

Iranian Lawmakers Draw Red Lines on Vienna Talks

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Report

Amir Abdollahian, Borrell discuss Vienna texts at Munich

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian met on Saturday with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

During the meeting, the latest status of the talks in Vienna and the details of the agreements were discussed.

The foreign minister praised the role of Borrell and his deputy Enrique Mora as coordinators of the Vienna talks.

He also stressed Iran's will for the conclusion of the talks and explained Tehran's position in this regard.

Noting that Iran has presented all possible initiatives and proposals, Amir Abdollahian said that now is the time for the United States and the three European countries to show the real will to reach an agreement in the shortest possible time by making the necessary political decisions.

Iran's top diplomat stressed that if it were not for Iran's initiatives, both sides would not have been so close to an agreement, but the other side should know that Tehran will not ignore its red lines.

During the meeting, Borrell reviewed various parts of the text which is being negotiated in the field of sanctions lifting, nuclear commitments, verification and obtaining guarantees, and briefed Amir Abdollahian as the coordinator of the JCPOA talks. ▶ Page 2

Persian Gulf Arabs that first opposed nuclear deal now encourage Biden to revive it: senator

TEHRAN — Democratic Senator Chris Murphy said on Saturday that certain Arab countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf which first vehemently opposed President Barack Obama for striking nuclear deal with Iran in 2015 are now supporting President Joe Biden to revive the agreement that was ditched by his predecessor Donald Trump.

Murphy said the reason for this policy shift is that these countries realized that the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was working well.

And when Trump abandoned the nuclear agreement Iran retaliated by speeding up its nuclear activities, he added.

"Gulf countries hated Obama's Iran nuclear deal. Now they are rooting for Biden to restart it. Why? 1. They saw that it worked. To their surprise, Iran made good on its end," Murphy tweeted.

Trump quit the agreement in May 2018 under his "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran and returned sanctions lifted under the JCPOA. Trump even added new sanctions under different names. Trump had the illusion that by quitting the agreement he will force Iran to write a nuclear agreement in which Tehran would be deprived its right to nuclear enrichment.

Iran remained fully loyal to the JCPOA even one year after Trump left the agreement. Iran's commitment to its nuclear obligations was confirmed in quarterly reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency, which was tasked to monitor Iran's commitment to the agreement.

Iran started to lift bans on its nuclear program after the European parties to the agreement (France, Britain, and Germany) failed to compensate Iran for the U.S. sanctions. At the time Iran announced that if the Europeans honor their commitments, it will reverse its decision.



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A police battalion backed by armored vehicles, heavily armed tactical officers that look more like special forces at a war zone, horses, and drones are cracking down on Canadians protesting against the government.

In addition to wide-scale physical force

against the protesters, security forces are using stun grenades and pepper spray to break up the gatherings.

There have also been clashes between the security forces and a core component of the protesters, some of whom initially came

out with their trucks dubbed the "freedom convoy" demonstrating against the government's coronavirus restrictions.

However, the protests soon morphed into wider anti-government policies as more people from all walks of life joined ▶ Page 5

Iran-ECO trade grows over 41%

TEHRAN — Iran's trade with the members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) exceeded \$13.11 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-January 20, 2022) to register a 41 percent increase year on year, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Customs Administration (IRICA) said.

According to Ruhollah Latifi, the trade with the mentioned countries also increased by 25 percent in terms of weight in comparison to the figure for previous year's same 10 months, IRICA reported.

As reported, during the said 10 months

Iran traded over 24,758,827 tons of commodities worth \$13,110,812,971 with ECO member countries including Turkey, Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. ▶ Page 4



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Heads of government branches hold consultations

TEHRAN — The heads of the three branches of government met on Saturday night. The meeting was hosted by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf. The heads of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government consulted on the most important issues of the country, including economic issues.

76% of students aged 12-18 inoculated

TEHRAN — Some 76 percent of the students aged 12-18 years have received the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to the latest announcement of the Ministry of Education.

Meanwhile, the first shot has been injected to 86 percent of the whole students of this age group.

The total population of students aged 12 to 18 (seventh to twelfth grade) is 6,503,258 people.

Accordingly, the number of injections of the first dose among the students is 5,591,179 and the number of injections of the second dose is 4,932,085, IRNA reported on Sunday.

All educational centers in Iran have been closed since February 2020.

In order for students to keep in touch with their studies, the Ministry of Education launched a homegrown mobile application on

April 9, called SHAD, providing students with distance learning programs. More than 60 percent of students and 94 percent of teachers attended 64 percent of classes through the SHAD app, whose acronym in Persian translates as the Students Education Network.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) also began to broadcast televised educational programs on a daily basis after school closures.

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Interview

Republicans are correct that U.S. is 'republic', American professor says

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — Richard Bensel, the professor of American politics at Cornell University, confirms a claim by Republicans that America is a republic than a democracy.

"Republicans are correct that the United States is a 'republic' because no political institution is fully democratically controlled," Bensel tells the Tehran Times.

"For example," Bensel says, "Justices on the Supreme Court are appointed and serve for life."

In opposition, Democrats make every effort to cast light on democratic aspects of governance in the United States. They blame Republicans for efforts to undermine democracy in the country.

The 2020 election was a turning point in the Republican-Democrat dispute as Trump and his supporters accused Democrats of electoral fraud.

Trump, who failed to win a second term in 2020 election, still claims that the election was rigged.

Some political observers expect Trump run again for president in the 2024 election.

Professor Bensel rejects claims that the 2020 presidential election was rigged, saying, "The 2020 election was not rigged because Trump simply did not receive enough votes to be reelected." ▶ Page 5

"The Situation of Mehdi" wins best film at Qoqnus Screen Awards

TEHRAN — War drama "The Situation of Mehdi" added one more honor to the chain of its successes in Iranian events by winning best film prize at the 11th edition of the Qoqnus Screen Awards on Saturday.

The awards ceremony, held online, was streamed live on Ofoq, IRIB's channel for documentary cinema.

The film portrays the part of the life story of Mehdi Bakery, the chief of IRGC 31st Shura Division that carried out several major operations during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

"Unconventional consequences result from wars; for instance, the greatest novels and literary works have usually been created in the aftermath of war," director Hadi Hejazifar said after accepting the award.

"You cannot find any better examples of heroes than those born from the heart of war," he noted. ▶ Page 8

Amir Abdollahian, Borrell discuss Vienna texts at Munich



From page 1 ▶ The two sides agreed to continue their consultations.

Western media reported that the E3 has offered two compromise packages, and the Iranian side is discussing these packages. Meanwhile, the Iranian side has also prepared written drafts, especially after Bagheri Kani's return from Tehran.

During his speech in the Munich Security Conference on Saturday, Amir Abdollahian said that right now, Iranian negotiators "are confronting the double games of the Western

party on the text and time."

He then added that Iran is ready to "achieve a good deal, at the earliest possible time, if the other side makes the needed political decision."

According to the foreign minister, Iran participated in the new round of nuclear negotiations in "good faith and seriousness while tabling numerous initiatives for achieving a good deal."

Amir Abdollahian listed Iran's demands in Vienna as following:

"The removal of all sanctions inconsistent with the JCPOA, verification of sanctions removal, and presentation of absolutely necessary objective guarantees for the fulfillment of commitments."

The Munich Security Conference says it provides a platform for global dialogue. Iran has used this platform to explain its political position in Vienna, and to reach an understanding regarding the negotiations, as well as explaining its regional stances.

A good deal seems within reach, but it is the Westerners, and United States in particular that can decide the future of this agreement.

Iranian parliament warns Raisi not to sign any deal with U.S., E3 without guarantees

'U.S. and others must commit themselves not to use snapback mechanism'

TEHRAN - 250 Iranian parliamentarians have written a letter asking President Ebrahim Raisi to fully observe the red lines of the Iranian nation in signing any agreement with the U.S. and the three European countries of Britain, France and Germany in reviving the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the JCPOA.

The letter, which was read out at the open session of the Majlis (parliament) on Sunday, asks the president that Iran must receive the "necessary guarantees" for a full removal of sanctions, including those under CAATSA and ISA, and that the U.S. must not leave the nuclear deal again.

The text of the letter is as follows:

Iran's negotiations on the lifting of oppressive sanctions against the Iranian nation have reached a critical point.

We as the representatives of the people of Iran, while thanking you for your active and honorable diplomacy and the negotiating team, draw your attention and also the attention of the negotiating officials to the following points:

The tyrannical and terrorist U.S. government as well as the three European countries, as the weak followers of the United States, have shown that they are hellbent to use any possible means to harm the interests of the Iranian people over the past eight years in violation of all laws.

They also imposed medical sanctions against the Iranian nation in violation of all global rules, and based on this we

should learn from the past experiences and not sign any agreement with those that violated their obligations without obtaining the necessary guarantees by putting the interests of the Iranian nation as the red line.

The terrorist government of the United States and other Western countries that have broken their commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal must ensure that they will not leave the JCPOA again.

The U.S. regime and other JCPOA members must commit themselves not to use the snapback mechanism.

The U.S. regime and the three European countries must give assurances to lift sanctions against the Iranian people under the false nuclear, terrorism, missile and human rights pretexts, including sanctions related to CAATSA, U-turn and ISA (Iran Sanctions Act).

The United States and other JCPOA parties must first fulfill their obligations regarding the sanctions, and after verification Iran will take steps to fulfill its nuclear obligations.

According to Article 7 of the Law on Strategic Actions to Lift Sanctions approved by Majlis, the government is obliged to report to the Majlis on the fulfillment of Western obligations in lifting sanctions, especially oil and banking sanctions and the return of export income via the banking system without any problems, and if approved by the Majlis, the legislative branch may take steps to reduce the nuclear commitments.

Saudi Arabia says plans for fresh round of talks with Iran

Saudi Arabia is looking to schedule a fifth round of direct talks with Iran despite a "lack of substantive progress" in previous rounds, the kingdom's foreign minister has said at the Munich Security Conference.

Saudi Arabia severed ties with Iran in 2016 after its embassy in Tehran was stormed by protesters following the execution of Shia religious leader by Riyadh. The two regional powers launched talks last year hosted by Iraq.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said on Saturday that if the 2015 nuclear pact was revived that should be "a starting point, not an endpoint" in order to address regional concerns. Saudi Arabia has been critical of the deal for not tackling Tehran's missiles programme.

"That will indeed require from our neighbors in Iran a serious desire to address the underlying issues that exist ... We hope that



there is a serious desire to find a new modus operandi," he said, Al Jazeera reported.

"If we see substantive progress on those files, then yes, rapprochement is possible. So far, we have not seen that," he told the Munich Security Conference.

In a sign of a thaw in relations, Iran said last month that three Iranian diplomats arrived in Saudi Arabia to take up posts at the headquarters of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah.

FM: Iran ready to achieve good deal in shortest possible time in Vienna

TEHRAN— In his speech at the 58th Munich Security Conference on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian touched on many important issues such as the Vienna talks, the Yemen crisis, and the situation in Afghanistan.

The following is the full text of the foreign minister's speech:

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful Excellencies

Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very much delighted to have the opportunity today to be here and outline various dimensions of the foreign policy of the new government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Last week, the great nation of Iran celebrated the forty-third anniversary of their glorious revolution—a revolution which offered the world a new model of democracy on the basis of religion under the slogan of Independence, Freedom, and the Islamic Republic that has experienced so far 43 general elections with a mass voter turnout. The last general elections in my country resulted in the establishment of a popular and transformational government.

Today the foreign policy of the pragmatist and result-oriented government of President Raisi is founded on the principles of establishing a balance and dynamic diplomacy and smart interaction with others. It is indeed the embodiment of the esteemed causes of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and realism emanating from our national interests.

The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is centered on the restoration of balance in Iran's foreign relations, in terms of strengthening relations with various geographical areas as well as pursuing various aspects of foreign relations such as political, economic, and cultural engagement.

Such a foreign policy has been founded on pillars such as prioritizing neighbors and Asia, smart interaction, and expansion of relations with the countries of the world particularly the Muslim

world on the basis of common interests, mutual respect, and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs as well as the promotion and support of multilateralism, and rejection of unilateralism.

Distinguished participants

We are exchanging views here in this forum almost five years after the illegal withdrawal of the United States from the Iran nuclear agreement and subsequent imposition of economic terrorism on our nation, and unfortunately relative inaction and passivity by the three European states, party to the Deal.

This is while the Islamic Republic of Iran remained unilaterally, fully, and faithfully committed for a full year to all of its JCPOA commitments, and remained in the deal for the following years, to provide adequate and rather long opportunity to other participants to fulfill their obligations. But to no avail. Iran was deprived of all the promised economic benefits of the JCPOA.

The Islamic Republic of Iran participated in the new round of nuclear negotiations in good faith and seriousness while tabling numerous initiatives for achieving a good deal. What we are considering seems absolutely reasonable and fair: the removal of all sanctions inconsistent with the JCPOA, verification of sanctions removal, and presentation of absolutely necessary objective guarantees for the fulfillment of commitments.

Now that I am addressing you here in Munich, my colleagues are confronting the double games of the Western party on the text and time.

I would like to emphasize here that we are ready to achieve a good deal, at the earliest possible time, if the other side makes the needed political decision.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The security of the Persian Gulf and West Asia is strongly and directly bound to the security of the neighboring geographical areas such as Europe. The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes any idea and plan that aims to contribute, without foreign intervention, to stability and peace in the region.



On such a basis, our government has initiated constructive dialogue with its southern neighbors. Remarkable progress has been made. Our relations with our neighbors are in the good direction of development and progress.

We believe that weapons arsenals in the region would not produce security for the region. The presence and intervention of foreign powers in the region would only make the security arrangement of the region more complicated and exacerbated. We believe that the security of all the countries of this region can only be ensured and provided with collective contribution and cooperation.

Regrettably, we are witnessing a long conflict and human tragedy in Yemen. The settlement of the crisis in Yemen is contingent upon considering the roots of this conflict, the United Nations' central role-playing, respecting the will of the people of Yemen to determine their own destiny, ending the economic and human blockade, declaring ceasefire, and initiating Yemeni-led Yemeni-owned talks. The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supports the establishment of peace and stability in Yemen and the wider region and spares no efforts to realize it.

Distinguished colleagues

Afghanistan is stuck in an extensive human crisis. The situation on the ground in Afghanistan is the product of military occupation and use of force against that country. The policies of the United States of America towards Afghanistan during the past twenty years are suggestive of an incorrect US understanding of the realities of Afghanistan. We have consistently stood by the people of Afghanistan. Iran's government and non-government institutions have continued delivering humanitarian assistance and supplying fuel to the people of Afghanistan. We remain strongly worried about continued violence and terrorism in Afghanistan and the expansion of the activities of Daesh there.

The current wave of Afghan refugees to my country and other neighbors is a matter of serious concern. The active

participation of international community and institutions in humanitarian campaigns for the people of Afghanistan seems urgent and necessary. In our belief, the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan with the presence of all political and ethnic groups is absolutely necessary for achieving peace and stability.

Support for the Palestinian cause and peace in the Middle East region is central to our foreign policy. The Islamic Republic of Iran has proposed a comprehensive political and democratic solution for this problem. Iran's proposal has been registered in the United Nations. We believe that holding a referendum among the indigenous habitants of Palestine including the Christians, Jews and Muslims, and support of all governments for the outcome of such a referendum presents the best solution. The people of Palestine are the only people who should decide about their own destiny and future.

Distinguished audience,

We are very much concerned about the escalation of tension between Ukraine and Russia. The Islamic Republic of Iran is having good relations with both sides and invites them to settle their differences through dialog and peaceful means.

We also emphasize the necessity of the peaceful settlement of regional issues including in the Korean peninsula and disputes in the South China Sea without interference by transregional powers. We believe that politicizing universal concepts such as democracy and human rights in the long term would impair and undermine such fundamental values.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In conclusion, I would like to once again emphasize that the new government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a pragmatic and result-oriented government and is consequently ready to fortify constructive, sustainable, and viable relations with all countries on the basis of mutual respect and shared interests.

I would like to thank the organizers of this important forum and wish you all good luck and further success.

Senior MP says sanctions under CAATSA should be lifted

TEHRAN — Spokesman for the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian parliament suggested on Sunday that now that the Vienna talks are close to completion sanctions against Iran under CAATSA should be lifted.

"The talks have reached a very sensitive stage and they have progressed well so far, and if it had continued in the same way in the past, we would have reached a win-win agreement," Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini said.

However, the legislator said that negotiating partners have to reach a clear conclusion on a few sensitive issues.

"If we do not reach an agreement on these cases, the principles of agreement will not be easily grasped. We are ready to reduce the Westerners' concerns about nuclear activities and we have both seriousness and good faith in this regard," Meshkini noted.

He added that Iran is working within the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement and is ready to address concerns about its nuclear program.

"It is not a question of the level of enrichment, and we must have all our activities based on the safeguards of the Agency, so that we can address their concerns," the MP added.

The Vienna talks are aimed at lifting sanctions imposed against Iran illegally.



Meshkini stressed that Iran is demanding the lifting of sanctions and practical guarantees in this regard.

Former U.S. president Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and returned sanctions and added new ones under different pretexts. Trump did this despite the fact that the JCPOA is being endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Talks to revive the JCPOA started after President Biden said his administration is willing to rejoin the JCPOA.

Meshkini said, "If the West and the Americans show good faith and seriousness, a win-win agreement is possible."

Regarding the remarks of Iran's foreign minister in the Munich Security Conference on exchange of prisoners between Iran and the United States, Meshkini said, "We do not go into

details, but what is important for us is that the sanctions that must be lifted. Sanctions such as CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) must be dealt with. If not, I do not think we will reach a conclusion in Vienna soon."

On the U.S. Congress letter to President Biden about the Vienna talks, Meshkini said, "It was not a good time to write the letter to Biden and the text was not correct and I do not think this letter is without coordination. In this regard, the Majlis (parliament) has also written a letter to the president of Iran, calling on the president not to rush into an agreement unless the Americans provide the necessary guarantees to lift the sanctions. We believe Americans need agreement more than we do."

The letter written by the MPs asks President Ebrahim Raisi not to sign any deal with the Western negotiating partners if they don't provide guarantees that the JCPOA would not be violated again.

It also wants the U.S. and the European countries that are still signatory to JCPOA not to use the snapback mechanism.

Part of the letter also says the U.S. and the three European countries (Britain, Germany and France) must give assurances to lift the sanctions, including sanctions related to CAATSA, U-turn and ISA (Iran Sanctions Act).

Iranian lawmakers draw red lines on Vienna talks

TEHRAN – A large group of Iranian lawmakers has taken a rare stance on the Iranian government's negotiating position, warning it against crossing the redlines drawn by the Islamic Republic.

More than 250 lawmakers wrote a letter to the government of Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi laying out a set of conditions for Iran to recommit itself to a deal with the West.

The letter, addressed to President Raisi, laid out an array of important measures to be taken by Iran and the United States as well as the European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), before and after reviving tattered deal.

First, the lawmakers advised the government to learn a lesson from Iran's past experience in its dealings with the U.S. and Europe and draw redlines based on Tehran's national interests.

Second, the lawmakers called on the government to seek guarantees from the U.S. and Europe that they won't quit the JCPOA again.

Third, they said the U.S. and other JCPOA parties must make a commitment that they won't use a controversial built-in mechanism within the JCPOA. The mechanism, known as "snapback", allows parties to the



deal, except Iran, to reimpose all UN sanctions on Iran without consent from other participants if Iran failed to honor its obligations under the deal.

Fourth, the lawmakers said the U.S. and Europe should make a commitment that they will remove nuclear sanctions and those imposed under terrorism, missile, and human rights authorities.

Fifth, the lawmakers said Iran must reverse its nuclear measures only after the U.S. verifiably remove its sanctions.

The letter represents a changing mood regarding the JCPOA talks in the parliament which in the past provided the legislative infrastructure

for the resumption of Iran's nuclear activities. It also signifies that if the West does not show flexibility in relation to guarantees and verification, a deal won't be made any time soon.

It also comes at a time when the success of talks in Vienna seems to be depending on the West providing robust guarantees that they won't renege on their commitments again. Guarantees along with verification measures Iran is demanding before any deal have appeared as Iran's main redlines in the talks.

In his meeting with High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdol-

lahian brought up the issue of Iran's redlines.

Amir Abdollahian has sat down with Borrell on the margins of the Munich Security Conference.

In the meeting, the two sides discussed the latest status of the Vienna talks as well as the details agreed upon by parties to the negotiations.

In the meeting, the top Iranian diplomat appreciated the role of Borrell and his deputy Enrique Mora as coordinator of the talks, saying Iran is determined to see the talks end with a good agreement.

Amir Abdollahian also elaborated on Iran's positions in that regard.

He said the Islamic Republic of Iran has presented all possible initiatives and proposals, saying it is time the U.S. and the three European countries adopt the necessary political decisions to show they are really determined to work out a deal in the shortest possible time.

Amir Abdollahian stressed that if it weren't for Iran's initiatives, the negotiators wouldn't be so close to reaching an agreement as they are now.

Nevertheless, he added, the other side should know that Tehran will not give up its red lines.

Amir Abdollahian continues talks with foreign counterparts

TEHRAN – On the second day of his stint in Munich, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held meetings with several foreign officials on the sidelines of the 58th Munich Security Conference.

Amir Abdollahian met with Sophie Wilmès, Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The two top diplomats discussed and exchanged views over bilateral relations and some issues of mutual interest during the meeting.

Amir Abdollahian referred to the good 130-year history of relations between the two countries, saying, "There are many bilateral and multilateral opportunities in ties between the two countries, and the hosting of European institutions in Brussels also adds new dimensions to the bilateral relations and cooperation."

Amir Abdollahian also spoke of the beginning of a new momentum in bilateral ties in recent months after the inauguration of the new administration in Iran. He then described the further expansion of parliamentary cooperation between Tehran and Brussels as one of the capacities for developing political relations.

Turning to the impact of the development of economic and trade relations in deepening ties, Amir Abdollahian described as important, the operation of the Belgian trade and commercial offices and the maintenance of their activities and said this effectively helps build the future of bilateral relations between two countries.

The foreign minister emphasized Iran's readiness to further develop relations with Belgium in various fields, including technical areas and new technologies as well as knowledge-based companies. The Belgian deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs also expressed pleasure with the new meeting with his Iranian counterpart. Sophie Wilmès further pointed to the various aspects of relations between the two countries and stressed that further development of these ties will have many positive effects in Europe and West Asia.

Wilmès also stressed her country's readiness to cooperate in all fields of bilateral relations and to work to follow up on the agreements reached to further develop and expand ties between the two

countries.

In the meeting, the foreign ministers of Iran and Belgium also discussed some consular issues, including the situation of Mr. Asadi. Amir Abdollahian explained Iran's views on the issue to his Belgian counterpart.

Iraq ready to host Iranian-Saudi talks

Amir Abdollahian has met with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein as he continued his meetings with the top diplomats participating in the Munich Security Conference.

In the meeting, Amir Abdollahian and Hussein discussed bilateral issues and the latest regional and international developments.

The Iraqi foreign minister presented a report on the domestic developments of Iraq and the post-election situation there, saying his country is ready to host the next round of talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Amir Abdollahian also announced Iran's readiness to continue talks with Saudi Arabia, saying however that this depends above all on the will of the other side.

The top Iranian diplomat reiterated the need for a civil transfer of power in Iraq based on consensus and compromise between all Iraqi groups.

The foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq also discussed economic projects between the two countries and explored ways of implementing the agreements reached during talks between the two sides' delegations over the past few months.

Vienna talks discussed with Austrian FM

Amir Abdollahian and his Austrian counterpart Alexander Schallenberg have discussed bilateral ties and international issues of mutual interest, including the ongoing talks in Vienna.

During the meeting, Amir Abdollahian thanked Austria for hosting the negotiations, saying today Vienna is the center of developments in important areas for Iran and the international community.

He also outlined Iran's red lines and Tehran's strong opposition to any move to violate them in Vienna. He said, "If the final choice is between no deal, on the one hand, and violating the interests of the Iranian people - as our red line - on the other, then Tehran's definite choice is to respect national interests and not cross the logical and legitimate

red lines of the Islamic Republic."

He described the establishment and maintenance of a balance between rights and responsibilities as the obvious key to the stability of any agreement. Amir Abdollahian added, "Now the Western parties must make their final decision on whether they want to end the current economic terrorism and their inaction and non-compliance, or still want to leave the scar unhealed under unacceptable pretexts."

He stressed that the launch of media campaigns by the three European countries and the United States to achieve their negotiating goals does not affect the definitive mission of the Iranian negotiators to protect the interests of the great people of Iran.

In other comments, Amir Abdollahian described the centuries-long history of relations between Iran and Austria as distinguished, saying the ties have different aspects. He also expressed hope that relations with Austria will be promoted to higher levels.

The Iranian foreign minister also called for resolving the consular problems of Iranian citizens in Austria, including the problems of student families visiting their children, extending the residency of some students, and some banking problems of resident Iranians.

Alexander Schallenberg referred to his meetings with all the heads of the negotiating delegations in Vienna. He said, "The final stages of the talks are very tough and sometimes breathtaking, and some days progress may not be made, but we must all continue to make efforts to reach a deal". Schallenberg added that although Austria is not a party to the Iran nuclear deal, JCPOA, it has a firm commitment to give any possible assistance to the negotiations.

"There is no doubt that the restoration of the JCPOA and the return of all parties to their commitments is the solution to the crisis created by the former US president and that we are all addressing the issue today," he said.

The Austrian foreign minister also noted his country's firm determination to expand relations with Tehran in all areas, saying consular issues can be resolved in talks between colleagues from the two ministries.

Iran condemns Israel 'racist actions' in West Bank

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has reacted to the recent Israeli measures in Jerusalem and the West Bank that inflamed tensions between Palestinians and the Israelis.

The Iranian foreign ministry said that "Khatibzadeh has condemned the Zionist regime's racist actions in forcing the Palestinian residents of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of the occupied West Bank to leave their homes."

Khatibzadeh expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people as the main and real inhabitants of this ancient land and cradle of divine religions.

Khatibzadeh stressed the need to support the Palestinian people and called for an end to the destruction of their homes and confiscation of their land, which is a continuation of the apartheid policies of the child-killer Zionist regime.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman called on the world community and international organizations to fulfill their legal and humanitarian commitments in this regard.

The well-known Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of Jerusalem (al-Quds) has been a scene of clashes

between Israeli security forces and Palestinians since last week. The fresh wave of clashes began when far-right Knesset member Itamar Ben Gvir, accompanied by dozens of Jewish settlers, broke into the neighborhood to set up a parliamentary office there.

A member of the far-right Religious Zionist party, Ben Gvir contributed to inflaming the situation, according to Israeli media. He made a "substantial contribution" to erupting clashes in the neighborhood, a police source told Israeli broadcaster Channel 12.

Earlier this month, a Palestinian elderly died in Israeli custody. He was detained by Israeli troops at a checkpoint in the West Bank and was later found dead. An autopsy conducted by three Palestinian doctors found that the man died of cardiac arrest after a stress-induced heart attack resulting from "external violence," according to the Associated Press.

A Palestinian young man from the village of Kafr Ein, north of Ramallah was shot dead by the Israeli army at the entrance to the village of Al-Nabi Saleh.

On February 8, an Israeli force assassinated three Palestinians in the Al-Makhfieh neighbor-

hood in Nablus after shooting at a Palestinian vehicle they were traveling in.

Sources revealed to Al-Mayadeen that the Hamas movement held talks with the Egyptians about the recent Israeli attacks in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

The sources said that Hamas informed the Egyptian side that what is happening is an "escalation of danger that cannot be tolerated," and that the occupation government is "playing with fire again." Hamas confirmed that the expulsion of Palestinians from the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood is a "red line that the resistance knows how to respond to." In turn, the Palestinian factions confirmed that they "will not leave the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood alone."

On Sunday, a Hamas leader warned that tampering with Jerusalem is playing with fire.

The deputy head of the movement in the Gaza Strip, Khalil al-Haya, said that "the occupation must choose between fire or peace."

He added: "Gaza is still standing ready to defend our people with all its might."

SPORTS

Alireza Jahanbakhsh scores a wonderful goal

TEHRAN – Alireza Jahanbakhsh scored a wonderful goal as Feyenoord defeated Cambuur 3-1 on Sunday.

Cambuur took the lead in the 17th minute by Tom Boere.

Luis Sinisterra equalized the match in the 24th minute.

Orkun Kokcu was on target just before the half-time.

Jahanbakhsh scored Feyenoord's third goal four minutes into second half.

Feyenoord moved up to third place, six points adrift of Ajax.

Hamed Lak pens one-year extension with Persepolis

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club have handed a one-year extension to their goalkeeper Hamed Lak.

The 31-year-old custodian joined Persepolis in September 2020 from Machine Sazi.

Lak helped Persepolis win Iran Professional League and Super Cup titles.

He also was one of the team's members who qualified for the final of 2020 AFC Champions League.

Iran looking to make impact on 2022 AFC U23 Asian Cup

TEHRAN – Asian Football Confederation (AFC)'s website has reported that Iran will be looking to make an impact on the 2022 AFC U23 Asian Cup

Uzbekistan will expect to advance to the knockout stage on home soil but Thursday's draw would have left the team fearing the unknown after being drawn alongside Iran, Qatar and debutants Turkmenistan.

Uzbekistan have enjoyed success in the last two editions of the tournament - winning the title in 2018 and finishing fourth two years ago - but will be wary of their group stage opponents come June.

Iran and Qatar, big hitters at the senior level, will be looking to make an impact on a tournament neither have won before and this spells danger for Uzbekistan.

Qatar's best was a third-placed finish in 2018 while Iran have not featured in the semi-finals of the previous four editions and Uzbekistan 2022 could well be the platform for both to deliver.

Turkmenistan will be an unknown quantity for all three teams and the Central Asian side will relish the opportunity of testing itself against higher ranked opposition in its debut AFC U23 Asian Cup appearance.

Three other foreign strikers linked with Persepolis

TEHRAN – Three other foreign strikers have been linked with move to Iranian football club Persepolis.

Portuguese forward Alexandre Xavier Pereira Guedes was supposed to join Persepolis but his move to Iran but was ineligible to play in the Iran league.

Now, the media reports suggest that Patrick Friday Eze, Uros Deric and Emir Kujovic are on the club's radar.

Patrick Friday Eze

Nigerian Patrick Friday Eze has played in Turkish teams Konyaspor, Denizlispor and Serbian clubs Rad, Napredak Kruševac and Mladost Lužani.

The 29-year-old forward has most recently played for Qatari club Al Ahli.

He had been also linked with a move to Esteghlal several years ago.

Uros Deric

Serbian Uros Deric started his playing career in Serbian club Radnički Nova Pazova.

Deric has also played in his homeland teams Radnički Niš, Borac Zrenjanin and Sloboda Užice.

The 29-year-old frontman has played in South Korean teams Gangwon, Gyeongnam and Suwon Bluewings as well.

Emir Kujovic

Swede Emir Kujovic plays as a striker for Djurgårdens IF. He has won five caps for the Sweden national team, and was a squad player at UEFA Euro 2016.

The 33-year-old striker started his playing career in Swedish club Landskrona BoIS and has also played for Belgian Gent and German club Fortuna Düsseldorf.

Four Para skiers to represent Iran at Beijing 2022

TEHRAN – Iran will send four Para skiers to the 2022 Paralympic Winter Games in Beijing, China.

Elaheh Gholi Fallah will compete in women's Para Nordic skiing and Abolfazl Khatibi represent Iran in the men's division.

Hossein Sooleghani in the men's Para Snowboard and Sedigheh Rouzbeh in the women's Para Snowboard are two other Iranian representatives in the Games.

Para Snowboard originally made its debut at Sochi 2014 as a discipline of alpine skiing with snowboard-cross, before being recognized as its own sport for PyeongChang 2018 when banked slalom was also added.

Gholi Fallah was chosen as flag bearer for Iran in the opening ceremony.

The Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games will take place from March 4 to 13 in Beijing.

Iran champions of CAFA U19 Futsal Championship

TEHRAN – Iran claimed the title of the CAFA U19 Futsal Championship on Saturday.

Ali Sanei's boys defeated Uzbekistan 7-1 in their final match and won the first edition of the competition.

Each team played four matches on a round-robin basis.

Iran started the campaign with a 10-3 win over Afghanistan and also beat Tajikistan (2-1) and Kyrgyz Republic (6-1).

Afghanistan finished in second place.

Iran also won Fair Play award.

Central Asia has long been considered an Asian futsal hotspot, with 12-time continental champions Iran leading the way, while Uzbekistan have reached the AFC Futsal Asian Cup Final on four occasions.

Kyrgyz Republic has reached the semi-finals of the continental finals on three occasions, and Afghanistan were runners-up in the inaugural AFC U-20 Futsal Asian Cup in 2019, while Tajikistan have qualified for the last nine AFC Futsal Asian Cups.

Norway retains title with most medals at 2022 Winter Olympics

TEHRAN – With all 109 medal events decided, competition at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing is officially complete.

After three weeks of dominance, Norway stands alone atop the chart with the most total medals (37) and the most gold medals (16).

Norway broke its own record for the most gold medals won at a single Winter Olympics with 16, to go along with eight silver medals and 13 bronze medals. (Norway and Germany in 2018 both matched the record of 14 gold medals at a single Winter Olympics previously set by Canada in Vancouver 2010.) Norway narrowly missed eclipsing its high-water mark of 39 total medals, won in PyeongChang.

The United States finished the Games with eight gold medals -- tied for the fourth most along with Sweden and the Netherlands. But America's total medal count of 25 put them fifth. In addition to eight golds, the U.S. tallied 10 silver medals and seven bronze medals, nbcolympics.com wrote.

Iran-ECO trade grows over 41%



From page 1 ▶ Iran exported 21.035 million tons of commodities worth over \$8.419 billion to the said nations in the mentioned period.

As reported, the Islamic Republic's export to ECO members in the said 10 months increased by 36 percent and 51 percent compared to the figures for the previous year in terms of weight and value, respectively.

He said major export destinations of the Iranian goods in the said union were Turkey with about \$4.530 billion of imports, Afghanistan with \$1.535 billion, Pakistan with \$1.018 billion, and Azerbaijan with \$438.332 million.

Petroleum products, dairy products, foodstuff, fresh and dried fruits, juices and citrus fruits, carpets, saffron, fish, caviar, ornamental aquatic products, various stones, and construction equipment, clothing,

industrial equipment, bags and shoes, medicine, and health supplies, as well as plastic products, were Iran's main exported items to ECO members, according to Latifi.

Meanwhile, the country imported 3.722 million tons of goods valued at over \$4.691 billion from the ECO member countries, with Turkey, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan being the top sources of imported goods.

The value of Iranian imports from the ECO union increased by 26 percent compared to the previous year's same time span, the official said.

Basic goods, industrial machinery, raw materials for production, and medical supplies and medicine, were the top imported goods from ECO member states.

Iran and ECO members had traded more than 23.723 million tons of goods worth \$11.71 billion during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2021), of which the share of exports was 18.419 million tons of goods worth \$6.890 billion and the share of imports from these countries was 5.312 million tons worth \$4.819 billion.

The Economic Cooperation Organization or ECO is an Asian political and economic intergovernmental organization that was founded in 1985 in Tehran by the leaders of Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Oji visits Qatar to attend GECF summit

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji has traveled to Qatar to attend the 6th Summit of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) which is slated to be held in Doha on Tuesday, Shana reported.

Oji, who left Tehran on Saturday evening, is going to accompany President Ebrahim Raisi during the GECF summit.

As reported, heading a high-ranking delegation, President Raisi is going to leave Tehran for Doha on Monday.

The 5th GECF Summit was convened in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on November 29, 2019, under the patronage of Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of Equatorial Guinea. The Meeting was attended by President of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari.

The Iranian delegation attending the summit was headed by Mohammad Nahavandian, the country vice president at the time.



The Gas Exporting Countries Forum is an international governmental organization that provides the framework for exchanging experience and information among member countries.

Iran, Algeria, Bolivia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela are the permanent members of GECF and Azerbaijan, Iraq, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Norway, Oman, and Peru have the status of observer members.

Construction of 25,000 National Housing Movement units starts in Alborz province

TEHRAN – The operation for the construction of 25,000 units of National Housing Movement started in Alborz province, the director-general of Transport and Urban Development Department of the province announced.

Reza Khaleqi said: "National Housing Movement is a collective effort by the government that aims to provide house for all groups of the society, and we, in turn, have a major role in this important goal."

As previously reported, the operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of National Housing Movement began in early February.

The ceremony to begin the mentioned operation and also to launch some development projects in the housing sector was attended by Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi.

Following the government's public call for

the registration of people needing affordable housing units under the framework of a new program called the National Housing Movement, so far 2.387 million people have registered in this program.

After the National Housing Action Plan, the National Housing Movement is the government's second major program for providing affordable housing units to low-income classes.

As reported, the construction of 750,000 such housing units is underway across the country under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

Since the beginning of the National Housing Action Plan in 2018 so far over 1,461,528 people have registered in the program and considering the applicants in the new program, a total of 3,812,655 people have registered in the government's housing plans.

Saipa Company, and National Iranian Copper Company were the most widely followed ones.

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

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

Lack of sufficient training for shareholders, facilitating the entry of new companies into

Issuance of mining licenses rises in Q3

TEHRAN – Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry data show that 310 mining exploration licenses, as well as 126 discovery certificates, have been issued in the third quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (September 23-December 21, 2021) to register 17.4 percent and 3.3 percent increase compared to the previous year's same three months, respectively.

Based on the mentioned data, 130 licenses were also issued for the operation of new mines during the fall, which shows a 5.7 percent increase compared to the summer in which 123 licenses had been issued, IRNA reported.

According to the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), a total of 797 mining exploration licenses were issued from the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021) up to the end of the year's third quarter.

The number of issued licenses in the mentioned nine months



increased by 13.9 percent compared to the previous year's same time span.

Also, in the first nine months of the current year, 355 discovery certificates and 380 operation licenses were issued, which indicates decreases of 3.5 percent and 17.7 percent, respectively.

Expenses for exploration operations, however, increased by 294 percent in the mentioned

nine months compared to the figure for the previous year's same period; accordingly, the cost of exploration operations in the mentioned nine months was 3.593 trillion rials (about \$13.87 million) while the figure was 911 billion rials (about \$3.5 million) in the previous year's nine-month period.

In the past few years with new resilient economy strategies

coming into play, the mining sector has become a major point of focus for the Iranian government and various organizations and bodies active in this sector have been tasked to implement new programs for boosting this sector.

As a major state-owned holding company active in the mining sector in the country, IMIDRO has been playing a significant part in the mentioned planning.

The organization has been implementing several new programs in all the main fields of the mining industry including exploration, machinery development, extraction and also reviving the country's idle mines.

According to the IMIDRO head, the organization has put the development of mines and mining industries on the agenda with three main strategies: increasing exploration operations, developing infrastructure, and reviving the country's idle small-scale mines.

Trade between Iran, Qatar can reach \$1b in next year: TPO head

TEHRAN- The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said that the value of trade between Iran and Qatar can reach \$1 billion in the next year.

Alireza Peyman-Pak said, "Trade between Iran and Qatar is currently a small figure of about \$300 million-\$400 million, while there is the potential to increase to \$1 billion next year."

Mentioning the trip of the president to Qatar, the official said this visit is aimed at attending the meetings of Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), and also meetings between the two countries' officials in line with the expansion of industrial, trade, transit, and tourism cooperation.

Referring to the opportunity and capacity of Qatar for investment and international partnerships, he continued: "Qatar has richer financial resources compared to the other Persian Gulf countries, and one of the approaches that this country pursues is

investing in the region and distant countries."

Iran and Qatar signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for cooperation in a variety of areas at the end of the two countries' seventh Joint Economic Committee meeting which was held in Isfahan in late November 2020.

Based on this MOU, the two sides agreed to cooperate in forming a joint trade working group between the two countries, establishing trade centers between the private sectors of the two sides, establishing commercial affiliates in the embassies of the two countries in Tehran and Doha, and using the ports of the two countries to boost the export and import of goods.

Cooperation between the two countries' chambers of commerce to encourage the private sectors of the two sides for joint ventures, the development of cooperation in the fields of agriculture, electricity, water and wastewater and gas, cooperation in the



field of cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism, including holding a cultural week in Isfahan, were among other provisions of the mentioned MOU.

The MOU also covered cooperation in the fields of pharmaceutical and medical equipment, higher education and scientific research, transit and transportation of goods, communications and information technology, as well as protection and maintenance of fiber optic cables (submarine).

Steel exports rise 11% in 10 months yr/yr

TEHRAN- Iran exported over 6.049 million tons of steel during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-January 20, 2022), which was 11 percent more than the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

Khuzestan Steel Company posted the best performance through exporting 1.51 million tons of steel in the ten-month period, followed by Mobarakeh Steel Company and Esfahan Steel Company by exporting 980,758 tons and 937,906 tons, respectively.

Slab produced by Sirjan Jahan Steel Company registered the highest export rise in the mentioned period, as the export of product rose 150 percent.

As reported, steel export fell 10 percent in the tenth month of this year from that of the previous year.



According to the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), Iranian exports of steel during the previous Iranian calendar year declined 13.1 percent compared to the figure for the preceding year.

Based on the association's data, the country exported nine million tons of steel in the previous year.

Over 2.839 million tons

of steel products were also exported in the mentioned year, registering an 18-percent decline year on year.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the

performance of the world's top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

The production capacity of the country's steel chain increased from 123 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 230 million tons in the previous year (ended on March 20).

Based on the latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA), Iran has maintained its place as the world's 10th biggest steel producer during January-October, 2021.

Production of crude steel in Iran reached 22.4 million tons during the mentioned time span to register a 5.7-percent decline year on year, the report said.

TEDPIX drops 7,700 points on Sunday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 7,785 points to 1.274 million on Sunday.

As reported, over 7.441 billion securities worth 52.756 trillion rials (about \$202.9 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index lost 2,941 points, and the second market's index dropped 24,211 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,

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

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

Mokhber announced at the time.

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

According to Mokhber, the decisions made in the meeting of the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters have been communicated with Finance and Economic

Affair Minister Ehsan Khandouzi, Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Reza Fatemi-Amin, Oil Minister Javad Oji, Head of Planning and Budget Organization (PMO) Masoud Mir-

Kazemi, and Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Ali Saleh-Abadi.

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

Earlier on January 25, President Raisi had called on all related authorities to take the necessary measures for resolving the stock market problems.

Canadian government cracks down on protesters

From page 1 ► the truckers to rally against what they say is their freedom being taken away from them by the government and the prime minister.

In one case, caught by reporters, Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested a man at gunpoint after smashing their way into his vehicle.

Many others refused to leave their vehicles and officers smashed their vehicle windows to arrest the people locked inside.

Most of the protest organizers in the capital Ottawa have been taken to prison while others are reportedly on the run.

Some protest organizers have said on social media that they were "shocked at the abuses of power by the law enforcement in Ottawa" and have therefore "asked our truckers to move from Parliament Hill to avoid further brutality". They also claim that protesters had been "horse-trampled".

The government offensive comes four days after authorities enjoyed unprecedented powers when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau invoked the Federal Emergencies Act for the first time in the country's history.

Trudeau cited the protesters' siege on parts of the capital and the blockade of some trade routes with the U.S. as part of the reasons behind triggering the act.

Speaking to the Canadian Broadcasting Corp, Safety Minister Marco Mendicino claimed "an ongoing effort to blockade that port of entry (south of Vancouver) really shows why the Emergencies Act continues to be a necessity".

Mendicino also told reporters that the emergency powers Trudeau had triggered has allowed financial services providers to freeze bank accounts with a total of \$2.5 million.

The protesters have been receiving donations from Canadians via an online funding platform. Temporary powers afforded by the act include the ability to freeze the bank accounts and credit cards of people connected to the protests.

But many demonstrators remain defiant; they are either on the streets shifting to other locations or sitting in their trucks as security forces, moved in and around their vehicles.

One trucker who identified himself to media outlets as just Richard says "they're just trying to scare us to move, but we're not moving";



however with officers standing in front of his truck, the man insisted that they would have to drag him out.

Another trucker has told Al Jazeera that he did not have any interest in joining the "freedom convoy" which he argued was not all about coronavirus restrictions saying there are "major issues" in the trucking industry, such as unpaid wages and exploitation of foreign workers, that warrant more attention.

The protester says "I wouldn't call it a truckers' protest" saying that "it has nothing to do with trucking".

Canadian authorities have provided no timeline for how long it might take for security forces to end the protests and clear areas in the capital and elsewhere.

Trudeau's new Emergency powers has also allowed police to compel heavy tow truck operators to help drag out the large vehicles holding firm on the city's streets.

The precinct of parliament had been transformed into a temporary accommodation by the protesters, many of whom had brought their kids with them and pitched tents in the middle of downtown streets where some of the protesters served food.

For three consecutive weekends, supporters of the protests gathered in the city to join the truckers who were residing in their parked vehicles.

There are many questions officials and leaders at all levels will be called on to answer. Topping the list is Trudeau, whose move to invoke emergency measures adds to the mounting criticism that accuses him of politicizing the pandemic.

While Trudeau's orders have been in effect since Tuesday and security forces have already used the powers, under the Emergencies Act, a debate must be held in both the House of Commons and Senate.

This allows both members of parliaments and senators to discuss

the Prime Minister's decision.

Parliament also has the ability to vote down the government's motion; which would effectively result in the official cancellation of Ottawa's temporary yet extraordinary powers.

During a parliamentary debate on the use of the Emergencies Act in the House of Commons, left of center New Democratic Party MP Charlie Angus asked "how did we get here?" before reading a long list of culprits into the parliamentary record.

He began with Ottawa police, Mayor Jim Watson, Canada's security establishment and Facebook. "I blame the prime minister, I blame his failure to stand up and give a vision when we needed a vision," he continued. "I blame [Ontario Premier] Doug Ford who was off snowmobiling and kept missing key security briefings."

Conservative House Leader John Brassard did not hold back saying that the unrest was stoked by a prime minister who plays identity politics, "wedging, stigmatizing, dividing, calling people racist, misogynist, extremist and asking whether we have to tolerate these people."

MP Adam Chambers told Parliament that lawmakers don't even have enough information to know if the emergency measures are justified.

He noted that "there were no briefings. No secret intelligence has been shared. Ministers have held press conferences and conducted interviews implying terrorists are at the steps of Parliament but have offered the House no evidence".

Conservatives have strongly denounced the government, calling the emergency orders a power grab and a shocking move that tramples on the rights of Canadians.

MP Michael Barrett says "history will not be kind to those who approve

of this illiberal power grab, that is not who we are as Canadians".

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney described the use of the act as "unnecessary" and "disproportionate" while announcing that his province will take the federal government to court.

The Debate on Trudeau's decision to invoke the Emergencies Act will continue morning to night until a vote scheduled for 8pm on Monday.

A representative of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) which also plans to pursue a lawsuit against the federal government says invoking such sweeping new powers was "unnecessary, unjustifiable and unconstitutional".

CCLA executive director Noa Mendelsohn says "we think what we're seeing here is a very difficult law-enforcement situation that doesn't amount to a national emergency".

She added the "sweeping powers" made possible by the act are troubling because they can be used not only in Ottawa but across Canada.

Over the past weeks, the right to protest in Canada has been under the spotlight; as has the Prime Minister invoking emergency powers against the demonstrations and whether it had met the legal threshold of the legislation.

Mark Sutor, a 33-year-old protester from Hamilton, Ontario, speaking as police retook control of the streets around Parliament, noted "I think we've started something here, this is going to be a very big division in our country. I don't believe this is the end".

U.S. Representative Yvette Herrell says that she would be introducing laws that would grant temporary asylum to those involved in the Canadian protests.

In a statement Herrell said "just as we provide asylum for political prisoners, we should do the same for truckers who have been subjected to violence, had their property confiscated, and their bank accounts frozen by a government that is quickly becoming the embarrassment of the free world".

The statement added she is introducing the legislation because "Canadian protesters are being persecuted by their own government. We cannot be silent as our neighbors to the north are treated so badly".

Russian diplomat: 'We don't trust the US and British intelligence'



A Russian diplomat on Sunday said Moscow does not trust "U.S. and British intelligence" while repeating Russia's claim that it has no plans to invade Ukraine.

Sky News host Trevor Phillips asked Deputy Russian Ambassador to the UN Dmitry Polyanskiy why the Kremlin has amassed 150,000 troops at the Ukrainian border if Moscow does not plan to invade its neighbor.

"First of all, who counted them? Where do you take this figure 150,000? I remember it was 100,000, then it was 120,000, now it is 150,000, some people say 190,000," Polyanskiy said. "I admit inflation is very high here in New York. We see it in the prices, but in the number of soldiers..."

Phillips pushed back on Polyanskiy's remarks, citing satellite imagery from Western governments showing an increase in Russia's military presence at the border.

"We don't trust the U.S. and British

intelligence, they let us down, the whole world, on many occasions. Enough to remember the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq," Polyanskiy replied.

The diplomat repeated Moscow's frequent argument that it is allowed to place its troops wherever it wishes within its own borders. Phillips asked if Moscow would have the same "relaxed" attitude if Ukraine similarly amassed a military presence along its border with Russia.

Polyanskiy claimed that Ukraine has already amassed 120,000 soldiers along contact lines in Donbass and alleged that the Ukrainian military had begun shelling the region. Hundreds of artillery shells exploded along contact lines between Ukrainian soldiers and Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine over the weekend, resulting in thousands of Ukrainians being evacuated to Russia.

(Source: news.yahoo.com)

Republicans are correct that U.S. is 'republic', American professor says

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

The 2020 elections raised questions about U.S. political system. Trump called it a rigged election. Republicans claim that America is a republic, not a democracy. And there is possibility that Trump would run again for the presidential post in 2024. Please brief us about U.S. political system.

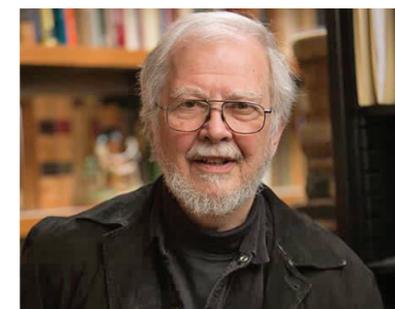
Republicans are correct that the United States is a "republic" because no political institution is fully democratically controlled. For example, Justices on the Supreme Court are appointed and serve for life. However, the democratic aspects of all political institutions are determined by elections. For example, the vote of the people determines who serves in the Electoral College and, thus, who is elected to the presidency. The 2020 election was not rigged because Trump simply did not receive enough votes to be reelected.

What is your take on the mechanisms used in the U.S. election. Aren't they old-fashion, especially when it comes to electoral college?

I actually support the Electoral College in American politics for two reasons. First, if there were voting fraud in one of the states, it would be limited to the outcome in just that state. If we simply counted votes for the entire nation, voting fraud in one state might have a stronger influence on the outcome. Second, those who serve in the Electoral College might prevent the election of a president who, despite the fact that he had been democratically elected, turned out to be a very bad person after information was revealed following the election. In a sense, the Electoral College is a "fail-safe" mechanism if something goes drastically wrong.

Democrats accuse Republicans of undercutting democracy by curbing people's voting rights. What is your comment?

Democrats are certainly correct when they contend that some Republicans would like to discourage some people from voting. And those Republicans are not being entirely honest when they argue that all they are trying to do is prevent



voting fraud. However, Democrats are, in my opinion, exaggerating the impact of most Republican-supported restrictions on voting and, in addition, have a rather extreme interpretation of voting rights (e.g. that it should be as easy as possible for people to vote when the most common reason Americans do not vote is that they simply do not care about elections).

Why is the U.S. unable to tackle problems like racism and gun violence (gun bearing law)? Does the problem lie in U.S. democracy or liberalism?

The basic problem in these and other similar issues is that there is an irresolvable tension between "freedom" (the right of individuals to say and do what they like) and "justice" (the right of individuals to feel safe and avoid discrimination). The United States will always debate these issues because they do not have an objective answer in a free society.

Trump enjoys a big social base. Does support for Trump mean that a considerable percentage of the people approve of racism?

I suspect that most people we would label as "racists" do not actually believe that they are. However, most people who would discriminate against blacks on the basis of race would probably vote for Donald Trump.

On the other side of the spectrum, most people who would discriminate against whites on the basis of race would probably vote for the Democratic Party. One of the difficulties is that most people in both groups would say and believe that they had reasons, other than race, for discriminating against blacks or whites.

National Archives: Trump took classified items to Mar-a-Lago

Classified information was found in the 15 boxes of White House records that were stored at former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence, the National Archives and Records Administration said Friday in a letter that confirmed the matter has been sent to the Justice Department.

The letter from the agency follows numerous reports around Trump's handling of sensitive and even classified information during his time as president and after he left the White House. The revelation could also interest federal investigators responsible for policing the handling of government secrets, though the Justice Department and FBI have not indicated they will pursue.

Federal law bars the removal of classified documents to unauthorized locations, though it is possible that Trump could try to argue that, as president, he was the ultimate declassification authority.

No matter the legal risk, it exposes him to charges of hypocrisy given his relentless attacks during the 2016 presidential campaign on Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton for her use of a private email server as secretary of state. The FBI investigated but ultimately did not recommend charges.

Trump recently denied reports about his administration's tenuous relationship with the National Archives and his lawyers said that "they are continuing to search for additional presidential records that belong to the National Archives."

In a statement Friday night, Trump said, "The National Archives did not 'find' anything, they were given, upon request, Presidential Records in



an ordinary and routine process."

"If this was anyone but 'Trump,' there would be no story here," he said.

The letter from the archivists in response to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, which is investigating, also details how certain social media records were not captured and preserved by the Trump administration. And it also says that the agency learned that White House staff frequently conducted official business using unofficial messaging accounts and personal phones.

Those staff did not copy or forward their official messaging counts, as required by the Presidential Records Act. The letter also goes on to reveal that after Trump left the White House, the National Archives learned that additional paper records that had been torn up by the former president had been transferred to the agency.

"Although White House staff during the Trump Administration recovered and taped together some of the torn-up records, a number of other torn-up records that were transferred had not been reconstructed by the White House," the letter continued.

Lawmakers are also seeking information about

the contents of the boxes recovered from Mar-a-Lago but the agency cited the records act as holding them back from divulging.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., the chairwoman of the Oversight Committee, said in a statement Friday that "these new revelations deepen my concern about former President Trump's flagrant disregard for federal records law and the potential impact on our historical record."

She added, "I am committed to uncovering the full depth of the Presidential Records Act violations by former President Trump and his top advisors and using those findings to advance critical reforms and prevent future abuses."

The Washington Post first reported that the archivist asked the Justice Department to investigate the discovery of 15 boxes of White House records recovered from Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, and that the former president had a habit in office of tearing up records both "sensitive and mundane."

House investigators will be looking to see if Trump's actions, both during his presidency and after, violated the Presidential Records Act, which was enacted in 1978 after former President Richard Nixon wanted to destroy documents related to the Watergate scandal.

The law mandates that presidential records are the property of the U.S. government, rather than belonging to the president himself. A statute, punishable by up to three years in prison, makes it a crime to conceal or intentionally destroy government records.

(Source: AP)

• **ARVAND Petrochemical Co. is like a holding company for some petrochemical companies in region: Production Manager**

Deputy Oil Minister: ARVAND Petrochemical Co. to Witness Giant Leap with Launching Development Plans



Managing Director of National Petrochemical Company (NPC) and Deputy Oil Minister for Petrochemical Affairs paid a visit to ARVAND Petrochemical Company at the head of a delegation of senior managers of petrochemical industry and held a get-together meeting with the managers of this petrochemical company.

During the meeting, Hassan Neshanzadeh Moghadam Chief Executive of Arvand Petrochemical Company pointed to the superiority and pioneering of this petrochemical company in solving problem facing petrochemical industry of the country and reaching registration of new records in sales and production of products and added, "With the coordination made, the company managed to settle its heavy debts and presently, we are trying to offer initial stocks of the company at the Capital Market."

Presently, Arvand Petrochemical Company is the only producer of EPVC in the Middle East region and have a share in the world's chlorine producing complexes, he said, adding, "We are also providing chlorine of some companies in the region."

"In Vision Plan of the company, we are also considering to launch development plans of the company in order to be self-sufficient in importing some products of the company and at the same time, we are trying to yield currency to the country," he added.

Turning to the salient achievements gained at the company over the past three years, the company owes its success to the unflinching efforts of its managers and outstanding performance of its staff, personnel and workers.

He went on to say that National Petrochemical Company (NPC) will specifically be next to Arvand Petrochemical Complex to witness the registration and continuation of new records in production and sale of products of the company."

Chief Executive of National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Shah-Mirzaei was

the next speaker who thanked him for taking giant stride in line with realizing objectives of this industrial and production company.

He added: "We suggest that in development and investment of petrochemical projects, we should move towards projects that make us needless from abroad, so that we can rely on ourselves to be self-sufficient in this regard."

Ten-Day Dawn celebrations is a golden opportunity to start developing petrochemical projects, CEO of NPC emphasized.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Shah-Mirzaei Chief Executive of National Petrochemical Company (NPC) pointed to the skilled and competent manpower and engineers at Arvand Petrochemical Company and stated, "Benefited from the most experienced and expert manpower, they took giant stride in line with realizing most economic objectives of the company and proved that they can offer constructive ideas in line with completion of production chain."

Referring to the changes adopted in Persian Gulf Holding Petrochemical Company, Shah-Mirzaei noted, "The government's share in the Persian Gulf Holding Company was to be transferred which was revised due to considerations and the government's share remained in Persian Gulf Holding Company."

At the end of his remarks, CEO of NPC praised salient measures taken at Arvand Petrochemical Company, which has led to new records in chlorine and PVC production, and said that this is the result of the efforts and endeavors of all employees led by the company's management.

Production Manager of National Petrochemical Company (NPC) was the next speaker who pointed to the continued increase of production in Arvand Petrochemical Company and the program devised by the company to achieve more than 90% production capacity and called this goal "achievable".

"The problems we witnessed in the petrochemical industry in previous years, Arvand Petrochemical Company, with the support of domestically made technologies in anodes and cathodes, managed to resolve problem and has now reached a point where it has been able to eliminate the turbulence in country's market in PVC product, and this was achieved only by increasing production and supply in the market.

Chlorine - alkali unit of Arvand Petrochemical Company is seen on a global scale and the country needs caustic acid of the company, he said, adding that Arvand Petrochemical Company can provide feedstock of other petrochemical companies optimally.

Mir-Hashemi Production Manager of Arvand Petrochemical Company pointed to the development projects of Arvand

will increase in coming years."

In the end, Mir-Hashemi Production Manager of Arvand Petrochemical Company emphasized the tangible change has been witnessed in quality of products of Arvand Petrochemical Company and added, "Today, Arvand Petrochemical Company has reached a point where customers are satisfied with it which is the result of changes that have been made in the policymaking of this industrial and production complex over the past years."

Arvand Petrochemical Company Continues to Break Sales and Production Record / Arvand Petrochemical Company's Sales Volume up 233% in 10 Months / Arvand Petrochemical Company's Exports Value Exceeded 285% / Arvand Petrochemical Company's Production Volume Tops More 7%



Petrochemical Company and stated, "With the development of the company and also launch of second PVC Unit, in addition to meeting domestic demands of the country, Arvand Petrochemical Company will enter the capital market with more added value and this issue can be significant for stakeholders of this industrial and production unit.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he termed the basic and fundamental repairs at this company 'very valuable' and stated, "Basic and fundamental repairs will be in dire need of prerequisites and requires offering round-the-clock services and it is hoped that production capacity of the company will increase by repairing the dilapidated parts and equipment of this industrial and production unit."

He once again hoped that production record of Arvand Petrochemical Company will be increased, he said, adding, "As we witnessed the consecutive and growing production volume of the company in previous years, we hope to see that nominal production capacity of the company

the same period of last year.

Accordingly, 487.656 tons of EDC product of Arvand Petrochemical Company hit the domestic market in 10 months of the current year in 1400.

Although production of E-PVC product based on market demand remained unchanged in 10 months of the current year in 1400 as compared to the same period of last year in 1399, production portfolio of Arvand Petrochemical Company in this period has been increased at least five percent which means that 93% of objectives of annual production plan of the company has been realized in this period as compared to the same period of last year.

In Sales Department, according to the report of Commercial and Trade Unit of the company, domestic sales conditions of Arvand Petrochemical Company's products during this period are unique. Out of total production portfolio, 744.619 tons of products were offered in the domestic market, which achieved 94% of budget of the company.

In general, the company's production volume has jumped considerably in this period in a way that the company managed to attain best performance as much as 103 percent as compared to the same period of last year.

Rial-based sales of EDC products of the company in 10 months of the current year (from March 21, 2021 to Jan. 22, 2022) have increased by 576 percent as compared to the same period last year, which means the realization of 1216 percent of plan of the company which is considered as a significant record in all-time history of Arvand Petrochemical Company.

Domestic sales of products based on Rial value, in both S-PVC and E-PVC products have been followed by a significant increase, showing a 199 and 246 percent hike respectively as compared to the same period of last year.



Saffron inhibits growth of cancer cells: study

TEHRAN – Researchers at Birjand University have obtained significant and effective results from the extracts of saffron petals and threads cultured organically to prevent the growth of cancer cells.

Mahdieh Askari Malekabad and Mohammad Ali Behdani examined different fertilization managements on the biochemical properties of saffron petals, IRNA reported on Sunday.

The results that saffron petal and thread extracts had anti-cancer effects in both conventional

and organic planting conditions, but these effects significantly prevented the growth of cancer cells in the extracts of saffron petals and threads grown organically.

According to the report, medicinal plants are a rich source of effective ingredients for many medicines, and scientific and technological advances over the past two decades have doubled the importance and constructive role of medicinal plants in meeting human needs, especially in medicine and treatment.



The article published in the Journal of Agricultural Science and Technology entitled "evaluation of two cultivation ways on phytochemical and anti-cancer activities (Breast Cancer) of saffron (*Crocus sativus*)".

Saffron is a spice derived from the flower of *Crocus sativus*. The vivid crimson stigma and styles, called threads, are collected and dried for use mainly as a seasoning and coloring agent in food. Saffron has long been the world's costliest spice by weight, originat-

ed in Iran.

Saffron extracts and tinctures have been used for centuries in traditional medicine for the treatment of different syndromes and diseases. Some of these uses have been antispasmodic, eupeptic, sedative, carminative, diaphoretic, expectorant, stomachic, stimulant, aphrodisiac, emmenagogue, and abortifacient.

It has also been used to treat eye diseases, heal wounds, fractures, joint pain, and many other uses.

Rainfall rises by 6% compared to long run

TEHRAN – Since the beginning of winter (December 22, 2021), the amount of rainfall was accompanied by a growth of over 6.1 percent compared to the long-term average, IRNA reported on Saturday.

The precipitation rate during autumn (September 23-December 21, 2021) was not very favorable, as the Meteorological Organization has considered this autumn one of the driest seasons in the past 50 years.

The latest report of the National Center for Drought Warning and Monitoring Center shows that since February 17, the country received 73 mm of rainfall, which shows an increase of 68.8 mm compared to the long-term period, amounting to 6.1 percent.

At the same time, from the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2021) to February 17, the total rainfall of the whole country has reached 112.8 mm, which has decreased by 13.5 mm compared to the long-term period of 130.4 mm.

From January 21 to February 17, 14.7 mm of rainfall

poured over the country, which shows a decrease of 59.1 percent compared to the long-run average of 35.9 mm.

This indicates that only in January, the country's rainfall situation was slightly better than in the long run, but overall, a promising situation in terms of rainfall is not yet conceivable.

According to the World Meteorological Organization's multiannual forecast, in the next five years, Iran's average rainfall will decline by 75 percent, and the temperature rises by 50-75 percent compared to the long-term average.

Climate change and extreme weather events

Climate change is a fact that cannot be run over, whether the temperature raises over 2 or 6°C, natural incidents such as flooding, droughts, and severe storms are among the main consequences of climate change.

Moreover, water and food shortages, water-borne illnesses, cold or heat-related deaths will come up as the results of temperature variations. In tropical

areas also the risk of floods will raise.

Heavy rain and other extreme weather events will become more frequent, which can lead to floods along with decreasing water quality, but also decreasing availability of water resources in some regions.

Climate change will also bring extreme wet and dry seasons, which mainly causes rainfall fluctuations and water scarcity. While there have been prolonged droughts nationwide in past recent years leaving people scrambling for water.

So, nations must take steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the future, preventing the emissions peak, otherwise, they might not be able to breathe on the planet in the future, or migrate to other places if found.

The study may also come efficient when it comes to making the people aware of climate change impact in their own city, within their lifetime, to avoid experiencing an entirely new climate that is beyond human experience.

Drugs have dangerously polluted the world's rivers, scientists warn

Humanity's drugs have polluted rivers across the entire world and pose "a global threat to environmental and human health", according to the most comprehensive study to date.

Pharmaceuticals and other biologically active compounds used by humans are known to harm wildlife and antibiotics in the environment drive up the risk of resistance to the drugs, one of the greatest threats to humanity.

The scientists measured the concentration of 61 active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) at more than 1,000 sites along 258 rivers and in 104 countries, covering all continents. Only two places were unpolluted – Iceland and a Venezuelan village where the indigenous people do not use modern medicines.

The most frequently detected APIs were an anti-epileptic drug, carbamazepine, which is hard to break down, the diabetes drug metformin, and caffeine. All three were found in at least half of the sites. Antibiotics were found at dangerous levels in one in five sites and many sites also had at least one API at levels considered harmful for wildlife, with effects such as feminising fish.

The APIs end up in rivers after being taken by people and livestock and then excreted into the sewer system or directly into the environment, though some may also leak from pharmaceutical factories.

Hotspots with very high levels of APIs included Lahore in Pakistan, La Paz in Bolivia, and Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. Madrid in Spain was in the top 10% of places with highest cumulative concentrations, and Glasgow, UK, and Dallas, US, were in the top 20%.

"The World Health Organization and UN and other organisations say antimicrobial resistance is the single greatest threat to humanity – it's a next pandemic," said John Wilkinson, at the University of York, in the UK, and who led the study, which involved 127 researchers from 86 institutions. "In 19% of all of the sites we monitored, the concentrations of [antibiotics] exceeded the levels that we'd expect to encourage bacteria to develop resistance."

Research published in January estimated that 5 million people died in 2019 from



bacterial infections that were resistant to antibiotics. The regions suffering the highest impact from antibiotic resistance in that study closely align with those in the study with the worst drug pollution, suggesting the contamination of rivers may be playing a part in driving up resistance. One site in Bangladesh had levels of the antibiotic metronidazole more than 300 times higher than the safe target, possibly due to leaks from pharmaceutical manufacturing.

Drug pollution was already known to be harming wildlife, from antidepressants causing starlings to feed less and contraceptive drugs reducing fish populations. "If I were a fish living in some of these rivers, I'd be worried right now," said Wilkinson. However, the levels in most rivers would not deliver high doses to people swimming, he said.

The study, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, is by far the biggest to date and represents the impact on river pollution of 470 million people. The researchers concluded: "Pharmaceutical pollution poses a global threat to environmental and human health."

Previously, almost all the measurements had been taken in western Europe and North America but the latest research showed API pollution is often much higher elsewhere. The work included 36 countries in which APIs were measured for the first time, particularly in Africa and South America.

Among the drugs detected on all continents except Antarctica were the antidepressants citalopram and venlafaxine, antihistamines cetirizine and fexofenadine, the antibiotic trimethoprim and lidocaine, an anaesthetic. The Kai Tak River in Hong Kong had 34 different APIs at a single site, the highest number recorded.

"Ecological risks could well be greater than predicted for the single APIs due to

toxicological interactions of these mixtures," the researchers said. There are more than 2,500 pharmaceuticals in use, but current technology allows the analysis of only 50-100 from a single sample, so researchers focused on the most commonly used.

The highest drug concentrations were found in low-to-middle income countries, including India and Nigeria. The researchers think this may be because people in these nations have enough income to buy pharmaceuticals, but live in places without good sewerage systems, which can remove drugs but are expensive.

The study did not include measurements of illegal drugs such as cocaine and MDMA, which have been detected in rivers at levels harmful to wildlife, although future analysis of the samples may do this.

The scientists hope the research will help focus clean-up efforts on the pharmaceuticals and regions at greatest risk. "We know good sewage connectivity and wastewater treatment is the key to minimising, though not necessarily eliminating, pharmaceutical concentrations," said Wilkinson. "However, that is extremely expensive as there's a lot of infrastructure involved."

Using medicines more carefully is another way to reduce the pollution, he said, particularly antibiotics, which are cheaply available in many countries without prescriptions, and widely taken unnecessarily, for example to treat colds.

"Pharmaceuticals are almost omnipresent in rivers across the world," said Prof Joakim Larsson, of the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, who was not part of the study team.

"The study shows that a fairly large set of pharmaceuticals exceed 'safe levels', and often at a very large number of sites. Bacteria do not respect national borders, so if a new resistant bacterium develops on one side of our planet, it soon becomes a risk for everyone."

The researchers are looking to extend the number of countries covered, as the Covid-19 pandemic halted their surveys. They are also increasing the number of drugs measured and hope to assess levels in rivers across the year in order to examine seasonal trends.

Cov Pars begins clinical trial on adolescents

TEHRAN – The domestically-made Cov Pars Razi vaccine has received the license for a clinical trial on adolescents, Mehr news agency reported on Sunday.

The trial is scheduled to take place by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20) with 210 volunteers, Mohammad Hossein Fallah, spokesman for the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, said.

The third phase of the human test has been completed successfully being administered to 23,000 volunteers, Fallah said, adding, so far, no serious side effects have been reported after injecting the first dose and using the inhaled dose of the vaccine.

Booster dose studies are also completed. Recently, the vaccine has obtained the permit to be injected as a booster dose for all vaccines available in the country.

According to these studies, Cov Pars, as a booster dose, can increase the antibody 16 times among those who have received various vaccines such as Sinopharm, Barkat, AstraZeneca, and Sputnik.

Developed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, Razi Cov Pars is the second Iranian-made vaccine that started the clinical trial on February 27, 2021.

The vaccine is protein-based, which employs recombinant versions of the spike protein and tutors the immune system against the virus by producing antibodies.

It is developed in 3 doses. The first two doses are injectable and the third dose is intranasal. The second dose of the vaccine will be injected into the volunteers 21 days later and the third dose will be inhaled 51 days later.

At the end of the second phase of clinical trials, Cov Pars proved 80 percent of the immunogenicity.

Razi Institute (affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture) is capable of producing 20 million doses



of vaccine by the end of 2021, Agriculture Minister Javad Sadatinejad said.

A number of countries have requested to purchase the Cov Pars vaccine for COVID-19, and negotiations are underway to take the necessary measures for export, Fallah said in December 2021.

Domestically-made vaccines

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

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

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

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

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

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

از افتتاح تا افتخار
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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be afraid of a gentleman when he is hungry, and of a mean person when his stomach is full.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon: 12:18 Evening: 18:10 Dawn: 5:20 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:43 (tomorrow)

Sadi: works and life

Part 5

That same evening, Sadi encounters another friend in a garden, where they stay the night. Preparing to return to town the next morning, the companion begins gathering rose petals to take back as souvenirs, whereupon Sadi comments that ephemeral things make unsuitable objects of affection (a line Victor Hugo later borrowed for *Les Orientales*).

Sadi promises instead to compose a roseate book whose leaves would never fall to the tyranny of the autumn winds; that very day he completed a portion (fasl) of the book on social graces and the etiquette of conversation (dar hosn-e mo'asharat wa adab-e mohawarat).

This does not correspond precisely to any of the chapter (bab) rubrics provided in the table of contents of the *Golestan*, but if the eighth chapter (dar adab-e sohbat) is intended, this would mean that the book began as a series of maxims and admonitions rather than as a collection of anecdotes.

Sadi frequently introduces his anecdotes as things he saw or heard about during his travels, and while some of the anecdotes obviously draw upon literary tradition, relatively few have been traced to specific written sources.

The form of expression, at least, seems unique to Sadi, and the elaborate conceit of the *Golestan* as rose petals/florilegium pages gathered as souvenirs of a sojourn out of town reinforces the impression that the *Golestan*, like the *Bustan*, was offered as lessons learned in the course of the author's travels beyond Shiraz.

Much of what Sadi presents as personal experience in both these works has, however, been shown to be greatly embellished or wholly fabricated.

Sadi himself warns us that "he who has seen the world tells many lies" (chap. 1:32), but the temptation to cull biographical details has nevertheless proved irresistible. However, a more skeptical consensus about Sadi's historical reliability has been building, and it has been shown that the "Sadi" who appears as protagonist in over 40 stories in the *Golestan* should be understood primarily as a poetic persona, rather than as a chronicler of events.

Despite these inherent dangers, the *Golestan* affords some of what little we know first-hand about Sadi. The epilogue alludes to the Mongol sack of Baghdad and the toppling of the Caliphate, which occurred only months before the completion of the work in 1258.

Sadi comments about one poem in the introduction, in which a fifty-year-old persona reflects upon his life, that it mirrors his own personal situation.

Based upon this topos of age, it has generally been inferred that Sadi was about fifty years old at the time the *Golestan* was written, thus placing his birth in the year 1209, though Abbas Eqbal argues for a later date, between 1213 and 1218.

The *Golestan* includes over forty direct quotations from the Quran and the Hadith, and Sadi tells us he was of pious and ascetic bent in childhood, performing devotions well into the night.

Sadi shares much in common with the tradition of popular homily, but seems uninterested in the literal or legalistic exegesis of traditional feqh, asserting that "the purpose of the revelation of the Quran is the acquisition of a good character, not the recitation of the written characters".

His concerns revolve around pragmatic situational ethics and personal integrity rather than religious law and systematic theology, reflecting the values of the social milieu of the *khanqaq* and *rebat* more than the *madrasa*.

Sadi casts numerous dervishes (*darvish*), pious men (*parsa*, *abed*), and ascetics (*zاهد*) in the role of protagonist in the *Golestan*, and one of the longest chapters is devoted to the dervishes.

Though "dervish" often designates a stock Sufi character, Sadi sometimes uses it to refer more generally to the poor or meek. The dervishes and pious men of the *Golestan* are mostly anonymous characters, with few of the heroes of the Sufi tradition being celebrated by name.

Zul-Nun Mesri appears once and Sadi does make Abd al-Qader Gilani (d. 1165) the hero of one story; he also describes the grandson of Abulfaraj ibn Jawzi (killed in 1258), who taught in the Mostanseriya madrasa and became the *mohitaseb* in Baghdad from 1235, as one of his own teachers.

In the *Bustan*, Sadi also mentions learning from the "knowledgeable Shaikh" Shehab ad-Din Omar Sohravardi (d. 1234), who had promoted a *fatowwa*-inspired order among the merchant classes on behalf of the caliph.

Sadi's connection to the Sufi tradition seems, however, to have been loose and informal. He seems unconcerned with strict adherence to all its principles, and the breaking of his vow of silence to compose the *Golestan* perhaps implies that he never completed the rites of seclusion that would constitute initiation into a Sufi order.

While Sadi often counsels tolerant and altruistic humanism in the *Golestan* (e.g., "mankind are all members of one body"), his principles sometimes derive from conventional mores, or from simple comfort and convenience, and sometimes betray the prejudices of the day against black Africans, Jews, and women, etc.

Style and Criticism

Modern observers have independently remarked upon the perceived deficiencies of organization and consistency in the *Golestan* and in another work completed within fifteen years of it, the *Masnawi* of Jalal ad-Din Rumi, both of which illustrate religious, political and socio-ethical values through entertaining and edifying tales.

Remarks have been made about the "careless" and "hasty nature of the composition" of the *Golestan*, and how it "sags a bit in the middle", or how it is "more superficial and elaborately 'devised'" than the more earnest and carefully organized *Bustan*.

(Source: *Encyclopedia Iranica*)
(To be continued)

"The Situation of Mehdi" wins best film at Qoqnus Screen Awards

From Page 1 ► Hejazifar, who also stars as Mehdi Bakri, called "The Situation of Mehdi" a film for all Iranians and added, "We tried to make a film that can communicate to everybody with every attitude; it was very difficult and complicated, but we did it in the simplest form."

The Qoqnus Screen Awards are presented by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization to revolutionary films and cineastes every year.

"No Prior Appointment" directed by Behruz Shoeibi was honored runner-up this year.

The film follows Yasmin, a woman who returns to her homeland Iran after years of living in exile in Germany due to the death of her father. Her six-year-old autistic son



Hadi Hejazifar acts in a scene of his directorial debut "The Situation of Mehdi".

makes her visit to Iran more difficult, however, in her short stay in Iran, she achieves a new understanding of humanity and

death.

"Henas", a drama director Hossein Darabi about the assassination of Iranian nuclear

scientist Dariush Rezaiejad, took third place in the Qoqnus Screen Awards.

All the movies had their premieres during the 40th Fajr Film Festival, which honored "The Situation of Mehdi" as best film. The film brought Hejazifar the award for best directorial debut.

"No Prior Appointment" received the Golden Simorgh for best film from the national point of view at the festival.

"The Situation of Mehdi" and "No Prior Appointment" each won over ten prizes at the National Will Manifestation Awards, which is a supplement to the Fajr Film Festival. The awards are presented to those films that promote issues being pursued by some public organizations and institutes.

"Titi" star Elnaz Shakerdoost shares best actress award at Moroccan festival

TEHRAN – Elnaz Shakerdoost has shared the award for best actress for her role in the Iranian drama "Titi" at the Rabat International Author Film Festival (FICAR – Festival International du Cinema D'Auteur de Rabat) in Morocco.

The award was shared with Demyana Nassar for her role in "Feather" directed by Omar El Zohairy from Egypt, the organizers announced on Saturday.

Directed by Ida Panahandeh, "Titi" also won a special mention.

The film is about Ebrahim, a physicist who is about to prove a thesis about the end of the world. He meets Titi, a weird surrogate mother who wants to preserve humanity and make a room of her own.

Ebrahim is suffering from a terminal illness in a hospital where Titi works. Taking a liking to Titi, he explains his work to her, and she believes that it is essential to the future of the planet. When he slips into a coma, his wife demands that his papers be discarded, but Titi takes them home, where her husband lines his rabbit cages with them. Eight months pregnant as a surrogate for a childless couple, Titi wanders into the sea, where her mystical powers manage to bring the professor back to life. As he searches for the papers she took, he enters Titi's world, and nothing will ever be the same.

FICAR Hassan 2 Grand Prix was awarded to "Identifying Features" by Fernanda Valadez from Mexico.



Elnaz Shakerdoost acts in a scene from "Titi" by Ida Panahandeh.

The special jury award was given to "Little Palestine", a co-production of Lebanon, France and Qatar by Abdellah Alkhatib.

Iranian films line up for Bengaluru festival

TEHRAN – Eight Iranian movies will be competing in the 13th Bengaluru International Film Festival opening on March 3 in the Indian city of Bengaluru.

"A Hero", "180°Rule" and "Fathers" will be screened in the Cinema of the World category, while "Absence", "Careless Crime", "Killer Spider", "The Alien" and "Two Dogs" will be showcased in the Asian Cinema competition.

"A Hero", a co-production between Iran and France directed by two-time Oscar-winning director Asghar Farhadi, won the Grand Prix (ex aequo) at Cannes 2021.

It follows Rahim, who is in prison because he was unable to pay a debt. During a two-day leave of absence from prison, he attempts to have his creditor withdraw his complaint over part of the sum owed. But things don't go as planned.

Directed by Farnush Samadi, "180°Rule" tells the story of a school teacher from Tehran, who is preparing to attend a wedding in northern Iran. When her husband suddenly forbids her to go, she makes a choice that will place her on a painful path to



Zuzana Stivínová and Ali Mosaffa act in a scene from "Absence".

atonement.

"Fathers" by Salem Salavati depicts that the confrontation of two different generations can lead to some problems, however, the film shows that an incident brings two generations together.

"Absence" has been directed by Ali Mosaffa, producer of "180°Rule".

The film is about an Iranian man who visits Prague to investigate his father's youth in the city. He finds himself in the shoes of a third man who is almost dead and happens to be of Iranian origin. The film shows how the heavy security atmosphere coming after the 1953 military coup in Iran forced some to flee the country to seek asylum in Eastern Europe.

"Careless Crime", winner of the Premio Bisato d'Oro for Best Original

Screenplay at the Venice Film Festival, has been directed by Shahram Mokri.

It shows that protestors forty years ago, during the uprising to overthrow the Shah's regime in Iran, set fire to movie theaters as a way of showing opposition to Western culture. Forty years have passed and, in contemporary Iran, four individuals also decide to burn down a cinema. Their intended target is a theater showing a film about an unearthed, unexploded missile.

Ebrahim Irajzad has directed "Killer Spider" based on a true story that occurred over ten years ago in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad.

Saeid is a forty-year-old mason, severe and fanatical in his religious beliefs. One day his wife is accosted by a driver who assumes she is a prostitute. Seething with rage, Saeid seeks revenge.

Directed by Nader Saeivar, "The Alien" follows two mysterious strangers in a car. They begin to park daily in an otherwise ordinary Iranian neighborhood and are suspected to be national security, which unleashes a wave of paranoia and distrust among the neighbors, as each

one feels they have reasons to be watched. The neighbors collectively suspect, however, that the main target for the surveillance is Bakhtiar, a Kurdish teacher, a newcomer and a foreigner, and attempt to pressure him into giving himself up or leave the neighborhood.

"Two Dogs" directed by Amir Azizi is about Iman and Sajjad, two young men who are struggling with problems typical for 30-year-olds in contemporary Iran: unemployment, depression and lack of self-confidence. Iman is translating Franz Kafka's "Investigations of a Dog" into Farsi and works as a cab driver, too. His passengers are similar to the characters of Kafka's story. Sajjad, Iman's best friend, is very inhibited because of the way he looks and is trying to obtain enough money for surgery. They both have dogs that look very similar to their owners. The dogs, not always welcomed by the families, make the men feel less lonely living in traditional Iranian society.

The Bengaluru International Film Festival will run until March 10.

From Gaza to Damascus, from Kashmir to Caracas

The sum of contradictions

Let's be honest; we can't travel all around the world to see it, and even if we could, this Corona Virus won't let us, but I always love traveling and reading travelogues. Traveling to Gaze has always been one of my dreams, so when I found out that one of the destinations in Mr. Razavi's book was Gaza, I had to read it.

Name: Roullah's soldier

"I was born in Kashmir, and both my mother and father are Kashmiri too. At the beginning of the Iranian revolution, my father left his life and job in Kashmir and came to Iran only for his love for Imam Khomeini and decided to stay, and we were with him too".

Soldier Ruhollah Razavi introduces himself as quoted earlier. He is a member of the International Union of Unified Ummah, and a real cosmopolitanism and his character and spirit are shown during his exciting journey in the book. He studied up to a master's degree at the Iran University of Science and Technology; then, he went to Qom to study at Al-Mustafa International University.

"From Kashmir to Caracas" is a remarkable and lively book. He is very funny while being serious, and some of his memories are also very entertaining while being gloomy. The story of this book is not just about one or two destinations, it's about traveling to various destinations from various routes and meeting different people. This book is basically a travelogue, but sometimes its context is more than a travelogue, and the author is a fighter more than a tourist. A fighter who doesn't matter borders and nationality just to fight cruelty.

In "From Kashmir to Caracas", like any other travelogue, words and photos have been used together. The book has a lovely appearance. Each chapter is about a particular journey with valid and useful details of cities and routes that the writer has provided.

After the Mavi Marmara ship

The first chapter is "Journey to Gaza", right after Israel attacked the Mavi Marmara ship of the Gaza Liberation fleet, and several fighters martyred on deck. Global protests began, and the International Union of Unified Ummah in Iran

with the cooperation of organizations from Asian countries decided to complete the unfinished mission of the Gaza Liberation Fleet. 150 peace activists from 15 countries went to the Gaze, and they traveled through India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Egypt to finally enter the Gaza Strip via the Rafah border, and that was the first time, soldier Rouhollah could enter Palestine because of his non-Iranian citizenship.

My beloved, rise and go

The name of the second chapter is "one step to Quds" which is related to the global movement to Jerusalem that all the peace activists gathered in the occupied territory from three different routes, while the situation in Syria was getting chaotic, and the passage of time showed the necessity of entering the Syrian issue to the anti-war activists of the world. The chapter "Looking for Peace" is about a new plan for the war-torn country, Syria.

Travel brings wisdom

"From Kashmir to Caracas" was one of the best books I have read in the last few months, and I wish they were more people like soldier Rouhollah and more travelogues like this.