

Trading Partners on Alert as Vienna Talks Inch Forward

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Report



Munich Security Conference: Opportunity to clarify Iran's strategy

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian arrived in Munich on Friday to participate at the annual Munich Security Conference (MSC).

Upon his arrival, Amir Abdollahian told the Iranian TV that he is in Munich to clarify on Iran's foreign policy.

"We are in Munich to clarify our balanced foreign policy, declare Iran's political positions on regional issues, and concentrate on the Vienna sanctions-removal talks," he said.

He added that he hopes the Iran-P4+1 talks would result in a "good" agreement in the "near" future.

"We need to have various talks with several countries for post-good agreement stages to prepare all sides to return to their JCPOA commitments," he noted.

The JCPOA — or the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — is the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal.

Amir Abdollahian added that there are still some unresolved issues in Vienna.

"We still face some unresolved issues in the Vienna talks. What is related to Iran, and the active initiatives Iran has put on the negotiating table, we are close to reaching a good agreement. The Westerners need to show their real initiatives with flexibility. This will determine whether the Vienna talks will bear fruit in the coming days or the coming weeks," he reiterated.

Later, the foreign minister met with UN Secretary General António Guterres, and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference. ► Page 2 [STAY UPDATED #MSC2022](#)

Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari wetlands hosting 80 species of birds

TEHRAN — Some 80 species of migratory birds have come to winter in wetlands of the southwestern Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, Shahram Ahmadi, the provincial department of environment chief, has stated.

Currently, about 90,000 aquatic bird species are inhabiting in Choghakhor, Gandoman, Solqan, and Aliabad wetlands, he said.

According to Ahmadi, about 140,000 birds migrated to Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari wetlands this year, and with the freezing of Gandoman and Choghakhor wetlands, more than 50,000 moved to the southern regions of the country and the shores of the Persian Gulf.

These birds are from the family of storks, white and brown herons, ducks, Eurasian teal, egrets, flamingos, Grebes, coots, Bitterns, northern lapwing, gulls, and terns, he explained, IRIB reported on Saturday.

Gandoman wetland, stretching to 1,070 hectares, is located in Borujen county. It is one of Iran's top five birdwatching sites and the country's most important permanent habitat for migratory birds.

Located in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, Choghakhor wetland is flowing on 1687 hectares, being designated as a hunting restricted area. It is also a birdwatching site that supports more than 47 bird species, with breeding populations of migratory birds such as the Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*). ► Page 7

Hezbollah shocks Israel again with "40-minute" drone mission



Lebanon's Hezbollah Resistance movement has launched a drone reconnaissance mission named "Hassan" inside the occupied Palestinian Territories

According to Hezbollah, the reconnaissance mission extended for a length of 70 km

north of occupied Palestine

Hezbollah says despite all the enemy's multiple and successive attempts to bring it down, the "Hassan" plane returned safely to Lebanon.

According to Hezbollah, the drone toured the target area for 40 minutes during its

"successful" reconnaissance mission.

Lebanese media affiliated with Hezbollah say the "Hassan" drone is not the first reconnaissance plane sent by the resistance to occupied Palestine and it will not be the last. ► Page 5

Iran-EU trade rises 9% in 2021

TEHRAN — The value of trade between Iran and the European Union reached €4.863 billion in 2021, registering a nine-percent growth compared to the previous year.

According to the data released by the European Union's statistics office Eurostat, the trade between Iran and the European Union

during 2020 stood at €4.458 billion, Tasnim news agency reported.

Iran exported €922 million worth of commodities to the union during January-December 2021 to register a 29-percent rise year on year.

Based on the mentioned data, the ex-

ports from Europe to the Islamic Republic in the said year also increased by five percent, standing at €3.941 billion.

Iran had imported €3.745 billion worth of commodities from the European Union states in 2020, while exporting €713 million to the region. ► Page 4

Gholi Fallah named Iran's flag bearer at 2022 Winter Paralympics

TEHRAN — Elaheh Gholi Fallah was named as flag bearer for Iran at the opening ceremony of the 2022 Paralympic Winter Games in Beijing.

She was flag bearer for Iran at 2018 Paralympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang.

Iran will send four Para skiers to the Games which will be held from March 13 to 14.

Gholi Fallah was only Iranian woman to qualify for the Paralympic Winter Games. Vision impaired from the age of five, due to fluid in the brain and a tumor, she has long refused to let her disability define her.

Six months after losing her sight, she started riding a bicycle and was soon going out on her own, despite her parents' understandable fury. Track and field followed at school but then came Para Nordic skiing and the opportunity to change her life and the lives of others.



37th Fajr Music Festival wraps up with honoring Barbad Awards winners

TEHRAN — The 37th Fajr Music Festival ended on Friday evening with honoring the winners of the Barbad Awards, which are presented to top musical productions of the year. ► Page 8

Ancient potteries probably exposed by flash flood discovered in Susa

TEHRAN — Local guards in charge of protecting cultural heritage have discovered three ancient potteries which had probably been exposed to sunlight due to a flash flood in Susa, southwest Iran.

"Following recent downpours, guards of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Unit discovered three potteries during their [routine] through inspection across the historical site of Beitol-Mashhout in Susa," IRNA quoted a

local police commander in charge of cultural heritage protection.

"The objects, which were obtained with the keenness and vigilance of the protection unit personnel, are three pottery objects that, according to the initial estimates, date from the (early) Islamic era," Ramin Maknavi said. Early in January, a series of torrential rain triggered flooding in southern provinces of the country.

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Interview



Days of the only superpower in the world are gone: Russian expert

By Mohammad Mazhari

THRAN — A Russian expert believes that China and Russia would strengthen their alliance in case of Western sanctions on Moscow.

"Days of the only superpower in the world are gone," Stanislav Mitrakhovich from the National Energy Security Fund and the Financial University tells the Tehran Times.

"China and Russia strengthen their alliance that is almost formed. Pushing Russia even closer to China would be a super great mistake of the West."

United States President Joe Biden has said he is "convinced" that Russia's Vladimir Putin has made a decision to invade Ukraine, warning Moscow against starting what he called a "war of choice" that would be catastrophic.

But the U.S. president said the door for diplomacy remains open. Until war breaks out, "diplomacy is always a possibility," Biden told reporters on Friday.

Since November 2021, both NATO and EU officials have repeatedly voiced their concerns about Russia's military concentration, warning that Moscow will face serious consequences and heavy sanctions if Ukraine is attacked.

"As for harsh sanctions, if it excludes trade blockade (including energy), then these sanctions are not harsh by design. If sanctions aim at electronics as the biggest threat, China will inevitably help Russia, although it takes time and efforts to organize a technological transfer," Mitrakhovich notes. ► Page 5

MP: Iran turned down U.S. request for direct negotiations in Vienna

TEHRAN — A legislator has said the U.S. delegation had asked Iran's top negotiator for thirty minutes of direct talks, but Ali Bagheri rejected the offer.

Speaking in an interview with Mehr on Saturday, Seyyed Mahmoud Nabavian said that the situation has now reached a point where the Iranian people must allow the United States to enter into negotiations or not.

"The United States is now knocking on doors and has appealed to China, Russia, Germany, Britain, France and some countries in the region to persuade Iran to enter into direct talks with the United States. We do not give them this permission and right. This is the authority of the Iranian nation in the world, and the Islamic Republic of Iran determines which countries remain behind the negotiating table and which countries are participants in the negotiating table," he noted. ► Page 2

Iran warns support for MKO will backfire on Europeans

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian human rights official on Friday warned Europe that its support for the anti-Iran terrorist Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) will backfire on them just like the Daesh terrorist group.

Kazem Gharibabadi, the Judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs and secretary of the High Council for Human Rights, censured the European Parliament for backing the MKO members by referring to them as "political opponents".

It is shameful for members of the European Parliament to pursue their own political interests and turn a blind eye to the crimes committed by the MKO, which has killed over 12,000 innocent Iranians and still continues its terrorist activities while freely traveling through European countries, he stated.

"The Europeans should know that as their support for Daesh has backfired on them in a way that more than 4,000 Daesh members were European citizens and created insecurity for them, their support for the MKO will equally be costly," the Iranian human rights chief cautioned, Press TV reported.

Gharibabadi said the United States and Europe have committed the most heinous crimes against Iran by supporting terrorist groups, sheltering them and excluding them from the list of terrorist groups as well as imposing or implementing unlawful and oppressive sanctions.

"The European Parliament and European countries must stand accountable for their human rights violations against Iranians. They are in no position to preach others in the field of human rights," the top rights official stated.

After it was founded more than 50 years ago, the MKO launched a campaign of bombings and assassinations in Iran. Out of the nearly 17,000 Iranians killed in terrorist attacks over the past four decades, about 12,000 have fallen victim to the group's acts of terror.

In a report in November 2018, the British newspaper Guardian reported that Saddam Hussein, who was fighting a bloody war against Iran with the backing of the UK and the U.S., saw an opportunity to deploy the MKO fighters against the Islamic republic. In 1986, he offered the group weapons, cash and a vast military base named Camp Ashraf, only 50 miles from the border with Iran.

For almost two decades, under their embittered leader Massoud Rajavi, the MKO staged attacks against civilian and military targets across the border in Iran and helped Saddam suppress his own domestic enemies. But after siding with Saddam - who indiscriminately bombed Iranian cities and routinely used chemical weapons in a war that cost a million lives - the MKO lost nearly all the support it had retained inside Iran. Members were now widely regarded as traitors.

For most of its life in exile, the MKO was funded by Saddam. After his downfall, the group says it raised money from Iranian diaspora organizations and individual donors. The MKO has always denied it is financed by Saudi Arabia - but Prince Turki al-Faisal, former director of Saudi intelligence agency, made waves when he attended the group's 2016 rally in Paris and called for the fall of the Iranian government.

"The money definitely comes from Saudis," says Ervand Abrahamian, a professor at the City University of New York and author of the definitive academic work on the group's history,

Raisi, Macron consult on Vienna talks

TEHRAN — Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his French counterpart held phone talks on Saturday afternoon over the ongoing nuclear talks in Vienna intended to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

The telephone conversation comes as talks have reached a delicate stage and hopes have risen for restoring the multilateral agreement.

President Raisi told Macron that if the agreement is revitalized, all false claims against Iran should come to an end.

In the conversation, Raisi noted that Iran has put forward constructive proposals during the Vienna talks and has examined the proposals put forward by the other parties on the basis of their compatibility with the interests of the Iranian people.

The president said that the Iranian delegation has repeatedly stated that Tehran welcomes

The Iranian Mojahedin. "There is no one else who could be subsidizing them with this level of finance."

After the U.S. invasion of Iraq, it launched a lavish lobbying campaign to reverse its designation as a terrorist organization - despite reports implicating the group in assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists as recently as 2012, the Guardian said.

Rajavi has not been seen since 2003 - most analysts assume he is dead - but under the leadership of his wife, Maryam Rajavi, the MEK has won considerable support from sections of the U.S. and European right, eager for allies in the fight against Tehran.

The cultish group is currently based in Albania, where it enjoys freedom of activity after being delisted by the European Union and the United States in 2009 and 2012, respectively.

Regardless of its disrepute around the world, the MKO has in recent years held numerous big events, attended by senior American, Israeli and Saudi officials, including former U.S. Senator John McCain, former Mayor of New York City Rudy Giuliani, former U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton, former U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman, and Turki bin Faisal Al Saud.

Bolton, who has made multiple appearances at events supporting the group, is estimated to have received upwards of \$180,000. According to financial disclosure forms, Bolton was paid \$40,000 for a single appearance at the Free Iran rally in Paris in 2017.

An Albanian historian and journalist said in a tweet on Thursday that the country's police have alerted the U.S. embassy that the MKO members are involved in various criminal activities in Europe, including human trafficking, with possible links to Daesh.

Olsi Jazexhi, citing Albanian media reports, said some MKO operatives, headed by the terrorist group's leader Maryam Rajavi and based in a camp near the capital Tirana, have attempted to traffic over 400 of the group's own members to France.

'Politically-motivated'

Gharibabadi also denounced a recent resolution by the European Parliament on death penalty in Iran, saying it is based on political goals and fails to represent the existing realities in the country.

"This resolution encompasses distorted and fabricated issues and is not consistent with the existing realities in Iran, but it has been prepared with completely political purposes."

The official said the execution penalty is being implemented in 55 countries throughout the world and urged the European Parliament and European countries to respect other nations' laws and cultural diversity when it comes to human rights issues.

According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the death penalty is permissible when it comes to capital crimes, he said, criticizing the Europeans for imposing their own standards on other countries in contradiction to their sovereignty.

Europeans must learn to respect national sovereignty of other countries and know that they cannot support their criminal citizens and demand their release through threats, the Iranian official said.

initiatives that guarantee and protect the rights of the Iranian people.

He added, "Political pressures or claims have been made to maintain pressure on the Iranian people and undermine the prospect of reaching an agreement."

Raisi stressed that any agreement in Vienna should include the lifting of sanctions, the provision of a valid guarantee and the closure of political issues and claims.

Raisi noted the history of Iran's interaction with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the numerous reports by the UN body confirming the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities are a testimony to the falsification of allegations against Iran by certain countries.

For his part, French President Emmanuel Macron said that "good progress has been made in the Vienna talks and we hope that the talks will be concluded as soon as possible."

Munich Security Conference: Opportunity to clarify Iran's strategy

From page 1 ► In the meeting with Guterres, the two sides discussed issues of mutual interest including the latest developments in the Vienna talks.

Amir Abdollahian said constant talks and consultations have helped bring the views of the negotiating partners closer together.

The ongoing talks are aimed at lifting the illegal sanctions imposed on Iran during the Trump administration.

Stressed the seriousness and intensity of the talks, Amir Abdollahian said progress in the negotiations is significant but the other side has yet to make serious political decisions and show determination in practice about some key issues in order to secure the rights and interests of Iran.

For his part, Guterres touched on the Vienna talks to revive the JCPOA.

'Iran's red line should be observed'

"We are all looking forward to an agreement being signed and implemented as soon as possible by the negotiating parties that will be acceptable to all sides and ensure the interests of Iran," the UN chief said.

In his meeting with the German foreign minister, Amir Abdollahian reiterated that Tehran has been serious to reach a good deal since day one, adding Iran expects the European sides and other signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal to carefully observe Tehran's red lines in mind and seek, after years of inaction, to play an effective role in restoring the legitimate rights of Iran as the party which suffered losses due to Washington's unilateral and illegal withdrawal from the 2015 agreement.

The Iranian foreign minister rejected some comments about setting fake deadlines, stressing Iran believes the quality of an agreement should be assessed within the context of time.

"If Iran's legitimate demands are heeded today, it will be possible to reach an agreement in Vienna," he noted.

He emphasized it is essential that the other side not to make any miscalculations in these final steps and not taint the negotiations with media campaigns.

For her part, Baerbock reviewed the breakthroughs made in Vienna, adding the talks are at a sensitive juncture and that it is necessary that all sides make utmost efforts to pass this phase in the shortest possible time and usher in a new chapter.

She stressed that Iran's rights must be respected, calling for redoubling efforts to reach a good



Iranian F M Amir Abdollahian (R) meeting his German counterpart Baerbock (L) on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference

deal in Vienna.

FM reviews Afghanistan, Yemen situation with top officials

In his meeting with the UN chief, the two sides also discussed issues in the West Asia region.

Regarding the situation in Afghanistan, the foreign minister underlined the need for the continuation of delivering humanitarian aid to the people of the country.

Amir Abdollahian also said forming an inclusive government in Afghanistan with the participation of all political groups is vital and very effective for the resolution of Afghanistan's problems.

The top Iranian diplomat further lamented the continuing influx of refugees from Afghanistan to Iran, dangers of the spread of terrorism in the country, and drug production that will affect stability and security of the wider region and the whole world.

He stressed the need to expand and strengthen UN assistance and the services of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to Afghanistan's neighbors, most notably Iran.

As for the current situation in Yemen, Amir Abdollahian also said the issue has reached a critical point and political efforts to resolve the crisis and prevent the continuation of the humanitarian catastrophe in the country should be maximized.

He further referred to the importance of the role of UN Secretary General in this regard and underlined the need to resolve the crisis in Yemen and end the aggression and war on the country.

Guterres also expressed pleasure with the opportunity to engage in direct consultations and exchange views with the Iranian Foreign Minister.

Guterres said, "We also think that the government of Afghanistan should be really inclusive and not a show, and we believe a single-ethnic government is no solution to the

problems in Afghanistan."

The UN Secretary General expressed the deep gratitude of the world body and the international community to Iran for its approach to the plight of Afghan refugees that has reached a critical and dangerous situation.

Guterres stressed that the UN is aware that the humanitarian aid delivered to Iran is limited, stressing the need to increase and strengthen global support and assistance to the Islamic Republic for Afghan refugees and asylum seekers and underlined the necessity to pursue this issue.

He also spoke about the concerns of the international community about the growing rise of terrorism in Afghanistan.

The world's top diplomat also stressed the need to address issues such as the right of Afghan girls and women to education.

Guterres then stressed the need to prevent economic collapse in Afghanistan, which would have consequences for stability and security of the country, the wider region and the whole world.

Reaffirming Iran's concerns regarding the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and the continuation of war in the country, the UN chief also said the continued humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen is a blow to the world. He suggested that peace and stability must be restored to Yemen.

Guterres emphasized that all parties and countries must help achieve a political solution to the Yemen conflict.

Saudi Arabia, along with the UAE, have been striking Yemen since March 2015. When declaring the war on Yemen to reinstate the pro-Riyadh regime in Sanaa, Saudi Arabia claimed it would restore the situation in the Arab country in a matter of weeks. The war has only led to the destruction of Yemen's infrastructure, the miseries of the Yemenis, and a humiliation of the Saudi-led coalition among other things.

Iranian, German foreign minister call for close ties

Amir Abdollahian also discussed regional issues with his German counterpart Baerbock.

At the meeting, the top Iranian diplomat recalled that it was his first meeting with her after she was named the new German foreign minister. Amir Abdollahian congratulated her on the top job and wished her and the German government success.

The top German diplomat, in turn, expressed her gratitude to the Iranian foreign minister for his remarks and welcomed comprehensive ties between the two countries.

She said her country is determined to forge closer ties with Iran.

In the meeting, some issues of mutual interest, including regional and consular issues, were also discussed.

Amir Abdollahian further touched upon the history of Iran-Germany cooperation, and expressed Tehran's readiness to hold a meeting of the two countries' joint commission at the earliest opportunity.

He added Iran is prepared to enhance economic, political, cultural and scientific interactions with Germany. Amir Abdollahian also called for expanding cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries.

Similarly, Iran's foreign minister and his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani met in Munich to discuss regional and bilateral issues.

During the talks, Iran's foreign minister stressed the significance of exemplary relations between the two sides, expressing hope a planned visit by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to a meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) in Doha will help boost reciprocal ties.

Iran's top diplomat also elaborated on Iran's humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and the necessity of helping Afghan people to weather the current difficult situation

The Qatari foreign minister, in turn, said Doha is expecting a state visit by Iran's president and his entourage.

He also touched upon the programs planned for the visit and said Doha stands ready to look to this trip as the basis for upgrading mutual relations.

He also presented a report on the latest measures adopted by his country with regard to the issue of Afghanistan as well as the current talks between the two countries.

MP: Iran turned down U.S. request for direct negotiations in Vienna

From page 1 ► He then went on to say that the Americans asked Ali Bagheri, the head of the negotiating team, for half an hour of direct negotiations, but the Americans have "no right to negotiate directly with the Iranian officials."

He added that the Americans raised a number of issues to justify direct negotiations with Iran.

"For example, they said that the High Representative of the European Union (Enrique Mora) does not have the expertise and cannot convey our remarks properly, and we have to enter into negotiations ourselves. They even said that the German, British and French negotiators were not very involved and started a series of justifications so that they could enter into direct negotiations with Iran, but Iran would not accept this in any way," the MP reiterated.

Europeans send messages to Iranian negotiators



Nabavian then went on to say that the European countries such as Germany, Britain and France, which think they are very powerful, have told the Iranian negotiators that sanctions are not related to them at all and is controlled by the United States and if Iran wants them to be removed, it has to negotiate directly with the United States.

"It is true that Germany, Britain and France are so humble and weak that they cannot withstand unilateral U.S. sanctions, but the question is why they themselves impose European Union sanctions on the Iranian people and what do these sanctions have to do with the U.S.?" the

legislator asked.

He added that sitting at the negotiating table with the United States will not solve any of Iran's problems.

"If Biden is right and wants to return to negotiations, he must first live up to his commitments and act," Nabavian said, adding that the United States is not trustworthy at all.

According to the MP, Iran has considered four types of legal, political, economic and inherent guarantees.

He noted that one of the assurances could be that the parliament or the congress of these countries approve their commitments, or that they must at least make a political statement that they accept the agreement.

"It should not be the case that they withdraw from the agreement again and apply the snapback mechanism whenever they want," Nabavian added.

He then went on to explain the political guarantee required by Iran.

The political guarantee is that the presidents or prime ministers of these countries must also make a commitment," he said.

According to the legislator, the economic guarantee is that foreign companies can come to Iran and easily invest in Iran without any problems.

"If the United States does not commit to its obligations, what is the value of the agreement?" he asked.

He then reiterated that the United States must make a commitment, and the Iranian negotiators must stand firm.

"We must no longer be deceived by the United States," Nabavian reiterated.

He then added that Iran is ready to reach an agreement "tomorrow" if the United States and the West live up to their commitments.

Iran FM meets foreign officials at Munich Security Conference

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, who is in Germany to attend the 58th Munich Security Conference, met several foreign officials on the sidelines of the global gathering.

Amir Abdollahian held a meeting with Slovenian President Borut Pahor to discuss the latest situation of bilateral ties and international issues of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the Iranian foreign minister pointed to the vast potentials for the expansion of bilateral ties in the economic and technical fields, expressing the Islamic Republic's readiness to convene the joint commission between the two countries.

Amir Abdollahian stressed Tehran's determination to create a balance in ties with different European countries and described relations with Slovenia as important.

For his part, the Slovenian president referred to his 2018 trip to Iran and meeting with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, saying the visit and the follow-up that ensued were signs of Ljubljana's will for an all-out expansion of ties with Tehran.

The two sides exchanges views on some regional and international topics of mutual interest, including the talks in Vienna.

In addition, the Iranian foreign minister met with Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, UN Secretary General António Guterres, and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.

Amir Abdollahian and Baerbock discussed bilateral, regional and international issues. In this meeting, Amir Abdollahian further touched upon the history of Iran-Germany cooperation on some areas of mutual interest, and expressed Tehran's readiness to hold a meeting of the two countries' joint commission at the earliest opportunity.

He added Iran is prepared for the enhancement of mutual relations on economic, political, cultural and scientific fronts as well as expansion of cooperation in technical fields and between the private sectors of both countries.

The two foreign ministers also exchanged views on the latest situation of talks in Vienna.

The Iranian foreign minister reiterated that Tehran has been determined to reach a good deal since day one, adding Iran expects the European sides and all signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal to carefully keep Tehran's red lines in mind and seek, after years of inaction, to play an effective role in restoring the legitimate rights of Iran as the party which suffered losses due to Washington's unilateral and illegal withdrawal from the 2015 agreement.

===== Indian credit line for Iran

Amir Abdollahian also met with his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. The two sides discussed the latest developments in bilateral relations and regional and international issues of mutual interest, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

During the meeting, the Foreign Ministers of Iran and India agreed on the development of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, regardless of the developments in Vienna.



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian (R) meeting Slovenian President Borut Pahor on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

In the meeting, referring to the vast capacities for the development and comprehensive expansion of relations between Tehran and New Delhi, Iran's Foreign Minister emphasized Tehran's readiness to implement the projects agreed between the two countries.

Amir Abdollahian expressed satisfaction with the recovery of the Indian foreign minister from Covid-19, noting that he is planning to visit Delhi at the earliest opportunity.

Amir Abdollahian expressed his hope that during the trip, good agreements will be reached for the development and promotion of bilateral relations, and consultation on some issues of common concern in the regional arena will be made.

The Indian Foreign Minister also reaffirmed his country's determination to develop cooperation with Iran in the fields of oil, industry, agriculture and trade. The Indian foreign minister stressed India's readiness to open a credit line for economic and trade cooperation.

The foreign ministers of the two countries also exchanged views on the latest situation in Afghanistan, emphasizing the common and close views of the two countries on the need to form an inclusive government with the participation of all political groups in Afghanistan.

Appreciating Bosnia human rights support of Iran

Amir Abdollahian also met with Biseria Turkovic, the foreign minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The foreign ministers of the two countries discussed issues of mutual interest. During the meeting, the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina thanked the Islamic Republic for its vital support during the war years and expressed the Bosnian people's appreciation for the government and people of Iran. She explained the latest developments in Bosnia and the need for the international community to assist Bosnia in overcoming the crisis.

She also expressed her country's readiness to develop relations with Iran.

In the meeting, Amir Abdollahian appreciated Bosnia's supportive positions for Iran in international forums, including on the issue of human rights. He underlined: "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always supported territorial sovereignty and convergence in Bosnia and does not consider it right to undermine national sovereignty in Bosnia."

During the meeting, the foreign ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Bosnia discussed some projects

and areas of cooperation, including the donation of vaccines by Iran to this country.

Consular issues raised

The Iranian foreign minister also met with his Swedish counterpart Ann Linde. During the meeting, the Foreign Ministers of Iran and Sweden exchanged views on bilateral relations and some issues of common concern in the regional and international arenas.

Amir Abdollahian expressed his satisfaction with meeting his Swedish counterpart again after their first meeting in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

He invited Linde to visit Tehran, which was welcomed by the Swedish side. Referring to the sensitivity of the situation in the West Asian region and the continuation of the crisis in Yemen and Afghanistan, the Iranian foreign minister stressed the situation in Yemen and said, "We are seriously concerned about the spread of the war in Yemen to the region, and the United Nations and the international community must fulfill their responsibilities to manage this situation and help resolve the Yemeni crisis."

Referring to Iran's continuous contacts with all parties to control the crisis in Yemen, Amir Abdollahian stressed: "The Yemeni people have been in a state of war and military aggression and inhuman siege for several years, which requires special attention from the international community to end this situation."

Referring to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the growing influx of refugees from the country, the Iranian foreign minister emphasized: "The Islamic Republic of Iran, as the host country of more than a few million Afghan refugees, cannot lonely bear the full burden of this crisis."

Amir Abdollahian referred to the continuous efforts and role of Iran to help establish stability and security in the region, including the formation of a government in Iraq as soon as possible. He also pointed to the ongoing hopeful talks in the Persian Gulf region to ensure and stabilize stability and security by the regional countries.

He also referred to some consular issues, including Hamid Nouri, and stressed that it was unacceptable that relations between the two countries should be targeted by the conspiracies of the terrorist group of hypocrites [MEK].

The Swedish Foreign Minister also expressed satisfaction with her second meeting with her Iranian counterpart and emphasized: "Four hundred years

of bilateral relations between Tehran and Stockholm and the presence of elite Iranians in Swedish society and two ministers of Iranian descent [in Sweden] indicate strong ties between the two countries."

Expressing hope for an increase in the regular exchange of official and diplomatic delegations between the two countries, the Swedish foreign minister announced her readiness to continue the current assistance of the country to the vaccination of Afghan refugees in Iran.

She also expressed hope that issues between the countries of the region in the Persian Gulf would move towards a political solution.

The foreign ministers of the two countries also exchanged views on the latest status of the negotiations on the lifting of sanctions on Iran in Vienna.

Amir Abdollahian informed his Swedish counterpart about Iran's principled positions in this regard and Tehran's serious will to reach a good agreement if the other parties act.

Meeting with Dutch FM

On the sidelines of the Munich conference, Amir Abdollahian also met with his Dutch counterpart Wopke Hoekstra to discuss the state of bilateral relations and some issues of mutual concern.

Amir Abdollahian stressed the need for the two countries to work to bring the views of Tehran and Amsterdam closer and to implement the agreements between the two countries to develop ties.

Amir Abdollahian explained the latest situation of the negotiations on lifting sanctions on Iran in Vienna and exchanged views with his Dutch counterpart in this regard. He underlined the position of Iran on the need to lift all sanctions inconsistent with the nuclear deal, JCPOA, and the need to respect Iran's red lines during the negotiations. Regarding the situation in Afghanistan and the priority of humanitarian aid and the situation of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers, the Iranian foreign minister stressed the need for the international community to fulfill its responsibilities towards the country.

Amir Abdollahian also referred to the complicated situation in Yemen and the fact that things are getting out of control there. He emphasized that the situation in Yemen is in no way in the interest of regional countries and it is necessary that all countries take responsibility and put an end to the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen and resolve the crisis through ending the war and military aggression and pursuing a political solution.

Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra also expressed pleasure with the meeting with Amir Abdollahian and said he hopes that he will travel to Tehran soon and exchange views and work closely with the top Iranian diplomat on the development relations as well as issues of mutual concern in the region.

Hoekstra also expressed hope that an agreement will be reached in the shortest possible time to move to a new situation, and stressed the Netherlands' readiness to expand relations and enhance cooperation with Iran.

SPORTS

Iran midfielder Ezatolahi misses Korea, Lebanon matches

TEHRAN – Iran international midfielder Saeid Ezatolahi will miss two matches against Korea Republic and Lebanon in the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification.



Ezatolahi, who currently plays for Qatar Stars League club Al Gharafa on loan from Danish Superliga club Vejle Boldklub, sustained ligament damage to his ankle in the match against Al Kharaityyat on Wednesday.

Ezatolahi will miss match against Korea Republic slated for March 24 in Seoul and match against Lebanon in Tehran five days later.

He is expected to be sidelined for six weeks.

AFC Asian Cup China 2023 qualifiers draw to be held on Thursday

TEHRAN – The draw for the final round qualifiers for the Asian Cup China 2023 will be made next Thursday February 24 with 11 qualifying places to play for.

The AFC's flagship men's national team competition was successfully expanded in 2019 to 24 teams and hosted in the UAE.

For 2023, 13 teams, including host China have already qualified from the first round of Asian qualifiers that also served as first round qualifying for the 2022 World Cup.

The final Group Stages will be played in June in centralized venues across all five AFC zones in six host nations – India, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia and Uzbekistan.

The six group winners and five best runners up will qualify for China 2023.

Qualifying matches will be played across three match days – June 8, 11 and 14, 2022, while the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 kicks off on June 16, 2023.

Portuguese forward Guedes linked with Persepolis: report

TEHRAN – Alexandre Xavier Pereira Guedes has been linked with a move to Iranian club Persepolis.

The 28-year-old player has most recently played in Polish club Raków Czstochowa.

Media reports suggest that Persepolis are going to sign Guedes but Persepolis club have not yet confirmed the news.

Guedes has played in Portuguese clubs Vitória Guimarães and Famalicao.

Persepolis sit second in the Iranian league, three points behind archrivals Esteghlal.

Mjøndalen goalkeeper Makani banned

TEHRAN – According to Norwegian media outlets, Iranian goalkeeper of Mjøndalen Soaha Makani has been banned for a month due to betting on the team's matches.

The disciplinary committee says it has been proved that the 35-year-old goalkeeper has violated regulations about betting.

The managing director of the club has also confirmed the issue, saying that Makani betted in 12 matches, PLDC reported.

The footballer has mainly betted on Mjøndalen matches and these were not necessarily for the victory of the team.

According to "drammens tidende" website, Makani also betted on individual features.

The website says Makani has betted in a total of nine matches that he had been on the pitch.

Ghorbani elected head of Iran shooting federation

TEHRAN – Morteza Ghorbani was elected as president of Iran shooting federation on Saturday for a four-year term till 2026.

In the elections held at the Iran's Academy Olympic in Tehran, Ghorbani secured 32 of 57 votes cast.

Habib Maghsoodi earned 18 votes and Reza Abolhasani came third with seven votes.

Ghorbani replaced Ali Dadgar in the position.

Shooter Javad Foroughi won a gold medal in Tokyo 2020 and it was Iran's first gold in shooting in the history of Olympics.

Saveh Shemshaki's positive test confirmed by CAS

TEHRAN – The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has formally confirmed that Iranian slalom skier Hossein Saveh Shemshaki has been expelled from the Games after a positive test for the anabolic steroid Oral Turinabol.

Shemshaki, a competitor in two previous Winter Olympics at Vancouver 2010 and Sochi 2014, had carried the Iranian flag at the Opening Ceremony.

He returned the positive test on February 7 – three days after the Opening Ceremony – and did not compete after being placed under a "mandatory provisional suspension".

Shemshaki's case was referred to arbitrator, Austrian judge Martina Spreitzer-Kropiunik at the CAS office in Beijing.

Spreitzer-Kropiunik heard evidence by video link before upholding the decision to disqualify the skier.

She also confirmed that "as the Athlete did not get to compete before the provisional suspension was imposed, there were no results to be disqualified and the Athlete should be declared ineligible to compete in all competitions in which he had not yet participated".

Shemshaki was ordered to leave the Olympic Village and surrender his Games accreditation.

He could still face further disciplinary action from the International Ski Federation for the offence.

Shemshaki has already admitted the offence and has asked for the "Iranian people forgive me for my negligence".

42nd Intl. Takhti Greco-Roman Cup to be held in Ahvaz

TEHRAN – The 42nd edition of the Takhti Greco-Roman Cup will be held in Ahvaz, capital of Khuzestan Province.

The competition is slated for February 23 to 25 February.

The Takhti Cup competition serves as qualification for the 2022 Asian Championships in Mongolia, 2022 Asian Games in China and 2022 World Wrestling Championships in Serbia.

The annual tournament is held in honor of late legendary Iranian freestyle wrestler Gholam Reza Takhti, who passed away half a century ago.

Nofallah crowned champions of Iran water polo league

TEHRAN – Nofallah water polo team won the title of the Iran Water Polo League on Saturday.

Nofallah defeated Azad University 14-12 in the final match and finished in the first place.

Naft Omidieh also defeated Raad Padafand Havaei 11-9 in the third-placed match.

The 31st edition of Iran Water Polo League was played in centralized format at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran.

Trading partners on alert as Vienna talks inch forward

TERHAN – The stage seems to be set for a leap in Iran's economic relations with many countries in the world, especially in light of the progress being made in the talks in Vienna.

Many countries in the world are heeding the progress as an encouraging signal to brace for resumption, and in many cases strengthening, of trade ties with Iran. This is evident from the meetings between Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and several foreign counterparts that was held on the sidelines of the 58th Munich Security Conference.

Many foreign ministers participating in the global gathering reiterated their countries' will to boost economic transactions with Iran in anticipation of a deal in Vienna, which is now closer than ever, according to press reports and official remarks. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Friday that he expects a deal with Iran to be announced next week.

And according to press reports, meetings in Munich between the Iranian foreign minister and his foreign counterparts are expected to put the final touches on the deal. Sources familiar with the Vienna talks told Qatari newspaper Al-Arabi Al-Jadeed that the talks between Amir Abdollahian and his E3 counterparts (Germany, Britain and France) during the Munich Security Conference would "constitute a very important, and perhaps final, station for the Vienna negotiations."

The sources added that "the Vienna negotiations are

awaiting what will result from the meetings between the Iranian foreign minister and some of his counterparts from the negotiating parties."

The sources pointed out that the Munich conference "will witness indirect negotiations" between Amir Abdollahian and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, stressing that the negotiators in Vienna "are waiting for the resolution of the sensitive points of contention in Munich."

These developments are not lost on economic operators who are willing to do business with Iran once the deal is announced.

Several foreign officials expressed interest in developing economic ties with Iran in their meetings with Amir Abdollahian. For instance, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar even voiced New Delhi's readiness to "open a credit line for economic and trade cooperation," according to an Iranian foreign ministry statement.

The Indian foreign minister said New Delhi was determined to forge closer cooperation with Tehran in oil, industrial, agricultural and trade domains.

Amir Abdollahian said he was planning to visit New Delhi at the earliest opportunity. The top Iranian diplomat expressed hope good agreements will be reached during that trip for enhancement of bilateral ties and consultations will be held on common issues of mutual interest at the regional level.

Iran-EU trade rises 9% in 2021

From page 1 ► Among European countries, Germany was Iran's top trading partner in 2021, accounting for about a third of Iran's trade with the European Union. Germany exported €1.449 billion worth of goods to Iran while importing €274 million worth of commodities from the Islamic Republic. The country's total trade with Iran was 1.723 billion euros.

Italy was Iran's second-biggest trading partner with €628 million euros of commodity exchanges. The country exported €450 million worth of goods to Iran while importing €178 million worth of products from the country.

The Netherlands stood in third place with a trade of €481 million. The country exported €443 million euros worth of goods to Iran and imported €38 million.

Iran mainly exports foodstuff and livestock, beverages and tobacco, raw materials, mineral fuels, and vegetable oils to the European countries, while foodstuff, beverages and tobacco, mineral fuels, vegetable oils, and chemicals are also the main products imported



from the union.

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

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

Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Economic Committee meeting to be held soon



TEHRAN – Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry is going to hold the 14th Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Economic Committee meeting in the coming days, an official with the country's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

Director-General of the TPO's U.S. and Europe Office Mohammad-Reza Karimzadeh said on Friday that the 14th Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Committee meeting will convene in Tehran on February 20-21, the TPO portal reported.

Expert committees have held talks in recent days to coordinate the preparation of the draft for a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two countries on economic, investment, customs, transportation, energy, health, scientific, technological, tourism, cultural and agricultural arenas, Karimzadeh said.

The official further noted that given the importance of enhancing relations between the private sectors of the two countries, the

organizers also plan to hold a seminar on trade opportunities of the two nations on the sidelines of the mentioned meeting at the venue of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on February 21.

As to the significance of the Joint Economic Committee meeting in developing the trade and economic relations between Iran and Uzbekistan, the Iranian official noted that Uzbekistan is one of the important destination markets for Iranian commodities.

Iran's exports to Uzbekistan have witnessed a growth in recent months, Karimzadeh said.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari said on February 17 that the Islamic Republic is going to hold two joint economic committee meetings with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in Tehran in the coming days separately.

It is expected that holding such meetings will help sign promising agreements for future cooperation in different fields, Safari noted.

According to the deputy foreign minister, an expertise delegation from Pakistan will also visit Tehran in the near future to discuss collaborations with officials in Iran's agriculture sector.

Pakistan and Iran have so far shown determination to enhance economic and trade ties between private and administrative sectors of both countries, Safari added.

OPEC+ would seek to woo Iran into supply cut deal post sanctions

TEHRAN – Sources close to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) have told Reuters that OPEC+ is expected to persuade Iran to join the group's cut deal if the U.S. sanctions are lifted from the country's oil industry.

A successful outcome to the Vienna nuclear talks could lift U.S. sanctions on Iran's exports, according to the International Energy Agency, potentially bringing 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd) of Iranian oil back into the market. That could ease tight global supply and take some heat out of a rally that has taken benchmark prices to just a few dollars short of \$100 a barrel.

Iran is currently exempt from the existing deal between OPEC and allies, known as OPEC+, to limit oil supply due to the impacts of the U.S. sanctions.

"It is very likely OPEC will adjust Iran into the deal, as there is no other option," said an OPEC+ source, who added that an agreement on reviving the nuclear accord looked close.

According to Reuters, a source familiar with Iranian thinking said Iran would first seek to restore its lost output, but would likely, after talks with OPEC+, agree to a quota. Iran is one of the five founding members of OPEC.

OPEC, in its latest monthly report,

put Iran's crude oil production in January at 2.503 million bpd, 21 percent more than the figure for December 2021.

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

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

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

Iran, Brazil to barter fertilizers for livestock feed inputs

TEHRAN – Iranian Agriculture Minister Javad Sadati-Nejad said the Islamic Republic is going to exchange two million tons of urea fertilizer with livestock feed input with Brazil through barter trade.

Sadati-Nejad made the remarks after a meeting with Brazil's Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply Minister Tereza Cristina Corrêa da Costa Dias, IRIB reported on Saturday.

During the meeting the officials announced their countries' willingness for the expansion of mutual agricultural cooperation to balance the exchanges between the two countries.

Referring to the unbalanced trade between Iran and Brazil, Sadati-Nejad stated: "At the present time, there are new opportunities to develop cooperation between the two countries, and we hope to use all these opportunities."

Emphasizing that preferential trade between the two countries should be established, he added:

"Iran is a hub for the production of high-quality urea fertilizer and Brazil is a major producer of livestock inputs, so we can meet each other's needs in these sectors."

The Brazilian minister for her part, pointed to establishing a joint advisory committee, holding exhibitions and selling Iranian agricultural products in local stores in Brazil as ways for the Brazilian people to get to know more about Iranian products, in order to pave the way for the development of cooperation between the two countries.

The Brazilian minister who visited Iran heading a 30-member delegation at the official invitation of the Iranian Agriculture Minister traveled to Fars province after arriving to Tehran on Thursday.

Cristina met with the members of the Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture of Fars province in Shiraz.

Speaking in this meeting, the Brazilian minister noted that the



Latin American country wants to maintain exports to Iran and expand imports from the Islamic Republic in order to reach a trade balance in agricultural exchanges.

As to the goal of her visit to Iran, she said that Brazil is keen to enhance agricultural cooperation because all countries should help supply qualitative and affordable foodstuff worldwide.

Given technological capacity and suitable lands for cultivation in Brazil, the country is ready to attract Iranian investors; so, the face-to-face negotiations can help reach consensus in this regard, she said.

Referring to the fact that agriculture and animal husbandry are modern and developed in her country, the minister said Brazil can assist other countries in terms of food security because of its advancement in this field.

"In Brazil, there is no problem regarding drought and water shortage for agriculture, and Brazil can complement Iranian

agriculture," Cristina said.

She also mentioned statistics of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), saying that demands for foodstuff will rise up to 60 percent; thus, food-producing countries should develop and implement new methods of cultivation and harvest.

The minister pointed to the fact that trade between Iran and Brazil is being conducted via intermediary countries, adding that the bilateral businesses focus on products such as corn, soybean, and so on.

Brazil is importing urea chemical fertilizer from Iran, she said, expressing hope that the item will expand to fertilizer for products such as pistachio, almond, and saffron.

The minister further noted that some Brazilian companies and banks are eager to facilitate the process of trade with Iran and solve some of the existing problems.

NIOPDC fully prepared to meet gasoline demand during Nowruz holiday

TEHRAN – National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) has announced his company's readiness for meeting the gasoline demand during the Iranian newyear holidays, Shana reported on Saturday.

"We expect that the traffic during the Nowruz holiday this year will be much higher than in previous years, and the trend of gasoline consumption on Nowruz will be on the rise," Keramat Veis-Karami said.

According to the official, the country's gasoline consumption in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20) has increased by about 16 percent compared to the previous year, and the figure will increase even further toward the last days of the year.

Planning has been done for the proper storage of the strategic fuel in the country's oil storage facilities for the supply during Nowruz, and as of February 20, supervision operations will begin at various distribution stations.

Earlier this month, Head of National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) Jalil Salari said the country's average daily gasoline consumption has stood at 86 million



liters in the current Iranian calendar year.

Salari put the country's current average gasoline production at about 104 million liters per day.

Having the production capacity of nearly 120 million liters per day of gasoline, Iran currently has also the capacity to store three billion liters of the strategic fuel.

Although the Islamic Republic is currently self-sufficient in gasoline production, fluctuations in consumption at different periods through the year have led to the creation of storage facilities across the country to manage the sustainable supply and distribution of gasoline.

These tanks will help the country's refineries continue operating at full capacity if on certain days of the year (such as the Nowruz holidays) gasoline consumption reduces significantly, and also prevent any interruption in the supply of the fuel if consumption increases drastically.

In this regard, the capacity of the country's gasoline storage facilities has increased in recent years, so much so that according to the National Iranian Oil Products Refining and Distribution Company, the volume of gasoline storage has increased from 1.8 billion liters to more than three billion liters.

According to the former NIORDC Managing Director Alireza Sadeq-Abadi, Iran is currently the biggest producer and exporter of gasoline in West Asia.

The country has achieved this success despite the external pressures and hurdles imposed by the U.S. sanctions on its oil industry.

The significant increase in the country's gasoline production and exports came despite the fact that nearly two years ago Iran was an importer of the strategic product, shipping in 17 million liters per day of gasoline.

Over 193,000 tons of alumina powder produced in 10 months

TEHRAN- Iran has produced 193,534 tons of alumina powder during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-January 20, 2022).

As reported, alumina powder output was 193,962 tons in the same period of time in the past year.

Aluminum oxide, which is commonly called alumina, is an inert, odorless, white amorphous material often used in industrial ceramics.

Alumina is an important ceramic material for

industrial applications. The numerous fields of application range from construction materials, to filling materials, as well as abrasives and catalysts.

In plants and mechanical engineering, alumina ceramics are mainly used for wear and corrosion protection.

The particle size distribution largely determines the application range and the quality of an alumina powder. Reliably identifying the differences in particle size is therefore an essential requirement of the measuring instrument.

TEDPIX down 279 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 279 points to close at 1.282 million points on Saturday.

Over 8.261 billion securities worth 53.065 trillion rials (about \$204 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dropped 1,231 points and the second market's index lost 5,005 points.

TEDPIX 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.

Capital market in a country eliminates the

Over \$230m invested in agricultural mechanization in 11 months

TEHRAN- As announced by the head of Iran's Agricultural Mechanization Development Center, 60 trillion rials (about \$230.7 million) has been invested in the agricultural mechanization sector of the country in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20, 2021).

Kambiz Abbasi said that 80 percent of the funds of the agricultural mechanization sector were given to farmers from cheap banking facilities to buy the tools, machinery and equipment they need.

According to the official, this is the largest volume of investment in this sector in recent

decades.

He continued by pointing to the farmers' welcome for increasing the mechanization coefficient, which is the basis of commercial agricultural development, and said the demand of farmers for purchasing and supplying agricultural equipment and machinery is increasing.

The official had earlier noted that the Agricultural Mechanization Development Center plans to increase the country's agricultural mechanization coefficient to 2.3 horsepower per hectare in the current year.

Iran's agricultural mechanization coefficient has currently reached 1.65 horsepower per hectare.

According to Abbasi, the Agriculture Ministry has been allocating a separate credit line for the mechanization of the agriculture sector every year, so that since the Iranian calendar year of 1392 so far, nine credit lines have been opened for this sector.

Statistics show that there is an annual demand for 25 trillion rials (about \$96 million) of facilities for the development and modernization of agricultural machinery.

From page 1 ► However, it is the first publicly known reconnaissance plane that has managed to fly for as long as 40 minutes to evade the Israeli regime's efforts to bring it down and return to Lebanon.

Hezbollah's media relations office issued a statement regarding the latest development (in Hezbollah's military arsenal that flew over occupied Palestine). The statement said:

On Friday, February 18, 2022, the Islamic Resistance launched the "Hassan" drone inside the occupied Palestinian territories and toured the targeted area for forty minutes on a reconnaissance mission that extended along seventy kilometers north of occupied Palestine.

The statement went on to say: and despite all the enemy's attempts; the multiple and successive efforts to shoot down the "Hassan" plane, it returned from the occupied territories safely after it successfully carried out the required mission and despite all the attempts that the enemy exhausted within its possession [to shoot down the drone] this did not affect the [intended] mission and direction of the drone".

Following the resistance movement's announcement about its drone mission, Israeli warplanes flew over the southern suburbs of Beirut at a low altitude.

The Israeli occupation has also admitted its failure to shoot down the drone that entered occupied Palestine from Lebanon.

Journalists stationed in occupied Palestine had reported hearing sirens sounding in the occupied Golan and Israeli settlements near southern Lebanon, as a result of the plane entering the airspace of occupied Palestine.

Israeli media say "the sirens in the north sent the [setters] into shelters amid preparations for Saturday" stressing that "there was panic".

A spokesman for the occupation's army confirmed that "the plane crossed Israeli airspace while claiming the [regime's] reconnaissance devices were tracking its path" adding that "helicopters and warplanes were called in, and interception missiles were launched from the [so-called] Iron Dome system, but without the success of any interception, and warnings were activated on the home front, but the plane returned to Lebanon".

Hezbollah shocks Israel again with “40-minute” drone mission

Israeli media have also quoted the occupation army as saying "the drone was lost, and it was not shot down."

Earlier, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, speaking in memory of the resistance movement's martyred leaders; addressed the Israeli regime by saying the Lebanese resistance has started manufacturing military drones inside the country, and has the technology to turn thousands of missiles in its possession into precision-guided munitions.

Writing on social media, Or Heller, a military affairs commentator for the Israeli regime, highlighted that it was "another major failure of the Iron Dome system in the north, and it raises many difficult questions".

Israeli media have discussed in length the details of the path of the "Hassan" drone, and have indicated that "the Israeli army's current priority is to return to the status quo that prevailed before the Hezbollah plane breached the Israeli occupied Palestinian border".

The military affairs correspondent for the Israeli regime media, Nir Dvory, described the entry of the "Hassan" drone, launched by Hezbollah, into the airspace of occupied Palestine, as a "successful attempt by Hezbollah".

Dvory says "this plane was not armed, as the Air Force says. It appears that it was on an intelligence-gathering mission, and it may have been carrying a camera"

Dfoury added, "After the plane passed from Lebanon to Israel, they tried to shoot it down twice, through helicopters and through the Iron Dome system. However, after believing that it had succeeded in intercepting it south of the Safed [settlement], they discovered that it had succeeded in turning around and returned to Lebanon."

The war correspondent pointed out that "the Air Force is currently examining

itself, and is looking into whether this small plane could have been detected at an earlier time? Are there any means by which it could have been successfully shot down?"

Dfoury explained that if the plane "were armed and carried only hundreds of fines of explosive materials, its delay would not be as important as with a rocket-propelled grenade launched from Lebanon, but here there is an achievement in terms of awareness, from the point of view of Hezbollah. Of course, [Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah] will try to point this out in the next few hours or days".

The reporter emphasized that "just as Israel collects intelligence information on Hezbollah, and sends satellites, drones, and other things, so too, Hezbollah is trying to gather intelligence information on Israel."

He continued, "There are detection systems in most cases that succeed in shooting down these planes, but this time it was different".

"The Israeli army's response (to Hezbollah's drone) was exaggerated, warplanes, helicopters, sirens, and the Iron Dome did not succeed in intercepting it," said Roi Sharon, a military analyst with the regime's Kan channel. Sharon quoted a security source as saying that "the response was exaggerated... We gave [Sayyed] Nasrallah a moral victory."

The Israeli "Kan Channel" indicated that "the Israeli army will investigate the reason for the failure of the Iron Dome system to shoot down the drone, which entered Israel".

The channel quoted the reserve brigade in the "army" of the Israeli occupation, Yitzhak Brik, asking: "How will the Israeli Air Force stop 3000 missiles and rockets daily on Israel and the home front, and it did not succeed in stopping a single drone?" He pointed

out that "in the event of a war there will be hundreds of projectiles a day, and we are not ready for that".

Brik added, "Israel is expected, in the short and long terms, to have two national disasters, which will cost us thousands of victims, destroyed infrastructure, and set us back decades. It is an earthquake and a multi-areas war".

Another Israeli military affairs analyst Carmela Menashe commented on the incident of the drone, saying that "there is fear in the army and the security establishment about the issue of the drones, and their preparation for them, yet her objection has not succeeded".

And the Israeli newspaper, "Yedioth Ahronoth", posted on its social media accounts, that "there is panic in the north following the breach of the drone," adding that "helicopters over our heads. We felt the war."

Observers argue its fair to say Hezbollah has sent shockwaves throughout the Israeli regime's military apparatus. The intelligence it has gathered will also be extremely concerning to the regime.

In 2000, Hezbollah resistance ended the Israeli military occupation of Lebanon that had at one point reached the Presidential palace in the capital Beirut.

In July 2006, Israel waged a 33-day war on Lebanon and despite Tel Aviv's advanced firepower, Hezbollah surprised the regime with its own weapons and military tactics. Following an internal probe; the regime acknowledged that it had lost the war, achieved none of its objectives and Hezbollah got the upper hand over Israel once again.

Since then, the resistance movement has changed the military equation with the regime.

According to many experts; unlike before when Israeli tanks and troops would enter and leave Lebanon as they wish, for more than two decades now, Hezbollah has brought peace and security to Lebanon and the regime occupying Palestine next door has to think twice about the consequences should it decide to target a single member of the Hezbollah movement no matter what rank they are; inside and outside Lebanon.

Days of the only superpower in the world are gone: Russian expert



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

How do you assess the current escalation between Russia and NATO over Ukraine?

The only reasonable scenario when Russia could interfere militarily in the Ukraine crises presumes an attack of Ukrainian military forces against separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. It is just a way to prevent an operation "Storm"-like scenario like Croatia in 1995 against the Republic of Serbian Krajina.

What is the fallout of any military clash in Ukraine?

Moscow shows a capability (including even "armed arguments") to prevent any possible way of Ukraine joining NATO in the future. And it all works. Putin wants Ukraine out of NATO, and he basically gets what he wants. At the same time, military rhetoric and hysteria in Western media raise oil and gas prices. American and Western rhetoric of possible and almost imminent invasion hugely damages Ukraine's economy. Some air companies stop flying to Ukraine. What about advertised tourists and investment attractions in Ukraine? Just see an example: Mercedes recently constructed its car-assembling plant in Russia, not in Ukraine.

NATO doesn't include Russia; it means Russia is excluded from the European system of strategic stability, that's an unsustainable type of security system.

Is Ukraine ready to pay the costs of a war?

Ukraine is dependent on Russian gas that Ukraine transports. Without this gas transit, Ukraine can't sustain a basic energy infrastructure.

Ukraine is hugely dependent on Russian coal for metallurgy and diesel from Belarus (that is a Russian ally). Ukraine is dependent on electricity imports from Belarus.

Several questions are yet to be answered in Kyiv and NATO capitals. If Ukraine is ready to fight, as we are being told, why not take control over Crimea?

If there was a Russian invasion before, or it is an ongoing Russian invasion, then why wait with sanctions? The West and Ukraine are confused with their own narratives.

How the does Ukrainian public see the current escalation?

There is no unified public opinion in Ukraine. A large number of people have relatives or friends in Russia. A strong pro-Russian element exists within the population of Eastern Ukraine. Ukraine artists and bloggers work for a Russian-speaking audience in several countries, including Russia. So the Russian market is important for them. Don't misinterpret the rhetoric of vocal Ukrainian activists with real public opinion (that in reality is deeply divided).

Do you predict Western powers including the U.S. will intervene in any military clash over Ukraine?

America will not fight for Ukraine. Do Americans or Europeans really want to make a body bag for Ukraine? The answer is very clear "no".

Public opinion in the U.S. doesn't support American military intervention in the Ukraine crisis. Public opinion will say: stay out of it.

Ukraine doesn't matter as much for America as it matters for Russia, so for Moscow, it will be natural to raise stakes (the same can't be said about America).

NATO and EU are not united. Take a note about the Hungarian prime minister just visiting Moscow and talking about a new gas contract.

How would be the fallout of U.S. harsh sanctions on Russia's banks?

As for harsh sanctions, if it excludes trade blockade (including energy), then these sanctions are not harsh by design. If sanctions aim at electronics as the biggest threat, China will inevitably help Russia, although it takes time and effort to organize a technological transfer.

Days of the only superpower in the world are gone. China and Russia strengthen their alliance that is almost formed. Pushing Russia even closer to China would be a super great mistake of the West.

What is going to happen in Ukraine?

Every day brings new noise and fury in the crisis over Ukraine, mostly from Washington. But what is really likely to happen?

There are three possible scenarios:

The first is that Russia will suddenly launch an invasion of Ukraine.

The second is that the Ukrainian government in Kyiv will launch an escalation of its civil war against the self-declared People's Republics of Donetsk (DPR) and Luhansk (LPR), provoking various possible reactions from other countries.

The third is that neither of these will happen, and the crisis will pass without a major escalation of the war in the short term.

So who will do what, and how will other countries respond in each case?

Russian invasion

This seems to be the least likely outcome.

An actual Russian invasion would unleash unpredictable and cascading consequences that could escalate quickly, leading to mass civilian casualties, a new refugee crisis in Europe, war between Russia and NATO, or even nuclear war.

If Russia wanted to annex the DPR and LPR, it could have done so amid the crisis that followed the U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine in 2014. Russia already faced a furious Western response over its annexation of Crimea, so the international cost of annexing the DPR and LPR, which were also asking to rejoin Russia, would have been less than that it would be now.

Russia instead adopted a carefully calculated position in which it gave the Republics only covert military and political support. If Russia was really ready to risk so much more now than in 2014, that would be a dreadful reflection of just how far U.S.-Russian relations have sunk.

If Russia does launch an invasion of Ukraine or annex the DPR and LPR, Biden has already said that the United States and NATO would not directly fight a war with Russia over Ukraine, although that promise could be severely tested by the hawks in Congress and a media hell-bent on stirring up anti-Russia hysteria.

However, the United States and its allies would definitely impose heavy new sanctions on Russia, cementing the Cold War economic and political division of the world between the United States and its allies on one hand, and Russia, China and their allies on the other. Biden would achieve the full-blown Cold War that

successive U.S. administrations have been cooking up for a decade, and which seems to be the unstated purpose of this manufactured crisis.

In terms of Europe, the US geopolitical goal is clearly to engineer a complete breakdown in relations between Russia and the European Union (EU), to bind Europe to the United States. Forcing Germany to cancel its \$11 billion Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline from Russia will certainly make Germany more energy dependent on the US and its allies. The overall result would be exactly as Lord Ismay, NATO's first Secretary General, described when he said that the purpose of the alliance was to keep "the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down".

Brexit (the UK departure from the EU) detached the UK from the EU and cemented its "special relationship" and military alliance with the United States. In the current crisis, this joined-at-the-hip US-UK alliance is reprising the unified role it played to diplomatically engineer and wage wars on Iraq in 1991 and 2003.

Today, China and the European Union (led by France and Germany) are the two leading trade partners of most countries in the world, a position formerly occupied by the United States. If the US strategy in this crisis succeeds, it will erect a new Iron Curtain between Russia and the rest of Europe to inextricably tie the EU to the United States and prevent it from becoming a truly independent pole in a new multipolar world. If Biden pulls this off, he will have reduced America's celebrated "victory" in the Cold War to simply dismantling the Iron Curtain and rebuilding it a few hundred miles to the east 30 years later.

But Biden may be trying to close the barn door after the horse has bolted. The EU is already an independent economic power. It is politically diverse and sometimes divided, but its political divisions seem manageable when compared with the political chaos, corruption and endemic poverty in the United States. Most Europeans think their political systems are healthier and more democratic than America's, and they seem to be correct.

Like China, the EU and its members are proving to be more reliable partners for international trade and peaceful development than the self-absorbed, capricious and militaristic United States, where positive steps by one administration are regularly undone by the next, and whose military aid and arms sales destabilize countries (as in Africa right now), and strengthen dictatorships and extreme right-wing governments around the world.

But a Russian invasion of Ukraine would almost certainly fulfill Biden's goal of isolating Russia from Europe, at least in the short term. If Russia was ready to pay that price, it would be because it now sees the renewed Cold War division of Europe by the United States and NATO as unavoidable and irrevocable, and has concluded that it must consolidate and strengthen its defenses. That would also imply that Russia has China's full support for doing so, heralding a darker and more dangerous future for the whole world.

Ukrainian escalation of civil war

The second scenario, an escalation of the civil war by Ukrainian forces, seems more likely.

Whether it is a full-scale invasion of the Donbas or something less, its main purpose from the US point of view would be to provoke Russia into intervening more directly in Ukraine, to fulfill Biden's prediction of a "Russian invasion" and unleash the maximum pressure sanctions he has threatened.

While Western leaders have been warning of a Russian invasion of Ukraine, Russian, DPR and LPR officials have been warning for months that Ukrainian government forces were escalating the civil war and have 150,000 troops and new weapons poised to attack the DPR and LPR.

In that scenario, the massive US and Western arms shipments arriving in Ukraine on the pretext of deterring a Russian invasion would in fact be intended for use in an already planned Ukrainian government offensive.

On one hand, if Ukrainian President Zelensky and his government are planning an offensive in the East, why are they so publicly playing down fears of a Russian invasion? Surely they would be joining the chorus from Washington, London and Brussels, setting the stage to point their fingers at Russia as soon as they launch their own escalation.

And why are the Russians not more vocal in alerting the world to the danger of escalation by Ukrainian government forces surrounding the DPR and LPR? Surely the Russians have extensive intelligence sources inside Ukraine and would know if Ukraine was indeed planning a new offensive. But the Russians seem much more concerned by the breakdown in U.S.-Russian relations than in what the Ukrainian military may be up to.

On the other hand, the US, UK and NATO propaganda strategy has been organized in plain sight, with a new "intelligence" revelation or high-level pronouncement for every day of the month. So what might they have up their sleeves? Are they really confident that they can

wrong-foot the Russians and leave them carrying the can for a deception operation that could rival the Tonkin Gulf incident or the WMD lies about Iraq?

The plan could be very simple. Ukrainian government forces attack. Russia comes to the defense of the DPR and LPR. Biden and Boris Johnson scream "Invasion," and "We told you so!" Macron and Scholz mutely echo "Invasion," and "We stand together." The United States and its allies impose "maximum pressure" sanctions on Russia, and NATO's plans for a new Iron Curtain across Europe are a fait accompli.

An added wrinkle could be the kind of "false flag" narrative that US and UK officials have hinted at several times. A Ukrainian government attack on the DPR or LPR could be passed off in the West as a "false flag" provocation by Russia, to muddy the distinction between a Ukrainian government escalation of the civil war and a "Russian invasion."

It's unclear whether such plans would work, or whether they would simply divide NATO and Europe, with different countries taking different positions. Tragically, the answer might depend more on how craftily the trap was sprung than on the rights or wrongs of the conflict.

But the critical question will be whether EU nations are ready to sacrifice their own independence and economic prosperity, which depends partly on natural gas supplies from Russia, for the uncertain benefits and debilitating costs of continued subservience to the US empire. Europe would face a stark choice between a full return to its Cold War role on the front line of a possible nuclear war and the peaceful, cooperative future the EU has gradually but steadily built since 1990.

Many Europeans are disillusioned with the neoliberal economic and political order that the EU has embraced, but it was subservience to the United States that led them down that garden path in the first place. Solidifying and deepening that subservience now would consolidate the plutocracy and extreme inequality of U.S.-led neoliberalism, not lead to a way out of it.

Biden may get away with blaming the Russians for everything when he's kowtowing to war-hawks and preening for the TV cameras in Washington. But European governments have their own intelligence agencies and military advisors, who are not all under the thumb of the CIA and NATO. The German and French intelligence agencies have often warned their bosses not to follow the US pied piper; notably into Iraq in 2003. We must hope they have not all lost their objectivity, analytical skills or loyalty to their own countries since

then.

If this backfires on Biden, and Europe ultimately rejects his call to arms against Russia, this could be the moment when Europe bravely steps up to take its place as a strong, independent power in the emerging multipolar world.

Nothing happens

This would be the best outcome of all: an anti-climax to celebrate.

At some point, absent an invasion by Russia or an escalation by Ukraine, Biden would sooner or later have to stop crying "Wolf" every day.

All sides could climb back down from their military buildups, panicked rhetoric and threatened sanctions.

The Minsk Protocol could be revived, revised and reinvigorated to provide a satisfactory degree of autonomy to the people of the DPR and LPR within Ukraine, or facilitate a peaceful separation.

The United States, Russia and China could begin more serious diplomacy to reduce the threat of nuclear war and resolve their many differences, so that the world could move forward to peace and prosperity instead of backwards to Cold War and nuclear brinkmanship.

Conclusion

However it ends, this crisis should be a wake-up call for Americans of all classes and political persuasions to reevaluate our country's position in the world. We have squandered trillions of dollars, and millions of other people's lives, with our militarism and imperialism. The US military budget keeps rising with no end in sight--and now the conflict with Russia has become another justification for prioritizing weapons spending over the needs of our people.

Our corrupt leaders have tried but failed to strangle the emerging multipolar world at birth through militarism and coercion. As we can see after 20 years of war in Afghanistan, we cannot fight and bomb our way to peace or stability, and coercive economic sanctions can be almost as brutal and destructive. We must also re-evaluate the role of NATO and wind down this military alliance that has become such an aggressive and destructive force in the world.

Instead, we must start thinking about how a post-imperial America can play a cooperative and constructive role in this new multipolar world, working with all our neighbors to solve the very serious problems facing humanity in the 21st Century.

(Source: antiwar.com)

Shah Cheragh pilgrimage ritual made national heritage

TEHRAN – The spiritual ritual traditionally performed during the pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Shah Cheragh has been added to the national heritage list.

To pay homage and visit the shrine, the pilgrimage of Shah Cheragh has been formed over centuries, which is why it is now recognized as part of the national heritage, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

A major tourist destination and pilgrimage site in the ancient city of Shiraz, Shah Cheragh is Iran's third most popular pilgrimage destination after Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam in Mashhad, and his sister Hazrat Masumeh (SA), in Qom, IRNA quoted Moayyed Mohsennejad as saying on Friday.

Before one leaves Shiraz for Mashhad and visits Imam Reza's shrine, it is a tradition to obtain permission at Shah Cheragh before leaving, he explained.

As well, three days after their return from their pilgrimage to Mashhad or even Karbala in Iraq, they would go to the Shah Cheragh holy shrine again and pay respect, he added.

The holy shrine is not only sacred to the people of Shiraz but is known and respected by all the Iranians as well, the official noted.

Included on the list of national heritage, these rituals will impart a lasting and familiar image to the younger generation and provide a platform for recognizing the preservation and promotion of these rituals by various ethnic groups throughout the country, he concluded.

The dazzling shrine of Shah Cheragh is where Sayyed Mir Ahmad (AS), one of the brothers of Imam Reza (AS), is laid to rest. Each day, it draws hundreds of faithful sightseers from all over the world.

It boasts architectural elements and motifs from various centuries and its courtyard and tilework represent relatively



modern embellishments from the late-Qajar period. Its blue-tiled dome is flanked by dazzling gold-tipped minarets.

Inside its great chamber of worship, giant chandeliers hang like frozen rain, smaller green lamps jut from the walls and stained-glass windows shine from on high, emitting light that sparkles off countless jewels and shards of glass.

They coat almost the entire interior of this special place, giving its dome a shimmering glow and making its elegant doorways feel like portals.

The site was improved and expanded over the centuries with religious schools and other facilities being added to the complex. In the 14th century, the site's signature mirrorball decoration was ordered at the behest of Queen Tash Khatun who wanted the mosque to intensify any light a thousand times over, the name "Shah Cheragh" roughly translating to "King of the Light" in Persian.

The increasingly sprawling site is still an extremely important pilgrimage location for Shia Muslims, however, visitors of any faith are likely to marvel at the sheer beauty of this glassy wonder.

The mausoleum has undergone various restoration projects over time. It was registered on the National Heritage list in 1939.

Safavid mosque undergoes restoration in western Iran



TEHRAN – The Safavid era (1501-1736) Soltani Mosque in Borujerd, western Lorestan province, has undergone some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The project involves repairing parts of the rooftop and exterior walls, Seyyed Amin Qasemi said on Saturday.

Every year, a different part of the building that needs urgent repair will be restored according to the allocated funding, the official added.

Also known as Imam Mosque, the mosque was built atop the ruins of an older mosque, which had been probably built in the 10th century BC.

During the Qajar era (1789-1925), it was renovated to become one of the largest mosques in the country.

There are three main entrances to the mosque, which has a four-arched plan. Borujerd's Great Bazaar is accessible through the western entrance. It has a yard measuring 2,800 square meters, and the roof arch for the southern prayer is approximately 17 meters high.

Tile work, stucco carvings, and moqarnas chiseling decorate the interior of the mosque. There are also very fine patterns carved into the stones of the northern portico's main base.

During the Borujerd earthquake of 2006, the structure was severely damaged.

It has been registered on the national heritage list.

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

Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.

further pain and suffering caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

"After two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, people, as well as our whole societies and economies, have suffered enough. We cannot afford for this to continue."

"We must rebuild and look to the future with hope, not fear," he said, adding that peace and mutual understanding are essential ingredients for recovery.

"Now is the time to work together, and

Ancient potteries probably exposed by flash flood discovered in Susa

From page 1 ► It is said that Alexander of Macedonia captured Susa in 330 BC and plundered the city, seizing some 40,000 talents of gold and silver from the treasury. Alexander the Great initiated Shushan's decline by favoring Babylon and shortly after, following a revolt, the city was burnt to the ground. Subsequently rebuilt by Sapor II (309-379 CE), it was renamed Iranshahr Shapur and later helped in the resistance against the Arab invasion of 645.

After the fall of the Achaemenid Empire and the reign of Alexander the Great, who married in Susa, the city became part of the Seleucid empire. It was now called Seleucia on the Eulaeus. A palace in Greek style was erected, next to Darius' palace. The administrative center, however, was in the southern part of the city, where nearly all Greek and Parthian inscriptions were discovered. In the Parthian age, the city minted coins.

During the Sasanian age, the city had a large Christian community. It was sacked by the Sasanian king Shapur II, who transferred the population to



Iwan-e Karkheh, but Susa was sufficiently recovered in the early seventh century to fight against the Arabs, who nevertheless captured the city which remained important until the thirteenth century CE.

In the Bible, Susa is known primarily from the story of Esther in which Haman the Agagite planned to defeat the Jews of Persia. According to the story, Esther outwitted him by persuading her husband, King Ahasuerus of Persia, to sabotage Haman's plan. The episode is commemorated every year in the

Jewish Purim festival which is marked with costumed parties and other celebrations, according to Ancient Origins.

Furthermore, Susa is also mentioned in Nehemiah and Daniel, both of whom lived in the city during the 6th century BC in the period known as the Babylonian captivity when several Jews were held captive following the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. A tomb known as Shush-Daniel is believed to be that of Daniel himself. It is capped by an unusual white cone which some

believe was formerly a stone 'Star of David'.

A wide variety of artifacts discovered in Susa includes carved cylinder seals, jewelry, clay balls, and clay tablets with cuneiform inscriptions recording business transactions, political history, and mathematical calculations.

Susa has yielded ample relics including pottery, arms, ornamental objects, metalwork, bronze articles, as well as clay tablets. The ancient site is also a gateway to several worthy destinations such as the UNESCO-tagged ziggurat of Tchogha Zanbil, the ruins of Achaemenid Apadana Castle, Shush Castle (Akropol), Prophet Daniel Shrine, Museum of Susa, the archaeological mount of Haft Tapeh.

All and all, archaeological evidence suggests that Susa has been continuously inhabited since 4,200 BC placing it among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. In addition, there are traces at Susa of a village inhabited around 7,000 BC and painted pottery dating from ca. 5,000 BC at the site.

Folk music, dance added to national heritage list

TEHRAN – A selection of indigenous routines including folk music and dance being practiced in northern and northeastern Iran have been registered as national heritage by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

"Maqami music and a local dance from three different Iranian regions have been registered on Iran's National Intangible Cultural Heritage list," a cultural heritage expert announced on Saturday.

"The Haqani Maqam music from Mazandaran province, the Katuli Maqam music from Mazandaran and Golestan provinces as well as the Kurmanji dance from Razavi Khorasan and North Khorasan provinces have been designated as national cultural heritage," Behruz Vojdani said.

To be listed on the intangible cultural heritage list, each element must fulfill its role and function, be alive and dynamic,



and end up affecting the lives of three generations of people, he explained.

Almost all musical instruments and songs from every region of the country have been nationally registered so far, he added.

The Maqami music is connected to the traditions and thoughts of an ethnic group living in a particular region.

A maqam is a specific musical scale combined with characteristic melodic elements or motifs, played following

traditional formats, which together form a complete system for the melodic and tonal structure of a musical performance.

The maqami music is more common in the regions of Khorasan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Hormozgan, and Bushehr.

Since Kurmanji people migrated from Kordestan to northern Khorasan centuries ago, they have been culturally influenced by Khorasan's culture, despite speaking Kurdish.

Kurmanji dances such as those from East and Central Khorasan are performed in circles. The folk performance starts with a slow yet heavy tempo and gradually speeds up. What is evident, however, is women jump more slowly than men.

Narratives say these dances tell the story of migration, hard work, cooperative endeavors, unity, dedication, as well as the ancestors who deemed their people worthy of love and happiness.

Iranian dolmeh gets national heritage status



dolma which comes from the Turkish word Dolmak meaning "to fill". The word dolmeh refers to any vegetable that is stuffed. When referring to stuffed grape leaves, the full name of this dish is "dolmeh barg-e mo" which literally means stuffed grape

leaves.

No Persian meal is complete without an abundance of herbs. Every table is usually set with sabzi-khordan, a basket of fresh herbs, radishes, and scallions, which are eaten raw and by the handful. Persian cuisine is,

above all, about balance — of tastes and flavors, textures and temperatures.

In 2020, Iran joined an online campaign launched by the UNWTO to promote gastronomy as an essential part of tourism. Iranian cuisine, usually dominated by fragrant herbs, varies from region to region. It principally accentuates freshness, deliciousness, and colorfulness.

Experts believe that food tourism has become one of the most dynamic and creative segments of tourism and, at the same time, has naturally positioned itself as an element of diversification of tourism with a high impact on the promotion of sustainable development at the regional and local levels.

Tourism has unique ability to promote peace everywhere: UNWTO chief

TEHRAN – World Tourism Organization secretary-general on Friday said tourism has a unique ability to promote peace between and among peoples everywhere.

"Tourism is the main bridge for building understanding. It has a unique ability to promote peace between and among peoples everywhere," Zurab Pololikashvili said in a press release.

He lamented that tourism insiders across the globe cannot tolerate

for diplomacy instead of conflict in all parts of the world. We must not allow political tensions to turn into a man-made crisis that will undermine our collective progress."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Pololikashvili hailed United Nations' call for settling disputes through peaceful solutions. "The UNWTO stands firmly with UN Secretary-General António Guterres in his call for all countries to settle disputes through peaceful means

and not through conflict, and that they respect international security and justice at all times."

As a part of the UN, giving a voice to people of all regions, backgrounds, and nationalities, UNWTO also believes that the spirit of international solidarity and shared values that define not just tourism but also our common humanity will prevail, Pololikashvili said.

"We also hope that diplomatic efforts to avoid conflict continue and succeed."



Water stress pushing reptiles, amphibians to extinction

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Drought, reduced precipitation, and rainfall fluctuations have endangered the lives of living organisms, especially reptiles and amphibians that are vulnerable to water and temperature changes.

Many water resources in Iran are under pressure and amphibians that spend part of their life cycle in water are endangered, which has been mainly caused by water shortages in the wetlands and lakes, Reza Faraji, head of wildlife conservation office of the Department of Environment, said.

Referring to other challenges for the lives of reptiles and amphibians, Faraji said that habitat destruction, water contamination, sewage inflow, and poisoning are other life-threatening factors for these species.

Lamenting that it is not possible to say exactly which species are in danger of extinction, he stated that marsh crocodile is one of the endangered species due to limited distribution area and low population and living in drought-ridden provinces.

Also, Euphrates softshell turtle, is in serious danger of extinction, he noted, regretting, Vipera ursiniisi also is threatened by illegal hunting and habitat destruction.

Referring to the DOE's plans for habitat and species protection, he stated that spider-tailed horned vipers, for example, were listed as endangered three years ago and annexed to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna



and Flora (CITES).

The CITES is an agreement between governments that regulates the international trade of wildlife and wildlife products. It came into force in 1975 with the goal of ensuring that international trade does not threaten the survival of wild plants and animals.

It is the duty of the member states to prevent the trade in plants and animals of this species. Endangered species are listed on one list and at levels one, two, and three based on threat levels. Any trade in level one species is strictly prohibited, and governments are only allowed to conduct research on these species. At levels two and three, the sensitivities decrease slightly, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Luristan newt, the world's most attractive salamander confined to western Iran, was driven on the brink of extinction due to habitat degradation as well as uncontrolled hunting for national and international pet trade which paced up near the Iranian New Year celebration, he also lamented.

So, we listed the species on the CITES to stop its international trade, and its domestic trade has

been controlled with the help of the DOE and has reached almost zero. Also, the springs and habitats of these species have been restored, Faraji further emphasized.

According to Article 50 of the Constitution, environmental protection is a public duty. All executive bodies must work with the DOE to help preserve the endangered species as part of conservation and management programs.

Importance of environmental protection

There are 1,300 species of animals in the country, 130 of which are endangered and threatened, Hassan Akbari, deputy head of natural environment and biodiversity of the Department of Environment, said in December 2021.

Over 10,000 environmental violators are arrested on average annually. Asiatic cheetahs, great bustards, Siberian cranes, Persian onagers, and some reptiles and amphibians are among the endangered and threatened species, he said.

Significant smuggling and habitat destruction are the main threats to the species, and promoting a culture of kindness to the environment and strength-

ening social participation is one of the most important and effective strategies in protecting the environment, he explained.

The availability of large quantities of weapons and ammunition to the poachers is another risk factor for wildlife populations, Akbari added.

To preserve the existing biodiversity over the wide geographic expanse of Iran, four types of areas have been designated for preservation and protection, including, national parks, wildlife refuges, protected areas, and natural national monuments. In 1997, the DOE held supervision over 7,563,983 hectares of such areas.

Currently, the supervised areas reached about 18.5 million hectares, including, 30 national parks, 170 protected areas, 45 wildlife refuges, and 37 national natural monuments.

Iran has a high diversity of species due to geographical conditions, climatic diversity, huge water resources of the Caspian Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf, and the Sea of Oman in the south.

According to the latest studies, about 1,300 species of vertebrates, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic fish, about 30,000 species of invertebrates, and 8,000 species of plants have been identified in the country.

Unfortunately, over the past two decades, human activities have led to alarming degradation of ecosystems, deletion of genes, species, and biological capabilities; Human threats to biodiversity have accelerated the most over the past 50 years over the entire history of human life.

Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari wetlands hosting 80 species of birds



From page 1 ▶ It supports more than 1 percent of the population of Gadwall (Anas strepera) and harbors threatened species such as the endangered White-headed Duck (Oxyura leucocephala) and the vulnerable Eastern Imperial Eagle (Aquila heliaca).

Unique birdwatching sites in Iran

Iran is decorated with impressive wetlands that hold a great share of aquatic and bird species and wildlife. Anzali wetland, Qeshm Island, Urmia Lake, and Miankaleh Peninsula are among the most important locations for bird watching in Iran.

Miankaleh International Wetland in Mazandaran, called the birdwatching paradise of Iran, stretches to a total area of 68,000 hectares, which is home to at least 130 species of migratory species with a population of 1.5 million.

Being an impressive bird-watching destination, the wetland displays a variety of bird species such as otters, all kinds of fish-eating ducks (common goldeneye and Mergus), pel-

icans, flamingos, and cormorants, common pheasants, partridges, mute swan, tundra swan, and coots. Ashuradeh was introduced and registered as one of the world's first biosphere zones in 1975.

Gomishan wetland in Golestan province is home to over 20,000 water birds, and more than 20 species of birds, which supports three IUCN Red List vulnerable species of waterbirds, i.e., Pelecanus crispus, Aythya nyroca, and Vanellus gregarius, as well as the vulnerable mammal Phoca (Pusa) caspica; it is also an important staging area for the fish subspecies Rutilus rutilus caspicus.

Located at the foot of the Zagros mountains in north-western Iran, Zarivar is a freshwater wetland hosting over 74 bird species, which is designated as a Ramsar Site.

The site provides a suitable breeding and resting place for birds and other wetland animals, and due to the relatively extensive reed beds, it is an important overwintering site for northern migratory birds.

World spends \$1.8tn a year on subsidies that harm environment, study finds

The world is spending at least \$1.8tn (£1.3tn) every year on subsidies driving the annihilation of wildlife and a rise in global heating, according to a new study, prompting warnings that humanity is financing its own extinction.

From tax breaks for beef production in the Amazon to financial support for unsustainable groundwater pumping in the Middle East, billions of pounds of government spending and other subsidies are harming the environment, says the first cross-sector assessment for more than a decade.

This government support, equivalent to 2% of global GDP, is directly working against the goals of the Paris agreement and draft targets on reversing biodiversity loss, the research on explicit subsidies found, effectively financing water pollution, land subsidence and deforestation with state money.

The authors, who are leading subsidies experts, say a significant portion of the \$1.8tn could be repurposed to support policies that are beneficial for nature and a transition to net zero, amid growing political division about the cost of decarbonising the global economy.

The report calls for governments to agree a target to eradicate environmentally harmful subsidies by the end of the decade at the biodiversity Cop15 gathering in China later this year, where it is hoped

a "Paris agreement for nature" will be signed, and for companies to reveal the subsidies they receive as part of environmental disclosure reporting.

Christiana Figueres, who was head of the UN climate change convention when the Paris agreement was signed, welcomed the research. She said the subsidies were creating huge risks for the businesses receiving them.

"Nature is declining at an alarming rate, and we have never lived on a planet with so little biodiversity," she said. "Harmful subsidies must be redirected towards protecting the climate and nature, rather than financing our own extinction."

The fossil fuel industry (\$620bn), the agricultural sector (\$520bn), water (\$320bn) and forestry (\$155bn) account for the majority of the \$1.8tn, according to the report. No estimate for mining, believed to cause billions of dollars of damage to ecosystems every year, could be derived.

Lack of transparency between governments and recipients means the true figure is likely to be much higher, as is the implicit cost of harmful subsidies. Last year, an International Monetary Fund report found the fossil fuel industry benefited from subsidies worth \$5.9tn in 2020, but the vast majority of this figure comes from the hidden costs of failing to make polluters pay for the deaths they cause and global heating.

“Maternity leave” increases for mothers of twins

TEHRAN – In line with “Law on Family and Youth Support”, mothers of twins can take maternity leave for one year.

Maternity leave has increased to the full nine months by paying all salaries and extras related, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Also, at the request of the mother, up to 2 months of this leave can be used in the last months of pregnancy, and the said leave for twins and multiple births has increased from nine months to twelve.

By a decree issued by President Ebrahim Raisi, the “Law on Family and Youth Support” approved by the Majlis (Iranian Parliament) was notified to the Ministry of Health and the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs.

The Guardian Council approved the law on November 17 to implement a population growth and family support plan for 7 years to change the declining trend of childbearing.

The plan stipulates health insurance for infertile couples, providing services and facilities to working women, providing health and nutrition support packages to mothers and children, educational opportunities for student mothers, providing livelihood support to families, and ongoing medical services to pregnant women.



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has always emphasized the need for paying attention to population growth and childbearing, so everyone is required to be aware and do their duty to get the country out of the current situation in the coming years.

The national budget bill for the next [Iranian calendar] calendar year (to begin on March 20, 2022) has proposed 120 trillion rials (nearly \$444 million) to implement childbearing and family support plans in the country.

Demographic issue

Today, the country's fertility rate has reached about 1.6 children per woman, however, it was 6.5 children per woman, in 1986. The lowest fertility rate in the whole region of West Asia, North Africa, and the MENA region is recorded for Iran.

While 1,594,000 births were registered in the [Iranian calendar] year 1394 (March 2015–March

2016), the downward trend continued annually to the point that the number of births reached about one million in the [Iranian calendar] year 1399 (March 2020–March 2021).

In other words, we lost more than 550,000 births in five years.

The fertility rate declined to 1.71 children in the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020–March 2021), reaching below the replacement level, according to the report released by the Statistical Center of Iran.

Replacement level is the amount of fertility needed to keep the population the same from generation to generation. It refers to the total fertility rate that will result in a stable population without it increasing or decreasing.

Nicholas Eberstadt, the Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), wrote in an article in July 2020 that the fertility rate in Iran has dropped by 70 percent over the past 30 years, which has been the highest decline in human history.

Seyed Hamed Barakati, deputy health minister for family and school population, said in May 2021 that Iran's population growth rate has decreased to less than one percent for the first time over the past four decades.

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\$22m earmarked for equipping technical-vocational schools

A total budget of 900 billion rials (nearly \$22 million) has been requested to develop and equip technical-vocational high schools across the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20, 2019), Mohsen Hosseini, an official with the Ministry of Education has announced.

Describing some of the programs and priorities of the technical and vocational training organization affiliated to the Ministry, Hosseini pointed to improvement of technical and vocational training plans as the Ministry's main priority.

Competency-based education and assessment is among the most important programs of the technical and vocational organization, which must be well implemented in all career and technical education high school, he added, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان‌های کشور

مدیرکل فنی و حرفه‌ای دفتر متوسطه وزارت آموزش و پرورش از تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان‌های کشور در سال جاری خبر داد. به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر، سیدمحسن حسینی مقدم در دیدار با مدیران هنرستان‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای شهر شیراز و برخی از مناطق استان فارس با تشریح برخی از برنامه‌ها و اولویت‌های وزارت آموزش و پرورش در بخش فنی و حرفه‌ای، گفت: کیفیت‌بخشی برنامه‌های دفتر فنی و حرفه‌ای اولویت اصلی آموزش و پرورش است.

حسینی‌مقدم اظهار کرد: آموزش و ارزشیابی مبتنی بر شایستگی از مهمترین برنامه‌هایی است که در آموزش‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای دنبال می‌شود و باید این شیوه آموزش به خوبی مراقبت شده و در همه هنرستان‌ها اجرا شود.

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FEBRUARY 20, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A fool's mind is at the mercy of his tongue and a wise man's tongue is under the control of his mind.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:18 Evening: 18:09 Dawn: 5:21 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:45 (tomorrow)

Sadi: works and life

Part 4

His works celebrate love in its manifold forms—social solidarity, friendship, amorous desire, and religious devotion—and they do so in a language that revels in the full capacities of the linguistic medium to range from dignified balance and aphoristic concision to playful punning and raucous excess.

Several of Sadi's works have already been mentioned and will be discussed in detail in the following sections of this entry. His collected works in verse and prose are known by the generic title of Kolliat.

Sadi himself probably began the task of gathering and organizing his own oeuvre, but our earliest record of this process is a note by Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Abu Bakr Bisotun, who provided indexes to Sadi's lyric poems and rearranged sections of the Kolliat in 1326 and again in 1334.

This recension contains 22 sections:

- (1) Taqir-e dibacheh ("Exposition of the preface," probably written not by Sadi, but by an earlier compiler who compares the book to a ship (safina) loaded with precious cargo).
- (2) Majales-e panjgana ("Five sermons," in prose).
- (3) So'al-e saheb-divan az shaykh ("The finance minister's question for the shaiikh," in prose, a report on Sadi's meeting with Shams ad-Din Mohammad Jovayni).
- (4) Resala-ye aql va eshq ("Treatise on reason and love," in prose).
- (5) Nasihat al-moluk ("Advice to kings," short prose mirror for princes).
- (6) Taqirat-e salaseh ("Three accounts," short prose pieces about rather than by Sadi, concerning his interactions with Abaqa Khan, Amir Ankyanu, and Shams ad-Din Tazikuy).
- (7) Golestan.
- (8) Bustan.
- (9) Qasayed-e farsi ("Persian qasidas").
- (10) Qasayed-e Arabi ("Arabic qasidas").
- (11) Molamma'at ("Macaronic poems" in Arabic and Persian).
- (12) Tarji'at ("Strophic poems").
- (13) Tayyebat ("Delights," collection of ghazals).
- (14) Badaye ("Marvels," collection of ghazals).
- (15) Khawatim ("Endings," collection of ghazals).
- (16) Ghazaliat-e qadim ("Old ghazals").
- (17) Sahebiya ("The Saheb's poems").
- (18) Moqatta'at ("Fragments").
- (19) Robaiat ("Quatrains").
- (20) Mofradat ("Single verses").
- (21) Motayebat and Mozahekat ("Jokes" and "Humorous diversions," prose).
- (22) Khabitat ("Facetiae," in verse).

The last two sections, known collectively as the Hazliat ("Bawdy works"), are suppressed from most modern editions of the Kolliat.

Golestan
Golestan-e Sadi, probably the single most influential work of prose in the Persian tradition, completed in 1258 by Sadi. It was dedicated to the Salghurid Atabeg in Fars, Mozaffar ad-Din Abu Bakr ibn Sad ibn Zangi, and his son, Sad, as well as the vizier Fakhr ad-Din Abu Bakr ibn Abi Nasr.

Sadi hoped his work would also cause future readers to remember the "dervishes" in their prayers. He evidently did not appear at court in person to present the Golestan, feeling it

inappropriate to the station of the dervishes with whom he associated (tafa-ye darvishan), though this group did feel an obligation to acknowledge their benefactors (shokr-e ne'mat-e bozorgan wajeib).

Sadi apologizes for the delay in presenting a token of service to the court, perhaps suggesting that he had not submitted any work since the dedication of the Bustan in the previous year.

As these dual allegiances might lead us to expect, striking the proper balance between the exercise of efficacious power and of enlightened moral authority in political relations, and the assertion of self-interest versus humane altruism in interpersonal relations, are central concerns throughout the Golestan.

Written in prose liberally sprinkled with verse in a variety of forms and meters, the Golestan follows the general themes and organization of the Bustan, but is grouped under eight (rather than ten) chapter rubrics, like the eight gates to paradise: "On the Conduct of Kings" (41 stories), "On the Morals of Dervishes" (48 stories), "On the Excellence of Contentment" (29 stories), "On the Benefits of Silence" (14 stories), "On Love and Youth" (21 stories), On Frailty and Old Age (9 stories), On the Effects of Education (tarbiat, 20 stories), On Manners (non-narrative aphorisms and maxims).

In the epilogue, Sadi describes the Golestan as primarily entertaining, a feature he predicts may lead moralist critics to dismiss it, but explains his purpose as delivering sermons (maweza) and counsel (nasihat) in a palatable form.

He does this with deliberate terseness and concision (be tariq-e ekhtesar; ijaz-e sokhan-ra maslahat did, through anecdotes and witticisms (nawader), parables (amsal), tales (hekatay), and reports about the conduct of the kings of the past.

With few exceptions, Sadi narrates these in prose, typically reserving verse to punctuate the narrative with commentary or draw a moral from it.

The narratives range in length from jokes delivered in a short sentence or two, to stories which unfold over several pages. Sadi hopes the crown prince will read the book and not find it tiresome, and that the vizier will likewise approve.

As Adam Olearius remarked in 1654, Sadi's way of speaking deep truths in terse words was likely to make its impression on kings and potentates.

In several vignettes, Sadi gives a highly stylized account of the circumstances which inspired him to write the Golestan, telling us of his conviction, reached after contemplating one night how he had wasted his life that one should strive to capture the prize of righteousness (guy-e niki).

He therefore decided to withdraw from society, erase the delirious things he had written, and take a penitent vow of silence for the rest of his life. However, an old friend comes to visit and is vexed by this unsociable behavior.

The friend insists that it would contravene propriety and good sense for Ali's sword to remain in its scabbard or for Sadi's tongue to stay silent in his mouth. Lacking the heart to act churlishly with his comrades, Sadi's resolve melts, and they venture out together into the warmth of mid-spring (1 Ordibehesht, or late April).

(Source: Encyclopedia Iranica)
(To be continued)

37th Fajr Music Festival wraps up with honoring Barbad Awards winners

From Page 1 ► Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili several other cultural officials attended the closing ceremony of the festival organized at Tehran's Vahdat Hall.

"Iranian musicians are among the most genuine artists of the country. They have always respected Iranian culture and rituals, and nobody is allowed to view them as anything else," Esmaeili said.

"These people are our cultural asset and nobody is allowed to speak about them in an ill-mannered fashion," he noted.

He said, "The organizers have done well to hold art festivals under difficult conditions, and it's not fair to generalize a weak point to other parts."

Esmaeili also called regional

Iranian music a great treasure and urged the organizers of the Fajr Music Festival to pay special attention to the genre.

The Barbad Award in the regional music category went to "Talesh", a musical project initiated by Majid Kalabi, placing a spotlight on melodies used in the Talesh region in the northern Iranian province of Gilan.

In the Modern Iranian Music without Vocals category, the Barbad Award was given to "Provativa" by Asu Kehzadi, while in the Modern Iranian Orchestral Music with Vocals category, Behnam Abolqasem for "Still, the Moment of Rain" and Amin Homai for "Where Have Gone?" were awarded honorable mentions.

Puria Akhavas was selected as best singer in the Modern Iranian Orchestral Music with Vocals

Singer and kamancheh virtuoso Faraj Alipur (L), harpist Azarnush Salek and tombak player Morteza A'yan pose after accepting their lifetime achievement awards at the 37th Fajr Music Festival. (ISNA/Morteza Zanganeh)

category for the album "Still, the Moment of Rain".

"Longing" composed by Reza Vaali was selected as the best Western classical music.

The award in the Vocal Pop and fusion Music Composition section went to the Pallet band for the album "North to South", while the best singer award in this section was given to Omid Nemati for the album "Meridian Origin".

In the Dastgahi Music without Vocals category, the Barbad Award went to the album "Parallel to Infinity" composed by Arman Mahdieh.

Hesam Inanlu won an honorable mention for his composing the album "Amid" in the Fusion Music without Vocals, while the album "The Story of Separation" composed by Amir

Sharifi received the award in the Dastgahi Music with Vocals category.

Mojtaba Asgari was named best singer in the Dastgahi Music category for the album "The Bustan of Sadi".

In the Pop Music without Vocals section, the award was given to "Detresse" composed by Elyas Dejahang and Majid Eidani-Asl, and flutist Mehrdad Gholami won the award for his performance in the Classical Music category for the album "Pieces for the Flute".

Noufe under the management of Moein Farzad was selected as best label.

Harpist Azarnush Salek, tombak virtuoso Morteza A'yan, and singer and kamancheh player Faraj Alipur were also honored with lifetime achievement awards.

Alireza Qorbani, Alim Qasimov team up for Expo 2020 Dubai concert

TEHRAN – Iranian singer Alireza Qorbani and Azerbaijani vocalist Alim Qasimov will give a joint performance on Sunday at the Expo 2020 Dubai as part of Iran's program for the world fair.

The concert will begin at 9 pm at the Dubai Millennium Amphitheater, Iran's Rudaki Foundation, which is the main organizer of the performance, announced.

"The concert has been organized in line with the expo's aim to bring the nations closer with a focus on cultural affinities between Iran and Azerbaijan," the foundation said in a press release published on Saturday.

A repertoire of Iranian and Azerbaijani songs composed by Hessam Nasserri will be performed during the concert.

Iranian musicians Saman Samimi, Milad Mohammadi, Dara Darai, Zakaria Yusefi, Puria Sarai, Shayan Riahi and Azerbaijani kamancheh virtuoso Rauf Islamov will

A poster for a joint concert by Iranian singer Alireza Qorbani and Azerbaijani vocalist Alim Qasimov at the Expo 2020 Dubai.

accompany the duo in the concert.

Qorbani and Qasimov have previously collaborated in several performances, including a concert during the 18th edition of

the Konya International Mystic Music Festival in the Turkish town of Konya last September.

Earlier in December 2020, Qorbani and Qasimov released a duet single entitled "Rababi" featuring a poem by Rumi.

The two vocalists sang both in Persian and Azerbaijani together in the song composed by Nasserri.

Qorbani has participated in several international projects in Europe such as Le Rhythm De La Parole, SOUFFLES DU MONDE, Ivresses-le Sacre de Khayyam with Tunisian singer Dorsaf Hamdani, concerts with the Dusseldorf Symphony Orchestra, Kamel Orchestra Vienna and the Vancouver Opera Orchestra.

The Expo 2020 Dubai is currently being hosted by the United Arab Emirates, having started 1 October 2021 and running to 31 March 2022. Originally scheduled for October 20, 2020 to April 10, 2021, it was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The War Is Still Alive” by Fatemeh Behbudi picked for Italy’s Biennial of Female Photography

TEHRAN – Italy's Biennial of Female Photography has selected Iranian photographer Fatemeh Behbudi's collection "The War Is Still Alive" showcase at its second edition.

The biennial, which will also put on view collections by Tami Aftab, Sarah Blesener, Betty Colombo, Solmaz Daryani, Delphine Diallo, Esther Ruth Mbabazi, Myriam Meloni, Ilvy Njikiktjen and Flavia Rossi, is scheduled to take place in the Italian city of Mantua from March 3 to 27.

In "The War Is Still Alive", Behbudi focuses on the aftermath of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and its victims who never returned to their normal lives: their wounds have not healed even after more than 30

years.

Over three decades have passed since the end of the Iran-Iraq war, but many mothers are still waiting for the return of the remains of lost sons who perished during the war.

Over 30 years have passed since the end of the war, but children and many people in the border towns of Iran are still the victims of buried landmines in the soil.

The war began in 1980 with Iraq invading the international border of Iran and lasted eight years, becoming one of the deadliest in history with one million deaths.

Behbudi grew up in the middle of the conflict, and her childhood was deeply affected by the pervasive sense of fear, the sounds of

emergency sirens and bombs and the escalating number of deaths.

While the war was formally over in 1988, the reality of those who survived was much different. Thirty years on, the lasting trauma of the conflict shows up increasingly.

Behbudi was added to Hundred Heroines, a pioneering list of global women photographers initiated by the Royal Photographic Society in 2018 to mark the centenary of the women's right to vote in the UK by identifying outstanding female photographers from around the globe.

She is also the photographer of the acclaimed series "Waiting Mothers", which focuses on those Iranian women who have lost their children during the war.

Legacy is the theme of the Biennial of Female Photography.

"Looking at the inner lives of families, our DNA, the current debate on our environmental impact, as well as our architectural and cultural heritage, we reflect on the idea of legacy," the organizers said in a statement.

"What did previous generations leave us? And what will we do with it as a consequence?... We did not reach this present (only) because of choices outside our immediate control, but because the world's current complexity is due to the interweaving of people's arbitrary and willful decisions. Our present and our future are children of the past. And the choices of today set the basis for our tomorrow."

“Luther: A Guide for the Perplexed” appears in Persian

TEHRAN – David M. Whitford's book "Luther: A Guide for the Perplexed" has been published in Persian by Elmi Farhangi, a major publishing house in Tehran.

Mohammad Saffar is the translator of the book originally published in 2011.

The book is an upper-level introduction to the German Reformer Martin Luther, who by his thought and action started the Reformation movement.

Martin Luther was one of the most influential and important figures of the second millennium. His break with Rome and the development of separate Evangelical churches affected not just the religious life of Europe but also social and political landscapes as well.

More books have been written about Luther than nearly any other historical figure, yet

A file photo shows a seller putting a copy of the Persian edition of David M. Whitford's book "Luther: A Guide for the Perplexed" on a shelf.

despite all these books, Luther remains an enigmatic figure.

This book proposes to examine a number of key moments in Luther's life and fundamental theological positions that remain perplexing to most students.

This book also presents an introduction to the primary sources available to a student and important secondary works that ought to be consulted.

Continuum's Guides for the Perplexed are clear, concise and accessible introductions to thinkers, writers and subjects that students and readers can find especially challenging - or indeed downright bewildering.

Concentrating specifically on what it is that makes the subject difficult to grasp, these books explain and explore key themes and ideas, guiding the reader towards a thorough understanding of demanding material.