

Leader Rules Out Breakout Intentions

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Report



Is the U.S. pushing for war in Ukraine?

Western officials and Western mainstream media are using all means at their disposal to beat the drums of war over a Russian invasion of Ukraine. This is despite both Ukraine and Russia calling on NATO, especially the United States, to end its warmongering.

At a Security Council session, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken claimed Russia was preparing to launch an attack on Ukraine in the coming days.

The remarks are in line with comments made by American officials since late October last year that a Russian invasion is “imminent” or “within a few days” or “next week” or “within a few weeks”. Sometimes anonymous American officials have been cited in mainstream media as setting a specific date for the invasion to start.

But all the dates have passed and no attack has taken place.

Critics say Washington needs the tension to persist at a heightened level even if Russia has no intention of attacking its neighbor.

Experts say that maintaining an intense crisis serves only to benefit the U.S. and in more ways than one. It gives the pretext to keep U.S. military forces and weapons stationed in Europe. It enables Washington to use the propaganda to portray Russia as an aggressive actor in the region.

Experts also say the increase in tensions serve to poison ties between Russia and the European Union. This would explain why the 27 member bloc has taken a more diplomatic approach to the crisis, unlike the U.S. and the UK which has left the EU. ► Page 5

Report



Marine biotechnology nascent, growing in Iran

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Marine biotechnology is one of the nascent scientific fields that are likely to grow, due to the country’s northern and southern coasts and also the high biodiversity in the Oman Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Biotechnology has been intertwined with life since the beginning of life on Earth. But it emerged as a scientific field at the end of the 19th century.

Marine biotechnology, also called Blue Biotechnology, uses resources from aquatic living organisms (fresh water and marine) to develop new commercially viable products or applications.

With the oceans covering 70 percent of the surface of the globe and hosting 99 percent of the biosphere, there is unprecedented biodiversity in the oceans. It is estimated that up to 1 million eukaryotic species, e.g., microalgae, seaweed, fungi, fish, invertebrates such as starfish, or mollusks, and also hundreds of millions of prokaryotes, such as bacteria, live in the oceans.

These organisms are used as biomass or even more importantly, to be utilized as producers of different end-products or substances, such as e.g., pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, nutraceuticals, agrochemicals. ► Page 7

Bank loans to knowledge-based companies up 127% in 10 months on year

TEHRAN – The loans paid by the banks to the knowledge-based companies during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-January 20, 2022) have been 127 percent more than the loans paid to these companies in the same period of time in the past year.

According to the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) data, Iranian banking system has paid 509.4 trillion rials (about \$1.959 billion) of facilities to 1,176 knowledge-based companies during the ten-month period of this year.

Bank Melli Iran (BMI) accounted for the biggest share of the paid facilities with 82 trillion rials (about \$315.3 million), followed by Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) with 68.6 trillion rials (about \$263.8

million) of offered facilities. The Islamic Republic has developed plans to support and empower knowledge-based companies as a step forward to materialize the goal of the year which is “Production: Support and Elimination of Obstacles”, as the economy is fighting the U.S. sanctions.

The law for promoting and supporting knowledge-based companies was approved by the Majlis (Iranian parliament) in 2010, paving the way for a jumpstart in the march toward scientific progress.

Over the past couple of years, the concept of ‘knowledge-based company’ has changed to ‘knowledge-based society’, meaning that supporting knowledge-based companies will lead to many social and economic advantages for the public.

Gilan exports \$9.6m of handicrafts in year

TEHRAN – Handicraft products worth \$9.6 million were exported from the northern Gilan province during the current Iranian calendar year 1400 (started on March 21, 2021), the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

The sum of handicraft exports has jumped fivefold since 1398 when the value of provincial handicrafts exports stood at \$1.8 million, Farzad Rashidi said on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

“Despite sanctions and the outbreak of the coronavirus, Gilan’s handicraft exports reached \$9.6 million this year which marks a significant growth compared to that of \$1.8 million collected in the year 1398.”

The major share of this “success” is due to the registration of Qasemabad by the World Crafts Council as a global hub of handicrafts, the official explained.

“The WWC inscription has made the handicraft brand of Gilan province much more prominent and has provided a good ground for exports.”

Situated in Roodsar county, Qassemabad village is nationally known for its traditional costumes because of its vibrant colors and uniquely beautiful designs. However, the Chador Shab, a kind of homemade outer garment for women, was the main subject for

The number of knowledge-based companies has increased from around 50 in 2013 to more than 5,700 in the previous Iranian calendar year.

Currently, many knowledge-based companies are active in different fields, ranging from information and communication technology to health, agriculture, and energy.

Various knowledge-based companies have made advancements in different fields, however, the level of progress in the fields of health, ICT, agriculture, and energy has been more noticeable. Of course, other sectors such as the automotive industry have removed many bottlenecks so far.

the WCC assessment.

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.

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 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 ornaments with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries. ► Page 6

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Interview



Whoever has been in charge of America’s foreign policy should hang heads in shame: American writer

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Describing U.S. foreign policy as “incompetent”, American writer Charles Ortel tells the Tehran Times that “whoever has been in charge of America’s foreign policies should hang heads in shame.”

Ortel says, “Perhaps we all should have listened far more closely to America’s founders who warned, ‘beware foreign entanglements’ at a time when America was insulated by two vast oceans.”

“Under both established political parties we have not only squandered precious lives and trillions of dollars, but we have also eroded trust in the basic decency of our people by tolerating if not enabling grievous errors in our foreign policies from Baghdad, to Benghazi and more recently Kabul to pick just three cases,” notes Ortel, also an investor who is interested in lasting peace.

Following is the text of the interview:

Do you expect Donald Trump to run again for president in the 2024 election? What will be its ramifications if he runs for the post?

Donald Trump will play a significant role in the 2022 and 2024 election ► Page 5



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Barij Essence crowned champions of Iran’s women volleyball league

TEHRAN – Barij Essence claimed the title of the Iran’s Women’s Volleyball Super League on Thursday.

Barij Essence defeated defending champions Saipa 3-1 (25-19, 25-14, 21-25, 25-20). Zob Ahan finished in third place after beating Paykan 3-1 (29-27, 25-20, 25-27, 27-25).

Barij Essence outside hitter Mahsa Kadkhoda was named the league’s MVP.

Zob Ahan are the most decorated team in Iran Volleyball Super League, winning the title six times out of 21. Barij Essence will represent Iran in the 2022 Asian Women’s Club Volleyball Championship in Kazakhstan.



Amir Abdollahian heads to Munich Security Conference

TEHRAN — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Iran's Foreign Minister, left Tehran for Munich on Friday to attend the 58th session of the Munich Security Conference.

The Munich Security Conference started on Friday and runs until Sunday.

In a press briefing on Wednesday, Ned Price, U.S. State Department spokesperson, said, "I wouldn't expect, at least in Munich, a meeting between the Secretary and the foreign minister. But what I will say, and what we have long said, is that we believe that direct talks



between the United States and Tehran – and Iran would be in our interest in the context of Vienna."

Iranian FM explores developments with Ukrainian counterpart

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held a phone conversation with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba on Thursday, exchanging views on international developments including the crisis between Kiev and Moscow.

Iran's chief diplomat expressed satisfaction with the easing of tensions between Ukraine and Russia, expressing hope that the current situation would be resolved through diplomatic channels without intervention of third countries.

"We want to maintain peace and stability in the region," Amir Abdollahian emphasized.

He announced that Iran is ready to provide any necessary assistance and take any necessary action to resolve the crisis peacefully.

Foreign Minister Kuleba also thanked Iran for its principled stance on the Ukraine crisis. "We are not after a war and we want the issue to be resolved diplomatically and peacefully," the top Ukrainian diplomat said.

During his opening remarks at the Munich Security Conference in Germany on Friday, UN Secretary General António Guterres said a Russian invasion of Ukraine would be "catastrophic". He called for diplomatic efforts to continue.

"I am deeply concerned about heightened tensions and increased speculation about a military conflict in Europe. I still think it will not happen but, if it did, it would be catastrophic," Guterres said, according to CNN.

"There is no alternative to diplomacy. All issues, including the most intractable, must be addressed through diplomatic frameworks. It is high time to seriously de-escalate," he added.

The UN secretary general also noted that "geopolitical divides continue to grow," and

Khatibzadeh explains about Iranian team's visit to South Korea

TEHRAN — Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Wednesday that an Iranian delegation went to Seoul to look into the possibility of resuming exports of Iranian oil and gas condensate to South Korea.

"An expert delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran consisting of banking and oil experts held talks in Seoul this week with South Korean officials and companies," Khatibzadeh said in response to a question regarding reports about the delegation's visit to South Korea.

The visit took place as negotiators from Iran and other parties present in Vienna have reportedly succeeded to narrow down their differences over reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Before former U.S. president Donald Trump quit the nuclear deal and imposed the harshest sanctions in history on Iran in line with his maximum pressure campaign against Tehran, the Republic of Korea was

one of the major importers of oil and gas condensate from Iran.

Khatibzadeh noted that the visit happened in line with Iran's policy to develop relations with Asian countries in a balanced way and after the deputy foreign ministers of Iran and South Korea met in Vienna.

He reiterated that the Iranian side used this opportunity, in consultation with the South Korean officials, to underline the need to unfreeze Iran's assets held illegally in South Korea.

The foreign ministry spokesman noted that the results of the expert meeting could serve as a test of Seoul's seriousness to resolve the two countries' differences and restore the relations to normal, including sale of oil and gas condensate to South Korea and also investment by the country's companies in Iran's economic projects.

For this reason, Khatibzadeh stressed, Iran will carefully follow the results of these negotiations and will take the results into account in regulating relations with Seoul.

Journalist says U.S. embassy is blackmailing Albanian police over MKO trafficking report

TEHRAN — According to investigative journalist Olsi Jazexhi, Albanian police head Gledis Nano "has gone insane" over a dossier delivered to the U.S. embassy in Albania alleging that the anti-Iran Mujahedin-Khalq Organization (MKO) intended to smuggle over 400 members to France.

Albanian media reported on Thursday that the country's police had notified the U.S. embassy that members of the MKO terrorist group are involved in a variety of illegal operations across Europe, including human trafficking, and that they may have ties to the Daesh terrorist organization.

One of the sources that covered the story, Gazeta Shqiptarja, then withdrew the item and replaced it with a statement from the police alleging that the leaked report was a "false do The US embassy, according to Jazexhi, an Albanian historian and social activist, is blackmailing the police.

"Albanian head police Gledis Nano, who most likely wrote the report to @USEmbassyTirana, has gone insane," he said in a Twitter thread after revealing that the MKO pushed Gazeta Shqiptarja to remove the item.

"The letter was most likely delivered to Gazeta Shqiptarja by a police insider." "Shqiptarja withdrew the item but does not dispute its veracity," he stated.

U.S. has its sights set on Iran and Turkey

According to Jazexhi, the Albanian police chief was promoted to his position by the U.S. embassy in Tirana after working as a spy for the Albanian counterterrorism police, where he jailed dozens of Albanian Muslims, expelled the Iranian ambassador from Albania, and loyally served the U.S. and Israel rather than his government.

"Gledis Nano has received training in the United States and Israel."

"A significant policy objective of the United States in Albania in recent years has been to crush the Muslim population and limit its relations with the Muslim world, particularly Turkey and Iran," he stated.

He noted that Albania is home to both the MKO and the FETO, a reference to the Turkish government's term for the Gulen movement, the Fetullah Terrorist Organization.

According to Jazexhi, Albanian authorities have not denied the arrests of key MKO leaders for transporting drugs and trafficking refugees to Europe.

"Even though the Albanian State Police declared their leaked [report] to @USEmbassyTirana to be 'fake,' they HAVE NOT disputed that key Mojahedeen commanders have been detained for transporting drugs and



trafficking people to Europe," he said.

Greece and Italy 'gone insane' over MKO operations

The journalist also said that security forces in Greece and Italy have gone "crazy" over what the MKO terrorist group is doing in their countries.

"Greece is particularly concerned about the operations of the #MaryamRajavi mafia in Athens," he said, referring to the MKO by its leader's name.

"In August 2020, when Interior Minister Sander Lleshaj wanted to illegally deport MKO defector Ehsan Bidi to Greece – on orders from Maryam Rajavi – and most likely kill him at the border, the Greek embassy in Tirana and its Ministry of Interior were placed on high alert!"

He said that the MKO has ties to the Afghan mafia and has utilized Athens to bring members to France. "Mehdi Abrichamchi transported Hadi Sani Khani to France via Athens in February 2021," he added.

The Italian government, Jazexhi continued, has gone insane over the MKO's actions, with the Italian secret service "horrified" of the group's involvement in the Adriatic, despite the fact that the MKO has recruited Italian politicians like Giulio Terzi to lobby on its behalf.

Exit News in Albania reported in December that two MKO members had been

detained for drug smuggling, human trafficking, and money laundering.

Members of the infamous MKO terrorist group are free to operate in the United States and Europe, and they even host large events attended by prominent American, European, and Saudi authorities.

The MKO initiated a campaign of bombings and assassinations in Iran after it was created more than 50 years ago. Approximately 17,000 Iranians have been killed in terrorist attacks over the last four decades. The MKO accounts for roughly 12,000 of fatalities.

In 1986, members of the MKO departed Iran for Iraq, where they were supported by former Iraqi tyrant Saddam Hussein. They were transferred from Camp Ashraf in Iraq's Diyala Province to Camp Hurriyet (Camp Liberty), a former U.S. military station in Baghdad, a few years ago, and were eventually sent to Albania.

The West has actively promoted the MKO as an "Iranian opposition organization."

Until 2012, the cultish organization was on the U.S. government's list of terrorist organizations. The MKO was likewise removed from the European Union's (EU) list of terrorist organizations in 2009, seven years after it was blacklisted.

FM briefed about Ukraine developments

TEHRAN — Iran's foreign minister made a phone call on Tuesday with Tehran's ambassador in Kiev to follow the latest developments in Ukraine, particularly the situation of Iranians in the country.

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian's call followed the Foreign Ministry assessment of the developments surrounding Ukraine.

A special headquarters has been formed to follow the situation surrounding the Iranians living in Ukraine.

The Iranian ambassador explained about the latest developments in Ukraine, especially the situation of Iranians living in Ukraine, including Iranian students studying in the country.

In the telephone conversation, Iran's top diplomat also emphasized the necessary recommendations regarding the Iranians living in the country and the provision of any necessary services by the Iranian embassy

in Kiev in case of a possible military clash between Ukraine and Russia.

In a telephone conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Monday, Amir Abdollahian discussed the current situation and the dangers of any escalation of the crisis in the Eurasian region and stressed the need for a peaceful settlement of the dispute between Russia and Ukraine.

Also on Monday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is following the events in Ukraine carefully and with sensitivity. We are concerned about the escalation of tensions between Ukraine and Russia. It is natural that, as a country with good relations with both sides, we try to invite both sides to a settlement so that they can resolve the situation peacefully."

Saeed Khatibzadeh added that the Eurasian region cannot see another tension.

The spokesman stated that the Foreign Ministry has taken important steps within

the framework of its definite responsibility regarding the Iranian citizens in Ukraine.

"The embassy has also issued the necessary announcements and is in communication with Iranians living in Ukraine through a virtual line. They have also been informed of the necessary news," he added.

He noted that the travel warning to Ukraine has turned from normal to red.

"The travel warning has been announced and we have announced a specific hotline for Iranian citizens to call, who will respond to all citizens living in Ukraine around the clock to answer questions," Khatibzadeh reiterated.

"We are in regular contact with our embassy in Ukraine," Khatibzadeh said, adding, "We have set up a headquarters at the Foreign Ministry to monitor the situation in Ukraine, and the ministry is following what is happening in Ukraine."

Senator Murphy seeks answers on efficacy of 'maximum pressure' on Iran

TEHRAN - Chris Murphy, a United States senator representing Connecticut, has asked the opponents of the 2015 nuclear deal to explain to him whether five years of "maximum pressure" on Iran has "worked out".

In May 2018, former U.S. president Donald Trump unilaterally quit the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and imposed the harshest sanctions in history on Iran under his "maximum pressure" campaign against the Islamic Republic.

"Explain to me how five years of 'maximum pressure' on Iran has worked out," Murphy wrote on his Twitter account on Wednesday.

Of those who provoked Trump to quit the JCPOA were former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, some Arab rulers, Iran hawks such as Trump's second

secretary of state Mike Pompeo, White House national security advisor John Bolton and senators Ted Cruz and Tom Cotton among others.

Immediately after Trump abandoned the JCPOA, Pompeo said the U.S. will impose "the strongest sanctions in history" on Iran. Also in November 2018, Bolton, said, "It's our intention to squeeze them (Iranians) very hard... until the pips squeak."

However, analysts and officials in the U.S. and other parts of the world say the maximum pressure have ended in failure. They say the economic sanctions has just put great economic pressure on ordinary Iranian citizens.

In an article in the TIME magazine on February 10, Senator Murphy described the mess created by Donald Trump's as "complete fiasco". Murphy also

said, "Going another month or year with Trump's Iran policy still in place is madness."

The maximum pressure undermined the middle class in Iran. Instead, it created a small group of overnight millionaires who misused the situation caused by high inflation rates.

Trump withdrew from the JCPOA despite warnings by his first secretary of state Rex Tillerson and defense secretary James Mattis. They told him that the JCPOA was working well. However, Trump suffered from the illusion that he could make a better deal with Iran.

In December 2021, Jake Sullivan, the national security advisor to President Joe Biden, said quitting the nuclear deal was "disastrous". Biden's Secretary of State Antony Blinken has also called withdrawal from the JCPOA

"disastrous".

"I think the decision to pull out of the agreement was a disastrous mistake," Blinken said in an interview published on December 3, 2021.

Blinken added "the JCPOA was a very effective agreement" that resulted in the "most effective and intrusive monitoring" of Iran's nuclear activities.

In interview with the Tehran Times in February 2021, Ronald Grigor Suny, a professor emeritus of political science and history at the University of Chicago, said, "He (Trump) 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."

Leader rules out breakout intentions

TEHRAN – As the talks in Vienna reach a crescendo by the day, a controversial, yet nonexistent, issue continues to take center stage in the drama surrounding the Vienna talks: breakout time.

Negotiations in the Austrian capital over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), are approaching their end, with some estimates putting the timetable for announcing the deal as soon as next week.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said on Friday that he expects a deal with Iran to be announced next week. Le Drian said in remarks to Israeli newspaper Maariv that the level of those who will sign the agreement has not yet been determined.

Le Drian and his European counterparts are expected to meet for “coordination and clarification” talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, who left for the Munich Security Conference on Friday.

Despite the assessments of an imminent deal, major issues such as the scope of sanctions that should be lifted and verification measures demanded by Iran remain unresolved in the talks. Iran has called for the removal of all sanctions imposed, reimposed, or relabeled by the Trump administration. Although Iran is still calling for the lifting of all sanctions, including those that were put in place after Washington withdrew from the



JCPOA, the Biden administration has only accepted to lift nuclear-related sanctions and those imposed under non-nuclear authorities but having effects similar to the nuclear sanctions, according to a report published by the Lebanese newspaper Al Akhbar.

This is due to the fact that the U.S. side is still not ready to lift sanctions related to areas such as human rights or support for terrorism, basing its position on the “more for more” rule, meaning that Tehran will have to make more concessions, which go beyond the limits of the nuclear deal, in order to lift more sanctions, the newspaper added.

The sanctions and verifications issues are tangible ones that are being discussed at the negotiating table and are expected to be included in the text of the agreement. But there is also an issue that is materially

nonexistent but continues to hamper the efforts to put the final touches on the much-awaited agreement.

The issue in question is the so-called breakout time- the time needed for Iran to produce a nuclear weapon. Despite Iran's repeated announcements that it is not seeking a nuclear bomb, this has been a major hurdle.

The kerfuffle over breakout time was so important that it was addressed by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in his speech on Thursday.

Addressing a number of people from Tabriz on the anniversary of the historic uprising of the people of Tabriz on February 18, 1978, the Leader said talks of breakout time for Iran is a “nonsense” because Iran does not seek to develop a nuclear bomb in the first place.

He described peaceful nuclear energy as being a fundamental need for the future and stated, “The reason for the enemy's focus on the Iranian nuclear issue and imposing oppressive sanctions, despite their knowledge of our peaceful intentions, and their utterance of nonsense such as Iran being close to producing nuclear weapons, is to prevent the country's scientific progress for meeting the future needs of Iran.”

The Leader referred to the oppressive behavior of the enemy toward Iran's use of peaceful nuclear energy, saying: “With what tyranny the enemy camp is emphasizing our nuclear energy. They themselves know that we are not pursuing nuclear weapons and that we are only trying to benefit from peaceful nuclear energy.”

Of note, there is no such thing as breakout time in the current talks in Vienna. Nor is there any clause in the text of the 2015 nuclear deal that refers to breakout time. It is more of an abstract concept than reality.

Breakout time, however, continues to cast a long shadow over the negotiating table. Western negotiators have insisted on destroying Iran's advanced centrifuges mainly due to their abstract concerns about breakout time. Iran proposed instead to keep the centrifuges and uranium enriched to 60 percent under seal inside the country. But according to Al Akbar, the centrifuges and highly-enriched uranium will be shipped to another country, possibly Russia.

West must accept nuclear Iran: MP

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian lawmaker has called on Europe and the United States to come to terms with a nuclear Iran and comply with their commitments.

The lawmaker, Abbas Golrou, said the U.S. policy of imposing sanctions on Iran has failed and that the West must accept a nuclear Iran.

Golrou, who is a member of the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, told Iran's state news agency IRNA that “it's better for Europe and America to abandon the failed policy of imposing sanctions and countering Iran and come to terms with the knowledge of a nuclear Iran. Of course, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready for any constructive engagement with the two sides.”

“Fortunately, the negotiations are proceeding with the tact and intelligence of the negotiating team of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Of course, there are difficulties that stem from the nature of the policy of the United States and some European countries,” he said, adding, “The country's diplomacy should not be one-dimensional, and the thirteenth government and the diplomatic apparatus are not based on one-dimensional politics. Because there are countless capacities in the international arena to diversify diplomacy and improve the country's economy and trade.”

He noted, “Strong economic diplomacy of Iran has been observed in the recent moves of the gov-

ernment in the field of trade and economic relations with China and Russia.”

The lawmaker further said that Iran's 15 neighbors have a very high capacity to boost imports and exports.

He pointed out, “Utilizing the political and economic capacity of neighboring countries, which is on the agenda of the 13th administration, will cause the U.S. policy of imposing sanctions to fail. In addition, valuable political and economic opportunities will be presented to the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

Golrou stated, “The United States, with its failed sanctions policy, cannot limit the Islamic Republic's nuclear knowledge. Because nuclear knowledge is deeply rooted in the lives of the country's scientists and elites.”

“The Islamic Republic should advance in nuclear science, which is the most important science of the day and has many applications in medical industry and various other sciences,” he explained.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has said that the enemy does not want Iran to make progress. Addressing a number of people from Tabriz on the anniversary of the historic uprising of the people of Tabriz on February 18, 1978, the Leader referred to the oppressive behavior of the enemy toward Iran's use of peaceful nuclear energy, saying, “With what tyranny the enemy camp is emphasizing our nuclear energy. They



themselves know that we are not pursuing nuclear weapons and that we are only trying to benefit from peaceful nuclear energy.”

Analyzing the oppressive behavior of the enemy in imposing sanctions on Iran in the area of nuclear energy, Ayatollah Khamenei said, “They do not want the Iranian nation to achieve this great, significant scientific progress. They are exerting pressure because our nation will need this (energy) in the near future. Therefore, they do not want this movement to continue. Well, this means that if we are negligent with regard to these long-term needs and issues, we will face serious problems in the future.”

Iran rejects reports of draft deal in Vienna as ‘misinformation’

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has reacted to reports of a draft agreement at the Vienna talks that allegedly lays out phases of mutual steps to bring Iran and the U.S. back into full compliance with a 2015 nuclear deal.

Tehran described the report published by Reuters on a final draft agreement in Vienna as inaccurate and misleading, denying what was reported about reaching a final version of the nuclear agreement to be implemented in stages.

Khatibzadeh said on Twitter that spreading false information in the context of media reports is “dangerous”, adding that the final agreement that allows the United States to return to the nuclear agreement is completely different from the distorted and unfounded report.

“Misinformation disguised as reporting is dangerous. The final deal to let the US return to the JCPOA will be far from the unsourced spin making the rounds. It won't be a bilateral agreement either,” the spokesman said on Twitter.

He added, “Expect more spin as we approach final days.”

The Reuters report was also buffed by the Russian envoy to the Vienna negotiations, Mikhail Ulyanov, who said the opponents of the 2015 Iran deal are trying to create an unhealthy environment surrounding the

final stage. He added that America was the one that left the agreement in the beginning and now it must take the first step, according to Al Alam.

“As we are getting closer to an agreement on restoration of #JCPOA, the opponents of the nuclear deal are becoming more and more proactive in the public space trying to create unhealthy atmosphere around final stage of the #ViennaTalks,” the Russian diplomat said on Twitter.

Reuters has indicated in its report that the first steps unfreezing Iranian assets and releasing prisoners, while the cancellation of the main sanctions will be dealt with later. It also pointed out that the draft agreement stipulates that Iran freezes enrichment activities above 5 percent.

Reuters, citing diplomats, claimed that “a U.S.-Iranian deal taking shape to revive Iran's 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers lays out phases of mutual steps to bring both sides back into full compliance, and the first does not include waivers on oil sanctions.”

It added, “The draft text of the agreement, which is more than 20 pages long, stipulates a sequence of steps to be implemented once it has been approved by the remaining parties to the deal, starting with a phase including Iran suspending enrichment above 5% purity.”

The report comes at a time when the date of reaching an agreement

between Iran and the West is imminent, according to the consensus among the majority of the negotiating parties. Washington has talked about making significant progress in the Vienna talks during the past week, and considered that the possibility of concluding an agreement is possible “within days” if Tehran shows seriousness.

Paris, for its part, considered that the agreement is now a few steps away, and that there are only days left for a decision on it, while China confirmed that the talks are in their last stage.

The chief Iranian negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, had confirmed that reaching an agreement is closer than ever, but he stressed that a deal will be dependent on agreeing on all issues. He called on the West to take serious decisions.

“After weeks of intensive talks, we are closer than ever to an agreement; nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, though. Our negotiating partners need to be realistic, avoid intransigence and heed lessons of past 4yrs. Time for their serious decisions,” the Iranian negotiator said on Twitter.

Earlier, Khatibzadeh had to offer explanation about a visit by an Iranian delegation to South Korea.

In response to a question by journalists regarding media reports about an Iranian delegation's visit to South Korea, Khatibzadeh said, “An

IRAN IN FOCUS

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

AFC U23 Asian Cup: Iran handed tough group

TEHRAN – Iran have been drawn in a tough group in the AFC U23 Asian Cup following the conclusion of the Uzbekistan 2022 Finals draw in Tashkent on Thursday.



Titleholders Korea Republic are drawn in Group C along with ASEAN trio of Thailand, 2018 runners-up Vietnam and Malaysia.

Hosts Uzbekistan, the 2018 champions, will have Iran, Qatar and newcomers Turkmenistan to contend with in Group A.

Australia, third in the 2020 edition, were drawn in Group B with Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait while Japan, the 2016 champions, are in Group D with 2020 runners-up Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and debutants Tajikistan.

The fifth edition of the Championship will be played in Central Asia for the first time, with Uzbekistan hosting 32 matches across the cities of Tashkent and Karshi.

Four former champions and nine teams to have reached the semi-finals or better within the last decade alongside two debutants will battle for Continental supremacy from June 1 to 19.

Azizi Khadem no longer head of Iran football federation

TEHRAN – Shahaboddin Azizi Khadem was temporarily removed from the presidency of Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI).

Members of the federation's board of directors held an extraordinary meeting on Thursday in which Azizi Khadem was temporarily removed from the presidency of the federation in accordance with article 35, paragraph 14 of the FFIRI Statutes.

Mirsahd Majedi was appointed as interim head of the federation until an extraordinary assembly is held in mid-May.

The board of directors had earlier announced Mehrdad Seraji as the interim president but changed their decision.

Aziz Khadem was removed from presidency just less than a year he was appointed as FFIRI president.

He faced controversy since taking charge of the position and the members criticized the legal and economic ambiguities in the contracts related to the football federation.

Iran to host Asian Beach Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran was chosen to host the 8th Asian Men's Beach Handball Championship.

The competition will be held on Kish Island from March 22 to 31, Tasnim reported.

It also acts as a qualification tournament for the 2022 Beach Handball World Championships, with the top three teams in each gender from the championship directly qualifying for the event to be hosted by Greece.

Pattaya, Thailand was originally chosen to host the competition but Asian Handball Federation (AHF) decided to move the event to Iran.

Iran down Kyrgyzstan in CAFA U19 Futsal

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Kyrgyzstan 6-1 in the CAFA U19 Futsal Championship on Thursday.

Erfan Mohammadpour, Mohammad Hossein Bazay, Ali Jurzi (two goals), Amir Hamzeh Sedighzadeh and Soran Balkaneh scored for Iran.

The round-robin tournament has started in Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan on Saturday.

Ali Sane'i's boys will play Uzbekistan in their last match on February 19.

The Central Asian Football Association (CAFA) is an association of the football playing nations in Central Asia.

IPL: Tehran derby date revealed

TEHRAN– The Iran League Football Organization announced the date for the return leg of Tehran derby between Persepolis and Esteghlal.

The organization released the fixture of the Iran Professional League (IPL) Matchweek 23, in which the Iranian popular football teams will meet each other on March 17 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Esteghlal and Persepolis sit first and second place of the 2021-22 season respectively.

Esteghlal and Persepolis have played each other 97 times with Esteghlal narrowly leading the encounters by 26 wins to 25 with 46 draws.

Behnam Yakhchali tests positive for COVID19-

TEHRAN – Iran basketball guard Behnam Yakhchali has tested positive for COVID-19.

Yakhchali, who plays for German club The Mitteldeutscher Basketball Club, will miss two matches against Kazakhstan and Syria in the 2023 FIBA Basketball World Cup Asian Qualifiers.

Iran have been scheduled to face Kazakhstan and Syria on February 24 and 27.

Iran lead Group D with two wins over Bahrain.

Iran's Vafaei starts Welsh Open Qualifying on high

TEHRAN– Hossein Vafaei survived a scare in the Welsh Open qualifying round – fighting back from 3-1 behind to deny Andrew Higginson in a thriller.

Vafaei, last month's Snooker Shoot Out champion, got off to the best possible start by making a nice break of 122 in the opening frame.

But after wasting several chances in the following three frames, Higginson moved to within the brink of a place at the venue stages, nookerrh.com reported.

Contributions of 74 and 64 for Vafaei forced the deciding frame, though, which he duly won on the final black to ultimately emerge unscathed from the Welsh Open qualifying.

The Iranian will face England's Robbie Williams in the first round when the tournament gets under way properly at the end of February in Newport.

Urmia chosen to host Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship

TEHRAN – Iranian city Urmia will host 22nd edition of the Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship.

The competition will be held from May 15 to 2 with participation of 11 teams.

Iran Super League champions and a team from the host city will represent Iran in the competition.

Iran have previously hosted the competition three times in 2002, 2004 and 2013.

Foolad Sirjan are defending champions.

The Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship, previously the AVC Cup Men's Club Tournament (between 1999–2002), is an annual continental club volleyball competition organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC), the sport's continental governing body. The competition was first contested in 1999 in China. It was not held in 2003 and 2020 due to 2002–2004 SARS outbreak and COVID-19 pandemic respectively.

The winners of the Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship qualify for the FIVB Volleyball Men's Club World Championship.

Paykan Tehran hold the record for most victories, winning the competition seven times. Teams from Iran have won the tournament 15 times out of 21 editions, the most for any nation.

Renewables prevent emission of 59,000 tons of GHG in a month



TEHRAN – Generating electricity from renewable sources prevented the emission of Green House Gases (GHG) in Iran by 59,000 tons during the tenth Iranian calendar month Dey (December 22, 2021-January 20, 2022).

Electricity generation from renewables in the mentioned period has led to economizing on the consumption of natural gas by 26 million cubic meters and water by 20 million liters.

Renewables account for about seven percent of Iran's total power generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

Based on Iran's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), the country was aiming for 5,000 megawatts (MW) increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

But in the final year of the plan, only one-fifth of the figure was achieved.

Iran was supposed to become a regional hub in the field of energy in the past Iranian calendar decade (March 2011-March 2021), but evidence shows that the country is facing a shortage even in the supply of electricity inside the country, an issue that many believe that could be achieved by developing renewable energy and increasing efficiency of the thermal power plants.

After the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known commonly as the Iran nuclear deal, in July 2015, many foreign delegations came to Iran for making investments and constructing renewable

power plants in the country.

However, following the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions, foreign investment in the country's renewable industry has fallen significantly.

In mid-October, 2021, Energy Minister Ali Akbar Mehrabian said his ministry welcomes foreign investment in the country's renewable energy industry.

Speaking in the Second Belt and Road Energy Ministerial Conference which was held by the National Energy Administration of the People's Republic of China (NEA) through video conferencing, Mehrabian said: "The current government has a four-year plan to increase the capacity of the country's renewable power plants by 10,000 megawatts."

Referring to Iran's potentials and capacities in the renewable energy industry, the official announced the country's readiness to attract investment to develop the renewable energy industry for a green and inclusive energy future in Iran.

According to the former Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, the country has great potentials in the field of renewable energies and can have a significant role in developing the region's market for such energies.

"Relying on the high potential of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, etc., the Energy Ministry has planned good measures in order to implement new policies for creating positive changes in the development of the country's renewable energy sector," Ardakanian has said.

And in last November, the head of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA) said that in line with the plan for generating 10,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity from renewable sources through domestic and foreign investment, the private sector has already announced its readiness for generating 32,000 MW.

Speaking in a news conference, Mahmoud Kamani said that the private sector's readiness in this due is expected to rise for generation of 60,000 MW of electricity.

TSE's main index drops 2,000 points in a week

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 2,000 points (less than one percent) to 1.282 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

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

The Money and Capital Market Committee of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) hosted a meeting with Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) Head Majid Eshqi on January 30 to discuss the capital markets' current issues and challenges.

The meeting was attended by the members of the mentioned committee as well as the representatives of some of the companies active in the stock market.

Lack of sufficient training for shareholders, facilitating the entry of new companies into the stock market, offering bonds by the capital market instead of banks to provide fixed and working capital for production units, accelerating the formation of credit rating companies in the stock market, and tax exemption for undistributed dividends of companies, as well as pricing problems, were some of the most important issues pointed out by the businessmen and officials attending the mentioned meeting.

Government Economic Coordination Headquarters in its meeting in the last week of January approved five new resolutions for supporting the country's stock market, and the directives in this regard were sent to relative ministries, First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber announced at the time.

The mentioned resolutions include the reduction of petrochemical feed prices, the reduction of interbank interest rates, the restriction of the sale of securities, preventing the increase of government mining salaries, and the increase of the exchange rate of banks.

According to Mokhber, the decisions made in the meeting of the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters have been communicated with Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandozai, Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Reza Fatemi-Amin, Oil Minister Javad Oji, Head of Planning and Budget Organization (PMO) Masoud Mir-Kazemi, and Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Ali Saleh-Abadi.

Speaking about the positive impacts of the mentioned decisions on the capital market, Finance Minister Ehsan Khandozai said that the mentioned resolutions carry the message of government's serious support for industries and indicate stable economic activity, predictability of variables, and ultimately a positive outlook for the economy in the coming months.

period of this year, indicating also 19.4 percent growth in terms of weight.

He named petrochemicals, steel products, aluminum ingots, cement, foodstuffs, and agricultural products as the main commodities exported from the province in the first ten months of this year, and Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Germany, India, Turkey, Ukraine, Pakistan, Poland, Syria, Russia, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Malaysia, Belgium, Kuwait, Austria, Oman, Indonesia, UAE, Burkina

Faso, Italy and Armenia as the export destinations.

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

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

TEHRAN – Iranian capital Tehran will host the 17th meeting of Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Committee during February 21-22.

The meeting will be held in the framework of Iran-Kazakhstan economic cooperation in the fields of trade, agriculture, transportation, energy, investment, as well as technical, and cultural cooperation.

Iran's Agriculture Minister Javad Sadati-Nejad will be the Iranian chairman of the meeting.

A high ranking Kazakh delegation, accompanying with the managing directors of the country's 25 top private companies active in different areas will attend the mentioned meeting.

The 16th meeting of Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Committee had been held in Kazakhstan capital Nur-Sultan in October 2019, in which the two sides inked an economic cooperation document.

In mid-October 2021, Tehran had also hosted an Iran-Kazakhstan business forum during which the two sides stressed the need for removing visa issuance and transportation obstacles, to realize a \$6-billion annual trade target.

The business forum was attended by senior officials from both sides including the Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam Hossein Shafeie, Kairat Torebayev, Kazakhstan's vice minister of trade and integration, Kazakh Ambassador to Tehran Askhat Orazbay, and ICCIMA Deputy Head Mohammadreza Karbasi, as well as the head of Iranian chambers of commerce and businessmen from the two

Tehran to host Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Committee meeting next week



sides.

As reported by ICCIMA portal, members of the Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Chamber of Commerce, representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI), the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), and the Agriculture Ministry were also present at the event.

Speaking in the meeting, Shafeie underlined the two countries common cultural and

religious backgrounds and said: "Our relations with neighboring countries have a special priority for the government, and Kazakhstan, as one of the largest countries in Central Asia, has an important place for us in Iran's foreign policy."

"In the last two years, despite the coronavirus pandemic the borders of the two countries were never closed and commercial goods were exchanged

Potential for development of trade between Iran, Kazakhstan high

‘Reviving idle production units a major approach of government in industry sector’



TEHRAN- The head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) said that reviving the idle production units is a main approach of the government in the industry sector.

The government, with the help of the private sector and enterprises, is seriously pursuing the solution of the problems of production units, and very good planning has been done in this regard, Ali Rasoulia stressed.

He mentioned two important and priority programs of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade in relation to industrial parks as providing infrastructure and supporting small businesses and enterprises, and said that 2,023 projects related to providing infrastructure of industrial parks in the country, including water, electricity and gas supply, with 60 trillion rials (about \$230.7 million) of credit is underway in different parts of the country.

The ISIPO head also announced that 390 infrastructure projects worth 11.4 trillion rials (about \$43.8 million) were inaugurated during the Ten-Day Dawn (February 1-11) celebrations, which marked the 43rd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, and many other projects will be put into operation by the yearend.

He further mentioned the establishment of small and medium-sized workshops throughout the country as another priority

of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

The official has recently announced that 1,717 idle industrial units have been revived in the industrial parks and zones of the country since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021).

Rasoulia said the figure is hoped to reach 2,000 units by the end of the present year.

Putting the number of idle units in the industrial parks and zones at 12,067 at the moment, the official said that 62 percent of these units can be revived.

The number of idle units has dropped 18 percent in the current year, he added.

The ISIPO head has previously announced that 1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to the production cycle in the industrial parks with a financing of 35 trillion rials (nearly \$130 million), providing employment for 27,000 people, in the last Iranian calendar year.

With the aim of reactivating stagnant units or units that are operating below capacity, 900 consultants from the private sector and knowledge-based companies were selected in the form of industry clinics across the country to recognize the weaknesses of these units, Rasoulia stated.

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

Sanctions have caused problems for financial exchanges and the export of goods to other countries, he said, adding, "The negative effects of coronavirus pandemic

on various parts of the country, including industry, are not hidden from anyone, and the economic growth of some countries has reached below zero during this period."

Iran is proud that despite these restrictions and pressure from these two important challenges, its industry has grown by more than seven percent, according to the statistics and reports from various sectors, the official further highlighted.

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

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

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

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

through water borders," Shafeie added.

He stressed that given the resources and capabilities of the two countries in various fields such as oil, gas, and shipping in the Caspian Sea, petrochemicals, agriculture, metals, minerals and chemicals, animal husbandry, construction materials, and technical services and engineering, bilateral relation with the Republic of Kazakhstan has special significance for Iran.

"Especially given the active presence of Kazakhstan in global interactions, as well as its membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Shanghai Agreement, the potential for the development of trade relations between the two countries is more than before," the official said.

Further in the forum, Orazbay stated that holding this event on the eve of the 30th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence is of special importance for the country, adding: "Kazakhstan is not only the largest country in Central Asia but also the largest economy among them. At present, Kazakhstan is one of the 50 most developed countries in the world, and with the plans made, we want to become one of the top 30 countries in the world in the future."

Torebayev for his part noted that Iran and Kazakhstan have always had friendly social, cultural, and political relations and are close to each other.

"The possibility of communication by rail, sea, and air between the two countries has brought their relations closer together," he stressed.

1,557 idle, semi-active units returned to production cycle in past year

Export from North Khorasan province rises 102% in 10 months on year

TEHRAN – As announced by a provincial official, the value of export from North Khorasan province, in the northeast of Iran, rose 102 percent during the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-January 20, 2022), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Mohammad Badri, the director-general of the province's governorate's office of economic affairs, announced that 334.2 million tons of products worth \$137.8 million were exported from the province in the ten-month

period of this year, indicating also 19.4 percent growth in terms of weight.

He named petrochemicals, steel products, aluminum ingots, cement, foodstuffs, and agricultural products as the main commodities exported from the province in the first ten months of this year, and Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Germany, India, Turkey, Ukraine, Pakistan, Poland, Syria, Russia, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Malaysia, Belgium, Kuwait, Austria, Oman, Indonesia, UAE, Burkina

Faso, Italy and Armenia as the export destinations.

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



period.

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

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

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

The United Arab Emirates was the top exporter to Iran in the said period, followed by China, Turkey, Germany, and

Switzerland, he stated.

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

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

Is the U.S. pushing for war in Ukraine?

From page 1 ► Observers also note the sharp ongoing uptick in spreading concern and uncertainties serves to harm the eurozone economy and allow more capital flight from the continent to the U.S. where inflation has hit decades-long highs.

Some analysts have also suggested Washington is stirring up trouble with Russia in an effort to use the tension to damage Moscow's ties with its allies such as China and Iran; however so far this approach appears to have failed.

Ukraine has regularly denounced America's war rhetoric saying the language is only hurting Kiev. Last month, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy criticized his American counterpart Joe Biden saying "I am the president of Ukraine, I am here and I know more details and I have deeper knowledge than any other president".

Ukraine has also called on Washington to end its war "hysteria" warning it is damaging the country's economy.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has slammed the West's remarks, telling the Russian news outlet RT "I am certain that even casual observers of foreign policy have long confirmed to themselves that all of it is propaganda, fake news, fiction".

The top diplomat added, "If they enjoy [making such claims], let them take their time getting the pleasure".

The Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has strongly criticized Washington's persistent announcements that an offensive is on the horizon.

She also pointed out that Ukraine has expressed doubt over claims an incursion is looming and Kiev is asking the West to end the doomsday warnings.

Responding to U.S. intelligence reports that a Russian invasion is imminent, Zakharova questioned "what kind of intelligence is this? What kind of an embarrassment is this? Reports that an invasion is



imminent or about to happen," she continued "The next minute, it turns out there is no absolute certainty that it is imminent, but yet there is already a date: in 48 hours, from 24 hours, maybe on the 15th or 16th, maybe at 1 AM, maybe at 4 AM."

She adds "maybe [U.S. officials] think it is normal to use a situation like this for some kind of revenge, something went wrong, and they need to push countries... to condemn people to torment, to suffer again, just to stroke their own ego, and among other things, are willing to go so far as to provide their own president with such distorted, falsified intelligence".

According to the Kremlin, the West has left the situation near Russia's borders in such a state that "the risk of moving from mud-slinging to consequences that would cause a new outbreak of war in the immediate vicinity of our borders is always lurking".

According to the Kremlin even if that is the case, "Russia maintains a responsible position and awaits dialogue from its partners".

Lavrov is reportedly set to meet Blinken late next week.

Russia on the other hand has also published its reply to the U.S. response to Moscow's security proposals in December to defuse tensions.

The Russian Foreign Ministry says "The U.S. side has failed to provide a constructive response to the basic points of the draft treaty on security guarantees of the part of the U.S. prepared by

the Russian side".

The ministry added, "the U.S. side deliberately chose the issues that it feels comfortable to discuss, which raises doubts that Washington is willing to settle the European security issue".

It adds that "the U.S. unwillingness to agree on strong and legally binding guarantees" and by ignoring Russia's "red lines" as well as Washington refusal to address legally binding guarantees regarding Russia's security may force Moscow to respond including "through the implementation of measures of a military-technical nature", according to a copy by the Russian State News agency.

Elsewhere, the Russian Foreign Ministry says the conflict in eastern Ukraine is purely an internal Ukrainian matter noting "the loss of territorial integrity by the Ukrainian government is the result of internal processes in that country" adding no Russian military boots have entered Ukrainian territory, especially since 2014 when the conflict broke out.

The document points out Russia has no plans to invade Ukraine and that U.S. forces must withdraw from Russian borders adding that the deployments of troops within Russia's own territory "do not and cannot concern the fundamental interests of the United States".

In its response, Russia also added that NATO's "open doors policy" violates security; the U.S. and NATO's eastward expansion violates both the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe

(CFE) and the 1997 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security between Russia and NATO.

Moscow insisted on the withdrawal "of all U.S. armed forces and weapons deployed in Central and Eastern Europe, Southeastern Europe, and the Baltics," noting it violates the principle of indivisibility of security which the U.S. committed to under the treaties that established the Organization for European Security Cooperation; most notably to "not to enhance their security at the expense of the security of others".

The document also points out there was no response by the U.S. about the Russian proposal to withdraw nuclear weapons from NATO member states that are capable of hitting Russia; something that violates the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT).

Meanwhile, in a statement, Russia's defense ministry has said President Vladimir Putin will personally oversee exercises of Moscow's strategic deterrence forces, including ballistic and cruise missile launches meant to simulate a nuclear attack.

The annual strategic Grom drills will take place on Saturday "under the supervision of Russian Armed Forces Supreme Commander-in-Chief Vladimir Putin. Ballistic and cruise missiles will be launched in its course."

The exercises coincide with the final day of Russia's Allied Resolve military drills in Belarus.

The ministry said the Russian drills will "involve forces and hardware belonging to the Aerospace Forces, the Southern Military District, the Strategic Missile Forces, the Northern Fleet, and the Black Sea Fleet".

It adds that "deterrence forces drills are aimed at checking the preparedness of military commands and crews of missile systems, warships and strategic bombers to accomplish their missions and at verifying the reliability of weapons of strategic nuclear and conventional forces".

Whoever has been in charge of America's foreign policy should hang heads in shame: American writer

'U.S. is addicted to foreign meddling and military actions'

From page 1 ► season trying to eject country club globalists from the Republican Party, promoting conservative economic policies and candidates, reaching out to moderate Democrats and trying to attract support from independents.

On the one hand, Trump might relish returning to the White House as President to undo Joe Biden's already disastrous missteps and "policies". But given his age and the range of his business interests, opportunities and family obligations, he may ultimately choose to play kingmaker and decide to remain a potent power behind the throne.

Either way, Donald Trump will remain a strong force with which domestic and foreign interests must reckon.

Many political observers believe Republican measures under Trump's leadership will put U.S. democracy at risk. What is your comment?

The United States is, in fact, a republic and not a democracy. In 2020, if we are to believe reported results, millions more voted than in any prior election, so there is scant evidence that is credible to suggest that potential voters were denied voices then.

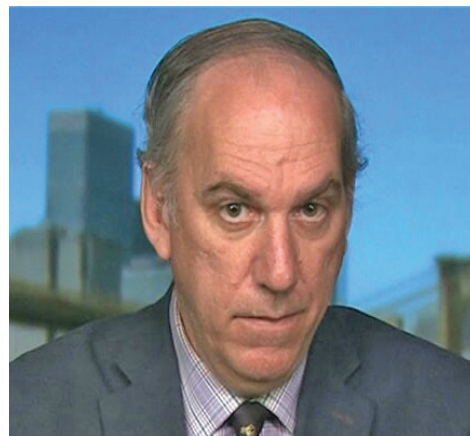
If anything, the biggest threats to freedom inside the United States emanate from overreach by our gargantuan government that is left unchecked by captured corporate media, academia and multinational corporations who are each enthralled with unchecked, crony globalism.

Don't you think the current division in the U.S. is dangerous to its future?

The biggest danger inside the United States is that our education bureaucracy puts blinders on students who are, sadly, encouraged not to learn from the mistakes and triumphs seen in history inside and outside our country.

The division you speak of is a false contest, designed to distract attention from issues that affect all of us across the political spectrum. These include assaults against private-sector workers and incomes, overreach by our surveillance apparatus, and addiction to foreign meddling and military actions.

In truth, a sweeping trend that gathers force now is a rejection of both established political parties and growing belief that independents



can work together, as we certainly must, to solve vexing problems at home not simply wallow in misery asking for more and more resources but never checking to see how effectively these sums are spent.

How do you describe U.S. foreign policy in recent decades? Cooperative or militant?

In a word, incompetent.

In 1992, the United States was the sole superpower with a national debt and annual government deficit that both were trending downward.

It seems people in street don't care about U.S. foreign policy. However, who are the main foreign policy decisionmakers? Hawkish politicians or lobbyists?

The perpetual and vast bureaucracies in our State and Defense Departments, and in our National Security complexes seem impervious to regulation or control. Its actions are cheered on by media, academia and think tanks, and supported by the donor class who all too frequently benefit in material ways by choices to intervene and/or to stand down.

Until conflict erupts, you are correct to say that most Americans are much more preoccupied providing for their own families here at home.

Perhaps we all should have listened far more closely to America's founders who warned, 'beware foreign entanglements' at a time when America was insulated by two vast oceans.

Whoever has been in charge of America's foreign policies should hang heads in shame.

New scientific review punctures myth of missile defense

A new study from the American Physical Society, the nation's leading organization of physicists, concludes that despite 65 years of efforts and the expenditure of over \$350 billion, "no missile defense system thus far developed has been shown to be effective against realistic ICBM threats." Current and planned systems are incapable of defending the United States against even a limited attack by North Korea. They are even less capable against the more sophisticated weapons fielded by China and Russia.

As the study notes, "the explosion of even a single nuclear warhead over a major U.S. city would be an enormous disaster, potentially killing a million people and reducing 100 square miles to rubble." None of the defenses produced or deployed by the United States could prevent such a catastrophe.

The study could have significant repercussions in Congress which approves some \$20 billion a year for "missile defense and defeat" programs under the erroneous perception that these weapons work or soon could work against nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Weapons designed to intercept short- and medium-range missiles, such as the Patriot and Aegis systems, have shown success in tests. Very short-range defense, such as the Iron Dome system fielded by Israel, are said to



have great success in intercepting rockets that travel tens of miles, though there has been no independent verification of these claims. Long-range missiles, however, present a much more difficult challenge.

Missiles that fly more than 3000 kilometers (1860 miles) travel outside the atmosphere for much of their trajectory and re-enter at high velocity, many times greater than the speed of sound. ICBMs — missiles that fly more than 5500 km (3400 miles) — fielded by China and Russia are quit sophisticated and can use "technologies specifically designed to defeat current and future U.S. defenses against ballistic missiles, such as maneuvering warheads, multiple independently targeted warheads, and hypersonic glide weapons," the study notes. These two nations may also soon field weapons that can defeat any known

defense systems "such as short-range ballistic missiles launched from ships off U.S. coasts, nuclear weapons launched on fractional-orbit trajectories, nuclear-armed uncrewed underwater vehicles, or nuclear-armed cruise missiles."

The detailed study, though, looked at defending against a single, more basic North Korean ICBM or a salvo of 10 such missiles. This is the focus of current U.S. missile defense programs. After a comprehensive analysis of the capabilities of the North Korean forces, including the counter-measures North Korea has likely developed, the authors found that even a defense against this limited threat is not effective and is not likely to be effective for the next 15 years.

Specifically, the scientists examined the \$90 billion Ground-Based Mid-Course Defense

system, consisting of 44 interceptors based in Alaska and California. This system is designed to "hit a bullet with a bullet," destroying the warhead in the middle of its flight as it travels through the cold and darkness of space. While this capability has been shown in tests against simple targets, the deployed system has such grave issues with reliability, could be crippled by attacks on its radars, and is so vulnerable to defeat by simple countermeasures, such as decoys, that it "cannot be expected to provide a robust or reliable defense against more than the simplest attacks by a small number of relatively unsophisticated missiles," such as the Hwasong-15. "The ability of any missile defense system to do this reliably has not been demonstrated," the scientists note, as no system has ever been tested against realistic counter-measures, including decoys, chaff, or radar-absorbing coatings.

As recent tests have demonstrated, North Korea is moving beyond this baseline threat. U.S. intelligence estimates that North Korea "is likely already capable of launching a more sophisticated attack," the

study notes. So the scientists also examined two new ideas for adding to the deployed systems.

The first are interceptors designed to hit an enemy missile in its boost-phase, the initial period of flight when the rocket engines are firing, launching the nuclear warhead into space. This could theoretically solve the problems with mid-course interception as the missile would be hit when it is slow, hot and vulnerable rather than fast, cold and disguised. They found that any of the proposed systems using interceptors launched from ships, aircraft or from land face "very difficult technical challenges" that render them "unable to defend the entire continental United States."

Space-based systems, also designed to intercept enemy missiles in their boost-phase, fare no better. This type of defense "would require many hundreds of weapons orbiting on space platforms to theoretically defend against a single North Korean ICBM, and thousands to defend against five ICBMs launched within a short time." The cost to field these weapons would be enormous and they would be "vulnerable to being

disabled by anti-satellite weapons."

The scientific study is the first independent report on missile defenses from the APS since the physicists studied boost-phase defenses in 2003 and directed energy weapons in 1987. Both studies concluded that these defensive systems were unfeasible in the foreseeable future. Their findings have been upheld by the failure of these systems since.

The current report concludes that creating a reliable and effective defense against the threat posed by even a small number of relatively unsophisticated nuclear-armed ICBMs "remains a daunting challenge." Specifically, "the difficulties are numerous, ranging from the unresolved countermeasures problem for midcourse-intercept to the severe reach-versus-time challenge of boost-phase intercept."

Though Gen. John Hyten testified to Congress when he was in charge of these programs in 2020 that he had "100 percent confidence in those capabilities against North Korea," the scientists found that "few of the main challenges have been solved, and many of the hard problems are likely to remain unsolved during, and probably beyond, the 15-year time horizon the study considered."

The science is clear: For the foreseeable future an effective defense of the nation against ballistic missiles will remain a fantasy.

(Source: antiwar.com)



Ancient post office named national heritage



TEHRAN – Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has recently registered a Chapar-khaneh (ancient post office) in Semnan province as national heritage.

Located near the town of Lasjerd, the centuries-old office along with 12 other historical relics scattered across the north-central province have been inscribed on the national cultural heritage list, CHTN reported on Friday.

Chapar-khanehs are no longer used in Iran today, but they can still be seen throughout the country mostly in the shape of ruins. The ancient Persian postal system was powered by horses that operated on a relay system, which made journeys more speedy and efficient.

Contrary to popular belief, the history and post and postage goes far back in time as Iranians, during the Achaemenid era (c. 550-330 BC), enjoyed an innovative efficient system, which remained a source of inspiration for subsequent generations. At its peak under the reign of Darius the Great, the Persian Empire stretched from Greece to India.

Prehistorical Iranians were able to deliver messages from one end of the gigantic Persian Empire, which stretched from Ethiopia,

through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), Central Asia, or India just within a few days using couriers on horseback.

According to reliable sources, a message could be sent from Susa, the administrative capital of the empire in western Iran, to Sardis, which is now situated in what is now western Turkey, in between seven and nine days, traveling through the then Royal Road, a sort of highway connecting the two cities.

As mentioned by the Encyclopedia Iranica, the celebrated Greek historian Herodotus described the system in the days of the Achaemenid King Xerxes (r. 486 to 465 BC): "Now there is nothing mortal that accomplishes a course more swiftly than do these messengers, by the Persians' skillful contrivance. It is said that as many days as there are in the whole journey, so many are the men and horses that stand along the road, each horse and man at the interval of a day's journey; and these are stayed neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed. The first rider delivers his charge to the second, the second to the third, and thence it passes on from hand to hand? ..."

In that era, the post was a government service for carrying official correspondence in sealed bags though routes occasionally disrupted by war, rebellion, or simply lacking security.

In addition, postal riders and messengers played a particularly important role in gathering intelligence throughout the empire. For instance, among their duties was escorting government officials to their posts.

After the fall of the Sassanian Empire in the 7th century CE, the Persian system of message delivery was practiced more or less both by invaders like the Arabs and Mongols, and the indigenous dynasties that followed like the Safavids, Zands, and Qajars.

Tehran webinar to discuss Eastern Hemisphere rituals, anthropology



TEHRAN – Tens of sociologists, anthropologists, and historians are scheduled to discuss rituals and humanities of the Eastern Hemisphere in a day-long webinar to be held today.

According to organizers, the Tehran webinar will discuss the anthropological understanding of Eastern cultures in Japan, China, Korea, Iran, Afghanistan and India, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Indonesia, Turkmenistan, Mongolia, Malaysia, and other countries.

Moreover, the experts will exchange views on the significance of anthropological studies in Iran, and ways it could contribute to sustainable development in the country.

The event is organized to mark World

Anthropology Day which is typically celebrated every year on the third Thursday in February, allowing anthropologists to celebrate their discipline and share it with the world.

Anthropology is the study of humans, human behavior, and societies in the past and present. Anthropologists take a broad approach to understand different aspects of human experience. Their goal is to understand our human origins, our distinctiveness as a species, and our great diversity. There are many reasons for the study of anthropology. Studying humans, societies, and their behaviors provides a better understanding of our world. The past is studied to help interpret the present.

Anthropology is divided into three subfields; the sociocultural aspect that deals with interpreting the content of particular cultures, the biological aspect that studies a variety of aspects regarding human biology, and archeology which turns the spotlight on the remains of the past and present cultural systems.

Furthermore, studying these subfields allows anthropologists to use each other's knowledge to better understand why humans act the way we do, and how it affects our physical, cultural, and social environments.

The people of Gilan from different ethnic groups, including Gilak, Talesh, and Tat, have come together and formed a very rich and diverse culture and customs.

In 2019, Gilan was selected as the first province to start the country's comprehensive tourism plan, which is being developed under the auspices of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The comprehensive plan is aimed to serve as a roadmap to guide tourists from all over the globe to achieve a sustainable and competitive tourism market.

Tehran, Tunis eager to expand cultural ties



TEHRAN – Iran's deputy minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Pouya Mahmoudian on Wednesday met with Tunisia's Ambassador to Tehran Samir Al-Mansar to discuss ways to expand ties in areas of cultural heritage and ancient arts.

"Cooperation in the field of arts and handicrafts will lead to the deepening, strengthening, and consolidation of relations between Iran and Tunisia," Mahmoudian said.

The Tunisian envoy praised Iran's "successful" performance in the field of commercialization of handicrafts and emphasized strengthening cooperation and establishing trade channels between the two nations.

Also, Mahmoudian proposed working out a memorandum of understanding to be inked by ministers of the two countries, which was welcomed by the Tunisian ambassador.

"We are interested in using Iran's experience in the field of commercialization and exchanging information in the field of Handicrafts," Al-Mansar stated.

"We welcome your proposal to formulate a memorandum of understanding, and we are ready for that."

Moreover, the officials exchanged views on how to hold joint exhibitions and exchange experts.

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 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.

570 relics including millennia-old objects confiscated by border security agents

TEHRAN – Iranian authorities have confiscated 570 relics some of which date from the first millennium BC from a cargo truck before it crosses an Iran-Turkey border.

"A truck carrying a large number of coins and antiques, some of which were 3,000 years old, was stopped by customs agents and about 570 items of antiques and coins were discovered before leaving the country," ISNA quoted Seyyed Ruhollah Latifi, spokesman for the customs, as saying on Friday.

The truck, whose cargo was declared as home furniture shipping to Canada, was inspected by customs experts at the Bazargan border and before leaving the country for Turkey, and more than 570 pieces of historical objects such as books and coins were discovered, the official explained.

The recovered relics include 18 pieces of bronze related to the first millennium BC, an antique dagger, seven glass teardrop containers, 322 pieces of silver coins, 87 pieces of copper coins, 6 pieces of wire alloy.

Moreover, the haul of relics includes 59 pieces of rare coins, 36 pieces of album coins,



two oval agate seals with Kufic scripts, a porcelain vase, 15 Qajar coins, a copper coin commemorating Baqer Khan (a key figure in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution), a one-dollar coin minted in 1845, 12 silver spoons, a brass samovar, a wooden camera, a plate bearing a portrait of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, three brass trays dating from 1889, a gilded copy of Quran, and a rare storybook.

From a historical perspective, Iran has long played a significant role in the region. The country's roots as a distinctive culture and society date to the Achaemenian period, which began in c. 550 BC. From that time the region that is now Iran—traditionally known as Persia—has been influenced by waves of indigenous and

foreign conquerors and immigrants, including the Hellenistic Seleucids and native Parthians and Sasanids. Persia's conquest by the Muslim Arabs in the 7th century CE was to leave the most lasting influence, however, as Iranian culture was all but completely subsumed under that of its conquerors.

According to Britannica, an Iranian cultural renaissance in the late 8th century led to a reawakening of Persian literary culture, though the Persian language was now highly Arabized and in Arabic script, and native Persian Islamic dynasties began to appear with the rise of the ?hirids in the early 9th century. The region fell under the sway of successive waves of Persian, Turkish, and Mongol conquerors until the rise of the Safavids.

With the fall of the Safavids in 1736, rule passed into the hands of several short-lived dynasties leading to the rise of the Qajar line in 1796. The country's difficulties led to the ascent in 1925 of the Pahlavi line, whose ill-planned efforts to modernize Iran led to widespread dissatisfaction and the dynasty's subsequent overthrow by the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

UNWTO offers support to member states for tourism revival

TEHRAN – The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has said it provides support with member states to gain tourism revival.

"UNWTO is supporting communities as they prepare to welcome visitors back and realize the potential of tourism to kickstart recovery and drive sustainable and inclusive growth," the UN body said in a press release.

The World Tourism Organization has said it has developed technical assistance packages to help revive COVID-battered tourism businesses.

"As restrictions on travel continue to be steadily eased or lifted, UNWTO is shifting its focus from supporting its members as they mitigate the impacts of the historic crisis to rethinking tourism's longer-term role in building resilience and providing opportunity. Through Technical Assistance packages,



UNWTO is on the ground in every global region."

The UN body added that the tourism sector has started recovering from the impacts of the pandemic. "UNWTO is working alongside local authorities on a package of technical advice and practical assistance."

The World Tourism Organization is the United Nations specialized agency fostering tourism as a vehicle for equal, inclusive, and sustainable development. Working with its

Member States, international organizations, and the private sector, UNWTO promotes safe and seamless travel for all.

Furthermore, UNWTO works to make tourism the foundation of trust and international cooperation and a central pillar of recovery. As part of the wider UN system, UNWTO is at the forefront of global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through its ability to create decent jobs, promote equality and preserve natural and cultural heritage.

Back in January, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said Iran is one of the main hubs for tourism in the world due to its multicultural nature, capabilities, and diversity in the field of tourism. "In terms of tourism and handicrafts, Iran can contribute to the World Tourism Organization's goals and

programs," he added.

Pololikashvili made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami on the sidelines of Fitur 2022 in Madrid.

Iran was ranked as the second fastest-growing country in tourism based on data compiled by the World Tourism Organization. Experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

The Islamic Republic 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.

Gilan exports \$9.6m of handicrafts in year

From page 1 ► The lush green province is known for its tourist attractions and warm-hearted and hospitable people.



The sophisticated capital city of Rasht has long been a weekend escape for

residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

From the historical perspective, Gilan was within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenian, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE. The subsequent Arab conquest of Iran led

to the rise of many local dynasties, and Gilan acquired an independent status that continued until 1567.

Moreover, Gilan is well-known for its rich Iron Age cemeteries such as Marlik that have been excavated over the past century. It was once within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenian, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE. The subsequent Arab conquest of Iran led to the rise of many local dynasties, and Gilan acquired an independent status that continued until 1567.

TEHRAN – More than 35 percent of Gorgan Bay at the south-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea has dried up. Dredging of canals leading to the bay has been announced as one of the solutions, but some experts believe that it needs assessment, considering the topographic conditions of the region.

Covering an area of about 400 square kilometers, the Gulf of Gorgan also known as Gorgan Bay, is located near the cities of Behshahr, Gorgan, and Sari and is separated from the main water body by the Miankaleh peninsula and extends until the Ashuradeh peninsula.

Geological evidence has shown that the Gulf of Gorgan had not yet formed about 2,600 years ago when the water level of the Caspian Sea was 22 meters high, and during the Little Ice Age, at the altitude of 24 meters, the Miankaleh Peninsula began to form and the Gorgan Bay was created.

The ecology of Gorgan Bay is affected by the Caspian Sea, adjacent rivers, and the Miankaleh Peninsula, which play an important role in the growth and reproduction of aquatic, bony, and cartilaginous fish and the attraction of migratory birds.

Therefore, it can be said that Miankaleh Peninsula and Gorgan Bay are environmentally and geographically inseparable.

The bay has a unique, but fragile, biodiversity and not only has valuable cartilaginous fish, white fish, and mullet but also provides a significant share of caviar needed by the country.

But this valuable water basin has been struggling with drought, as the Caspian Sea has dropped by about 25 cm

Will dredging save Gorgan Bay?



over the past 5 years, which has caused more than 35 percent of Gorgan Bay to dry up.

However, earlier the former deputy director of the Department of Environment, Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, said that a five-year plan has been prepared and announced to the related bodies, to solve the problems of Gorgan Bay and Miankaleh wetland.

The solutions approved for Gorgan Bay are compiled 5 years ago, the water level of the Caspian Sea has dropped by about 25 cm since that time, and the plans such as dredging may no longer be the right

solution as the conditions have changed.

The credit predicted for the implementation of this program in 2016 is not sufficient anymore, and it should be doubled, he stated.

Considering the downward trend of the Caspian Sea level in 2021 which has increased almost 3 times compared

to 2020, amounting to 12 cm drop, does dredging guarantee that the Caspian Sea water will be transferred to Gorgan Bay?

Therefore, it seems that dredging does not make sense, and assessment is required, he further noted.

According to forecasts, by the end of the current century, the water level of the Sea will decrease by 9 to 18 meters, making trafficking impossible through the Ashuradeh and Chap Oghli canals, while Golestan province will also lose access to Gaz and Turkmen port.

In addition to the impacts of climate change, global warming, and increased evaporation.

“Comprehensive management of this coastline should be in accordance with field evidence and engineering studies, for example, if dredging is to take place, new hydrography should be carried out on the Caspian Sea and Gorgan Bay to determine the difference in elevation.

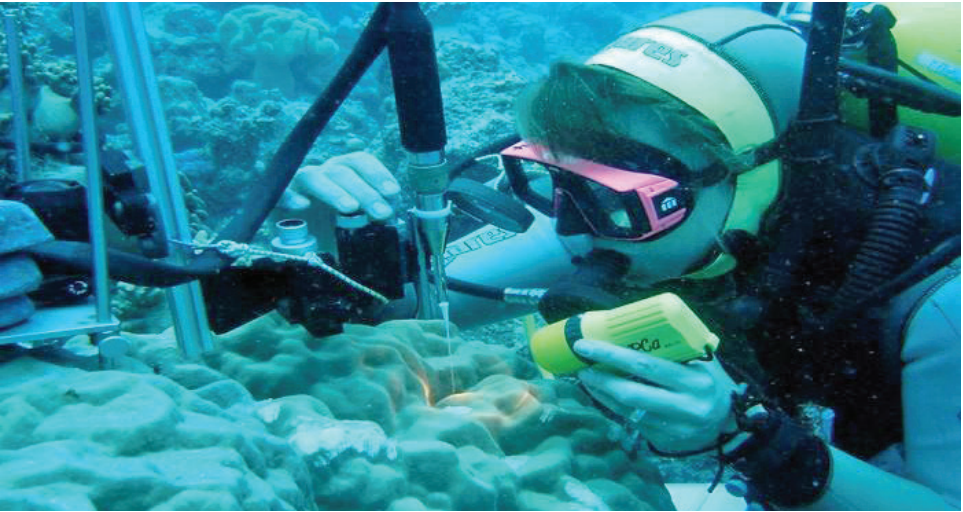
Another issue is that we must have a safe canal at the best point, which is where the Caspian topography is at a suitable slope so that if the water level goes down, artificial canals and motor pumps drive water to the Bay,” he suggested.

Valuable ecological complex

Gorgan Bay was designated as a Ramsar site (defined by the Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value) along with Miankaleh Wetland.

The bay and its surrounding area are recognized as a valuable ecological complex in the world which had a direct impact on the livelihood of local communities in addition to conserving the marine life cycle. Ashuradeh Island, which hosts a variety of native and migratory birds throughout the year, was also introduced and registered as one of the world's first biosphere zones in 1975.

Marine biotechnology nascent, growing in Iran



From page 1 ► This sub-sector is very young and is currently being driven and developed through National and EU projects that support and encourage this vital research-intensive area.

Hoda Khaledi, Ph.D. in marine biotechnology, said that marine biotechnology is the use of aquatic organisms such as sea bacteria, algae, oysters, and fish to obtain new medicine and identify specific genes that produce valuable biological products.

“For example, we identify the active ingredient in a marine organism and measure its effect on bacteria or on the production of a substance required for human health or nutrition. Either we amplify a gene through transmitters such as some viruses and insert it into a living organism, or isolate that chemical or metabolite, to

find out which component is effective,” she explained.

“Iranian biotechnologists can obtain a variety of biological materials from the sea, including diagnostic kits for diseases, pesticides, medicines, cosmetics, foods, and enzymes.

One of the advantages of this new science is related to the ancient life in the sea. We see biological processes in the body of marine organisms that are not similar to those on land, and on the other hand, the stable environmental conditions of the sea allow marine organisms to experience specific pathways for the production of metabolites in their bodies,” she said.

This field trains students up to the doctorate degrees, she concluded.

“Noora” vaccine produces strong neutralizing antibodies: study

TEHRAN – The results of the first and second phases of the clinical trial showed that “Noora” vaccine produces very strong neutralizing antibodies against coronavirus.

Developed and produced by Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, affiliated with the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Noora is a recombinant protein vaccine.

The studies show that a suitable immunity is provided to the candidates in the first phase of the clinical trial for up to four months.

According to the research team of Noora, it is one of the most suitable vaccines for the third jab, which has high effectiveness of about 90 percent and produces a high amount of antibody.

The current monthly production capacity of the vaccine is about three million doses.

Domestically-made vaccines

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

Made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, COVIRAN BARKAT was unveiled on December 29, 2020, and received the license for public use on June 14.

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



the Order of the Imam.

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

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

Iran is one of the few countries that has all vaccine production platforms, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, former head of the Food and Drug Administration, said in June 2021.

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

COVID-19 UPDATES ON FEBRUARY 18

New cases	19,317
New deaths	187
Total cases	6,913,427
Total deaths	134,607
New hospitalized patients	2,566
Patients in critical condition	3,842
Total recovered patients	6,427,388
Diagnostic tests conducted	46,466,138
Doses of vaccine injected	138,883,111

Deadly wildfires and noise pollution among critical environmental threats, UN warns

Wildfires are more severe and frequent and urban noise pollution is growing into a global public health menace, the UN has warned.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Frontiers Report raises fears that wildfires and noise pollution, as well as disruptions to natural life cycles, are causing serious ecological consequences, the Independent reported.

The document states an average of about 423 million hectares of the Earth's land surface – an area about the size of the entire European Union – burned each year between 2002 and 2016.

“An estimated 67% of the annual global area burned by all types of fires, including wildfires, was on the African continent,” it added. “Dangerous wildfire weather conditions are projected to become more frequent and intense and to last longer, including in areas previously unaffected by fires.

“This is due to climate change, including hotter temperatures and drier conditions with more frequent droughts. Land-use change is another risk factor, including commercial logging and deforestation for farms, grazing land, and expanding cities.”

Wildfires also generate black carbon



and other pollutants that can pollute water sources, cause glacier melt, trigger landslides and large-scale algal blooms in oceans, and turn carbon sinks such as rainforests into carbon sources.

The report also highlights the health impacts of unwanted, prolonged and loud sounds in urban areas. This includes chronic annoyance and sleep disturbance, resulting in severe heart diseases, diabetes, hearing impairment, and poorer mental health.

Noise pollution already leads to 12,000 premature deaths each year in the EU and affects one in five EU citizens. It is also a threat to animals, altering communications and the behaviour of various species, including birds, insects, and amphibians.

“The Frontiers Report identifies and of-

fers solutions to three environmental issues that merit attention and action from governments and the public at large,” said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP.

“Urban noise pollution, wildfires and phenological shifts – the three topics of this Frontiers report – are issues that highlight the urgent need to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.”

The report also warns of phenological mismatches – disruptions in the timing of life cycle stages in natural systems.

Plants and animals in terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems use temperature, day-length or rainfall as cues for when to unfold leaf, flower, bear fruit, breed, nestle, pollinate, migrate or transform in other ways.

Phenological shifts occur when species shift the timing of life cycle stages in response to changing environmental conditions altered by climate change.

These phenological shifts are increasingly disturbed by climate change, pushing plants and animals out of synch with their natural rhythms and leading to mismatches, such as when plants shift life cycle stages faster than herbivores.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

5,000 clunker garbage trucks move in Tehran at night

Some 5,000 clunker trucks, aged over 40 years, move across the city of Tehran during the night to collect wastes, Tehran Governor Isa Farhadi has announced.

The renovation of the garbage collection fleet requires high amount of budget; this is while the Municipality of Tehran cannot afford the cost and the issue needs urgent measures, he stated.

He went on to say that the vehicles are extremely old resulting in huge amount of emission and contributing to air pollution.

“We tried to replace the clunker trucks with new ones, however, there is a large number of trucks that replacing the whole fleet is not nearly possible for Tehran traffic and transport affairs directorate,” he added.

Clunker garbage trucks aged 40 years or above which travel through the capital at night amounts to 5,000, he concluded.

۵۰۰۰ کامیون زباله‌کش قدیمی شب‌ها در تهران تردد دارند

فرماندار تهران از وجود ۵۰۰۰ کامیون زباله‌کش که شب‌ها در تهران تردد دارند و عمرشان بیش از ۴۰ سال است، خبر داد.

به گزارش خبرنگار اجتماعی خبرگزاری فارس، عیسی فرهادی گفت: نوسازی این ناوگان هزینه بسیاری دارد که از توان ما و سازمان شهرداری خارج است و باید فکری برای آن اندیشیده‌شود.

اکنون میانگین سن این خودروها بالا رفته است و به تبع آن آلودگی‌های ایجادشده نیز افزایش خواهد یافت.

فرماندار تهران افزود: ۵ هزار کامیون زباله‌کش شب‌ها در تهران تردد دارند که سن آنان بالای ۴۰ تا ۴۵ سال است. در جلسات گذشته تلاش شد که راهکاری اندیشیده‌شود تا این خودروها جایگزین شوند، ولی متأسفانه خودروهای سنگین تعدد بسیاری دارند که انجام این کار از توان ما و معاونت حمل و نقل ترافیک شهرداری تهران خارج است

TEHRAN TIMES



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He is the wisest and the most knowing man who advises people not to lose hope and faith in the Mercy of Allah and not to be too sure and over-confident of immunity from His Wrath and Punishment.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:18 Evening: 18:08 Dawn: 5:21 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:45 (tomorrow)

What’s in Tehran art galleries

* Bavan Gallery is hosting an exhibition of artworks by a large group of artists, including Parmis Hakimi, Mitra Soltani, Hossein Tadi, Sama Rahmani, and Tarlan Tabar.

The exhibit named “Paper: Revelation Space” will run until March 14 at the gallery that can be found at 7 Abdo off Lareztan St. off Motahhari Ave.

* Shirin Gallery 2 is hosting an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Mansur Nosrat Nezami.

The exhibit entitled “Simplicity in Complexity” runs until April 12 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

Painting

* Sohrab Gallery is showcasing a collection of paintings by Firuzeh Bakhtiari.

The exhibit named “Psalms” will be running until March 1 at the gallery located at 142 Somayyeh St.

* A collection of paintings by Shohreh Haqiqi is on display in an exhibition at Inja Gallery.

Entitled “Confrontation”, the exhibit will run until February 28 at the gallery located at 4 Pedram Alley, Neauphle-le-Chateau St.

Sculpture

* A collection of sculptures by Ali Asghari is on display in an exhibition at Sheis Gallery.

The exhibition named “Figure” will be running until February 24 at the gallery located at Shirzad Alley, near Daneshju Park.

میرزا سلطانی
پیمان شفیعی زاده
حسین طادی
نوبت عطیعی سجادی
شیما قراقرانی
طرلان لطیفی زاده
کیمین مه آبرادی
سحر نیراوندی نژاد

مریم اسپندی
مجیدی امیری
شبیده تاجی
نوا تبار
نوا ثابت ابراهیمی
پارمیس حکیمی
مصطفی دره باغی
اسما رحمانی

Iran seeks pure and Islamic cinema, minister says

From Page 1 ► A national cinema institution such as the Farabi Cinema Foundation plays a significant role in strengthening the Iranian-Islamic film industry, he noted.

The Iranian cinema should be helped by the cooperation and mutual assistance of the economy and culture, and the board of trustees of the foundation should exploit its maximum operational and executive capabilities, he explained.

Taking steps to promote Iranian cinema can be made possible with the cooperation of the related

organization, he mentioned.

Speaking at the meeting, FCF Managing Director Seyyed Mehdi

Javadi highlighted the most recent trends in world cinema and cultural and economic

characteristics.

He also pointed to the position of Iranian cinema in terms of production and economy in the region and explained what the foundation's future plans will be.

Founded in 1983, Farabi Cinema Foundation is the biggest organization in the Iranian film industry and the leading company in the fields of production, international distribution, and promotion.

Farabi also acquires foreign films for release on video, television, and in theaters in Iran.

\$114m allocated to unfinished cultural, artistic projects

TEHRAN –Some 30 trillion rials (over \$114 million) has been allocated to the semi-finished arts and culture-related projects, the culture minister has announced.

A total of 14 provinces will receive the budget to spend on the art and culture projects that have not yet been completed, Mehr quoted Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili as saying on Thursday.

Many semi-finished cultural and artistic

projects in provinces need to be completed and made available to the public, he added.

In order to promote major activities in this field, the cultural infrastructure must be strengthened, he explained.

He also noted that in response to complaints regarding the lack of budget in the culture and arts sector, this issue will be considered in the national budget bill for the next calendar year (starting March 21).

“Azazeel” comes to Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – Egyptian scholar and columnist Youssef Ziedan's 2008 book “Azazeel” has been published in Persian.

Published by Qoqnus, the book has been rendered into Persian by Fariba Hazbavi.

Based in upper Egypt, Alexandria, and northern Syria in the fifth century BC, “Azazeel” presents a parallel fight between the new religion (Christianity) and its believers, on the one hand, and the old pagan religions and their followers, on the other.

Another parallel fight occurs inside the monk Hiba, whose life

is a constant struggle between the earthly and the heavenly elements, the pagan and the Christian.

In religious mythology, Azazeel is a name for Satan, which represents man's tendency to do evil things. In art, however, especially in poetry, the Arabic

word for Satan is Shaytan. When combined with the word ‘poetry’, it symbolizes the inspiration sources.

So Ziedan's Satan is all but negative, and has nothing to do with any rigid dogmas; it's a symbol of man's inclination to freedom, to dream and create.

Ziedan's “Azazeel” is far more complex than that of the religious mythologies: he tempts Hiba into doing evil things, only to prove through the monk's inner discourse that this evil is nothing but a human's purest repressed wishes.

The author has set tricky

tasks for his two protagonists, Azazeel and Hiba alike: Azazeel's tough challenge was to free a monk of his religious limits, and Hiba's challenge was to handle a conflict between his human and divine halves.

Ziedan's career as a researcher of religious scripts played an important part in reconstructing the world in which his novel is set. His characters move smoothly, both in their dramatic world and in the reality of fifth-century Egypt and north Syria.

The book received International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) in 2009.

Sadi: works and life

Part 3

None of these works can be considered panegyrics in the usual sense of the word, since they consist mostly of counsel and warnings concerning the proper conduct of rulers.

Less admonitory in tone are the poems that Sadi addressed to the long-time head of the chancery in Shiraz, Shams ad-Din Hosayn Alakani (d. ca. 1289).

He had been appointed to this post by the Il-Khanid general finance minister, Shams ad-Din Mohammad Jovayni Saheb Divan (killed 1284). He is celebrated some of Sadi's finest qasidas, along with his brother, Ala ad-Din Ata Malek Jovayni (d. 1283), the author of the Jahangosha-ye Jovayni.

Two treatises commonly included in Sadi's collected works (though clearly not by his hand) discuss his meeting with the Jovayni brothers and the Il-khan Abaqa in Tabriz during the poet's return home from a pilgrimage to Mecca.

In several older manuscripts of Sadi's works, there is also a collection of poetic fragments entitled the Sahebiya in honor of Shams ad-Din Mohammad.

Although Sadi spent the final decades of his life in Shiraz, his poetry and reputation spread throughout the Persophone world, traveling even to places that he probably never visited in person.

In India, his lyric poetry in particular made a significant impression on the two master poets of Delhi in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, Amir Khosrow (1253-1325) and Hasan Sijzi (d. 1336).

In his Qeran al-sadayn, Khosrow chides himself for aspiring to write poetry during Sadi's lifetime: “In the age of Sadi—may it never grow old—aren't you ashamed to compose poetry?”

Hasan concludes a ghazal with a signature verse that plays on the name of Sadi's most famous work and acknowledges his pervasive influence on all lovers: “Hasan has brought a flower from Sadi's Golestan, for the true of heart are all plucking flowers from that garden.” In Anatolia, Sayf ad-Din Mohammad al-Farghani (d. first quarter of 14th century) not only translated Sadi's Golestan into Turkish, but also composed several Persian qasidas in his

honor.

In a poem that Sayf composed on sending some samples of his poetry to Sadi, he confesses that in his eagerness to please, “I didn't realize that it is foolishness to send copper to a gold mine”.

Perhaps the last dateable poem in Sadi's works is the short qasida dedicated to Majd ad-Din Rumi, who served as an administrative official in Shiraz under the Il-Khan Arghun between 1287 and 1289.

Sadi died a few years later. Early sources give death dates ranging from 1291 to 1299. In a detailed review of the evidence, Nafisi concludes that Sadi died on 27 Zul-hejja 691/9 December 1292.

Later medieval biographical compendia, such as Dowlatshah's Tazkerat al-sho'ara and Jami's Nafahat al-ons, agree on the year 691, but place the event in the month of Shawwal/15 September-2 October 1292.

The oldest surviving credible record is the Tarikh-e gozida (composed 1330) by Hamd-Allah Mostowfi, and based on this and other 14th-century sources, Z. Safa opts for a date a year earlier, Zu'l-hejja 690/25 November-22 December 1291.

This earlier date has the advantage of helping to account for variations in the chronograms written on Sadi's death; since he died in the last month of the year, commemorative chronograms might memorialize either the actual year of death or the following year, at the conclusion of the 40-day period of mourning.

Although Sadi's works are an unreliable guide to his biography, his biography, at least in its general outlines, may tell us something about his works and the worldview that informs them.

Sadi lived through one of the most eventful and traumatic centuries in the history of Asia and the Middle East. The expansion and consolidation of Mongol power was marked by the destruction of old centers of culture and civilization, the upheaval of established political institutions, and the mass migration of populations.

Mere survival demanded luck, wit, determination, and practical savvy. Sadi met

the challenges of his age by adept and constant motion. In his early years, this motion was physical; as an itinerant scholar and increasingly respected poet, his mastery of language and literate culture allowed him to move from place to place and in and out of mosques, markets, and palaces.

He maintained a social mobility even after settling in Shiraz. His works show that he was in regular contact with the ruling circles of the city, but he apparently never joined the court in a formal capacity, and reports that he resided in a Sufi hospice (khanagah) despite his influence, status, and access to the wealthy seem plausible.

These circumstances help account for the breadth and variety of the world depicted in his work from the mansions of the elite to street life among the poor.

More importantly, the course of his life also seems to have contributed to the attitude of detached engagement that characterizes his work.

The irony, humor, and charity of judgment that are often found in his writings result from an ability to maintain multiple perspectives and an awareness of his own fallibility.

This detachment is nevertheless informed by a commitment to certain core values: concern for the suffering of others (especially the less privileged), awareness of the fragility of life, and faith in a moral reckoning both in this life and the next.

Sadi's concern for social welfare requires an engagement with the politically powerful, but also a circumspect caution and a willingness to adapt principle to the particular situation at hand.

Similarly, the works acknowledge the need for religious authority, but also recognize the hypocrisy and self-righteousness that often accompany it.

Despite the dire times through which the author lived, Sadi's works project a joy and vitality that seems to grow from his full participation in two capacities that most make us human: love and language.

(Source: Encyclopedia Iranica)
(To be continued)