

Report



Trudeau invokes emergency powers against protesters

The Canadian prime minister, Justin Trudeau, has invoked legislation that gives his government sweeping powers to try and crush a growing protest movement dubbed the “freedom convoy” that has paralyzed parts of the country and shut some border crossing points with the United States including Ambassador Bridge, a vital trade route between Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit in the U.S.

Trudeau is the first Canadian prime minister to invoke the Emergencies Act, which will go into effect for a month and will allow the federal government to ban people from gathering in certain locations.

Addressing a press conference deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland says banks would be able to “freeze the personal accounts of anyone linked with the protests without any need for a court order”. The federal government will also use the new powers to try and cut off funding for the protests. ► Page 5

Interview



Historian says U.S. beginning to experience its own decline

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - Ronald Grigor Suny, a professor emeritus of political science and history at the University of Chicago, says that the U.S. as the richest and most powerful country in the world is beginning to experience its own decline.

“The United States, still the richest and most powerful country in the world, is beginning to experience its own decline, and its leaders know this,” the professor tells the Tehran Times.

“They fear a rising hegemon, China, and a much weaker one, Russia, and believe that Iran is unpredictable and a threat to its major Middle Eastern (West Asian) ally, Israel,” Suny adds.

According to the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Developments in the last fifteen years have driven renewed interest in hegemonic stability and power-transition theory. ► Page 5

Iran firms up efforts in support of WHO for health care services to refugees

TEHRAN - In a recent two-day visit to Zahedan University of Medical Sciences (UMS) in the southern and border province of Sistan-Baluchestan, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative Syed Jaffar Hussain met with local health authorities to review the efforts made in scaling up health services in the province and to explore avenues of collaboration in promoting national plans in the area of health and health promotion in the area.

The visit on February 1-2 mainly aimed to look at the collective progress made over the past years by universities of medical sciences and relevant agencies in the province with regards to health care services, including those concerning Afghan refugees and other foreign nationals in the area, the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean reported.

The visit encompassed a meeting headed by the Iranian parliament's Health Commission Head, Dr Hossein Shahriyari, with Dr Hussain, which reviewed the health priorities of Sistan-Baluchestan and discussed ways that WHO can support ongoing or planned efforts in the field. The high-level session was attended by Dr Hashemi Shahri, ► Page 7

Bahrain's Ties With Israel Could Anger Iran



©CGPO

Iran's January oil output rises 21% from December

TEHRAN - Iran's crude oil production in January reached 2.503 million barrels per day (bpd), registering a 21-percent increase compared to the figure for December 2021, according to OPEC's latest monthly report.

Iran produced 2.482 million bpd of crude oil in December 2021, the report said citing secondary sources.

The Islamic Republic's average crude output for the fourth quarter of 2021 stood at 2.480 million bpd indicating a 40,000-bpd increase compared to the figure for the first

quarter of the year, the report indicated.

OPEC put the average Iranian crude output for 2021 at 2.405 million bpd, while the average output in 2020 was 1.988 million bpd.

These statistics show that although with the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions, Iran's oil production decreased; gradually the country has been able to compensate for part of the output decline. The country's heavy crude oil price also increased \$10.91 in January, to register a 14.6 percent rise compared to the previous month, according to the OPEC report.

Iran sold its heavy crude oil at \$85.59 per barrel in the mentioned month, compared to December's \$74.68 per barrel.

Based on the OPEC data, the country's average heavy crude price was \$54.38 in 2021.

In addition to the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the global oil industry which resulted in the drastic fall in oil production and prices, the Iranian oil industry was under pressure from the U.S. efforts to isolate the country by re-imposing sanctions in 2021. ► Page 4

South American, Asian playoff to be held in Qatar

TEHRAN - The fifth-ranked team from South America will play the fifth-placed side from Asia for a berth at next year's World Cup in Qatar.

The World Cup draw, held in Zurich, also pitted the fourth-placed team from North, Central America and the Caribbean (CONCACAF) against the Oceania champions.

Both playoffs will be staged over a single leg on June 12 and 14 in Qatar, football's governing body said.

Peru are currently fifth in the South American zone standings with two match days remaining in the qualifying campaign. Panama are fourth in the CONCACAF region. New Zealand are firm favorites to win Oceania's qualifying tournament, which has been scheduled to be played in Qatar in March.

Asia's playoff spot will be decided by a duel between the third-ranked side in Group A and B of its third round qualifying stage. Those positions are currently occupied by United Arab Emirates and Australia.

The World Cup will be played from November 21 to December 18 at eight venues in five Qatari cities.



©IRNA

Renovated minaret of Imam Ali holy shrine unveiled

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Imam Ali (AS), the minaret of his holy shrine in the Iraqi city of Najaf, was renovated by Iranian artists and artisans and was unveiled on Monday, February 14. The birthday is celebrated in Iran as Father's Day, falling this year on February 15. In Iranian culture, the day is observed in recognition of the role of fathers in family, raising the children and society as a whole.

Tehran-Caracas flights to be launched amid hopes to boost tourism

TEHRAN - Direct flights between Iran and Venezuela will begin on March 21, concurrent with the Iranian new year, amid hopes to buttress tourism between the two nations.

“The passenger flights from Tehran to Caracas will begin on March 21,” the president of Conviasa airlines Ramon Velazquez told HispanTV on Sunday.

Venezuela's flagship airline wants to bring Ira-

nian tourists to Venezuela via 13-hour flights.

Despite the long distance between the two, Iranian vacationers are offered visa-free entry to Venezuelan soil to encourage tourism. “Iranian nationals do not need a visa to enter Venezuela at present,” the official noted.

Velazquez called Venezuela a “strategic destination” for Iran, saying “tourism is going to have big

importance, above all else,” Al-Monitor reported.

Iran and Venezuela enjoy close relations, which are dominantly focused on economics. Conviasa began cargo flights between Tehran and Caracas in 2019 to transport medicine as well as industrial products, according to Velazquez. Iran has also sent multiple fuel tankers to Venezuela in recent years. In 2020, an Iranian supermarket opened in Caracas. ► Page 6

From Inside



- Amir Abdollahian: Iran in hurry for good agreement in Vienna talks **P2**
- EU chief diplomat: Reviving nuclear deal 'in sight' **P2**
- Iran's Shamkhani decries 'American malpractice' as main threat to a deal **P3**
- Iran officials intensify JCPOA consultations **P3**
- Top industrial, mining companies honored **P4**
- Iran-Iraq joint investment opportunities summit to be held soon **P4**
- Tehran, Buenos Aires eye expansion of economic ties **P4**
- First successful bone marrow transplant for multi autoimmune syndrome in Iran **P7**
- Sanctions have put the lives of vulnerable people at risk: UN envoy **P7**
- Cinema Organization of Iran CEO meets Chinese envoy to discuss execution of earlier film MOUs **P8**
- Close-up Film Festival spotlights Iranian short cinema **P8**

Interview



U.S. doesn't have the same economic superiority it had before: political scientist

By M. A. Saki

TEHRAN - David Schultz, a distinguished professor of political science and legal studies from Hamline University, says that the U.S. lacks the same economic dominance it once had to advance its global ambitions

“The U.S. does not have the same economic superiority it had at its height,” Schultz tells the Tehran Times.

“At one time its GDP was half of the entire global GDP. Now it is about 20% with China and the EU at about the same level.”

Some reports say that China will overtake the U.S. to become the world's largest economy by 2028.

The U.S. economy, by contrast, has been hit hard by the world's worst coronavirus epidemic in terms of sheer numbers.

“It lacks the same economic dominance it once had to support its global ambitions. On top of that, the political divisions in the U.S. make it hard to exercise global dominance especially after Afghanistan and a U.S. retreat from foreign engagements,” Schultz notes.

Following is the text of the interview:

After weaponizing sanctions against Iran, Washington is going to use them against Russia under the pretext of the Ukraine crisis. Do you think the sanction policy is an efficient weapon?

More often than not sanctions do not work. Many regimes are able to withstand sanctions or find ways to ► Page 5

“The Situation of Mehdi”, “No Prior Appointment” scoop up National Will Manifestation Awards

TEHRAN - Acclaimed dramas “The Situation of Mehdi” and “No Prior Appointment” each won over ten prizes at the National Will Manifestation Awards held at Eyvan Shams Hall in Tehran on Thursday.

The gala is a supplement to the Fajr Film Festival and the awards are presented to those films that promote issues being pursued by some public organizations and institutes. Juries from the organizations select winners from the films screened at the Fajr Film Festival every year.

Winner of the best film Crystal Simorgh at the 40th Fajr Film Festival, “The Situation of Mehdi” was selected as best film by the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs, Municipality of Tehran, Municipality of Mashhad, Mostazafan Foundation, Public Culture Council and several other organizations and institutes. ► Page 8

Foreign Ministry: Vienna talks have reached a sensitive stage

TEHRAN — The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Monday that the Vienna talks have reached a sensitive stage, and the media should distance themselves from portraying unrealistic pictures from Vienna.

Responding to a question by the Tehran Times correspondent about a recent phone call between Iranian Supreme National Security Council secretary Ali Shamkhani and Iranian top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani, Khatibzadeh said that the details of the conversation must be explained by Shamkhani himself.

“I also talked to Mr. Bagheri this morning. As I said before, the developments in Vienna have reached a difficult point. These are important and key issues and are sensitively pursued by all parties. A number of proposals have been made by Iran, and a number of proposals have been made by the other parties, which, of course, is a natural part of the negotiations,” he told a regular news briefing.

The diplomat went on to say that some media outlets try to portray a rosy picture of the Vienna talks, while some want to say that the talks are at an impasse.

“Negotiations are complex and difficult, and has reached key points. Disputes are at stake and require serious and key decisions from Washington,” he noted.

The spokesman then went on to say that as long as both sides do not agree on all four areas (verification, guarantees, technical nuclear issues, and sanctions removal), it cannot be said that progress have been made.

“These issues are inter-connected,” he added.

Khatibzadeh went on to say that there are several key nuclear issues.

“Protecting the achievements of our young nuclear scientists is our ‘red line’ and we cannot ignore these achievements and efforts. In the matter of lifting sanctions, all sanctions in violation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) must be lifted. Some issues have been remained in this area that require political decisions by the other side,” he reiterated.

The diplomat further said that progress has been made in the field of verification.

“Ideas in this field have become words. Words have become an executive process, and some decisions are still remained in this area. In the field of guarantees, this issue is divided into different sections. Talks have been held in this regard. There are still unresolved topics in this area, and as I said, they all move in an interconnected space,” he stressed.

He then went on to say that those who follow developments in the Vienna talks seriously know that the delegations consult with each other on a daily basis.

He added that these conversations may even take place several times a day, and this is normal and creating hysteria on normal events in media is not helpful.

“The delegations meet and consult. They may return to their capitals for a break and resume negotiations, and this is normal in negotiations process, and I call on the media to distance themselves from such atmosphere. Some want to be overly



optimistic and some want to be pessimistic and present a negative image. None of this is the real scene of the Vienna talks today, and as I said before, the real scene of the Vienna talks is that talks are taking place on sensitive and key issues,” the spokesman remarked.

Khatibzadeh added that all sanctions against the Iranian people must be lifted in accordance with the JCPOA, and it does not matter what the label of the sanctions is.

“Sanctions contrary to the JCPOA and UN Security Council Resolution 2231 must all be lifted altogether,” he stressed.

Regarding the date of a possible agreement, the diplomat said that if the European and American sides respond to Iran’s initiatives within the framework of the JCPOA “today”, and if they respect the rights of the Iranian people and the logic that Iran has put on the table today, there is no need for the end of February and an agreement in Vienna can be announced the next day if these conditions are met.

He added that the time to reach an agreement has a direct relationship with the real will of the United States and the West.

“If they show real will and move in this direction, the time to reach an agreement will be less, and this agreement will wait for political decisions to be made by the other parties,” he reiterated.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman added there is “no impasse” in the Vienna talks.

“Negotiations are being held as before, and talks and round trips are taking place between the delegations,” he noted.

Khatibzadeh continued, “Dialogues become difficult in the days when serious issues need to be discussed, and there are definitely a number of delays and points that the parties must decide on.”

He then went on to say that after the Iranian delegation returned Vienna last week, Iran re-discussed the draft proposal with the P4+1.

The P4+1 refers to the four remaining permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany which are still party to the nuclear agreement.

“Giving and receiving offers is common, and it is not uncommon for a proposal to be made and received,” he noted.

The diplomat then outlined that Iran has made its political decision many years ago when it decided to remain in the JCPOA.

“We are waiting to receive a response from the West to the Iranian initiatives,” he concluded.



EU chief diplomat: Reviving nuclear deal ‘in sight’

TEHRAN – The European Union’s top diplomat said on Monday a revived nuclear deal between Iran and world powers was “in sight” and urged negotiators to compromise.

Josep Borrell’s comments came after a phone call with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on the Vienna talks.

“Another important call with Iranian Foreign Minister @Amirabdollahian. As Coordinator of the #JCPOA, I strongly believe an agreement is in sight. The

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Monday that his country is in a “hurry” for a “good” agreement in Vienna that would preserve the rights of the Iranian people.

Amir Abdollahian made the remarks at a joint press conference with visiting Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Intensive negotiations are underway in Vienna to restore the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to lift the illegal U.S. sanctions on Iran.

Amir Abdollahian went on to say that he and Coveney exchanged views about the Vienna talks, noting, “We are present at the Vienna talks with seriousness and strong negotiation motivation and (presenting) initiative.”

According to Amir Abdollahian, Iran’s chief negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani and other senior experts from the foreign ministry, oil ministry, economy ministry, and the central bank are continuing serious talks in Vienna with the aim of lifting sanctions and pursuing the rights of the Iranian people.

In May 2018, former U.S. president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA, returned sanctions and added new ones under different names. This happened despite the fact that the JCPOA is endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

As a member of the UN Security Council, Ireland has been trying to work as a facilitator for implementation of the JCPOA.

“What is important to see is what is really happening on the ground to lift the sanctions and get the other sides back to their commitments,” Amir Abdollahian asserted.

He added that Iran is serious about reaching a good agreement, saying the Western parties must stop their behavior which is based on doubts about Iran’s nuclear intentions.

And, they must also stop playing around with “time and text” and show their true intention and immediately return to their obligations under the JCPOA.

Stating that Iran will continue its activities and efforts at the Vienna talks with a “strong negotiation logic,” the top diplomat said, “Our goal is to lift the sanctions that have been cited in the JCPOA.”

“If an agreement is reached in Vienna today and sanctions are lifted, it would be better for Iran if this happens tomorrow,” he said, adding that Iran is in a hurry to reach a good agreement in the framework of “rational negotiations” and emphasis on achieving the rights of the Iranian people.

The foreign minister also commented on the statements of Western officials that the time to reach an agreement is coming to an end and whether Iran sees the

Amir Abdollahian: Iran is in hurry for a good agreement in Vienna talks



will of Western countries to reach an agreement or not, saying that Iran expects the American side and the three European countries (Britain, France and German) to be serious by returning to their obligations under the JCPOA.

Even though the three European countries did not quit the JCPOA, they refused to honor their agreement, fearing the U.S. secondary sanctions.

Even in May 2019 when Iran started to gradually reduce its commitments under the JCPOA based on paragraph 36 of the agreement, the Islamic Republic was repeatedly saying if the European parties honor their obligations, it will immediately reverse its remedial measures.

“If such a will arises and such a thing happens, reaching a good agreement is available in the short term,” Amir Abdollahian pointed out.

Amir Abdollahian then went on to say that Americans speak of goodwill through messages they have sent through various countries, but so far nothing has happened on the ground.

The minister continued, “We consider reaching a good agreement available, and Iran’s practical, constructive and positive initiatives and proposals have paved the way for reaching such an agreement.”

He also said that threats and warnings from the other parties will not determine the conclusion of the talks.

“Rather, the reality at the negotiating table and their efforts to return to their commitments determine the timing of the end of the negotiation and the reaching

of an agreement,” he insisted.

Amir Abdollahian also responded to the concerns of some European countries about Iran’s peaceful nuclear activities, saying that Iran’s nuclear program is peaceful and what created the main problem in implementing the nuclear agreement is the inaction of the European parties in fulfilling their obligations and the U.S. withdrawal from the agreement.

The nuclear deal was signed on July 14, 2015 and went into force on January 2016. However, Trump started venting anger at the JCPOA during his presidential campaigns in 2016, vowing to tear it up if he wins the presidency. Trump did this despite warnings by his national security advisors including defense secretary James Mattis and his first secretary of state Rex Tillerson.

“If an agreement is reached in Vienna today and sanctions are lifted, it would be better for Iran if this happens tomorrow,” Amir Abdollahian says.

“Trump’s closest national security advisors begged him not to tear up the deal. They told him the deal was working. Iran had lived up to its promises, shut down major parts of its nuclear program, and allowed the inspectors in,” Chris Murphy, a United States senator representing Connecticut, wrote in the TIME magazine on February 10.

Amir Abdollahian said, “We hope that in the Vienna talks, that will continue in the coming days, we will see the Americans and the three European countries make up for this mistake and that they will return to fulfilling their obligations.”

‘I hope to see reopening of Irish embassy in Tehran soon’

Referring to his consultations with the top Irish diplomat,

Amir Abdollahian said that during the meeting of the Irish foreign minister with the Iranian president, the Irish ambassador to Iran presented her credentials.

“I hope to see the reopening of the Irish embassy in Tehran soon,” he added.

He then went on to say that Iran has one of the best relations with European countries including Ireland.

“We both agree that the volume of trade between the two countries has not been satisfactory, especially in the last two years, despite the various capacities that exist between the two countries,” Amir Abdollahian said.

He then added that the two sides should give priority in areas such as agriculture, food, water resources management, information and communication technology, medical and pharmaceutical industries, new technologies and renewable energy.

Of course, this does not mean that other areas will not be considered, Amir Abdollahian added.

He also said that the parliamentary relations between the two countries are of special importance. “In recent years, including in recent months, parliamentary diplomacy between the two countries has reached the necessary strength and efforts have been made to expand these relations.”

‘Iran, Ireland seek inclusive government in Afghanistan’

The foreign minister also stated that Iran has supported Ireland’s non-permanent membership at the UN Security Council, saying, “We consider the role of this country as one creating peace and stability in the world, and Ireland should have a role in the UN Security Council.”

“We are aware of the attention of Europe, including Ireland, to developments in the surrounding areas,” he said, referring to the two countries’ consultation on Afghanistan.

Amir Abdollahian said that the two countries support an Afghanistan government with the participation of all ethnic groups.

“We welcome the provision of our humanitarian assistance and the facilitation of the delivery of aid to this country through our air, land and sea borders, and we will continue to play this important role,” he stated.

Amir Abdollahian also reiterated Tehran’s long-held policy toward the Yemen conflict, saying Iran emphasizes establishment of a ceasefire in the country, cessation of hostilities, ending the siege on the country and holding Yemeni-Yemeni talks.

He also said, “We are also concerned about the gross and systematic violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people by the Zionist regime.”

President: Iranian people’s rights should be respected in Vienna talks

TEHRAN — Speaking on Monday during a meeting with Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney, Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi referred to the two countries’ cooperation capacities in various fields, including energy, science and technology, industry and agriculture.

Raisi said that the volume of relations and trade between the two countries can be higher than the current level, adding Tehran is determined to enhance relations with friendly and independent countries.

Referring to Ireland’s approach toward global political and economic relations, the president said, “We welcome Ireland’s independence from the United States and some European countries.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Raisi said protecting the interests of nations and

mutual respect form the cornerstone of his administration’s foreign policy.

He added what Iran is insisting on in the current negotiations with major powers in Vienna is that the rights of the Iranian people, including a lifting of sanctions, must be respected.

For his part, the Irish foreign minister stressed that his country attaches special importance to the development of relations with Iran.

“We believe that we are at a strategic level in our relations with Iran, and we seek to develop and improve the level of multilateral relations, and in this regard, we are determined to reopen our embassy in Tehran,” he added.

The chief Irish diplomat also said the Iranian people’s disappointment with the 2015 nuclear deal -JCPOA- is quite “understandable” as the U.S. violated the agreement.



The Trump administration unilaterally quit the nuclear agreement in 2018 and reinstated sanctions and imposed new ones under different labels under the “maximum pressure” campaign against Tehran.

Foreign Minister Coveney said that Ireland believes that in the current talks in Vienna the necessary guarantees should be given to Iran so that the agreement can be restored.

Iran officials intensify JCPOA consultations

TEHRAN –Iranian officials have held talks with a number of foreign officials to discuss the situation around the Vienna talks.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani, who leads the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna, and Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg have met in the Austrian capital.

During the meeting, Bagheri and Schallenberg held talks and exchanged views over ties between Iran and Austria and also the latest developments surrounding the Vienna talks.

Iran FM, EU foreign policy chief exchange views on Vienna talks

European Union foreign policy chief and lead coordinator of the Vienna talks Josep Borrell and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian have discussed the latest status of the talks in Vienna.

Borrell appreciated the efforts of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and other delegations during the Vienna talks, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

Borrell referred to the great efforts of all parties during the negotiations, noting that the Vienna talks have reached a critical stage and all parties need to help advance the negotiations through flexibility and by taking into account each other's capabilities and limitations.

In the telephone conversation, Amir Abdollahian also thanked EU foreign policy chief and the JCPOA coordinator as well as lead EU negotiator and coordinator for the Vienna negotiations Enrique Mora for their efforts. The Iranian foreign minister said some hasty moves, repeatedly playing with the text, and a lack of serious will on the part of the West to reach a good and credible agreement in Vienna have led to unnecessary prolongation of the talks.

Referring to the serious efforts of Iranian chief negotiator Bagheri Kani and the presentation of realistic initiatives by the Iranian team, Amir Abdollahian stressed that it is necessary to include the legitimate rights and demands of the Islamic Republic of Iran in any proposal.



Amir Abdollahian and the EU foreign policy chief agreed to continue close consultations to advance the negotiation process. The two sides described the overall negotiation process as positive.

The Iranian foreign minister stressed that the Islamic Republic will not back down from its “red lines”, which are based on logic and realism.

Iran, UK FMs discuss Vienna talks

Amir Abdollahian also held a telephone conversation with his British counterpart Liz Truss. In the conversation, the two sides exchanged views on the Vienna talks, bilateral issues, and a number of issues of mutual interest such as the situation in Afghanistan and Yemen.

Truss reviewed the latest developments in bilateral relations and the Vienna talks. The British foreign secretary considered the growing relations between Iran and the UK as serving the interests of both countries.

She also expressed hope that her country would be able to pay its debts to Iran in the near future.

She also noted the cooperation of Britain and the United Nations in assisting the people of Afghanistan and praised Iran's effective role and cooperation in this regard.

In this telephone conversation, Amir Abdollahian also referred to the visit of Iran's Department of Environment chief to the Glasgow Climate Summit, the joint webinar of the

parliamentary friendship groups of the two countries and the request of the British delegation to visit Tehran, assessing the relations between the two countries as positive.

Referring to the approaching critical stage of the Vienna talks, the Iranian foreign minister stressed the need for seriousness and responsibility of the negotiating parties with Iran.

He said that reaching this stage of the talks was more than anything due to the logical approach and the initiative of the Iranian side.

He stressed the need for a collective agreement between all negotiating parties on a single text and the need to take into account the legitimate demands of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Amir Abdollahian also called the humanitarian situation in Yemen and Afghanistan critical.

Explaining the principled position of the Islamic Republic towards Afghanistan, he said forming an inclusive government in Afghanistan is important.

He also stressed the need for the international community to provide immediate assistance to the people of the country.

In another part of the telephone conversation, Amir Abdollahian pointed to the miserable situation in Yemen and expressed hope that Britain would fulfill its responsibilities to end the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the continuing aggression

and war in the country.

Iran and Russia FMs hold consultations over the phone

Top Russian diplomat Sergey Lavrov has held a telephone conversation with Amir Abdollahian over the trend of bilateral ties and some issues of mutual interest at the regional and international levels including the Vienna talks.

Lavrov thanked the Islamic Republic for its initiatives and constructive approach during the Vienna negotiations. He also stressed the need for continued consultations and talks between the various parties to the Vienna talks to review the texts and proposals and reach an agreement.

The Russian foreign minister also welcomed Iran's hosting of the next session of the second P3+3 meeting on the South Caucasus and expressed hope that this conference will further ensure the interests of regional countries and maintain stability and security in the region.

In the telephone conversation, Amir Abdollahian also underscored the need for the other parties to the Vienna talks to pay attention to the full rights of the Islamic Republic while fulfilling their obligations in any agreement. The Iranian foreign minister also described the forthcoming session of the second P3+3 meeting on the South Caucasus as an opportunity for consensus and synergy to deepen regional cooperation in favor of the interests of the countries and people of the region.

Amir Abdollahian also spoke of the crisis in Ukraine after being informed of Moscow's position in this regard by his Russian counterpart. The top Iranian diplomat pointed to the presence of more than five thousand Iranian nationals including students in Ukraine and noted the Islamic Republic of Iran follows developments in this region sensitively. He said Russia's views and concerns about foreign interference are understandable to Iran, expressing hope that the current situation will be resolved through peaceful and constructive interaction and pursuit of a diplomatic approach by the two sides.

IRAN IN FOCUS

FEBRUARY 16, 2022
Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Five Greco-Roman wrestlers to represent Iran at Bulgarian tournament

TEHRAN – Iran will send five Greco-Roman wrestlers to the Dan Kolov & Nikola Petrov Tournament in Bulgaria.



The 59th edition of the event will be held in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria on February 17-20, Tasnim news agency wrote.

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:
55kg: Arash Negahdari, **60kg:** Saeid Esmaeili, **63kg:** Meysam Dalkhani, **72kg:** Alireza Abdevali, **82kg:** Alireza Mehmedi

Alipour scores twice as Marítimo defeat Arouca

TEHRAN – Iranian forward Ali Alipour scored a brace as Marítimo football team defeated Arouca 3-0 at Estádio Municipal de Arouca in Portugal league.

Alipour opened the scoring for the visiting team in the seventh minute.

Cameroonina Joel Tagueu scored the second goal from the penalty spot in the 27th minute.

Alipour once again was on target in the 79th minute to seal a 3-0 win over Arouca.

Marítimo sit eighth in the standing, 32 points adrift of leaders Porto.

Iran in Pot 2 of 2022 AFC U23 Asian Cup draw

TEHRAN – Asia's brightest young talents will discover their road to Continental glory when the AFC U23 Asian Cup Uzbekistan 2022 official draw ceremony is staged in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on Thursday.

The tournament, which is a platform to unearth future Asian stars, will be staged in Central Asia for the first time, with Uzbekistan hosting 32 matches across the cities of Tashkent and Karshi from June 1 to 19.Previous editions of the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ have launched the careers of many young footballers including Mehdi Taremi from the Islamic Republic of Iran, who currently plays for Porto, AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 winner and top goal scorer Almoez Ali of Qatar and Liverpool forward Takumi Minamino, and a new generation of stars are poised to emerge in 2022.

With their places secured in last year's qualifiers, 16 teams will discover their group stage opponents in the draw, representing a thrilling cross-section of the world's largest football Continent.

Among the qualified teams are four former champions and nine teams to have reached the Semi-finals or better within the last decade, while Tajikistan and Turkmenistan will appear at the Finals for the first time.

With the exception of hosts and number one seeds Uzbekist

an, the teams will be seeded based on their positions in the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020, which was won by Korea Republic, the-afc.com reported.

Uzbekistan and Korea Republic will be seeded in Pot 1 alongside Saudi Arabia and Australia, who finished second and third respectively at Thailand 2020. Pot 2 will feature Jordan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and Iran, while Iraq, Qatar, Vietnam and Japan will occupy Pot 3, and the quartet of Tajikistan, Malaysia, Kuwait and Turkmenistan will be drawn from Pot 4.

As hosts, Uzbekistan will be placed in position A1

in the final draw, with each group to feature one team from each Pot, with the teams from Pot 4 to be drawn first.

Former Persepolis coach Mijac passes away

TEHRAN – Croatian football coach Zeljko Mijac passed away on Monday at the age of 69.

Mijac started his football career in Hajduk and was part of the team that was named the golden generation of the Club.

He also played for youth team of Yugoslavia and competed in the European U19 Championships in 1971 in Czechoslovakia and in 1972 in Spain.

Mijac worked in several Iranian clubs in his coaching career.

He started his work in Iran in Persepolis in 2010 as Ali Daei's assistant and also worked in Naft Tehran, Saba, Rah Ahan and Saipa.

FIBA Asia Cup 2022 draw to be held on Friday

TEHRAN – The procedure for the FIBA Asia Cup 2022 Draw has been issued ahead for the event which will take place on Friday.

Sixteen (16) teams have qualified to play in FIBA Asia Cup 2022 with this being the first Asia Cup ever that teams qualify from the Asia Cup Qualifiers. All teams are distributed into four pots of four (4) teams each, based on the FIBA World Ranking Men, Presented by NIKE.

The latest edition of the FIBA World Ranking Men was updated on December 7, 2021 and is used to reference the selection of the top seeds for the FIBA Asia Cup 2022 draw.

Defending Asia Cup champions, Australia, are ranked 3rd in the world and the 1st ranked team in Asia/Oceania with 690.7 points. 3-time Asia Cup champions, Iran, are ranked 2nd in Asia with 444.8 points. They are followed immediately by Asia Cup 2017 Semi-Finalists, New Zealand, who are ranked at 3rd with 372.1 points. 16-time Asia Cup Champions, China are ranked 4th with 361.7 points. These four teams will be the top seeds in Pot A.

Pot A: Australia, Iran, New Zealand, China
Pot B: Korea, Philippines, Japan, Jordan
Pot C: Lebanon, Chinese-Taipei, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia

Pot D: Indonesia (hosts), Syria, India, Bahrain
As hosts of Asia Cup 2022, Indonesia are given priority to choose the group that they want to be in.

Four (4) additional pots each containing numbers 1-4 will be used to determine the position of each team in their group and the subsequent order of their games.

Each Group will draw one team from each pot until the Group is full.

The FIBA Asia Cup 2022 Draw will be complete once all the pots have been emptied and have fed their respective Groups.

Three bids submitted for FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup 2023

TEHRAN – Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Seychelles have been announced by FIFA as the three countries bidding to host the 2023 Beach Soccer World Cup.

Neither Bahrain nor Seychelles have staged the competition in the past. The UAE hosted the tournament in 2009 when Dubai served as host city and Brazilian were crowned champions with a 10-5 victory against Switzerland in the final. Abu Dhabi recently staged the Club World Cup, stepping in as host after Japan's withdrawal because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

FIFA said that a decision on the successful bid will be made later this year. National federations had until 29 October 2021 to submit their declaration of interest with five (Colombia and Thailand were the other two) initially expressing interest.

Since 2005, the world federation has organized the Beach Soccer World Cup on an annual basis but from 2009 onwards it has been a biennial event.

Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro hosted the first three editions before FIFA took the competition around the world with Tahiti in 2015 and The Bahamas in 2017 among the hosts.

Iran's Shamkhani decries 'American malpractice' as main threat to a deal

TEHRAN – Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, has laid out the meaning of the real lifting of U.S. sanctions on Iran, saying that American malpractice is a major threat to any deal.

"The real lifting of sanctions means that #Iran will enjoy credible and sustainable economic benefits. Proven American malpractice is the most important threat to any agreement," the top security official said on Twitter.

He added, "Verification and providing a guarantee is an integral part of a #Good Deal."

Earlier on Monday, Shamkhani said the talks in Vienna reached a transparent stage.

"#Vienna Talks have reached a stage where outcome can be announced without speculation and with certainty. The US political decision to realize or refuse to accept the requirements of a credible and lasting deal based on the principles accepted in #JCPOA can replace speculation," he tweeted.

The tweets came after Shamkhani spoke over the phone with Iran's chief negotiator in Vienna Ali Bagheri Kani.

After the conversation, Shamkhani said the Iranian negotiating team had difficulty implementing the instructions it received from Tehran.

"Tonight's phone call with @Bagheri_Kani confirmed 2 statements in my mind about #ViennaTalks: 1. Increasing difficulty of Iranian negotiators task to advance the logical and legal instructions of Tehran 2. Continuation of initiative "show" by Western parties to evade commitments," he said on Twitter.

Earlier, he said Iran has options that will never be taken off the table. "Options that are never removed from the table: Glorious presence of Iranians in ceremonies in support of the Islamic establishment, Maintaining and strengthening #Iran's peaceful nuclear capacities and defense capabilities, Regional security-making policies of Islamic Republic," he said.



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Monday that his country is in a "hurry" for a "good" agreement in Vienna that would preserve the rights of the Iranian people.

Amir Abdollahian made the remarks at a joint press conference with visiting Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Bahrain's ties with Israel could anger Iran

TEHRAN – Despite Iran's repeated warnings about the dangers of Israeli presence in the Persian Gulf region, Bahrain doubled down on its interactions with Israel, a move that will most likely upset diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett landed in Bahrain on Monday for a two-day visit and was received by Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani.

The Israeli prime minister met with several Bahraini officials with whom he discussed "deepening cooperation, as well as various ideas, in innovation, the economy and technology."

During his meeting with the Bahraini foreign minister, Bennett appeared to be getting carried away. "I want to thank my friends for such a generous and warm welcome. I come here on the first official visit of an Israeli prime minister in Bahrain, but it's not only symbolic. My goal during this visit is to inject content into the Abraham Accords in trade, in people-to-people connections, and in all dimensions, and I'm very much looking forward to this day," he said.

Bennett's visit to Bahrain was

done without much fanfare in advance. And this seems to be due to security concerns about the visit. The visit, however, wasn't surprising given the momentum Manama-Tel Aviv relations are taking on. Earlier this month, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz made a surprise visit to Bahrain. Gantz's visit was unannounced too. It was announced only after the Israeli minister arrived in Manama.

After Gantz's visit, it was announced that a senior Israeli naval officer will be permanently stationed in Bahrain. The tiny Persian Gulf nation's foreign ministry confirmed the appointment of the Israeli officer, saying it will be related to the work of an unnamed international coalition of more than 34 countries.

The abrupt announcement of the coalition raised further concerns about a potential insecurity of the strategically important region. Bahrain said the coalition's task will include securing freedom of navigation in the territorial waters of the region, protecting international trade and confronting piracy and terrorism.

The appointment of the Israeli of-

ficer in Bahrain, which indicates that Israel will be part of that coalition, runs counter to Iran's emphasis that no foreign troops should be tasked with maintaining security in the Persian Gulf.

In general, Iran has opposed any foreign military presence in the Persian Gulf. And it categorically opposes any Israeli presence, whether military or non-military, in the Persian Gulf.

When the United Arab Emirates announced a normalization of diplomatic ties with Israel, Iran was clear about what that meant for security in the region. Tehran strongly criticized the United Arab Emirates for signing an agreement with Israel to normalize ties.

"The rulers of the United Arab Emirates should know that they have gone in the wrong direction if they think that they can buy security for themselves by getting closer to the enemies of Islam and Iran," then-President Hassan Rouhani said. He warned that "unfortunately, the United Arab Emirates has made a big mistake and we hope it would change its wrong tack. We warn them against giving Israel a foothold in the region,

then they will be treated differently."

Bahrain's strengthening of ties with Israel will likely be seen in Iran as a move intended to harm Iran's interests. Bennett himself openly pointed to this. In an interview with Bahrain's Al-Ayam newspaper, he said, "Israel and Bahrain are dealing with major security challenges that stem from the same source, which is the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran destabilizes the entire region."

He added, "We are fighting Iran and its henchmen in the region day and night and we will help our friends in promoting peace, security and stability, whenever we are asked."

He was responding to a question on the importance of a rare security agreement between Bahrain and Israel.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, during a recent phone call with his Emirati counterpart, Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, stressed that "the presence of the Zionist regime [Israel] in the region is a threat to all countries and the region itself" and called for efforts to be made to prevent any foothold of the regime to prevent crises in West Asia.

Iran's January oil output rises 21% from December



From page 1 ► Iran has been ramping up its oil production over the past few months following the recovery of the global markets from the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and the developments in Vienna talks.

Back in February 2021, Fitch Solutions Incorporation, a subsidiary of Fitch Ratings, which is one of the U.S.'s three biggest credit rating agencies, saw the Islamic Republic's crude oil exports double in 2022 compared to 2020.

"The prospects for the Iranian oil sector have brightened significantly following Joe Biden's victory in the U.S. presidential election on November 3, 2020. President Biden has indicated that he will seek to re-enter the U.S. into the Iranian nuclear deal, paving the way for a roll-back of secondary sanctions and recovery of around 2.0 million bpd in oil production," the report said.

Tehran, Buenos Aires eye expansion of economic ties

TEHRAN – Argentina's Charge d'Affaires to Tehran Jorge Mariano Jordan and Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie met on Monday and discussed ways of expanding economic cooperation between the two countries.

Speaking in this meeting, Jordan said his embassy will try to activate 20 companies between the chambers of commerce of Iran and Argentina and act as a linking bridge between producing sectors of the two countries.

The Argentinian diplomat said that his country has a population of 45 million while the country is capable of producing food for 500 million people, the ICCIMA portal reported.

Jordan said he would try to establish communications with different unions and associations active in various areas like foodstuff, auto parts, and home appliances to pave the way for further cooperation with Iran.

Shafeie for his part mentioned the great capacities of the two countries for expanding



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (R) and Argentina's Charge d'Affaires to Tehran Jorge Mariano Jordan

economic relations and noted that lack of direct transportation is one of the main hurdles on the way of trade between Iran and Argentina.

Mentioning the talks about an Argentinian shipping line being ready to operate between Iran and Argentina, Shafeie said that the launch of a direct shipping line can change the volume of bilateral trade drastically.

He voiced Iran Chamber's full support for the country's private sector to engage in economic relations with Argentina.

Annual shrimp output planned to reach 130,000 tons by March 2025

TEHRAN- Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) has planned the annual production of 130,000 tons of shrimp by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026), an official with the organization announced.

Morteza Afrasiabi, the acting head of the IFO's fishery development department, said, "To almost double the shrimp production, we anticipate its requirements, including working capital, construction of new sites and farms, development funds, and mechanization development."

The official further said that shrimp production is anticipated to reach 70,000 tons in the next Iranian year.

Afrasiabi stated that 60-65 percent of the costs of the aquaculture and shrimp sector are allocated to feed supply, adding that the supply of feed is one of the challenges facing the industry,

because producers in this field provide feed with free market forex rate, and this is the case that increases production costs and consumption prices.

The official has recently announced that Iran's farmed shrimps export stood at \$150 million since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021).

Afrasiabi said that 57,800 tons of shrimps were farmed in 14,034 hectares of aqua farms during the said time span, about 75-80 percent of which was exported to the European, Asian and regional markets.

He named Turkey, Iraq, United Arab Emirates (UAE), China, Spain and France as some of the export destinations of Iran's farmed shrimps during the mentioned period of time, and said China and UAE stood at the top of the list.

In last August, an official with Iran

Fisheries Organization announced that the area under shrimp farming in the country has risen 12 percent in the current Iranian calendar year.

Isa Golshahi, IFO's director-general for quality improvement, processing, and market development, said that the area under shrimp farming has reached about 13,607 hectares with an increase of about 12 percent compared to the previous year.

He stated that the highest area under shrimp farming belongs to Bushehr province (in the southwest of the country), adding that the area under shrimp cultivation in this province is about 6,053 hectares, which is 53 hectares more than the area targeted in the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021). The official has also stated that cooperation with the relevant organizations such as chambers of commerce, Trade

Top industrial, mining companies honored

TEHRAN – Iran's 19th "National Production, National Pride" festival was held by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry in collaboration with the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade House on Monday during which 51 industrial and mining companies were honored, IRIB reported.

The ceremony was attended by Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi-Amin, members of the Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade House, deputy ministers, and a handful of the country's businessmen and entrepreneurs.

In this ceremony, some issues regarding the activities of the country's industrial and mining units were also raised and the attendees called on government officials to find systematic solutions for such problems.

Banking problems, obtaining establishment or development



licenses, and time-consuming license issuance procedures were among the most important problems mentioned by the attendees of the event.

Plan for ranking industrial units to be implemented next year

Speaking in this ceremony, Industry Minister Fatemi-Amin said his ministry's program for ranking the country's industrial and mining

units will be implemented in the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 20).

"The ranking of enterprises will be completely implemented next year, and another of our actions next year will be the classification of units based on the field of activity," the minister said.

According to Fatemi-Amin, currently, the ranking of units is based on indicators such as

activity or inactivity or being a top unit or not, but indicators such as stability, existing challenges, capabilities, etc. will be also considered for ranking by the field of activity.

Referring to the changes in the new structure of the Industry Ministry, the official said: "In this new structure, four specialized groups have been defined for each office, one of the most important of which is the human resources and businesses, and this shows the government's view on the significance of business."

He further mentioned the balancing of the market and meeting the needs of industrial units as another program of the Industry Ministry and added: "In this program, indicators such as the supply of raw materials, cost-benefit ratio, capability, and predictability are the criteria for our actions."

Iran-Iraq joint investment opportunities summit to be held soon

TEHRAN – Head of Organization for Investment, Economic, and Technical Assistance of Iran (OIETAI) Ali Fekri has said an Iran-Iraq joint investment opportunities summit is going to be held in the near future, ILNA reported.

According to Fekri, over 1,000 businessmen and entrepreneurs from the two countries are expected to attend this summit.

Referring to the holding of Iraq's Investment Opportunities Exhibition, which is going to be held in Baghdad during March 28-31, Fekri said: "Iranian investment opportunities will also be introduced to Iraqis and other countries in this exhibition."

According to the official, Iran will open a pavilion in the mentioned exhibition.

Enumerating the goals of holding the pavilion of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the exhibition of investment opportunities in Iraq, the deputy economy minister stated: "Identifying and introducing Iraqi investors, introducing the benefits of Iran Investment Law, establishing



relations between the investors of the two countries, introducing successful investment projects in Iran, identifying the Iraqi market and production opportunities in Iraq, introducing Iranian knowledge-based and technology projects for production in Iran or Iraq, introducing the latest equipment, technology, machinery and services available in Iran and Iraq, creating opportunities for interaction between investors and entrepreneurs and introducing investment plans and opportunities in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq for investors of

the two countries are the most important goals of Iran's presence in the Iraqi exhibition."

"Iraq has the longest shared border with Iran with 13 border crossings and numerous daily flights between the two countries which have made it easier for the two countries' businessmen to travel and trade," Fekri said.

He further mentioned the willingness of Iraqi investors to invest outside of Iraq, saying: "One of the attractive destinations for Iraqi investment is Iran, so our goal is to guide Iraqi investors properly to Iranian projects, especially those that further tie the interests of the two countries."

Fekri noted that in this exhibition, investment projects of Turkey, the United Arab Emirate (UAE), Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq will be introduced to the visitors.

"Different countries and their nationals will be acquainted with investment projects in Iraq, and joint investment opportunities will be provided between the attending countries," he added.

Improving banks' capital adequacy, CBI major priority: governor

TEHRAN – Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has said improving the capital adequacy of banks is one of the most important priorities of the central bank and very good measures and decisions have been taken by CBI's Money and Credit Council in this regard.

Speaking in a meeting with the directors of the country's banks on Monday, Ali Saleh-Abadi praised those banks that control their overdrafts, and said: "The issue of banks' overdrafts and borrowing from the central bank is being followed seriously and in this regard, banks should manage their liquidity situation and eliminate any imbalances."

Saleh-Abadi further stressed the need to facilitate the payment of small facilities to the people by the country's banking system and said: "The approach of the banking network in this regard



should be to facilitate the granting of small facilities to customers based on their credit rating."

He further stressed the need for banks to strictly observe interest rates on deposits and facilities and said: "Non-compliance with the standard rates will have adverse effects on the country's economy and the central bank takes this issue very seriously."

90 development wells to be dug in South Zagros fields in 5 years

TEHRAN- As announced by the managing director of Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC), 90 new development wells and 17 workover wells will be dug in the operational zone of South Zagros Oil and Gas Production Company (SZOGPC) in a course of five years.

Ramin Hatami made the announcement in a meeting on forecasting the efficiency of the wells under the operation of South Zagros Oil and Gas Production Company in the first half of the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21).

South Zagros Oil and Gas Production Company is the largest subsidiary of Iranian Central Oil Fields Company.

Operating nine gas fields and two oil fields, SZOGPC is working in Fars, Bushehr, and Hormozgan

provinces.

The latest report released on the number of oil and gas wells dug in the country indicates that National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) dug and completed digging operation of 62 oil and gas wells during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-January 20, 2022), as announced by an official with the company.

According to Masoud Afshar, the deputy head of NIDC for drilling operation, the drilled wells consisted of four development, four exploratory, and 54 workover ones.

The official stated that 46 of the mentioned wells were drilled in the operational zone of the National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC), nine wells were drilled in the fields under the supervision of the Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), three in the fields under the operation of Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), one in the field under the supervisor of Iranian Central Oil Fields Company, and two in the operational zone of the drilling management department of the National Iranian Oil company (NIOC).

Since the beginning of this year, the drilling area of the wells has reached 65,493 meters, he said, and added that 14 drilling rigs are being relocated in the operational positions.

NIDC owns 70 light, heavy and super-heavy drilling rigs, including 67 onshore drilling rigs and three offshore rigs.

The company managed to carry out 10,182 meters of horizontal and directional drilling in 43 oil and gas wells across the country during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2021), according to the Head of NIDC's Special Operations Department Ali Daqayeqi.

Some 654 meters of core extraction drilling was also conducted in the mentioned period which was a huge achievement for assessing the condition of the country's oil and gas reserves.

In November 2021, an official with the NIDC announced that the company has implemented 2,559 special and technical operations for the applicant companies, which are subsidiaries of the NIDC, and the private sector during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March

21-October 22, 2021).

Mehran Makvandi, the deputy managing director of NIDC for technical and engineering affairs, said that of the mentioned offered services, 2,042 operations were in the field of technical services management, and 517 operations were special services.

Back in July 2021, NIDC's Director of Renovation and Upgrading Shahram Shamipour had announced that the company had allocated 5.2 trillion rials (about \$18 million) for the renovation and upgrading of its drilling rigs and equipment in the company's operational, technical, specialized, and logistical departments.

According to him, the renovation and upgrading operations are aimed at improving the performance of these rigs which are active in the country's oil and gas field development projects.

Shamipour noted that the equipment going through renovation operations include fluid pumps, draw-works machinery, charting tools, pumps for cementing and acidizing trucks, tow trucks, cranes, piping machines, generators, hydrogen sulfide gas

treatment systems, acid-coated storage tanks, and cement transport bunkers.

Considering the National Iranian Oil Company's new strategies for strengthening the presence of domestic companies in the development of the country's oil fields, NIDC, as a major subsidiary of the company, has been supporting such companies by lending them drilling rigs and other necessary equipment.

After the U.S. reimposition of sanctions against Iran, indigenizing the know-how for the manufacturing of the parts and equipment applied in different industrial sectors is one of the major strategies that the Islamic Republic has been strongly following up to reach self-reliance and nullify the sanctions.

Oil, gas, and petrochemical industries have outstanding performances in this due, with indigenizing the knowledge for manufacturing many parts and equipment that were previously imported.

Among different sectors of the mentioned industries, drilling could be mentioned as a prominent example in this regard.

Historian says U.S. beginning to experience its own decline

'The worst example of American arrogance was in the Trump administration'

From page 1 ► The persistence of U.S.-centered primacy during the 1990s produced new arguments for the stability of unipolar orders recent attention to the rise of China has made the dynamics of power transitions a central concern for work on grand strategy and interstate security, the institute said.

Following is the text of the interview:

Do you think the U.S. is the only hegemon in the world by dictating its demands or the situation has changed since World War II?

American foreign policy is having a difficult time adjusting to changes in the world, particularly the rise of China and the return of Russia. The United States, still the richest and most powerful country in the world is beginning to experience its own decline, and its leaders know this. They fear a rising hegemon, China, and a much weaker one, Russia, and believe that Iran is unpredictable and a threat to its major Middle Eastern (West Asian) ally, Israel. At the same time, the American people are bitterly divided between Left and Right, city and country, North and South. There is no unity in thinking about what the country needs domestically



or internationally. dominant emotions in America are doubt, fear, and anxiety about the future.

Some critics say the U.S. may fall into the same trap that its rival USSR fell in. What is your comment?

Russia is the USA's traditional enemy, but not a serious threat to its security. However, once again old mental habits have re-emerged. The American public and the country's elite do not think Russia has legitimate

And the security interests in Ukraine or the former Soviet Union, just as it does not recognize that Iran has security interests in the Middle East (West Asia). While the USA still believes it has the right, through the Monroe Doctrine, to exclusive diplomatic and military hegemony in the Western Hemisphere, it refuses to see other powers having similar interests near to their borders.

The American people are bitterly divided between Left and Right, city and country, North and South.

How do you interpret Trump's

presidency for America's future? Is it an alarm for the Americans?

The worst example of American arrogance was in the Trump administration. Luckily for the world and the USA, Trump was simply not that interested in either foreign or domestic policy. He was interested primarily in himself, his family, his companies, and his own wealth. For that reason, he did not do very much except bluster, make outrageous statements, frightens America's allies, and stupidly leave the treaty with Iran. Biden, on the other hand, is a serious politician, tactician, and thinker, and unlike Trump, he has a good heart, possesses empathy, and wants to leave the world a better place when he ends his presidency. But American foreign policy is always hostage to domestic elites, and the Republicans will attack Biden, accuse him of appeasement, if he makes serious concessions to Russia, so an unnecessary crisis has erupted over Ukraine. America has moral interests in Ukraine - support for its principles, democracy, and the NATO charter - but Russia has serious geopolitical interests in not having NATO forces and Western weaponry on its border. Compromise is necessary and possible.

U.S. doesn't have the same economic superiority it had before: political scientist

'In many ways U.S. is declining as a hegemon'



From page 1 ► get around them. In many cases, sanctions hurt regular people more than the regime and the sanctions often provide the pretext for leaders to galvanize public opinion in their country against those imposing the sanctions.

What determines America's foreign policy?

The making of U.S. foreign policy is complex. It involves many players including the president, the State and Defense Departments, Congress, and other elites. It is driven by several basic principles.

American foreign policy since the end of World War II is guided by several

principles or which have largely remained constant over time. If we assume as realists do that each nation acts in its own interests, then one can argue that these are the guiding principles of U.S. foreign policy:

The first principle is a commitment to liberal democratic world order.

A second guiding value linked to the first is opposition to communism and now global terrorism. This principle may be an outgrowth of the first principle endorsing democracy, but it is its own distinct guiding value. From the end of World War II until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Cold War politics defined the U.S. This played out in terms of the U.S. being viewed as the leader of the free world or at the same time seen as the world's policeman in terms of seeking to enforce democratic norms. Anti-communism as a defining principle meant during the height of the Cold War that international relations could depict the world as bipolar—with respective spheres of influence allocated to the U.S. and the USSR.

The third principle for the U.S. was the maintenance of military and nuclear superiority over all other countries in the

world. The Cold War was in part about both of these types of superiorities.

Finally, the fourth principle was economic dominance or superiority.

Some critics say that America as a global hegemon is declining after the emergence of China. Do you agree?

In many ways, yes. The U.S. does not have the same economic superiority it had at its height. At one time its GDP was half of the entire global GDP. Now it is about 20% with China and the EU at about the same level. It lacks the same economic dominance it once had to support its global ambitions. On top of that, the political divisions in the U.S. make it hard to exercise global dominance especially after Afghanistan and a U.S. retreat from foreign engagements.

'More often than not sanctions do not work'

Given the current divisions in America, do you predict its democracy will be at risk in the near future?

It is at risk already according to many studies. We face many internal challenges and political divides.

How do you describe U.S. foreign policy? Is it cooperative or militant?

Both depends on the issue and the president and the countries involved.

Ukraine could drop NATO bid to avoid war, ambassador tells BBC

Ukraine could drop its bid to join NATO to avoid war with Russia, the BBC quoted the country's ambassador to Britain as saying, in what would amount to a major concession to Moscow in response to the build-up of Russian troops on its borders.

Ambassador Vadym Prystaiko told the BBC Ukraine was willing to be "flexible" over its goal to join the Atlantic military alliance, a move Russian President Vladimir Putin has said would be a trigger for war.

"We might - especially being threatened like that, blackmailed by that, and pushed to it," Prystaiko was quoted as saying when asked if Kyiv could change its position

on NATO membership.

Ukraine is not a NATO member but has a promise dating from 2008 that it will eventually be given the opportunity to join, a step that would bring the U.S.-led alliance to Russia's border.

Putin says Ukraine's growing ties with the alliance could make it a launch pad for NATO missiles targeted at Russia. He says Russia needs to lay down "red lines" <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/why-is-russias-putin-so-focused-ukraine-2021-12-15> to prevent that.

Russia has moved more than 100,000 troops and heavy weapons to within striking distance of Ukraine in recent weeks, prompting the United



States and its NATO allies to warn that an invasion could be imminent.

Moscow denies it is planning an attack, calling the military manoeuvres exercises, but it has issued written demands that NATO forgo any further expansion eastwards including Ukraine.

NATO members have rejected the demand.

U.S. President Joe Biden spoke to his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday and agreed to continue diplomatic efforts to try to resolve the crisis, the White House said.

(Source: Reuters)

Trudeau invokes emergency powers against protesters

From page 1 ► Critics have already denounced the unprecedented move saying Trudeau is not interested with meeting the demands of the protests (which began as anti-vaccine mandate protests and later morphed into other anti-government policies) but rather to save his own leadership.

The Canadian Premier is facing plummeting approval numbers and members of his own Liberal party are turning against him accusing Trudeau of dividing and stigmatizing Canadians by politicizing vaccine mandates and Covid-19 restrictions.

Observers say Trudeau needs a fast and big win over the protests or his rein in power could collapse.

Over the past few days, a fresh wave of protesters joined a core group of truckers who have occupied the downtown area in Ottawa, where they voiced their anger and outrage near the government's doorstep. It's been more than three weeks that the Freedom convoy has been camped in the Canadian capital.

They argue that the protests are not about Canadian truckers being inoculated, one truck driver said about 90 percent of the truckers are likely vaccinated but their demands are about being given the freedom of choice.

Another protester who just recently joined the truckers said "more Canadians need to wake up and realize that our freedoms are being taken away".

Police just simply cannot move the protesters as they outnumber the police officers and analysts are questioning how the emergency powers will put more officers on the streets to quell the rallies and if that was possible, then why was the measure not taken before?

The Canadian protesters appear to have the upper hand as their rallies have seen support on the streets across the border in the U.S. and protesters using similar tactics with trucks to rally in other countries including in Europe.

Thousands of French police have been deployed to stop a truck convoy angry over increasing prices of goods from entering the French capital Paris.

Back in Ottawa, despite facing the risk of fines of up to \$100,000 or even prison sentences, people remain camped, police are still outnumbered and lorries are being refueled to keep engines running.

Maxime Bernier, the leader of the opposition People's Party of Canada who is a popular figure among the protests has rejected claims the rallies are a far-right movement, pointing out that people from all sectors of society have shown up.

The mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson, acknowledged that the protesters outnumber the police saying "we need to ensure the order is brought back to our city". He claims "people in residential areas have been subjected to bullish behavior".

However, one truck driver hit back arguing this was about a point of principle saying "people should be able to make their own choice, to take the needle or not take the needle and not lose their job, not lose their house, not lose their income, just for the vaccination".

The protests, started last month when Trudeau introduced a vaccine mandate for truck drivers arriving from the U.S. and Canadian drivers facing a 14-day quarantine if they have not been vaccinated.

That's when truckers and other groups formed a protest movement called the freedom convoy which began making its way from different parts of Canada to Ottawa.

However, the protests are no longer about the vaccine mandates but about wider Covid restrictions and reports say the movement is now wider than just the Coronavirus restrictions and has quickly escalated into a global movement absorbing a set of "anti-establishment causes, coordinated on social media and encrypted messaging groups".

The main cry of the protesters that underpins those causes appear to be a lack of freedom.



The Emergencies Act was passed in Canada in 1988 and may only be used in an "urgent and critical situation" that "seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians".

It does not apply to lawful protests and demonstrators and activists say they will not give in. The Ottawa protest leader, Tamara Lich, dismissed Trudeau's decision, telling media outlets "there are no threats that will frighten us. We will hold the line".

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has also disagreed with the governments argument that the conditions of the country's Emergencies Act have been met; warning that the move "threatens our democracy and our civil liberties".

Many other legal experts have also questioned whether the legal threshold has been met and whether a state of emergency actually exists.

The country's New Democratic Party Leader Jagmeet Singh says he sees the prime minister's decision to turn to the Emergencies Act as "proof of a failure of leadership".

Singh has also said that "the reason why we got to this point is because the prime minister let the siege in Ottawa go on for weeks and weeks without actually doing anything about it, allowed the convoy to shut down borders without responding appropriately".

Interim Conservative Leader Candice Bergen has accused Trudeau of dividing the people of Canada.

She says "we've seen the prime minister wedge, divide and stigmatize Canadians he doesn't agree with and by doing so he creates so many barriers in terms of trying to solve this problem".

Bergen also says "the prime minister had the opportunity to talk and listen to so many he disagreed with and he refused to do so, so this looks like a ham-fisted approach that will have the opposite effect."

Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre, the only person so far running to lead his party, says the path to end the protests and blockades is to remove the mandates.

Poilievre argues it's "real simple, Listen to the science, do what other provinces and countries are doing, that is to end the mandates and restrictions so protesters can get back to their lives and their jobs".

"The only emergency is the one that Justin Trudeau has deliberately created to divide the country and gain politically".

Indeed Trudeau, by invoking these emergency powers for the first time, has taken Canada into uncharted territory.

The convoy protests began with opposition about a Covid-19 vaccine mandate in mid-January in a sector where 90 percent of workers are vaccinated. However, the protest movement has morphed into various different forms of anti-government and anti-establishment anger.

What if the protests gain momentum; what happens next? Trudeau has publicly said he will not turn to the military, so what if the police and threats of fines, prison time, insurance taken away from the truckers fails to quell the rallies.

It could backfire on the Canadian Prime Minister and it's fair to say that Justin Trudeau, whether it was pressure from Washington because of a border trade crossing point that was forced to close, has taken an enormous gamble on his political career and legacy.

Tehran-Caracas flights to be launched amid hopes to boost tourism

From page 1 ► The primary purpose of the Conviaa flights beginning in March is tourism. On March 2, a group of Iranian tourist operators will fly to Caracas to identify tourist sites and deliberate with Venezuelan tourist authorities, according to Velazquez.

Over the past couple of months, officials of the two countries have discussed ways to expand tourism ties including sharing traveling know-how, as well as holding exhibits and fam tours.

Last November, Iran's deputy minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Ali-Asghar Shalbafian discussed tourism ties with Venezuela's Tourism and Foreign Trade Minister Ali Padron Paredes.

Shalbafian stated widening cooperation with Venezuela is high on the agenda for the Islamic Republic as he briefed Iran's efforts focusing on both the coronavirus and post-pandemic eras.



The Iranian official said Tehran is ready to hold joint exhibits and feminization tours for travel agents.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Fajr crafts festival announces winners

TEHRAN-The winners of the 6th edition of the Fajr national handicrafts festival were honored during the closing ceremony of the event on Monday.

The ceremony was attended by Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami, and his deputy for handicrafts, Pouya Mahmoudian, and craftspeople from across the country, CHTN reported on Tuesday.

Baqer Nafari, a metalwork crafter from Isfahan, painter Mohsen Aqamiri who is an expert of illumination from Tehran, and woodturner Bahram Taherian from Kermanshah received Silver Cypress.

"Sama Javadi from Zanjan in filigree, Sabereh Jamalzehi from Sistan-Baluchestan in needlework, and Amir Barqazadegan from Hamedan in Gereh Chini received honorable mentions," the report said.

A section of the festival was also dedicated to showcasing works and honoring children who continue their parents' path of handicrafts. Sasha Mahmoudi in Orosi or sash window, Mostafa Panbedanepur in Ehrami-bafi and Hamid Purjahangir in Namad-mali, and Ahmad Aq in Turkmen jewelry were honored in this section.

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

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



from ten to 14.

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

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

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

Anthropologist makes 3D maps to shed new light on Iran's 'Treasure Valley'

TEHRAN – Julien Riel-Salvatore, a full professor of anthropology at the University of Montreal, has developed some three-dimensional digital map to rediscover Iran's Ganj Dareh, which means 'Treasure Valley'.

His work is based on discoveries made by Canadian archaeologist Philip Smith who excavated Ganj Dareh between 1965 and 1974. The significant Neolithic archaeological site has yielded some of the earliest evidence of human sedentism, agricultural development, and goat domestication.

Drawing on Smith's archives, Riel-Salvatore produced three-dimensional digital maps showing walls of houses, walls, hearths, and burial places based on sedimentary strata Smith excavated, according to an article released by the University of Montreal.

Situated in Kermanshah province, Ganj Dareh is believed to have been occupied by humans roughly 10,200 years ago for a period of 300 to 600 years. "It is a short period in archaeological terms but it was very rich in technological development,"

explained Riel-Salvatore. "Among other things, clay objects, sun-baked bricks, and carved stone tools have been found at the site."

Smith, one of the first archaeologists in UdeM's Anthropology department, first visited the site in 1965 to begin excavating it. He returned to Ganj Dareh four more times and excavated 20 percent of the site's five levels.

"After 1974, the digs were suspended, but Smith was able to bring back a good deal of material, including animal and human bones, plant remains sediment samples, and various artifacts," said Riel-Salvatore.

That material is now conserved at three institutions: the human remains at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, the animal remains at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, and an extensive collection containing sedimentary, architectural, and charcoal samples, bone, stone and clay tools, and Smith's excavation notes at UdeM.

Recently, an analysis of collagen samples extracted from some of the animal bones yielded evidence of



A general view of Ganj Dareh, a Neolithic settlement in western Iran.

goat domestication at the site and, by extension, human sedentarization. Dating of the plant remains has revealed evidence of domesticated barley and lentils. "Ganj Dareh has been a focal point for research on prehistory and the transition to agriculture," said Riel-Salvatore.

Riel-Salvatore and two doctoral students began working on the collection, which had been languishing in the department's archives, and set about developing a three-dimensional model of a portion of Ganj Dareh's West Trench, which had been excavated by Smith.

The model is based on a small, 8-square-meter section of the site, about 10 percent of the area explored by Smith. It shows the stratification of the site and makes it possible to study the evolution of human behavior through the sedimentary layers.

"The paper published in PLOS ONE is the first step," said Riel-Salvatore. "It's a proof of concept of our approach that will allow us to pursue our research."

And much remains to be done at

UdeM's Anthropocene archaeology lab, which Riel-Salvatore directs: the Ganj Dareh collection contains some 100,000 objects and samples!

His long-term plan is to create a virtual repository comprising 3D models of key "Treasure Valley" artifacts in order to establish a permanent digital archive of all the analog material for the benefit of the international archaeological community.

"Ultimately, our goal is to make a slice of the history of Iran and the history of humanity accessible," said Riel-Salvatore.

"It's important to make these archives accessible to the scientific community and to the people who live in the region because they are part of Iranian heritage."

Finally, Riel-Salvatore noted the results of the project will soon be posted on a website and translated into French, English, and Farsi.

Measuring seven meters high and forty meters in diameter, Ganj Dareh is arguably the earliest site for goat domestication in the world.

Tehran opens permanent exhibit in Seoul to mark 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations

TEHRAN – On Thursday, the Iranian Embassy opened a permanent exhibition of arts and cultural heritage at the Multicultural Museum in Seoul to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Iran-Korea diplomatic relations.

Iranian music and traditional textiles are the highlights of the exhibit, which marks the 43rd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, the Korea Herald reported on Tuesday.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Iranian envoy Saeed Badamchi-Shabestari referred to the long-standing civilizational links between Persia and Silla -- one of the ancient kingdoms of the Korean Peninsula -- dating back about 1,000 years.

The ambassador noted the show would help people understand the rich cultural commonalities between Iran and Korea, as well as the art, culture, history, unique traditions, and customs of Iran.

"The long-standing relationship between Iran and Korea can be symbolically seen in the street names of Teheran-ro ("Tehran Boulevard") and Seoul-ro, named after capitals of both countries," said Shabestari.



In addition, the ambassador underlined that exhibition would be valuable for Koreans and foreign residents in Korea to learn about Iran's ancient civilization and its amazing handicraft traditions.

Celebrating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties, Korea-Iran Council President Chun Jeong-bae touched on the 1,500 years of intertwined Korea-Iran relations through Kush Nama's beautiful love story of a Persian prince and Silla princess.

Kush Nama is a Persian epic poem and part of a mythical history of Iran written by Hakim Iranshan that records a destined encounter between a Persian prince and a princess from Silla.

Historical cistern in Yazd restored to former glory

TEHRAN-A historical Ab-Anbar (traditional mudbrick cistern) in Yazd province has been restored to its former splendor, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The restoration project involved repairing the exterior decorations of the entrance gate, flooring, and cleaning the surrounding area, Mohammadreza Falahati said on Tuesday.

Made of stones, bricks, and mortar, the circular cistern is combined by four badgirs (wind catchers), which are used as traditional air conditioners, the official added.

The term Ab-Anbar is common throughout Iran as a designation for roofed underground water cisterns. It associates with water



management systems in arid areas that are reliant on permanent springs or seasonal rainwater.

Such underground reservoirs or Ab-Anbars are parts of the iconic qanat systems, which rely on snow-fed streams flowing down

from surrounding mountains.

Qanats, according to UNESCO, provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.

With its winding lanes, a forest

of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, being referred to as a 'don't miss' destination by almost all travel associates in the region. The oasis city is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains.

Yazd has an interesting mix of people as well, some 10 percent of whom follow the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism. Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.



turbulent period.

Lorestan was incorporated into the

Bazaar of Damghan undergoes urgent restoration

TEHRAN-An urgent restoration project has been commenced on parts of the historical bazaar of Damghan, the tourism chief of ancient Iranian city has said.

A budget of 2.5 billion rials (\$9,500) has been allocated to the project, Mehdi Qasemi said on Tuesday.

The project involves repairing cracks and damaged parts as well as lightening the arched ceilings, and strengthening the structure, the official added.

Located in Semnan province, the Qajar-era (1789-1925) vaulted bazaar has been inscribed on the national heritage list.

Browsing through a traditional bazaar may provide new experiences and fresh points of view on the ancient land. Such excursions can be made either in person or by "off-the-beaten-track" tours. Not only it's an opportunity to discover



dozens of unique local ingredients, but it's also a chance to taste street foods and delicacies, in some traditional bakery known only by locals and shopkeepers.

People watching and even mingling with them in the bazaars is one of the best ways to take the pulse of the country. Bazaars have traditionally been major economic and social centers in any Iranian city.

Ship-shaped work of art recovered in western Iran

TEHRAN- A ship-shaped work of art, which may date back to ancient times, has been found and confiscated by Iranian authorities in Khorramabad, the capital of the western province of Lorestan, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage has announced.

The police found the metal object in a house after receiving reports of illegally keeping ancient objects by an antique dealer, CHTN quoted Mohammadreza Moradian as saying on Monday.

The work of art has been surrendered to the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and

Handicrafts Department of the province for authenticity determination, the official added.

An individual was arrested in this regard and handed over to judiciary officials for further investigation, he noted.

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this

growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

"Luristan [Lorestan] bronzes" is the accepted term for a distinct body of metalwork produced in the first half of the first millennium BC and characterized by a wide range of idiosyncratic forms and a highly stylized conception of human and animal representation.

The term refers to the small cast objects decorated with bronze sculptures from the Early Iron Age, as well as a great number of ornaments, tools, weapons,

horse-fittings, and a smaller number of vessels and those found in recorded excavations since the late 1920s in Lorestan and Kermanshah provinces.

The ethnicity of the people who created them remains unclear though scholars believe that they were created either by the Cimmerians, a nomadic people from southern Russia who may have invaded Iran in the 8th century BC, or by such related Indo-European people as the early Medes and Persians, possibly related to the modern Lur people who have given their name to the area.

Iran firms up efforts in support of WHO for health care services to refugees

From page 1 ► Chancellor of Zahedan UMS and his deputy for Public Health Affairs Dr Seyed Mehdi Tabatabaei, as well as Dr Kamran Kordi, Chancellor of Iranshahr UMS, Dr Mahdi Afshari, Deputy Chancellor of Zabol UMS, Dr Mansour Saeedi, Director General of the provincial Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs, and Dr Mansour Ranjbar, Lead for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health at the WHO country office.

“There has been remarkable advancement in the improvement of health indicators in the province over the past few decades, but the continuation of this positive trend so that it meets the national average requires further scaled up support and effort,” said Dr Hussain during the meeting.

Dr Shahriyari took note of milestones achieved in Sistan-Baluchestan, including the elimination of local transmission of polio, measles and rubella, and acknowledged WHO's continued support over the years.

“It is natural that decades of war

and insecurity in the neighboring country of Afghanistan have also affected health issues, and now one of our health system's serious concerns, especially in the border regions, is tuberculosis and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis,” he added.

While thanking the Islamic Republic of Iran and the national health system, Dr Hussain expressed WHO's readiness to provide continued international support from available resources to the provincial health sector. Afghan immigrants have been benefiting from various free public health services in the country, including Sistan-Baluchestan, for many years.

Providing assistance to Sistan-Baluchestan in strengthening the response to COVID-19, furthering cooperation with the neighboring countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan in tackling health issues, and supporting health and medical infrastructure in the province in cooperation with Health Ministry and other UN Agencies were among



WHO Representative and Head of Mission Dr Syed Jaffar Hussain is briefed at Khatam Al Anbia Hospital. (Photo: Zahedan University of Medical Sciences)

other topics discussed during the visit.

As the leading agency within the UN-led working group on health in the country, WHO will use all potential opportunities to support the province in partnership with its UN partners, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP) and other collaborators, Dr Jaffar underlined.

The meeting also discussed the possibility of Zahedan UMS establishing a rapid response emergency stock warehouse in the province in cooperation with WHO.

“Such a centre will be able to provide pharmaceuticals, equipment, diagnostic kits and the like and keep them in proper storage conditions in order to be quickly distributed in the area when needed,” said Dr Hussain during the meeting. A similar centre is currently operating in Dubai with the support of WHO and had demonstrated success in the rapid distribution of international donations to approximately 100

countries worldwide, he added.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is also ramping up national efforts to structure and reinforce surveillance of vector-borne diseases by setting up an insectarium at Zahedan UMS in the province. The insectarium, which was visited by the WHO delegation, is being constructed with the aim to establish a surveillance system with an emphasis on Anopheles (bearing malaria) and Aedes (dengue carriers) mosquitoes as two potentially key disease carriers given the tropical climate of the region. Once completed, it will become the national and regional hub for entomological studies, local authorities predict.

The WHO team's excursion concluded by visiting the proposed premises for the rapid response emergency stock warehouse, dialysis and intensive care units of Khatam Al Anbia Hospital, Zahedan Alghadir Refugee Camp, Ammar Yaser Health Centre and Delivery Facility (in Shirabad neighbourhood) and Seraj Community-Based Mental Health Clinic.

First successful bone marrow transplant for multi autoimmune syndrome in Iran

TEHRAN – For the first time in Iran, the bone marrow transplant team of Ayatollah Taleghani hospital in Tehran successfully performed an autologous bone marrow transplant for multi autoimmune syndrome.

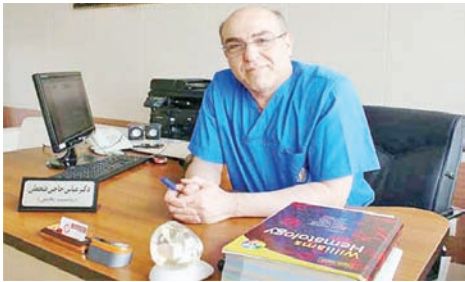
“A known case of myasthenia gravis, psoriasis, alopecia, Sjögren's syndrome, and multiple sclerosis (MS) since the age of 14, this 39-year-old female had undergone all available treatments without any desirable outcomes. Thus, her quality of life had declined significantly,” Dr. Abbas Hajifathali, professor of bone marrow transplant and hematology at Ayatollah Taleghani hospital in Tehran, told IRNA.

He also added: “Specifically, her myasthenia gravis was a refractory one with severe muscle weakness, resulting in repeated respiratory failures that required her to be intubated and mechanical ventilation at the ICU. Due to persistent failures in treatment and the recurrent crisis of this autoimmune neuromuscular disease, her muscles have deteriorated as well as suffering from chronic shortness of breath.”

In addition, Hajifathali explained that her MS has also declined over the past two years. “When we met her for the first time, she could hardly walk even with two canes.”

Another member of the transplant team, Dr. Sayeh Parkhideh, faculty member of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science, told IRNA that bone marrow transplant has been used successfully to treat various types of blood cancer for more than thirty years in many countries and Iran.

Actually, besides several risks associated with bone marrow transplants, the treatment



An undated photo shows Dr. Abbas Hajifathali who led the treatment team.

is a high-cost one. Accordingly, just in the case of failures of all routine treatments, it will be the last procedure to be considered. Consequently, it had not been performed in Iran until then.

Stressing that this patient suffering from multi autoimmune syndrome was the first case in Iran, Hajifathali noted: “As the treatment was not performed in Iran until then, we were not aware of such a case. Enjoying high morale despite many years of chronic diseases, she sent me an email to ask if we could help her promote her quality of life.”

Mentioning that her case was undoubtedly a rare one, Parkhideh continued: “In addition to chronic shortness of breath, given to several years of taking immunosuppressive drugs, she was affected with numerous side effects. Therefore, there existed significant life-threatening issues to take into account. However, the transplant team decided to perform such a treatment for the first time in Iran. Spending three months inspecting this demanding mul-

tidimensional job, ultimately autologous bone marrow transplant was chosen as the most effective approach to take.”

While this treatment can be quite helpful for multi autoimmune patients, Hajifathali emphasized that not every patient is a good candidate for this treatment. There are several factors requiring precise deliberation by the transplant team and other relevant specialists. Moreover, the patient's mental status must be stable enough in the psychiatric assessments.

Explaining autoimmune diseases, Dr. Mahshid Mehdizadeh, bone marrow transplant specialist and another member of the patient's treatment team, said: “An autoimmune disease is a condition in which the immune system mistakes part of the body like joints or skin as foreign cells just to send out an army of fighter cells to attack them. These types of diseases are chronic, require a longtime using of medications and can negatively affect the patient's quality of life.”

Dr. Mehdizadeh went on to say that some autoimmune diseases, such as myasthenia gravis are rare. Thus, the coexistence of several autoimmune and rare diseases in an individual is somehow unprecedented and worth studying. So, although she did not have cancer, a bone marrow transplant was the sole hope for improving her quality of life and containing the diseases.

Now, after a year since her treatment, the general condition of this 39-year-old woman is favorable. With no recurrence of myasthenia gravis and MS attacks, her quality of life has improved significantly.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

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

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

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

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

شیرین سازی و انتقال آب دریای عمان مشکل زیست محیطی ندارد

معاون رئیس جمهوری و رئیس سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست کشور گفت: شیرین سازی و انتقال آب دریای عمان به استان های مختلف به شرط رعایت الزامات محیط زیستی مانع زیست محیطی ندارد و از نظر این سازمان بلا مانع است.

عیسی کلانتری دوشنبه شب در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا در چابهار اظهار داشت: برای تامین آب کشاورزی، آشامیدنی و صنایع کشور چاره ای جز استفاده از آب دریا نداریم و باید چه اکنون و چه آینده به این منابع بیکران و بسیار فراوان رجوع کنیم.

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

Sanctions have put the lives of vulnerable people at risk: UN envoy

TEHRAN – Zahra Ershadi, deputy permanent representative of Iran to the UN, has slammed U.S. sanctions against the Iranian nation, saying “these illegal actions have directly impacted the lives of Iran's most vulnerable citizens, including women, children, and patients.”



“What is further distressing is the reality that many children have lost their lives as a result,” she said, IRNA reported.

“As our President stated in his address to the UNGA session, imposing unilateral sanctions against the Iranian people, particularly sanctions on medicine and humanitarian items, are criminal acts on par with crimes committed against humanity. Those who sanction countries should not go unpunished for such heinous crimes,” Ershadi said addressing the United Nations Commission for Social Development.

In May 2018, the U.S. began to unilaterally impose sanctions against Iran after the former left the Iran agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The U.S., under former president Donald Trump, launched what it called a maximum pressure campaign against Iran at the time, targeting the Iranian nation with the “toughest ever” sanctions.

Although Trump failed to reach its professed goals with his maximum pressure campaign, the bans have badly hurt the Iranian population.

The sanctions, preserved under the Joe Biden administration, have restricted the financial channels necessary to pay for basic goods and medicine, undermining supply chains by limiting the number of suppliers willing to facilitate sales of humanitarian goods to the country.

Iran has repeatedly denounced the sanctions as an act of “economic war,” “economic terrorism,” and “medical terrorism”.

“Under the current circumstances, the Government of Iran has provided special financial packages as well as social and economic rehabilitation plans for poor and people in the vulnerable situation along with economic support measures, especially for small businesses,” the Iranian diplomat said.

“In the meantime, treatment programs have been provided for around 4 million legal and illegal Afghan refugees,” Ershadi added.

She went on to say, “The United Nations system and its specialized agencies can play an important role in exchanging countries' successful experiences in implementing post- COVID economic and social rehabilitation projects, as well as mobilizing international financial resources to achieve the desired national goals in the post- COVID era.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the daily life of every single person. Women, children, the elderly, medical personnel, refugees, migrants, and those suffering from chronic and rare diseases are the most affected,” she noted.

“In fact, the pandemic has made the negative humanitarian effects of unilateral sanctions far more obvious and more disastrous,” the diplomat stressed.

“The illegal sanctions have hampered access of vulnerable segments of the society in affected countries, including my country, to basic medical items and requirements extremely difficult, thus endangering the lives and health of those citizens,” Ershadi said.

“Medicines, medical supplies, and health commodities have been targeted through tight restrictions of foreign exchange resources, even for these humanitarian items,” she added.

“As our President stated in his address to the UNGA session, imposing unilateral sanctions against the Iranian people, particularly sanctions on medicine and humanitarian items, are criminal acts on par with crimes committed against humanity,” she noted.

“Those who sanction countries should not go unpunished for such heinous crimes,” the Iranian diplomat said.

“The deteriorating economic situation as a result of illegal sanctions severely affects the exercise of economic and labor rights which, in the long run, will increase poverty and impede the achievement of sustainable development goals,” she noted.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran highlights the importance of national development policies and strategies as an appropriate platform for addressing the national priorities and requirements of Member States,” she said.

“In this connection, Iran is implementing its ‘6th Five-year National Development Plan’ through the reinforcement of a knowledge-based economy together with the development of advanced technology among a wide variety of subjects,” she added.

“Further, a strong legal and legislative framework has been created that provides a solid platform for planning, implementing, and following-up with national development strategies and policies, particularly regarding poverty eradication,” she noted.

“Significant achievements have been made so far despite the external challenges ranging from unlawful unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) including sanctions and the COVID-19 pandemic,” she stated.

“As the representative of a country whose people are subjected to the most brutal form of economic terrorism and illegitimate unilateral coercive measures by the United States, I call for the complete and immediate lifting of all unilateral coercive measures including sanctions in order to ensure the full achievement of economic and social development and enable the targeted countries to repair their economies while guaranteeing the well-being of their people in the aftermath of the pandemic,” Ershadi concluded.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON FEBRUARY 15

New cases	25,034
New deaths	167
Total cases	6,860,255
Total deaths	134,053
New hospitalized patients	2,768
Patients in critical condition	3,489
Total recovered patients	6,351,542
Diagnostic tests conducted	46,277,497
Doses of vaccine injected	138,197,905

