the Straits of Hormuz. According to Encyclopedia Iranica, to date, no Neolithic remains have been found anywhere along the Persian Gulf coast of Iran. The earliest archaeological remains yet identified on the coast of Iran consist of sherds of Mesopotamian Ubaid type picked up by M. E. Prickett and A. Williamson on the surface of Halilah, a prehistoric site on the Bushehr peninsula.

Metalwork exhibition in northwest Iran marks 43rd anniversary of Islamic Revolution

TEHRAN – An exquisite collection of engraved copperware has been put on show in Ahar, East Azarbaijan province to mark the 43rd anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, which is known as Ten-Day Fajr celebrations (this year from February 1 to 11).

The exhibition, which is underway in the historical mansion of Qasem Khan Ahari, features artworks by a number of the masters of this field as well as their pupils, CHTN reported on Saturday.

The five-day exhibit is organized by Ahar's office for the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Coppersmithing is one of the ancient handicrafts in Iran, which was practiced between the 6th and 7th millennium BC, however, the culmination of the art dates back to the Safavid era (1501-1736), when using copper dishes and objects has been popular among people.

The archeological evidence discovered at Tepe Sialk and other mining localities such as Talmesi and Anarak, and Tall-e Eblis indicates that several of the earliest sites of copper extraction were located in Iran.

During the 5th and 4th millennia BC in Iran,



craftsmen were able to create enough heat to reach temperatures required for the melting of most of the then known raw materials, and thus extract metals.

On top of that copper-smelting techniques became well known in various parts of Iran in this period. With the advancement of the knowledge of metallurgy in the Achaemenid era, finely crafted copper and bronze objects were created, continuing through ancient times.

Although copper is mentioned in geographical texts much less often than precious metals, it appears to have been mined over wide areas of Persia in early Islamic times.

Objects apparently made of unalloyed copper survive in very small quantities from

early Islamic times. The general rarity of early Islamic copper objects is probably because they were normally purely utilitarian, beaten out of sheet copper, and left undecorated for town or village use; they would have been melted down and reworked when old.

In the 15th century, however, decorated objects made of tinned copper became common. The reasons for this change are unclear but may have been related to the gradual dwindling of interest in inlaid base metals and the return to precious metals for luxury objects.

Under the Safavids, tinned copper seems to have been common throughout Persia, whence the taste spread to Mughal India. The designs on most Safavid tinned-copper objects seem to have been derived from the Timurid tradition, rather than that of the Turkman dynasties, though some are related in style to Safavid painting. For example, a group of objects with figural decoration has been linked to western Persia in the second quarter of the 17th century.

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

Land subsidence reveals ancient underground village

TEHRAN –An ancient underground village has recently been unearthed in Margh Malek Village, southwestern Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province after a vast area was subsided, a local official has announced.

The village of Margh Malek has been affected by land subsidence, which has resulted in the discovery of an underground village buried deep beneath the current village, Mehr quoted Khosro Kiani as saying on Saturday.

It seems that due to cold winters and bandit attacks, this village used to have an underground settlement, he mentioned.

Part of this underground village is used in the present-



day residential houses, and the construction of them is arched and very strange, the official added.

Construction has affected the underground village, and some areas have subsided due to weather conditions, drought, and groundwater scarcity, he

explained.

He also emphasized the need for the newly discovered village to be protected as there is a possibility of subsidence occurring in the residential houses in the area, which would cause human and financial losses.

Traditional jewelry of southeast Iran is ‘on the verge of oblivion’

TEHRAN – A handicrafts expert has warned that the art of traditional jewelry is on the verge of oblivion in the southeastern province of Sistan-Balouchestan.

This craft has become more and more neglected over the years, along with their construction, and there is a decrease in handmade jewelry making in the province, IRNA quoted Abdolmajid Sharifzadeh, who presides over the traditional art group of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism, as saying on Saturday.

Taking inspiration from the region's culture and nature, the artists developed a complementary course of art, which unfortunately has been overshadowed due to their lack of support, the expert added.

Among the oldest types of traditional

jewelry that are in a critical condition today are those used in the Sistan-Balouchestan, which need more attention and support, he explained.

The collective province -- Sistan in the north and Baluchestan in the south -- accounts for one of the driest regions of Iran with a slight increase in rainfall from east to west, and an obvious rise in humidity in the coastal regions. In ancient times, the region was a crossroad of the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations.

The province possesses special significance because of being located in a strategic and transit location, especially Chabahar which is the only ocean port in Iran and the best and easiest access route of the middle Asian countries to free waters.



The vast province is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert.

Lake Urmia level drops by 59cm

TEHRAN – Lake Urmia level shrank by about 59 cm compared to the same period last [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021), Javad Mohammadi, West Azarbaijan province's water company chief, said on Saturday.

The current level of the lake is 1270.68 meters, which shows a comparison of 59 cm compared to the same period last year.

The surface area of Lake Urmia has been reduced to 1,835 square kilometers, retaining 2.380 billion cubic meters of water, losing 1.920 billion cubic meters of water, he added, ISNA reported.

Since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2021), 152.7 mm of rainfall has been recorded in the province and 165.5 mm of rainfall has been recorded in the catchment area of Lake Urmia.

He went on to say that this environmental problem has increased the risk of salt dust storms in the



region, which can have adverse effects on human communities and the lakeshore.

Shared between West Azarbaijan and East Azarbaijan provinces in northwestern Iran, Lake Urmia, was once the largest salt-water lake in West Asia. It was home to many migratory and indigenous animals including flamingos, pelicans, egrets, and ducks, and at-

tracted hundreds of tourists every year who had bathed in the water to take advantage of the therapeutic properties of the lake.

However, decades of long-standing drought spells and elevated hot summer temperatures that speed up evaporation as well as increased water demands in the agriculture sector shrank the lake drastically. In 1999

the volume of water which was at 30 billion cubic meters drastically decreased to half a billion cubic meters in 2013. Moreover, the lake surface area of 5,000 square kilometers in 1997 shrunk to one-tenth of that to 500 square kilometers in 2013.

Lake's surface area reached up to 2,917 square kilometers, indicating 1,582 square kilometers increase in comparison to 2013 when the Lake Urmia Restoration Program began.

The level of Lake Urmia has reached 1,271 meters, which indicates an increase of over 1.39 meters compared to the lowest volume recorded. However, it still needs 9.5 billion cubic meters of water to reach its ecological level.

The above normal levels of rain came to help conservation measures to preserve Lake Urmia, but, this year, the drought and low rainfall are threatening the lake again.

Failure to prevent pandemics at source is ‘greatest folly’, say scientists

Preventing future pandemics at source would cost a small fraction of the damage already caused by viruses that jump from wildlife to people, according to scientists.

Each year on average more than 3 million people die from zoonotic diseases, those that spill over from wildlife into humans, new analysis has calculated. Stopping the destruction of nature, which brings humans and wildlife into greater contact and results in spillover, would cost about \$20bn a year, just 10% of the annual economic damage caused by zoonoses and 5% of the value of the lives lost.

The scientists heavily criticise approaches by global bodies and governments that focus only on preventing the spread of new viruses once they have infected humans, rather than tackling the root causes as well. “That premise is one of the greatest pieces of folly of modern times,” said Prof Aaron Bernstein, of the Center for Climate, Health and the Global Environment at Harvard University, who led the new assessment.

It details three key actions: global surveillance of viruses in wildlife, better control of hunting and trade in wildlife, and stopping the razing of forests. These actions would also pay huge dividends in fighting the climate emergency and the biodiversity crisis.

Wildlife is known to harbour vast numbers of viruses, and outbreaks are increasing in frequency and severity. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, experts have repeatedly warned that the root causes must be tackled. Inaction has left the world playing an “ill-fated game of Russian roulette with pathogens”, they have said, and protecting nature is vital to escape an “era of pandemics”.

“Our salvation comes cheap [because] prevention is much cheaper than cures,” Bernstein said. “If Covid-19 taught us anything, it is that we absolutely cannot rely on post-spillover strategies alone to protect us. Spending only five cents on the dollar can help prevent the next tsunami of lives lost to pandemics by stopping the wave from ever emerging, instead of paying trillions to pick up the pieces.”

Bernstein said action to stop pandemics at source had been ignored because pandemic response was led by medical scientists and organisations that were unfamiliar with the protection of nature in preventing spillover. “Also, this primary prevention does not result in profits for corporations,” he said.

The analysis, published in Science Advances, uses stark language that is unusual in a scientific journal. “Prominent policymakers have promoted plans that argue the best ways to address future pandemic catastrophes should entail ‘detecting and containing emerging zoonotic threats’. In other words, we should take actions only after humans get sick. We sharply disagree,” it says.

It specifically criticises the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB), a joint initiative of the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO), and a G20 high-level panel on financing for pandemic preparedness, whose reports and strategies do not mention tackling spillover.

The analysis assesses every zoonotic virus over the last century known to have killed more than 10 people, including the Spanish flu, repeat-



ed bird flu outbreaks, Marburg virus, Lassa fever, Ebola, HIV, Nipah, West Nile, Sars, Chikungunya, Zika and Covid-19.

The researchers calculated the average annual deaths and economic costs from these viruses and compared these with the cost of action to prevent spillover. They found the benefits of action were so large that it would be cost-effective even if it cut the risk of a major pandemic by only 1%.

The action recommended includes a global project to identify wildlife viruses to highlight hotspots of danger, better enforcement of controls on hunting and trade in wildlife, and cutting deforestation. The cost-benefit analysis did not include the damage caused by family deaths, lost jobs, delayed medical treatments, and lost education, or the cost of viral outbreaks in livestock or crops, which can run to many billions of dollars.

Prof Marcia Castro, also of Harvard University, said. “Making these investments in primary prevention brings returns to human health, environment, and economic development.”

Neil Vora, an expert in outbreak response who worked on tackling Covid-19 in New York and is now at Conservation International, said: “Unfortunately, dominant voices in public health have historically neglected pandemic interventions like ending deforestation. This reflects a bias towards immediately measurable public health victories, such as the number of vaccines administered, over those that require a longer time horizon before their benefits are realised. Many of these distant benefits are immeasurable as their goal is for a pandemic not to occur at all.”

A spokesperson for the GPMB said it supported the conclusions of the analysis. “We agree that there are substantial gaps in knowledge, institutional capacity and financial resources which limit the ability to avert pathogen emergence. We also agree that preventive action is substantially more cost-effective compared to the direct impact upon global economies and lives lost. Spillover and prevention at the source are specific areas of work that would benefit from global leadership.”

The spokesperson said GPMB reports had noted that global health security requires systems to predict, prevent, identify and detect the emergence of pathogens with pandemic potential. A framework for monitoring the state of the world's pandemic preparedness would be launched later in 2022, she said, and was “likely to include indicators related to biodiversity loss, deforestation, animal trade and animal health.”

Prof Stuart Pimm, a co-author of the new analysis, said: “Pandemics are not a problem that are going to go away. The world's human population is increasing and becoming very much more urbanised. It's going to get worse and we're going to be at greater risk.”

COVID-19 UPDATES ON FEBRUARY 5

New cases	23,130
New deaths	64
Total cases	6,543,837
Total deaths	132,745
New hospitalized patients	1,529
Patients in critical condition	2,282
Total recovered patients	6,138,692
Diagnostic tests conducted	45,296,728
Doses of vaccine injected	134,804,694

Over a ton of narcotics seized in southeastern border

TEHRAN – The anti-narcotics police have seized over a ton of drugs in the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan, commander of border guards Ahmad Ali Goudarzi said.

Security forces in the Jaleq border area of Saravan city obtained clues of the intention of drug traffickers to enter the country, and with careful operations, succeeded in discovering the narcotics shipment, he stated, IRNA reported on Saturday.

In this operation, 629 kilograms of methamphetamine were confiscated from smugglers, he stated, adding, in another operation also 654 kilograms of opium and a vehicle have been confiscated.

Iran holds record for narcotics confiscation worldwide

Iran holds the record for narcotics confiscation in the world, Eskandar Momeni, the director of headquarters for the fight against narcotics, said in December 2021.

However, great achievements in the field of countermeasures have been gained, and the United Nations has officially announced that 90 percent of opium, 70 percent of morphine, and 20 percent of world heroin have been discovered by Iran.



Last year, about 1,200 tons of drugs were discovered, which was the highest rate of discovery in the world,” he explained.

According to figures released by the United Nations in 2000, Afghanistan produced about 200 tons of narcotics, but in 2018, it has grown to 9,500 tons.

In other words, the production of narcotics has increased fifty times, which has doubled the need for prevention efforts, he highlighted.

Despite the conditions caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the imposition of harsh sanctions against the country,

fortunately, with the efforts of anti-narcotics police in 2020, drug detection increased by 41 percent.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), 3,800 were martyred, 12,000 were wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking.

The UNODC has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in drug-control campaigns.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.

Iran holds the record for narcotics confiscation in the world.



mation center of Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam.

Eleven countries from Asia and South America, and a European country have asked for importing COVIRAN vaccine, Hassan Jalili, the vaccine's production manager, said in June.

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

ENGLISH IN USE

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\$4m budget allocated to promote non-motorized transport

A total budget of 170 billion rials (around \$4 million) has been allocated to promote bike lanes across the capital city of Tehran, encouraging the residents to ride bicycles, Sakineh Ashrafi, deputy mayor of Tehran for planning, urban development and council affairs has said.

One of the main issues taken into consideration through the next year's budget bill, was development of non-motorized transportation, which focuses on active transportation and human powered transportation including walking and bicycling, she explained.

According to Tehran third development plan, biking as a green transport has been taken into consideration in order to mitigate traffic congestion and air pollution, she further noted, ISNA reported on Sunday.

تصویب اعتبار ۱۷ میلیاردی برای توسعه دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی در پایتخت

سکینه اشرفی معاون برنامه‌ریزی، توسعه شهری و امور شورای شهردار تهران از تصویب حدود ۱۷۰ میلیارد ریال اعتبار برای توسعه دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی در پایتخت خبر داد.

وی اظهار کرد: یکی از موضوعاتی که در بودجه سنواتی سال آینده شهرداری تهران به آن توجه شده، موضوع توسعه حمل و نقل عمومی غیرموتوری از جمله دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی است.

به گزارش روز یکشنبه برگزاری ایسنا وی ادامه داد: در برنامه سوم توسعه شهر تهران، موضوع توجه به دوچرخه‌سواری به عنوان یک حمل و نقل پاک برای کاهش ترافیک و آلودگی هوا مورد توجه و تاکید قرار گرفته است.

