

Western Hypocrisy Over Ukraine

▶ Page 5

Opinion

Gas transmission through West Asia's biggest network hits new record high

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN - Operating the largest natural gas network in West Asia, National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) has been continuously expanding this network into the country's most remote areas so that currently over 98 percent of the urban population, as well as 90 percent of the country's rural population, have access to natural gas through this huge network.

Iranian Gas Transmission Company (IGTC), as the NIGC's subsidiary in charge of the management, maintenance, and operation of the country's national gas network, has been working around the clock to ensure a safe, secure, and sustained supply of natural gas throughout the country all year long, especially during the cold seasons.

Despite unprecedented cold weather this year, the transmission of natural gas across Iran increased significantly and new record highs were also achieved in this regard.

According to IGTC Managing Director Mehdi Jamshidi-Dana, gas transmission across the country increased 2.8 percent during the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-January 20, 2022) compared to the same period last year.

Transmission of the mentioned fuel also hit a new record high of over 851 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) in the Iranian calendar month of Dey (December 22, 2021-January 20, 2022), the official announced. ▶ Page 4

Op-ed

The choices that built and impaired the post-war order

By Professor Mahmood Monshipouri

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has occurred at a time when there is a global consensus regarding Ukraine's sovereignty and that the freedom to choose its alliances must be unconditionally preserved. The military intervention in Ukraine is widely regarded as a political tragedy as well as a colossal challenge to the existing world order. Two immediate questions come to mind: (1) what can be done to protect and help the innocent Ukrainians caught in the middle of this war and (2) how can such aggression be stopped? No-one has good answers to these questions, and this uncertainty has everyone on edge, but it is clear that employing sanctions while seeking diplomatic routes to cease-fire has become unavoidable. Let us be clear about how we got here.

Historians remind us that major wars—both at the global and regional levels—tend to be pursued by either a new world order or a revised one. World Wars I and II were followed and accompanied by the creation of new states and a UN rules-based international order respectively. In both cases, great powers were involved in shaping the ensuing contours of geopolitical competition and its limits. New security architectures in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America reflected these new geopolitical rivalries and accommodations. The new world order—predicated on a rules-based, multilateral, and dialogue centric principles—proved to be tenable, albeit at times short of being broadly-based. In the post-Cold War era, however, this order failed to build an all-inclusive international order in which Russia could have had a fair share if not an equal leverage. ▶ Page 5



U.S. responsible for slow pace of talks

TEHRAN - After a period of short-lived optimism on the possibility of a deal being made in the Vienna talks, the odds of such a deal again become slim as the West started to put the blame on Iran for the lack of swift conclusion.

Just a week ago, the talks in Vienna over reviving

the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was reportedly at the final stage and Iran announced that the deal now is dependent on the West making a political decision regarding a number of issues.

In the meantime, the heads of negotiations

returned to capitals for more consultations. The short break was requested by the chief negotiators of the three European countries that are party to the JCPOA - France, Germany, and the UK, collectively known as the E3. ▶ Page 3

STAY UPDATED #ViennaTalks

Iran's security chief consults with MPs over Vienna talks

TEHRAN - Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) secretary Admiral Ali Shamkhani held a meeting with a number of MPs on Wednesday at the SNSC over the ongoing talks in Vienna, according to reports.

In the extraordinary meeting the latest developments regarding the lifting of sanctions

in the talks were explained.

The representatives present at the meeting were briefed about the process of the new round of talks in Ebrahim Raisi's government and the existing developments and challenges, as well as the main priorities on the agenda of the Iranian negotiating team.



ECO joint meeting starts work

The meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) began in Bandar Abbas on Wednesday. Several ranking officials attended the meeting, including Khosrow Nazeri, the ECO Secretary General.

Iran needs to be ready for a "tourism tsunami", expert says

TEHRAN - The tourism infrastructure of the country should be prepared for a potential tsunami [of travelers] thanks to the extensive vaccination against the coronavirus nationwide, an Iranian expert has said.

With the upcoming Iranian new year holidays, the hospitality industry will be faced with a surge and potential tsunami of tourism,

ISNA quoted Ali Hemmati as saying on Wednesday.

The outbreak of coronavirus has created challenges in various fields over the last two years, but tourism has been most affected by the pandemic, the official noted.

Despite the most damage occurring in the tourism sector, less support has been offered,

he mentioned.

Several segments of the economy, including the private sector, the hospitality industry, transportation, catering, restaurants, as well as historical, cultural, and tourism sites have suffered significant losses and are experiencing difficult times, he explained. ▶ Page 6

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Interview

Europe will be more affected by high energy prices than Russia: Turkish expert

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - A Turkish political pundit says sanctions on Russia can hamper its economic growth but will affect Europe more than the Russian federation.

"The growth of the Russian economy will slow down with the sanctions, but the rest of the region will be more affected by high energy prices and inflation than Russia," Tahsin Yamak tells the Tehran Times.

Russia supplies approximately 40% of the natural gas needs of EU countries.

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you see the latest developments in Ukraine?

Ukraine as a sovereign country wants to become a member of a security organization, NATO. Russia is troubled with the Ukrainian government, which has moved away from its sphere of influence and is allying with the West. Russia thinks that NATO membership, and finally the possibility of NATO soldiers in Ukraine, will threaten its own security. In fact, this attitude of Russia poses serious threats not only for Ukraine but also for Europe and the countries of the former Soviet geography. Russia was implementing a similar scenario in countries such as Georgia and Moldova in the past.

As we have seen in Crimea, it supports separatist movements in Donetsk and Luhansk - the Donbass region - where the Russian minority and Russian speakers are concentrated. The separatists, who seized the city centers of these two provinces with the support of Russia, declared their independence in May 2014 under the names of "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic". Russia immediately recognized these two so-called republics. ▶ Page 5

Movies from Iran scoop awards at Khamrubi Intl. Short Film Festival

TEHRAN - Iranian movies have won awards in various categories of the Khamrubi International Short Film Festival in India.

The festival took place in Guwahati, Assam, on February 26 and 27.

"The Hand" by Parviz Rajai was selected as best film in the short drama section.

In this film, an azure grain departs from a rock because of a mine explosion, and hits a young poet in the woods due to the intensity of the blast. The young poet picks up the grain and takes it with him. In the middle of the way, the grain falls out. The poet keeps going on his way without noticing. In time, the azure grain faces different events. ▶ Page 8



Senator encouraging Israel to assassinate Iranian scientists, Iran writes to UN

Tehran's mission to the UN says Graham's remarks are 'disgusting' and 'hateful'

TEHRAN - In a letter submitted to the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday, Iran's permanent mission to the UN has strongly denounced recent comments by an American senator who encouraged Israel to assassinate more Iranian scientists, Press TV reported.

The mission said the remarks by Senator Lindsey Graham amount to incitement to terrorism, which is a flagrant violation of international law.

During a visit to Israel in mid-February, Graham claimed that Israel can't live with a nuclear Iran and that he had "no doubt that Israel will do what she has to" against Iran's nuclear program.

"A lot of Iranian scientists have had a lot of accidents, and we would expect more accidents to come," he said, referring to the assassinations of a number of Iranian scientists in terrorist attacks widely attributed to the Israeli regime.

Graham made the remarks in the midst of talks in Vienna to revive the Iran nuclear deal, or the JCPOA, which hawkish U.S. lawmakers, including Graham, and the regime in Tel Aviv bitterly oppose.

Iran's permanent mission to the UN said the remarks were "disgusting" and "hateful" and acted as a "green light" to the Israeli regime to continue its terrorist attacks against Iranian



scientists.

The comments constitute a flagrant violation of the United States' international obligations, especially those under UN resolutions that prohibit states from inciting terrorist attacks and urge them to refrain from supporting terrorist activities, the letter read.

It also pointed to the long history of Israeli acts of sabotage against Iran's peaceful nuclear activities, urging the international community, the UN Security Council in particular, to strongly condemn the provocative acts and the encouragement of such terrorist activities.

The Islamic Republic of Iran reserves the right to take all necessary measures in accordance with international law, the Iranian mission added.

Iran's senior aide meets Syrian president

TEHRAN- President Bashar al-Assad of Syria hosted Ali Asghar Khaji, the senior assistant to the Iranian foreign minister, and his accompanying group in Damascus on Tuesday.

The talks focused on relations between Syria and Iran, as well as efforts by both parties' institutions to strengthen cooperation in all aspects, notably the economic sector, in order to serve the interests of the two friendly nations and peoples.

During the meeting topics including the political process and the future rounds of negotiations on the Astana and Geneva tracks were also discussed. The significance of such talks was emphasized to highlight their resumption without foreign interference and based on a defined strategy and methodology in order to achieve tangible outcomes.

Khaji briefed President Assad on the most recent developments surrounding the Iranian nuclear file, as well as the negotiating process, which can yield favorable results if Western nations

uphold all duties and conditions relating to this file.

During the meeting, he highlighted that Iran will work to improve Syrian-Syrian talks, as well as the return of displaced Syrians and the reconstruction of the country.

Both sides also exchanged views on regional and international developments, the crisis created by the West between Russia and Ukraine, and the immoral practices the West has exercised to fuel the crisis, such as transferring extremists from various parts of the world to that region and imposing sanctions on the Russian people, as it has previously imposed on the Syrian and Iranian peoples.

Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Miqdad, who present at the meeting, commended Iran for its economic and political support of the Syrian people and government.

Through sanctions and political pressure, he said, the Syrian enemies aspire to achieve what they were unable to obtain through violence and formation of terrorist groups.

MP: Vienna draft agreement is ready

"For Iran, red lines are more important than deadlines"

TEHRAN — Abolfazl Amouei, a member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the parliament, said on Wednesday that draft of an agreement to restore the 2015 nuclear deal is now ready but it is vital for Iran to obtain assurances that the United States would not leave the agreement if it is revived.

The U.S. under Donald Trump left the nuclear agreement, officially called the JCPOA, in May 2018 and imposed the harshest sanctions on Iran under his maximum pressure campaign against Iran.

Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial times.

After the U.S. abandoned the deal, the Europeans also failed to honor their commitments under the JCPOA.

Trump took such an illegal decision

despite the fact that Iran was fully abiding by the terms of the agreement.

"It is very important for Iran to get a guarantee from the other side," Amouei insisted.

Iran remained loyal to the agreement one year after Trump left the agreement.

The legislator said Iran complied with its obligations under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency and this was confirmed by the quarterly reports of the IAEA board and the IAEA director general.

Amouei, the representative of the people of Tehran in the parliament, said Iran's current concern is whether this time the Americans really want to return to the agreement and adhere to it, or they still want to disregard it.

Accordingly, the U.S. must give guarantees to Iran that it won't leave the agreement again and Europeans

will abide by their commitments.

Parliament is in the know about Vienna talks

The parliamentary committee member stated that when an agreement is reached, the parliament is informed, reviews it and announces its position.

"However, there are some key issues and until these issues are resolved, we cannot say that we have reached an agreement," he said, noting that a detailed text has been prepared for the agreement.

The final stage of negotiations is always the most important stage because the key issues must be assigned at this stage, he acknowledged.

Amouei added, "If what the Islamic Republic of Iran wants is achieved in the negotiations, we will impose restrictions on our nuclear program after the lifting of sanctions, verification and parliamentary approval."

The MP further said that obtaining an inherent guarantee is also very important to Iran, in the sense that Tehran must retain tools from its

UN Security Council resolution on Yemen taints peace, Tehran says

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson has slammed the latest renewal of an arms embargo against Yemen's popular Houthi resistance movement, which has been defending the nation against a Saudi-led assault since March 2015.

Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Tuesday that the UN Security Council resolution on the Yemen issue, as well as the language employed in it, will have a detrimental impact on the peace process and strengthen the position of the armed rivals.

The resolution "bears negative repercussions in the path towards peace," he added.

A day earlier, the 15-member Council decided to extend a targeted UN arms ban on key Houthi Ansarullah movement leaders to the whole movement.

Since 2015, the movement has taken control of the country when Yemen's former Saudi-backed government fled amid a political crisis, refusing to stay behind and negotiate a solution.

The conflict has led to the death hundreds of thousands of Yemenis and turned Yemen into the site of the world's greatest humanitarian disaster.

The U.S. has been providing military, logistical, and political assistance to the Saudi-led war on Yemen, which has been raging since

March 2015.

The UN resolution harshly denounced Yemeni fighters' counterattacks, especially those against Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — Riyadh's key supporter in the war coalition — and urged an immediate halt to the retaliation.

The resolution, Khatibzadeh added, has been adopted in line with "the political considerations and lobbying of members of the aggressor coalition."

As a result, it contradicts efforts to revive the political process by further isolating the conflicting parties' stances, according to the official.

Khatibzadeh lambasted the Security Council for "distancing itself from its inherent duties" in Yemen from the start of the Saudi-led war and for turning a blind eye to the aggressors' atrocities.

This, he noted, has contributed to "systematic and serious violations of the international humanitarian laws, massacre of civilians, extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure, and illegal embargo of [Yemen's] ports and airports," amid international silence.

Such an approach further complicates the prospect of achieving a "fair" and "lasting" peace, Khatibzadeh added.



Yemen's Supreme Revolutionary Committee leader, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, blasted the decision for disregarding the Saudi-led coalition's crimes, adding that any arms embargo that did not apply to the Western-backed alliance "had no value."

If the objective is to ensure justice, the U.S.-Saudi-Emirati aggressor coalition's deliberate targeting of Yemen and its war crimes should have been cause for a weapons ban, he argued.

He further mentioned that after supplying weapons to Persian Gulf nations, the Americans, British, and others put their weapons to the test by killing Yemeni children.

They, according to the official, deny Palestinians' access to weapons while providing lethal weapons to Israel that commits war crimes.

"Yemen now has a new weapon that it did not have before. Thank God, it is the jihad (endeavor for the sake of God) of the brave Yemenis, who have achieved it, as well as the defeat of the American-British-Saudi-UAE coalition and its military allies," he remarked.

Similarly, Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, a member of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, stated that the UN Security Council's decision to extend arms embargo will deprive

Yemen of its right to self-defense while the world requires a new order based on justice.

"We tell the countries that voted in favor of the resolution that you and your oppressive decisions are under our feet because we rely only on God," he asserted.

The war on Yemen was intended to restore the former Riyadh-backed dictatorship and smash the Ansarullah resistance organization, which has been handling state activities in Yemen in the absence of a competent government.

Despite seven years of relentless attacks on Yemen, the war has ended well short of its objectives.

The Yemeni resistance has become stronger in the face of the Saudi-led invasion, advancing toward strategic areas held by Saudi-led mercenaries, such as Ma'rib province, and launching many rounds of counter-strikes against Saudi Arabia and the UAE in recent months.

In April 2015, Iran put forward a four-point plan to end the conflict in Yemen. It called for cessation of war, establishing intra-Yemeni dialogue, end the siege on the country, and send humanitarian aid to the country. Iran's plan was submitted to Ban Ki-moon who was UN secretary general at the time.

Security chief consults with MPs over Vienna talks

From page 1 ► Shamkhani emphasized, "The main strategy of the country, along with trying to lift sanctions, is to focus on creating mechanisms to neutralize the sanctions, and fortunately, very good measures have been taken in this regard."

The MPs present at the meeting stressed the need for the Iranian negotiating team to continue efforts to restore the nation's lost rights in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions (JCPOA), the official name for the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson reacted to United States' officials "bluffs and blusters" in regard to the Vienna talks intended to restore the 2015 deal, saying Tehran is eager to reach an accord through dialogue but "will not wait forever".

Saeed Khatibzadeh made the remark in a tweet early on Tuesday after U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price indicated Washington was prepared to pull out of the Vienna negotiations if Iran demonstrated "intransigence to making progress."

The United States is not participating in the Vienna talks directly. Iran has said it will not sit at the negotiating table with the U.S.

so long as Washington does not return to the multilateral agreement. European Union coordinator Enrique Mora and the remaining members act as intermediary between Iran and the U.S.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman underscored that since the U.S. was the party that quit the historic accord, Tehran needed to make sure that the it would not renege on its commitments again if the deal is revived.

"U.S. has already 'walked away' from JCPOA. We must make sure it won't happen again. Everyone has its own plan B, though US' has proven hollow. Blusters & bluffs have/will not work. Decisions do," Khatibzadeh remarked.

He added, "A deal is at hand, if White House makes its mind. Iran is willing, but will not wait forever," he noted.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on Monday stated that the Vienna talks intended to lift anti-Iran sanctions have not yet concluded, suggesting it is now up to the U.S. to make the tough decision.

Iran's top diplomat also said that the current attempts which have been made by the new administration and the negotiating

team will continue to reach an agreement through the ongoing talks in Vienna.

Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani returned to Vienna on Sunday night to resume the talks. He had returned to Tehran for consultations.

Mora said on Feb. 22 that that the talks have reached a "crucial moment", suggesting it is necessary to fix "key issues".

Mora said after ten months of negotiations the "result is still uncertain". However, he said negotiators from Iran, Russia, China, France, Germany, France and the U.S. are engaged in intensive talks in the Palais Coburg.

Negotiations to revive the nuclear deal started in April last year. The talks started after U.S. President Joe Biden said his administration is willing to rejoin the nuclear deal abandoned by his predecessor Donald Trump.

"#JCPOA #ViennaTalks are at a crucial moment. We are nearing the end after ten months of negotiations. The result is still uncertain. Key issues need to be fixed. But all delegations are fully engaged. Intense work in Coburg," Mora wrote on his Twitter account.

nuclear program so that if the other party repeats its previous mistake and leaves the agreement, Iran can quickly let go of its limited nuclear program.

U.S. officials must provide political guarantees

"The Americans are trying to distract us from our rational demands by delaying the talks and without presenting initiative," he said.

According to the MP, Iran has offered various solutions and initiatives in the process of the Vienna talks.

"In the first place, U.S. officials must provide political assurances and explicitly state that they want to abide by this agreement," Amouei asserted.

He added that Iran's other demand is that the other side should give Iran an economic guarantee so that if they again withdraw from the agreement and Tehran suffers again, it will have the means to reduce the economic losses.

Lifting sanctions should not be limited to nuclear ones

The MP stressed that the parliament fully supports Iran's negotiating team because they are in charge of pursuing Iran's national interests and are trying

to lift sanctions.

"Our goal is to lift the maximum level of sanctions. The lifting of sanctions should not be limited to nuclear sanctions, but any sanctions that hinder our economic benefits and do not allow us to have trade relations with other countries should be lifted," the former diplomat reiterated.

The MP stated that the parliament hopes that the Iranian negotiators will achieve the maximum and desired result.

"We do not pay attention to the media controversies and the deadlines of the West, because for us in the negotiations, the red lines are more important than the deadlines," Amouei concluded.

Logical red lines

Since the beginning of the new round of the negotiations in Vienna on November 29 which started after Ebrahim Raisi took over as president in Iran, the Western media have tried to portray Iran as the party that is reluctant to revive the 2015 nuclear deal. When the Iranian negotiating team presented practical initiatives, the Wall Street Journal and Reuters used every measure to say that Iran's demands are

maximalist, but they failed to provide evidence to their claims.

The Vienna talks have now reached a critical stage. Reports from Vienna indicate that the talks are at a "make or break" point. On November 29, Iran's top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani said, "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed." The phrase indicated that Iran is seriously pursuing reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) while seriously upholding the rights of the Iranian people.

Iranian officials have repeatedly stated that the negotiating team clearly considers Tehran's red lines. As negotiation is principally based on a "give and take", Iran has shown the necessary flexibility needed to revive the internationally agreed deal, but the Western sides are not showing the necessary flexibility.

When it comes to action, the European troika, also called E3, are not even willing to back down from their meager demands. However, they expect Iran to back down from its critical red lines. One thing is now certain.

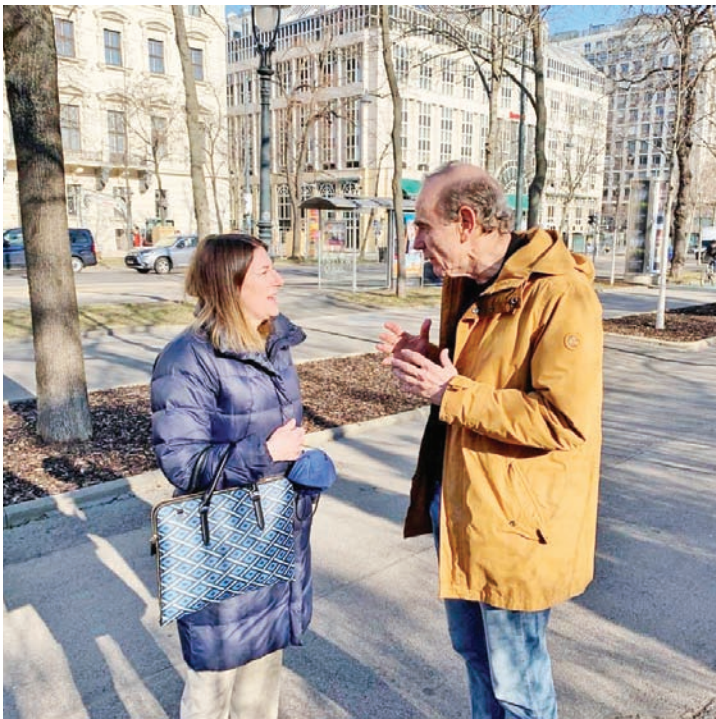
Even in case, the talks fail, Tehran will not back down from its logical red lines.

U.S. responsible for slow pace of talks

From Page 1 ► Before the hiatus, Iran said it had already made all the decisions needed to push forward the talks and now it's up to the West to make political decisions on the talks. That's why when Iran's chief negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, returned to Tehran, Iranian media said the break will unlikely bring about any change in Iran's position toward the talks.

Of course, during his stay in Tehran, Bagheri Kani made intensive consultations. And Iran's Supreme National Security Council held an important meeting on the Vienna talks to take stock of the state of the talks. The Council underlined the need to meet Iran's legal and logical demands which are part of the country's red lines, according to Nour News, a website close to the Council.

Bagheri Kani returned to Vienna on Monday. The E3 negotiators started to toughen their tone even before Bagheri arrived in the Austrian capital. French political director Philippe Errera wrote on Twitter on February 27 that "Tehran is playing with fire." The French diplomat then cited a French expression to the effect that one must know the point at which



one has gone too far.

This stark warning was issued even before Bagheri Kani returned to Vienna, meaning that the E3 negotiators are setting the stage for turning up the heat on Iran in order to push it into signing a deal soon.

But press reports in Iran and beyond suggest that Tehran is unlikely to sign a deal unless its

demands are met. Nour News said there are four issues that are delaying the signing of a deal: First, the West's desire to keep in place the sanctions structure through not providing reliable guarantees. Second, keeping a large number of sanctions within the red list. Third, continuing restrictive pressures that go beyond the terms of the JCPOA through keeping "political files of

the safeguards" open.

Fourth, keeping some Iranian institutions under sanctions using other authorities. Nour News said sanctions on these institutions will directly or indirectly create serious problems for Iran in benefiting the economic benefits of the JCPOA.

The website said Iran keeps insisting on the necessity of removing sanctions on these institutions but the United States is not willing to back down on the sanctions.

Whether the talks would result in a deal in the current round remains to be seen. The gap of differences between Iran and the West is widening with some reports even suggesting that the current round will not end in a deal. The Lebanese newspaper Al Akhbar said on Tuesday that the EU coordinator of the talks, Enrique Mora, has submitted a draft to Iran but Tehran "is not scheduled to announce its final approval at this stage on the draft submitted by Mora."

According to the newspaper, the negotiations are likely to continue for a few more days or a few weeks, before it is announced whether they will succeed or fail.

Iran continues efforts to evacuate nationals from Ukraine: ambassador

TEHRAN – Iranian Ambassador to Ukraine Manouchehr Moradi has said that his country will continue efforts to bring home Iranians stranded in Ukraine.

The ambassador noted that all Iranian nationals residing in Ukraine are safe.

"Since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has devoted all its activities and efforts to two very basic issues. The first issue was the protection of Iranian citizens and efforts around the clock to transfer them outside Ukraine, and the second issue was monitoring developments and sending timely reports to the center," Moradi said in a video message. "Despite all the difficulties in Ukraine, all compatriots are in perfect health. Fortunately, we have not received any reports of injuries or problems that may endanger the lives of our compatriots."

He added, "The embassy has been serving its compatriots full time in recent days."

The ambassador also introduced the phone number 00380630449029 for Iranian citizens to call the embassy in case they needed assistance. "We have also appointed people in major Ukrainian cities such as Kharkov and Odessa who can help the Iranians leave in a timely manner," Moradi said, according to Fars News.

The ambassador said some Iranian citizens are not willing to leave Ukraine, underlining that these citizens can call the embassy if they need help.

Moradi asked his compatriots in Ukrainian cities to take refuge in a safe place, and if they intend to leave the cities, they must go to the west of Ukraine and try to use the railways and city trains to Lviv.

The ambassador pointed out that according to reports, the Polish border is currently busier than the rest of the border, but the situation is better in southern Ukraine.

Addressing Iranian citizens in Ukraine,



Moradi said, "If you do not need to travel in or out of town, be sure to take refuge. Be sure to pay attention to the announcements made by the embassy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Kyiv municipality and the cities of residence, as well as the announcements made by the Ukrainian government, especially during the 24 hours of traffic and the declaration of martial law."

He added, "The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran will provide its services and will never stop its activities until the last Iranians who are here and those who wish and want to go abroad are sent abroad."

Also, Ukrainian ambassador to Tehran Sergei Bordeliak stressed his country's commitment to saving Iranians' lives and helping them leave Ukraine.

In talks with the head of the Eurasian First Office of Iran's Foreign Ministry, Bordeliak pointed out the difficult situation in his country and blamed the delay and the failure of a number of Iranian students to leave Ukraine via the Polish border on the gathering of thousands of Ukrainians as well as other countries nationals at the border.

Bordeliak promised to continue contacts with relevant Ukrainian officials over the matter.

At the same time, he called for understanding the special situation of his country and stressed the need to respect the regulations pertaining to the priority of people with special conditions, especially the elderly and women.

It should be noted that a significant number

of students and other Iranians living in Ukraine have in recent days left the country and entered Ukraine's neighbors.

This came after the escalation of tensions in Ukraine-Russia relations, and especially after the start of the war.

On Tuesday morning, the first group of Iranian students returned to Iran by a private flight, and in order for more of them to return, necessary coordination is underway with some countries, including Poland and Hungary.

Earlier this week, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, in a telephone call with Iran's Ambassador to Warsaw Hossein Gharibi, inquired about the latest situation of Iranians living in Ukraine, who have arrived in Poland.

While appreciating the measures taken, Amir Abdollahian asked the ambassador of Iran to Poland to provide all necessary needs, including food and health, to the Iranian citizens.

In the phone call, Gharibi presented a report on the latest situation of Iranians and emphasized that necessary measures have been taken to accommodate and provide other necessities for the Iranians and they are going to be returned by air from Warsaw to Tehran.

He also noted that due to a long line of people on the border, people's entry into Poland is slow.

The Iranian foreign minister also raised the issue of the Iranian nationals in his recent telephone conversation with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

Amir Abdollahian told Lavrov that Iran is making efforts to bring home its citizens in Ukraine through the war-torn country's neighbors.

Securing the safety and health of Iranian nationals residing in Ukraine is our top priority and we expect conditions to be set for their safe exit [from Ukraine]," the Iranian foreign minister told his Russian counterpart.



certain political purposes and the hostile measures against Tehran in this regard, according to the Al Alam news website.

to cooperation, broad interaction and strategic relations between Iran and Russia and China. He emphasized development of cooperation in legal, judicial and human rights fields.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to exchange visits of specialized judicial delegations and exchange experiences in this field," Gharibabadi said.

Russian Ambassador Levon Dzhagaryan welcomed the proposal, stressing the continued opposition to human rights resolutions issued against Iran for

rights officials of world countries will address the 3-day meeting. Then, the ordinary and seasonal session of the council will begin. Gharibabadi will outline the Islamic Republic of Iran's position at the high-ranking meeting of the UN Human Rights Council.

Last week, Gharibabadi held separate meetings with the ambassadors of Russia and China to Iran.

During the meetings, the former diplomat discussed issues related to human rights. In the two meetings, Gharibabadi referred

SPORTS

Two-year death anniversary: Siamand Rahman

TEHRAN – Two years ago this day, Siamand Rahman's heart stopped beating. The world's strongest Paralympian, died at the age of 32.

Last year, the Iranian National Paralympic Committee (NPC) organized a Para powerlifting competition to mark the first anniversary of his death and the competition will be held on Thursday for the second successive year.

Rahman started his international career in 2008, winning the gold medal at the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation Junior World Games in the New Jersey, the United States.

His most memorable sporting achievements came in 2012 and 2016 when Rahman won two gold medals at the Paralympic Games.

At Rio 2016, the Iranian became the first Paralympian to break the 300-kilogram barrier with a lift of 310kg in the men's over-107kg final.

He had promised to set a new record at Tokyo 2020 but Siamand was the greatest absentee in the Games.

Rahman who was preparing to compete in his third Paralympic Games in Tokyo 2020, where he wanted to set a new world record in World Para Powerlifting, will always be remembered for his kind smile and enthusiasm – An epitome of hope, humanity, faith, love and peace.

Rahman was also a three-time world champion and three-time Asian Para Games gold medalist.

Rest in peace, Siamand. You will always be remembered.

Former Iran midfielder Zandi named interim coach of Dynamo Dresden

TEHRAN – Ferydoon Zandi has been named as interim coach of 2. Bundesliga side Dynamo Dresden.

Zandi replaced Alexander Schmidt in the team.

Zandi was a member of Iran national football team from 2005 to 2009.

He also played in Iranian football clubs Steel Azin and Esteghlal.

He was assistant coach of Dynamo Dresden from 2020.

Under leadership of Schmidt, Dynamo earned 12 wins, six draws and 13 defeats.

Iran, Armenia boxing camp cancelled

TEHRAN - The 10-day joint training camp between Iran and Armenia boxing teams was cancelled.

The camp was scheduled to be held in the Iranian capital in March.

The training camp has been canceled after Iran's Coronavirus Fight National Headquarters announced that the Armenian boxers are not vaccinated.

Iran prepares for the 2022 Asian Games, which will be held in Hangzhou, China.

Giti Pasand win Iran Futsal Super League

TEHRAN – Giti Pasand claimed the title of the 18th edition of Iran Futsal Super League.

The Isfahan based futsal team defeated Zandi Beton Kelardasht 6-4 and won the title with two weeks remaining.

Giti Pasand had won the title twice in 2013 and 2017.

Giti Pasand also won the 2012 AFC Futsal Club Championship and finished runners up in 2013 and 2017.

Giti Pasand, headed by former Iran player Mohammad Keshavarz, will represent the country in the 2022 AFC Futsal Club Championship which will be held in August.

Persepolis midfielder Sarlak misses Sanat Naft Match

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team iconic midfielder Milad Sarlak missed the match against Sanat Naft.

Persepolis will have to face Sanat Naft in Abadan on Sunday on Matchday 21 of Iran Professional League.

Sarlak suffered a hamstring injury in the match against Mes which was forced him to leave the field.

Persepolis are second in the table, three points behind Esteghlal.

Central Asian trio set for Norouz Cup

Uzbekistan will host the national teams of Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uganda in the Norouz Cup this month, after the friendly tournament was announced on Tuesday.

Named after the holiday period celebrated in several nations throughout the region, the event will be held at Namangan's Markaziy Stadium on a knockout basis, with Uzbekistan to face Kyrgyz Republic on March 25, the same day Tajikistan cross paths with Uganda.

The winners of those matches will then meet in the March 29 final, with the two semi-final losers to play off for third.

The tournament is the latest Uzbekistan-hosted event on the Asian football calendar, with the Central Asian nation organizing the 2022 AFC U23 Asian Cup in Tashkent and Karshi this June, having staged two groups of last year's AFC Champions League.

The nation is also one of the hosts for the Final Round of AFC Asian Cup China 2023™ Qualifiers, with Sre?ko Katanec's Uzbekistan to face Thailand, Sri Lanka and Maldives in Namangan.

The Norouz Cup will serve as crucial preparation for those Qualifiers, with all three Asian sides in the event still yet to secure their place at the continental Finals.

The tournament could also see Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan face off just three months ahead of their meeting in the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers, with the neighboring countries both drawn alongside Myanmar and Singapore in the Bishkek-based Group F.

Both Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan have travelled to Uzbekistan for friendlies in recent years, with Uzbekistan defeating Kyrgyz Republic 3-1 at Pakhtakor Stadium in November 2019, while Tajikistan suffered a 2-1 loss at Lokomotiv Stadium in September 2020.

The protest of Russian athletes: "We victims of ethnic discrimination"

TEHRAN - The representatives of the athletes in the Russian Olympic Committee decided "unanimously" not to participate in meeting between the leadership of the IOC and the athletes commissions of the National Olympic Committees, "to discuss the recommendations on our participation in international competitions, which were previously adopted and made public by the IOC".

In a note these recommendations are defined "ethnic discrimination" to the detriment of Russian and Belarusian athletes, "a clear signal that international sport is turning into an instrument of political games".

"It is obvious to us that all decisions have been taken under the strong external pressure of forces that are far from understanding the principles of integrity of the Olympic movement and non-interference of politics in sport – continues the note of the Russian athletes – Now, they are consultations are planned, but only after the decisions have been made and even carried out. It turns out that the opinion of the athletes, our opinion, no longer matters", the statement reads.



Gas transmission through West Asia's biggest network hits new record high



From page 1 ► The above-mentioned volume of natural gas was transmitted through West Asia's largest natural gas network uninterruptedly to allow all Iranians access to this strategic fuel during the cold season.

With a total length of over 37,855 kilometers, Iran's gas network is also among the world's most modern networks and it enjoys the world's latest up-to-date measuring, transmission, and pressure boosting instruments and equipment.

There are 88 gas pressure boosting units, 326 compressor units including turbochargers, electric compressors, and compressor motors as well as 61 pipeline operation centers (yards) operating along the country's gas network to ensure a stable supply at all times.

In addition to the natural gas that is transmitted through the mentioned pipelines, a big volume is also stored at the country's strategic storage facilities to be used in emergency situations.

As one of the world's top gas producers, Iran has been following a plan to expand its

underground natural gas storage capacity to ensure that enough natural gas is available during peak demand periods to avoid electricity supply shortfalls in the future.

According to the NIGC's programs, the capacity of the country's two major storage facilities of Sarajeh and Shourijeh is planned to increase to over seven billion cubic meters in near future.

According to Jamshidi-Dana, his company has so far stored 1.665 billion cubic meters of natural gas in the Shourijeh storage facilities, while 880 mcm has also been stored at Sarajeh storage.

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

The official said the major overhaul of the pressure boosting facilities, pipeline operation centers, smart monitoring stations was carried out and timely periodic visits were also done to ensure sustainable and secure gas supply to Iranian subscribers in the country during the cold season.

Stating that the company had taken all the necessary measures for the sustained transmission of gas during the winter, Jamshidi Dana said: "Due to the increase in the amount of gas consumption at peak periods, all operational areas are ready to operate at maximum capacity and spare units are also prepared to ensure the stability of gas transmission and to avoid any disruption."

country's relations with Iran, the Tajik minister called for the expansion of bilateral ties.

"We in Tajikistan need fuel to supply our power plants feed and we are happy to supply this fuel from Iran", he stated.

"We are also willing to cooperate with Iran in the field of oil extraction", the official added.

Energy co-op discussed between Iran, Tajikistan

TEHRAN- Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji and Tajikistan Minister of Energy and Water Resources Daler Juma discussed the ways for the expansion of cooperation in the field of energy between the two countries in a meeting in Tehran on Wednesday.

While expressing satisfaction over his

China's purchase of Iranian oil more than before sanctions

TEHRAN- China's purchases of Iranian oil have risen to record levels in recent months, exceeding a 2017 peak when the trade was not subject to U.S. sanctions, tanker tracking data showed, Reuters reported on Tuesday.

Chinese imports exceeded 700,000 barrels per day (bpd) for January, according to estimates of three tanker trackers, surpassing the 623,000 bpd peak recorded by Chinese customs in 2017 before former U.S. President Donald Trump reimposed sanctions in 2018 on

Iranian oil exports.

One tracker estimated imports amounted to 780,000 bpd in November-December on average.

The ramping up of the purchases by the world's top oil importer comes amid talks between Tehran and world powers to revive a 2015 nuclear deal that will lift U.S. sanctions on Iranian oil exports. The talks have intensified in recent weeks.

A return of Iranian oil will ease tight global supplies and cool crude prices that have touched \$100 a barrel following Russia's

invasion of Ukraine.

Iran is expected to have a strong comeback to the global market in case the nuclear deal is revived and the U.S. sanctions on the country are lifted, Bloomberg reported on February 25.

According to the report, considering the capacity of Iran's offshore oil storages, the Islamic Republic will be able to inject millions of barrels of oil into the market as soon as the sanctions are lifted, without the need for boosting the current level of production.

Transit of goods via Iran increasing

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- The policy of paying attention to neighbors and developing political and economic relations with neighboring countries in the current government, increasing attention to road and rail routes in the world and the efforts and cooperation of transportation and trade-related organizations in establishing or activating corridors through the country has led to significant growth in transit of goods through Iran.

The latest report on transit of goods via the country indicates that 11.298 million tons of commodities have been transited through Iran during the 11-month period since the beginning of the current

Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-February 19, 2022), which has been 70 percent more than the figure for the same period of time in the past year (6.639 million tons).

It is while the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) had previously said that transit of goods via Iran is forecast to reach 11 million tons in the current

Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20), while the figure has already surpassed 11 million tons.

As announced by Rouhollah Latifi, 7.532 million tons of commodities were transited



through Iran in the previous Iranian calendar year, despite the restrictions created by the coronavirus pandemic.

Also, as stated by the managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI), 932,000 tons of commodities were transited via Iranian railways during the mentioned 11-month period of this year, which was 115 percent more than the figure for the same time span of the past year.

Iran is one of the countries that has a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as

the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due.

Paying attention to upstream documents, especially the country's development plans, and the government's decision to develop transit, paying special attention to infrastructure development, reducing transit time, making it cheaper to cross Iran and making more advantages over competitors, due to the short path for customers, can lead to facilitating the development of transit so that the country can reach the desired growth in this due.

Iran, Kyrgyzstan ink MOU on port cooperation



TEHRAN- Iran and Kyrgyzstan signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on port cooperation, Iran's Port and Maritime Organization (PMO) reported on Wednesday.

As reported, the MOU was inked in the presence of PMO Head Ali-Akbar Safaei, and Advisor to Kyrgyzstan President Tengiz Bolturuk, and the two sides emphasized the bilateral cooperation.

Addressing the meeting in which the mentioned MOU was signed, Safaei said according to tariffs, laws and regulations, the condition is provided for the presence of investors in the ports of Iran.

The PMO welcomes the presence of Kyrgyz investors in Iran's southern ports by drafting a

contract and reviewing it in the form of a joint committee, the official noted.

Kyrgyz investors and the private sector can use the facilities of the free trade zones by establishing an office in the Kish Free Zone or Qeshm Free Zone (both in Iran's southern Hormozgan province, as the MOU was signed with Port and Maritime Department of this province), the PMO head stated.

Bolturuk, for his part, spoke of Bishkek's interest in developing joint trade and economic relations and cooperation with Iran, and called for the cooperation to be operational as soon as possible.

He said, "Due to the changes and problems we have in the transit of goods from the west, we want to use the transit routes of the east and Iranian ports for the transit of goods."

Meanwhile, during a meeting with Head of Hormozgan Province Ports and Maritime Department Alireza Mohammadi Karaji-Ran on Sunday, the Kyrgyz official had said his country's companies are eager for expanding collaborations with Iranian counterparts.

Bolturuk, who visited Iran's southern

Shahid Rajaei Port on top of a delegation, expressed the Kyrgyz government's interest and willingness for investing in Shahid Rajaei Port's hinterland, and said: "One of our important missions in this trip is to make the necessary preparations for the active presence of Kyrgyz companies in Shahid Rajaei port in order to improve economic relations between the two countries."

Referring to the designation of 32 investment projects in the economic plans of the President of Kyrgyzstan, Bolturuk continued: "Among the mentioned projects in different investment sectors, activity in Shahid Rajaei port, especially in the field of mining, is one of our priorities."

According to the official, Kyrgyzstan is seriously seeking the development of relations and joint economic cooperation with Iran.

"In line with the emphasis of our president on the implementation of cooperation as soon as possible, we are very serious and determined to invest in Shahid Rajaei Port and we are ready to start our activities in this port as soon as March," he stressed.

Over 800,000 tons of sugar imported in 11 months



TEHRAN- Iran imported 819,000 tons of sugar during the first eleven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-February 19, 2022), a director in Iran's Government Trading Corporation (GTC)

announced.

Hojjat Baratali, the director for distribution and sales coordination in GTC, said, "With good planning, strategic supply of sugar has increased and we have enough sugar to supply to distribution networks whenever the market demands it."

So far, 483,000 tons of sugar, supplied through domestic production and import, have been distributed in the market, he added.

If the supply of this product to the market continues, by the end of the year, the amount of distribution will be less than last year, Baratali stated.

Energy minister meets scholars, experts to discuss water issues

TEHRAN - Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian met with some of the country's well-known scientists, scholars and experts active in the field of energy on Wednesday to discuss various issues related to water as well as electricity sector, the portal of the ministry Paven reported.

During this meeting, Mehrabian proposed the establishment of a think tank between his ministry and the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in order to explore issues related to various sectors including water, electricity, and energy economy.

In the meeting which was attended mainly by university



professors, scholars, and scientific experts in the field of water, Mehrabian referred to the importance of the relationship between science institutions and industrial sectors, saying: "Executors should share their problems

and challenges with experts to achieve ideal solutions."

He called on scholars and university professors to be active participants in developing the country's energy sector by providing effective and expert solutions

and proposals for improving the mentioned fields.

"Fortunately, there are many common areas for cooperation between water and electricity fields, and we hope to see success in these fields with extensive cooperation between scholars," Mehrabian stressed.

The minister noted that the government will definitely be able to solve the problems in the field of water and electricity, saying: "Today water crisis is the country's most important issue whose management has been put on the agenda of the parliament and the government and the allocation of an unprecedented portion of the next year's budget bill to this issue is an indication of its

importance."

Pointing out that the increase in water demand indicates development in various fields, Mehrabian said: "Currently, the per capita rate of water consumption in Iran has increased drastically due to population increase and development of the society."

He mentioned that the water crisis has three major aspects, including engineering, management, and economics, and said: "The issues related to the reforming and strengthening of the consumption management structure, infrastructure development as well as water economy should be considered and included in the future goals of the Energy Ministry."

TEDPIX loses 780 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 780 points to close at 1.281 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 6.74 billion securities worth 34.285 trillion rials (about \$131.86 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 274 points, while the second market's index dropped 4,193 points.

TEDPIX gained 6,000 points (less than one percent) to 1.288 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

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

From page 1 ► Then Russia decided to send soldiers to these regions. However, in a short time, it advanced its military operation as far as Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. On the seventh day of Russia's military operation against Ukraine, conflict is continuing. It is not possible to talk about the significant dominance of these states yet. Because Russia is using a controlled force against Ukraine, which it sees as one of the different branches of the great Slavic nation. While all this is happening in Ukraine, the West –with the exception of England– has a weak voice condemning the Russian invasion and expresses its support for Ukraine. Over the last days, it is seen that the West has increased its reaction against Russia due to the increasing public pressure. While war is continuing, Russia and Ukraine still have not come together to start negotiation.

Why do Western powers refuse to join Ukraine in the military conflict?

Although Ukraine is being punished for its moves to become a part of the Western alliance, no agent of the Western alliance has any intention of fighting Russia. It is thought that such an intervention would cause a World War. U.S. President Biden also stated that the alternative other than large-scale sanctions against Russia would be to start the Third World War. We can consider the reactions to this invasion under two titles. First, heavy sanctions will be applied to Russia economically/financially. It seems likely that the assets and bank accounts of Russian oligarchs and Russian banks, known for their closeness to Putin, in Western countries will be seized. Again, removing Russia from the international payment system SWIFT will be an important sanction. With long-term planning carried out since 2015, Russia, which has large gold reserves, is in a strong position not only strategically but also economically. But the sanctions are likely to increase Russia's borrowing costs and increase inflation. The foreign debt burden of \$60 billion will increase, and the ruble will likely depreciate further. The growth of the Russian economy will slow down with the sanctions, but the rest of the region will be more affected by high energy prices and inflation than Russia. Providing arms, equipment, financial and logistical support to Ukraine compose the second pillar of efforts in this direction. For example, U.S. President Joe Biden has announced that they will give 350 million dollars of military aid to Ukraine, which is struggling to repel the Russian invasion.

The choices that built and impaired the post-war order

From page 1 ► In Europe, romanticizing the expansion of NATO by stretching it from the Baltic Republics to Russia's doorstep has led to resentment and outright embarrassment in Moscow. In the Middle East, U.S. foreign policy has often conflicted with a rules-based international order. The U.S. strategic alliance with Israel has existed to the detriment of the Palestinian territorial claims. In 1953, U.S. engineered a coup against a duly elected government of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq. The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 was in clear violations of the UN Charter. Likewise, the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) under the Trump administration pulled the rug from under a multilateral agreement signed by key international actors (Shibley Telhami. Brookings, February 25, 2022). All these examples serve as grim reminders of the perils of promoting an international order that is based on a rules-based system, but is selectively upheld when it is seen as consistent with US interests and conveniently disregarded when it is not.

By the same token, the Russian military intervention in Syria was an equally alarming example of propping up its client state in Damascus. Russia's actions in Syria posed serious challenges to international law, a subject that has now been revisited by the Ukrainian crisis. It is worth noting that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has left the Kremlin

Europe will be more affected by high energy prices than Russia: Turkish expert



There are also statements from other countries that the aid will continue. Despite all these, I think it is not possible to prevent the division of Ukraine into east and west.

To what extent Russia will advance in Ukraine? Do you predict the collapse of the Ukrainian government?

The main purpose of this move, which Russia has undertaken by anticipating all the reactions it will receive, is to make Ukraine a state under its own control. Because Russia, under the leadership of Putin, perceives NATO expansion towards Russia by taking in former USSR republics as a significant threat. For Putin, the expansion of NATO means the fragmentation of the historical and spiritual space between Russia and Ukraine. For this reason, Putin does not want a pro-Western government in Ukraine, which Russia considers part of itself. Putin believes the West is in decline and disintegration. He is concerned about the increase of China's influence in the Eurasian region. All these concerns make the occupation of Ukraine necessary and legitimate for him. The process that started with Crimea continues with the Donbass region. It does not seem that it will come to an end without taking the whole of Ukraine under its control. As I mentioned in the previous question, I think Russia will eventually achieve a victory, perhaps slower than expected. Ukraine is likely to be divided into East and West. I foresee that the eastern part under the control of Russia will join the Russian Federation in a short time. On the other hand, it is not possible to eliminate the instability in Western Ukraine in a short

time. At the same time, it seems unlikely that Russia will leave the region until it gains dominance over the whole Ukraine. I think that more difficult days are ahead for the Baltic and Balkan states, to which Russia is always interested, especially Ukraine.

How could the recent escalation affect the global economy and energy supply?

This question will help us answer the question of why Russia invaded Ukraine now. Russia is the country with the highest natural gas reserves in the world and meets one-fifth of global production. Although it does not have such superiority in oil reserves, it meets more than 10% of global oil production. This situation causes Russia to be an important agent in the world energy market. In the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, energy demand had greatly decreased due to the restrictions applied around the world. By the end of 2020, the price of crude oil had dropped to \$42 per barrel, the lowest level since 2015. Despite the rapid increase in oil demand during the normalization process, the price of crude oil per barrel was around 100 dollars in the days when the Russia-Ukraine crisis started, as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and some non-OPEC producers led by Russia did not increase their production. Europe's shift from coal to natural gas and renewable energy sources in energy production has significantly increased the region's dependence on natural gas, especially in the last 10 years. The increase in natural gas consumption was mainly achieved through imports from Russia. Currently, Russia

supplies approximately 40% of the natural gas needs of EU countries. Natural gas exports from Asia to Europe decreased, as many businesses were closed during the Covid pandemic. When demand increased, Russia did not increase gas flow. This has led to a decrease in natural gas stocks across Europe. The decreasing natural gas stock has led to an increase in natural gas prices and, accordingly electricity prices. Russia wanted to invade Ukraine under these conditions. Because Putin thinks that it is not possible for European countries, which have the capacity to impose sanctions, to take such a step in the winter months when their natural gas needs are at their highest. Recent developments and statements also support this situation. It is seen that there is a clear difference between the sanctions rhetoric of Germany, which supplies 45 percent of its natural gas need from Russia, and the discourse of the UK, which supplies 3% of its natural gas from Russia. I think Europe will take this into account when designing sanctions against Russia. However, in the short and medium-term, there will be price increases in global energy markets due to supply and demand imbalances.

Do you think the escalation between Russia and the West will affect the Vienna talks?

The Vienna agreement, which was put forward to control Iran's nuclear activities, lost much of its meaning with Trump's withdrawal in May 2018. However, with Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential elections and the presidency of Ebrahim Raisi, we see that the process has been reconsidered. We can say that the 8th round negotiations held in Vienna are promising for the re-activation of the nuclear agreement and the lifting of sanctions. On the other hand, the negotiations, which were held with the participation of representatives from Russia, China, Germany, France, England, and Iran, will be affected by the Russia-Ukraine crisis. It will be difficult for other actors to accept Russia as a facilitator from now on. This situation will force Iran to have tighter and more difficult negotiations with other actors. But at this point, I think Iran has an important advantage that strengthens its hand. Iran is the second country with the most natural gas reserves in the world after Russia. Iranian gas can gain a critical position in reducing Europe's dependence on Russian gas. This could play an important role in reducing sanctions against Iran and turning the Vienna talks into a permanent agreement.

February 27, 2022).

Putin is trapped in an unwinnable war as he faces an unprecedented groundswell of opposition developed around the world against his military plans in Ukraine. Anagging question persists: Will Russians have an appetite for facing a longstanding insurrection and resistance from the Ukrainians? Why is that a wrong question to ask? Such a resistance must have been clear beyond doubt to the Russian leaders given the unpleasant experiences and long-lasting and vividly painful memories of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

The long-term impact of sanctions on the Russia's Central Bank will prove to be debilitating not only to ordinary Russians but to the country's overall economy, raising the price of this military adventure to an unbearable level for the Kremlin. Putin and his close aides can no longer rule out the possibility of Russia becoming a pariah state nor can they underestimate the possibility of a massive humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine. They would do well by heeding the call for de-escalation. Absent a diplomatic off-ramp, many innocent civilians will be indefensibly killed.

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Western Hypocrisy over Ukraine

From page 1 ► Over the past week, the truth has crept out over how Western governments and Western media view the conflict in Ukraine (a country they abandoned) in comparison to the wars waged by the West in particular against West Asian countries.

When we speak about the West, we should be more accurate in saying the hypocrisy that is mostly emerging from the Anglo-sphere or the “five eyes”.

When it comes to the mainstream media, many have criticized the racist attitude of pundits and reporters on mostly American and British platforms who voiced their alarm at a conflict occurring in Ukraine because of its proximity to the West and that Ukrainian refugees are white.

CBS's correspondent in Kyiv, Charlie D'Agata, reported that “this isn't a place, with all due respect, like Iraq or Afghanistan that has seen conflict raging for decades ... this is a relatively civilized, relatively European ... city where you wouldn't expect that or hope that (war) to happen”.

Many on social media denounced D'Agata for implying a conflict in a “civilized” European country means a conflict in an “uncivilized” West Asian country refers to inferior people.

“With all due respect,” the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan was an invasion launched by the U.S. and when it comes to civilization. And are countries such as Iraq uncivilized?

Iraqis were preaching to the world about science and algebra at a time when those in the West were painting their faces the color blue and living in the forest.

According to the UN Refugee Agency Chief, Filippo Grandi, around half a million Ukrainians have unfortunately left their homes and crossed into neighboring countries.

But journalist Daniel Hannan writing for the top British conservative newspaper, the Telegraph, was shocked because “they seem so like us. That is what makes it so shocking. Ukraine is a European country”, he says.

Of course, it is shocking that a conflict should occur in Europe for Daniel Hannan who may have forgotten that World War One and World War Two broke out in Europe.

NBS reporter Hallie Cobiella did not hold back saying “to put it bluntly, these are not refugees from Syria, these are refugees from Ukraine.. they're Christians, they're white. They're very similar [to us]”.

She certainly put it bluntly: if you're Syrian and neither white nor Christian, then you don't really matter in this world.

A commentator on the BBC took it up a notch saying “it's very emotional for me because I see European people with blue eyes and blonde hair being killed”. What made these remarks even worse is that the BBC presenter failed to challenge the comments.

Another news anchor Peter Dobbie said what is compelling from looking at Ukrainian refugees is the “way they are dressed”. He said, “these are prosperous, middle-class people. These are not obviously refugees trying to get away from the Middle East... or North Africa. They look like any European family that you'd live next door to.”

Refugees are refugees no matter how they dress and how they look and where they live. The racist bigotry and racism during a conflict is quite shameful.

But the idea that a conflict inside “civilized” Europe is so alarming because wars only happen in countries that are “uncivilized” is such disturbing double standards and hypocritical analyses because all the wars outside Europe, the vast majority of which in West Asia and Africa occurred as a result of Western imperialism, plots, and military adventurism, not by the people themselves.

British media has also been glorifying Ukrainians fighting Russians, effectively taking sides in a way that they would not dare to cover in other conflicts. For example, the Palestinians resisting Israeli regime forces would not receive such coverage.

Britain's Sky News showed a clip of how people are making bombs explaining in detail how to make the devices as effective as possible. If those people making



explosive devices were Palestinians they would be branded as terrorists. There are many examples of this hypocrisy over the past few days but the list is too long to cover.

The fake news propaganda machine in the Anglo-sphere has been working overdrive on mainstream media as well as social media.

So much so that it's repeating the same mistakes. One of which is the reported killing AGAIN of CNN journalist Bernie Gores, who was reportedly executed by the Taliban in Afghanistan and also now the first American to die in Ukraine. Poor old Bernie, the man is still alive.

In the UK, the same critics who accused Brexit architect Nigel Farage of wanting to deport Polish people are now calling for the deportation of Russians from Britain.

The Anglo-sphere claims or tries to preach to others on how the world should distance sports from politics.

But there have been calls for Russians who own shares in British football team Chelsea for example to be deprived of their ownership and deported.

This is while Saudi Arabia, which has been pounding Yemen for seven years and killing half a million Yemenis, including 80,000 children, owns two football clubs in Britain.

The United Arab Emirates which is a partner in the Saudi-led coalition owns Manchester City football club, arguably the richest team in England. The club held an event against the “bombing in Ukraine”.

The European Union is also at fault as Israel which has illegally occupied the Palestinian Territories and committed countless war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Palestinians for more than half a century is allowed into UEFA but Russia has suddenly been kicked out.

Nobody has even mentioned the British football club Manchester United, by the way, owned by Americans, despite Washington waging countless wars, invasions, and occupation of other countries.

The EU claims to be an advocate for freedom of speech has banned Russian media, which means their people will only get a limited narrative of the unfolding events.

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss announced that she would “absolutely” support people who want to travel to Ukraine and fight, even though that is illegal in Britain.

This is while the British government has jailed people who went to fight and defend the elderly, women, and children against the barbaric Daesh terrorist takfiri group in Iraq and Syria. And those that were detained by British authorities are still currently serving time in prison.

Can you imagine if somebody went to fight for the Palestinians against the Israeli regime, is Liz Truss going to “absolutely” support them?

Waving Palestinian flags has been banned at British football stadiums because you shouldn't “mix politics with sports” remember. This is while over the past few days, Ukrainian flags are being handed out at football stadiums.

The most disturbing aspect about all this is that the West is also pumping more lethal weapons to Ukraine which will only prolong the conflict. Instead of coming up with peace initiatives to resolve the crisis, it appears the west wants the fighting to continue.

It's very unfortunate, that the crisis in Ukraine has reached the stage of a full-scale military escalation; but the crocodile tears by western leaders and the hypocrisy of the media and authorities will not end this conflict.

Ukraine itself has even been abandoned by its allies, in particular the United States and Great Britain.

Over \$280,000 allocated to tourism projects in Kordestan



TEHRAN –Some 73.5 billion rials (\$284,000) has been allocated to five tourism projects across western Kordestan province, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

Traditional accommodation centers and a traditional restaurant are among the projects being implemented, Yaqub Guylian said on Wednesday.

The projects are estimated to generate over 40 job opportunities upon their completion, the official added.

Kordestan has excellent capacities in the tourism sector, which can be a better ground for the province's development if tourism projects are

supported, he noted.

The name Kordestan refers to the region's principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuq period), the name Kurdistan was applied to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains. It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran's Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century.

According to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in September 2020, over 2,400 tourism-related projects were underway across the country with a total estimated cost of 1,370 trillion rials (around \$5.2 billion).

The tourism industry of the country was growing and progressing well but unfortunately, it has faced the coronavirus outbreak, which brought the industry to a standstill.

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

Local festival in Lut Desert to mark UNESCO-listing anniversary



TEHRAN –An online festival of local traditions and rituals is planned to be held in Lut Desert, the heart of the Iranian plateau, on the occasion of the 6th anniversary of the desert's inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

By holding this festival, the local communities in the UNESCO-registered Lut Desert will be able to demonstrate their cultural values and customs to national audiences, the deputy tourism chief of Sistan-Baluchestan province has said.

Photographs and films depicting a range of local indigenous rituals, ceremonies, games, food, souvenirs, and agricultural products are the focus of the festival, CHTN quoted Mojtaba Mirhosseini as saying on Wednesday.

The festival accepts submissions until June 20, and the selected works will be celebrated on July 18, the official added.

The Lut Desert, widely referred to as Dasht-e Lut ("Emptiness Plain"), is a large salt desert encircled by the provinces of Kerman and Sistan-Baluchestan, and South Khorasan. It is the world's 27th-largest desert and was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List on July 17, 2016.

The vast desert is teemed with giant dunes, shifting sands, salt plains, and wind-hewn kaluts, offering visitors epic journeys of breathtaking beauty and wilderness. It is a

destination for people who are in search of new adventures; outstanding scenery and unparalleled serenity.

It is considered as one of the top areas in the world for finding meteorites, thanks to its unique parameters. In recent years, significant finds have been made, with the efforts of national and international teams of researchers. Seven years of satellite temperature data analyzed by NASA show that the Lut Desert is the hottest place on Earth. Based on the research, it was the hottest during 5 of the 7 years and had the highest temperature overall: 70.7°C in 2005.

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

Sistan-Baluchestan possesses special significance because of being located in a strategic and transit location, especially Chabahar which is the only ocean port in Iran and the best and easiest access route of the middle Asian countries to free waters. It is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert.

it submitted to the governor-general of the western province, MEHR reported.

The skill of making handmade knives, the talent of Gereh Chini, which is the art of laying finely cut pieces of wood on a surface based on a specific design, and the skill of making local dolls of

Delfan were amongst entrees to the prestigious list.

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted

Iran needs to be ready for a “tourism tsunami”, expert says

From page 1 ► However, it is hoped that the country will experience tangible growth in tourism during the next Iranian calendar year 1401 (starts on March 21), he added.

Back in January, the deputy tourism minister Ali Darabi announced that Iran needs to get ready for a probable “tsunami of tourism” once the coronavirus pandemic is over.

“Despite not knowing how the coronavirus outbreak will evolve in the future, we ought to plan on hosting tourists during the upcoming holidays of Noruz (Iranian new year).”

Travel and tourism will increase as vaccination becomes a priority around the world and lifestyles align, the

official added.

In January, an official with the tourism ministry announced that the Iranian tourism industry has suffered \$233m losses due to COVID restrictions over the past two years.

“Travel is not believed to be the cause of the outbreak, rather it is a lack of adherence to health protocols that have caused the outbreak, but people canceled their trips anyway, causing major damage to the tourist facilities across the country,” he explained.

The tourism ministry is preparing safe and smart travel packages for Iranian holidaymakers and travelers during Noruz, he noted.



Nearly 70 percent of the population has been vaccinated, so these trips may be able to partially compensate for the damage done to tourism facilities over the past two years, he mentioned.

Last year the tourism ministry announced that the tourism of the country was growing before the coronavirus outbreak, its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, nearing the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent.

Iran was ranked as the second fastest-growing country in tourism based on data compiled by the World Tourism Organization.

Experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

19th-century caravanserai hosting handicrafts exhibit

TEHRAN –An exhibition of handicrafts and traditional arts is currently underway at the 19th-century Moshir caravanserai in the city of Borazjan, southwestern Bushehr province, a local tourism official has announced.

The exhibit aims to promote handmade products by local artisans and crafters, Hamid Saadat said, CHTN reported on Wednesday.

The Qajar era (1789-1925) caravanserai, which is among the candidates for a collective inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list, was inscribed on the national heritage list in 1983.

With over 6,000 years of history and significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras, Bushehr is one of Iran's most important historical centers.

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. Qajar era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

Possible UNESCO tag for Iranian caravanserais

Iran has put forward a selection of 56 caravansaries as a candidate for a collective inclusion in UNESCO'S cultural heritage list.

Last year, the tourism ministry announced that Iran is developing a dossier for a selection of its historical caravanserais for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list. In this regard, cultural heritage experts are assessing such monuments that are scattered across the country to make a shortlist in terms of their architecture, historical and cultural values.

Caravansary (also Caravanserai or Caravansaray) is a building that served as the inn of the Orient, providing accommodation for commercial, pilgrim, postal, and especially official travelers.



According to Encyclopedia Iranica, from the number of surviving caravansaries and their sizes, it is clear that in Safavid and Qajar times there was a state architectural department that was specifically concerned with the construction of caravansaries and stations on the overland routes. Furthermore, in the cities, several caravansaries were erected as lodging houses, depots, and commercial offices in the vicinity of the bazaars.

A typical caravansary consists of a square or rectangular plan centered around a courtyard with only one entrance and arrangements for defense if necessary. Whether fortified or not, it at least provided security against beasts of prey and attacks by brigands.

The earliest caravanserais in Iran were built during the Achaemenid era (550 -330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 – to 1629, he ordered the construction of network caravanserais across the country.

For many travelers, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai, can be a wide experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age.

Such roadside inns were once constructed along ancient caravan routes in the Muslim world to shelter people, their goods, and animals. The former Silk Roads may be the most famous example dotted by caravanserais.

Cozy chambers that are meticulously laid out around a vast courtyard may easily evoke spirits of the past. It's not hard to fancy the hustle and bustle of merchants bargaining on prices, recounting their arduous journeys to one another while their camels chewing hay! You can also conceive the idea of local architectural style and material in its heyday.

It is not hard to fancy the hustle and

bustle of merchants bargaining on prices, recounting their arduous journeys to one another while their camels chewing hay!

Passing major roads in the country, one may see crumbling caravanserais many of which were abandoned for ages. In the Information Age, such guest houses have largely lost their actual usage.

However, a couple of years ago, the Iran tourism ministry introduced a scheme to keep them alive and profitable; tens of caravanserais are ceded to the private investors for better maintenance. Now, some are exclusively renovated, repurposed into boutique hotels and tourist lodgings.

They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them with doors in the corners of the yard.

Wide-ranging handicrafts

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

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

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

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

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

Cultural elements in Lorestan added to national list

TEHRAN-A total of five cultural elements long been practiced in Lorestan province have been registered in the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts on Tuesday announced the inscriptions in an official document

it submitted to the governor-general of the western province, MEHR reported.

The skill of making handmade knives, the talent of Gereh Chini, which is the art of laying finely cut pieces of wood on a surface based on a specific design, and the skill of making local dolls of

Delfan were amongst entrees to the prestigious list.

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted

for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

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



TEHRAN – Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), has praised Iran’s approach toward environmental protection.

“I realized that Iran is also celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Department of Environment. While congratulating this event, I would like to say that this news is impressive because few countries have a long history of establishing an environmental organization,” she said.

She made the remarks in a meeting with Ali Salajegheh, Department of Environment chief, on the sidelines of the Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) held in Nairobi from February 28 to March 2.

Kenya also established an environmental organization in 1974, but most countries began to seriously consider the issue after the Rio Summit in 1992, she explained.

Environmental measures and protection of natural resources, waste management, and other measures show Iran’s environmental approach, she further noted.



Pointing out that Iran’s natural climate is very variable, Salajegheh said that in Iran, precipitation varies from less than 10 mm in the desert to more than 2,000 mm in the Hyrcanian forests per year.

The area of protected areas has been increased by 11 percent and we have used local communities in the management of these areas. Good measures have also been taken to raise public awareness in local communities.

Referring to the great diversity of

wildlife species in Iran, he noted that there are many endangered species that climate change conditions have contributed to these risks. Unfortunately, with the drying up of wetlands and the increase in drought, biodiversity loss has intensified.

In the field of human-environment and prevention of water, soil, and air pollution, as well as wastewater treatment and waste management, valuable measures are being taken. We have also passed laws and instructions for water, soil, and air pol-

lutants and communicated them to all responsible bodies, he said.

Human activities degrade ecosystems

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

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

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

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

Iranian, Turkish Red Crescents sign MOU to enhance co-op

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society and the Turkish Red Crescent inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to expand cooperation on relief and medical services, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Pir-Hossein Kolivand, head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society met his Turkish counterpart Karam Kinik on the sidelines of the Conference of Humanitarian Leadership for the MENA Region held on Monday in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, ILNA reported.

The two officials reviewed the details of a cooperation agreement in the fields of relief, medicine, treatment, youth, and volunteers along with the deployment of joint teams to third countries such as Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria.

Kolivand also suggested that due to the common culture and events between the two countries, joint measures such as exchanging medical teams, sending medical teams and hospitals to international events, and exchanging experiences



could be fields of cooperation.

Stating that it is planned to set up an “Education Town” to train all age groups to deal with accidents in a simulated manner, he called on Turkish Red Crescent to participate in the construction of the Education Town so that it can send its teams and volunteers to the training camp.

On Monday, the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Francesco Rocca, has appreciated the Iranian Red Crescent Society as one of the stron-

gest communities in the world.

Stating that IFRC will support the IRCS’s programs, he announced readiness to strengthen the Iranian Red Crescent Society relations with other national communities because those communities can use Iran’s experience and knowledge to deal with and prevent the incidents.

Established in 1922, IRCS operates as a humanitarian organization in the fields of rescue and relief in disasters, health, treatment, and rehabilitation, educating the public, youth, and volunteers, as well as the production of medicine and medical equipment.

In 2005, the IRCS received the Henry Davison Award for outstanding humanitarian services, and the IRCS initiative of volunteers was selected as the best project (out of 50 projects from 45 national societies), by the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Iran provides free treatment to refugees with rare diseases

TEHRAN – All refugees with rare diseases residing in Iran are provided with free medical services and medication and are exempt from paying treatment costs, the deputy head of the Health Insurance Organization, has announced.

All refugees with special diseases such as hemophilia, thalassemia, dialysis patients (hemodialysis-peritoneal), kidney transplantation, and MS, like Iranian nationals, can receive all treatment and medication free of charge, IRNA quoted Mehdi Rezaei as saying on Wednesday.

The Health Insurance Organization is covering 47,000 refugees in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20).

Iran’s universal public health insurance scheme, known as Salamat Health Insurance, covers hospitalization, para-clinical and outpatient ser-

vices, including doctor’s visits, radiology, lab tests, and medication costs at any public hospital affiliated with the Ministry of Health.

Vulnerable refugees with the support of the UNHCR and Iran are insured free of charge. However, those who are financially able should pay their insurance premiums, Jafar Rahimi, deputy director of the Health Insurance Organization, said.

Over 2 trillion rials (nearly \$75 million) have been spent to provide insurance to foreign nationals this year, he further said.

Refugees condition

Based on the latest statistics, over 3 million Afghans are living in Iran – some 780,000 Afghan refugees, over 2 million undocumented Afghans, and another 600,000 Afghan passport-holders with Iranian visas.

However, in light of the pandemic, all

refugees, even those undocumented, benefited from access to free primary health services and free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like Iranian nationals.

The same happened for the vaccination when the country has generously considered refugees for vaccination against coronavirus.

The recent fast-paced turn of events in Afghanistan has the potential to create additional population movements; displacing families internally and potentially driving them to seek refuge in neighboring countries.

It is estimated that up to 300,000 Afghan asylum-seekers have fled to Iran this year alone in search of safety, while UNHCR has only been able to screen some 24,000 newly arrived Afghans for protection needs.

António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations,



has praised Iran’s generosity which – for decades – has hosted millions of Afghans in need.

“At this moment, we need the global community to put their hands on the wheel of progress, provide resources, and prevent Afghanistan from spiraling any further.

I will never forget the generosity of countries like Pakistan and Iran, which – for decades – have hosted millions of Afghans in need,” Guterres said in a statement released on January 26 to the Security Council on Afghanistan.

‘Feast of charity’ begins nationwide

TEHRAN – ‘Feast of charity,’ a campaign which is held prior to the Iranian New Year celebration each year aiming to help families having a hard time addressing their essential needs, will kick off on Thursday nationwide.

The nationwide event, called Jashn-e Nikoukari, opens annually a few days before the Iranian New Year, starting usually on March 21, and lasts for three days soliciting contributions to help those underprivileged who can barely afford a living.

The event also aims at encouraging humanitarian efforts and altruistic behaviors among the public.

Many people refer to schools and mosques to provide deprived families with cash handouts, commodities, or clothes; however, last year, coronavirus changed the event to an online contribution to prevent gatherings.

This year, the charity celebration will be held from March 3 to 5. Due to a surge in the coronavirus, only



a limited number of cities can set up a fundraising base in the main squares like the previous years and others will hold it online, ISNA reported.

Such charity events would certainly encourage altruistic behaviors and generosity in society. Particularly encouraging the youngsters to practice giving even though this brings no advantage to them would result in bringing up a caring generation.

Iranian-made vaccine against Omicron begins clinical trial

From page 1 ▶ 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.

COVIRAN is the first vaccine in West Asia that is in the process of global registration.

Iran is the sixth country in the world and the first country in West Asia to gain the ability to produce the Coronavirus vaccine.

More effective than world-known vaccines

According to a new study, the effectiveness of the Iranian-made COVIRAN Barkat vaccine in fighting the coronavirus has been more than foreign rivals, namely Sinopharm, AstraZeneca, and Sputnik.

The study was performed on 1.8 million people in Fars province from the beginning of the vaccination process till October 2021, which considered four



vaccines of Sinopharm, AstraZeneca, COVIRAN, and Sputnik.

COVIRAN vaccine was 87 percent effective in protecting against coronavirus infection and 86 percent effective against Covid-related hospitalization, compared with 84 percent and 82 percent, respectively for AstraZeneca; Sinopharm came in third with 80 percent and 72 percent, respectively.

The influence of Avicenna on medical studies in the West

Part 3

Arabic science was long to maintain a strong position at Montpellier, where lectures on Avicenna’s works often went far beyond what was required by the syllabus; as late as 1545 he still clearly ranked above the ancient Greek authorities (Germain, La médecine, pp. 9-12).

At Paris the Canon is first mentioned as lecture material in 1330, and it also appears in the library catalogue of the medical faculty made in 1395 (Seidler, Die Heilkunde, pp. 49f). Following the example of Paris, German universities founded in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries also admitted the Canon to their programs of study.

Academically trained physicians in the later Middle Ages undoubtedly were familiar with the entire Canon. Lectures, however, were concen-

trated on certain parts of the work, with slight local variations in choice and range. The compulsory teaching matter always included the part on physiology in the first fen (transcription of the Arabic fann) of book 1, which expounds the general principles of medicine, and the theory of fevers (Canon 4.1), sometimes together with the theory of crises (4.2).

Often the three remaining fens of book 1—on etiology and symptomatology, dietetics and general therapy—were also prescribed. Book 3, on the specifics of pathology and therapy, was by reason of its vast range less often used as lecture material, and then only in excerpts, but it was a favorite source for examination questions.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

ENGLISH IN USE

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‘Climate change impact on Iran doubles world average’

The effects of climate change on Iran has more than doubled on average compared to other parts of the world, while southern provinces of the country are more likely to bear the consequences, secretary of environmental policy at the center for strategic studies affiliated to the presidential office has said.

“The Hoomand-Absard station in Damavand county in northeast of Tehran experienced a temperature increase of 2.7 °C over the past 50 years, while over the past 100 years, the temperature rise was about 0.76 °C,” ISNA quoted Mohammad Darvish as saying on Tuesday.

Climate change impact is increasing in southern part of the country, among which Yazd province’s condition has raised concern, he said, adding, the industries operating in the province must reduce their dependency on water, otherwise water scarcity might worsen in the region.

تغییرات اقلیمی در ایران دو تا سه برابر جهان

محمد درویش، دبیر سیاست محیط‌زیست مرکز بررسی‌های استراتژیک نهاد ریاست جمهوری گفته، ایران با تأثیرات تغییر اقلیمی دو تا سه برابر بیشتر از تأثیرات ایجاد شده در کره زمین روبرو شده است.

محمد درویش، در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایسنا با اشاره به گزارش‌های منتشر شده توسط سازمان هواشناسی، وزارت نیرو و سازمان آب، اظهار کرد: ایستگاه هومند آبسرد در دامنه‌های کوه دماوند طی نیم قرن اخیر افزایش دمايي حدود ۲.۷ درجه سلیوس را نشان می‌دهد و این مسئله در حالی رخ داده است که در ۱۰۰ سال گذشته، حدود ۰.۷۶ درجه سلیوس افزایش دما داشته‌ایم.

وی اضافه کرد: هر چقدر به شهرهای جنوبی‌تر کشورمان نزدیک می‌شویم، تغییرات اقلیمی هم بیشتر می‌شود به طوری که از این میان یزد وضعیت نگران‌کننده‌ای دارد. باید میزان وابستگی صنایع در یزد نسبت به آب کاهش پیدا کند چرا که در غیر این صورت می‌تواند شتاب خشک‌سالی‌ها را افزایش دهد.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

An ignorant person will always overdo a thing or neglect it totally.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:16 Evening: 18:14 Dawn: 5:08 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:31 (tomorrow)

Jalal ad-Din Rumi: philosophy

Part 3

Ultimately, says Rumi, citing “the shaykh of the religion”—that is, Shams-e Tabrizi—“Meaning is God”. In more poetical terms, “Form is shadow, meaning the sun”. Or again, addressing God, “Inwardly You are the Spirit of the spirit of the spirit of the spirit, outwardly the Sun of the sun!”.

In short, Rumi sees all apparent existence as the Real Being showing itself as signs, forms, shadows, metaphors, manifestations, apparitions, things, creatures.

All activity and rest, strife and harmony, war and peace, are forms displaying the Hidden Treasure. This implies that God is the source of evil as well as good. Given the precedence of mercy over wrath, what appears to us as evil can only be serving a greater good.

Evil cannot be eliminated from the created world because that would be tantamount to destroying the world. Hence God appointed two sheriffs to keep the world going, remembrance of him (zeker), and heedlessness (ghaflat).

If either dominated, the world would disappear. One also needs to consider the infinite creativity of Being; a painter who cannot paint ugly pictures can hardly be called skillful. Moreover, the divine light in itself cannot appear to others, because it is far too intense to be perceived by created things, which are shadows and darkness.

“Light is the First Cause, and every secondary cause is its shadow”. Just as “you come to know light through light’s opposite”, so also “you will not know evil until you know good”. There can be no right path without wrong paths, no pleasure without pain, no mercy without wrath.

Rumi always applies such relatively theoretical discussions to the human situation. In this case, he asks his readers why they should be so ignorant as to complain about the existence of evil.

Any elementary understanding of tawhid should have made clear to them that the forms, pictures, reflections, and shadows that comprise the realm of appearances have no inherent good, for there is nothing truly good but God.

Given that it is impossible to find lasting good in anything, why are people so passionately and shamelessly attached to the world and their own egos? Ultimately, what they see as evil is simply God’s severity, announcing to them that they must seek his gentleness.

“Whenever you turn your heart toward something, His severity will detach you from it—O heart, don’t fix your heart on any place, don’t persist!”. But why must God make us suffer? When someone beats a rug with a stick, says Rumi, it is not because he hates the rug, but because he wants to get rid of the dust.

Our souls are veiled by the dust of the ego, “and that dust will not leave all at once. // With every cruelty and every blow, it departs little by little from the

Iranian movies line up for Izmir Intl. Women Filmmakers Festival

TEHRAN – Fourteen movies from Iran are competing in the 5th International Women Filmmakers Festival underway in the Turkish city of Izmir.

“A Poetess”, “Dish”, “Emergency”, “Iron Deficiency” and “Regolith” are among the highlights of the lineup.

“A Poetess”, co-directed by Sahra Fathi and Saeid Dashti, follows Sara who is facing a dilemma between choosing the abortion of her child and immigration, or staying in her homeland. By realizing the truth about her husband, she makes up her mind and plans for a new future.

Directed by Rana Vaezi, “Dish” tells the story of an old woman who lives alone in an apartment house and her only hobby is satellite TV and its serials. One night, the police collect the satellite dishes on the building where the old woman lives. She tries to save her satellite dish from the police.

“Emergency” is about Nazanin, a seven-year-old girl, who is trying to reveal a secret that bothers her by getting close to the emergency agent who has come to their house to check on her mother.

Directed by Maryam Esmikhani, the film won an audience award at the Iran Fest in Forli, Italy last December.

In “Iron Deficiency”, after the

“Emergency” by Maryam Esmikhani.

sudden suicide of Aban’s mother, she finds it unbearable to remain in this dilemma she used to call home. On the day of the funeral, Aban decides to leave for an unspecified destination on a journey where her insight gradually aligns with several seemingly destined empirical encounters. While she explores the city, meets different kinds of people and gets to know part of their stories, she walks in solitude and gets lost in the crowd, growing a vivid imagination about her mother’s last days of life. Something previously

twisted, a force entrapped within, is starting to unravel.

The film has been directed by Azadeh Abadpur.

In “Regolith”, director Saleheh Mortezaania focuses on the monotonous world of a struggling single woman who starts cracking when a man throws stones at her window, bringing her to the verge of making a drastic change.

“Ashes” by Saeideh Dalirian, “Doll Story” by Shakila Samavati, “For What Sin?” by Maryam Ebrahimvand, “Gone

Men’s Bride” by Robabeh Ruhi, “Good Girl” by Raheleh Karami, “Matryoshka” by Yalda Zadvan, “Pass” by Erika Abdollahi, “The Savior” by Soheila Purmohammadi and “The Third Slaughterhouse” by Sogol Izadifard will also be screened.

Iranian filmmaker Nerges Abyar received the Director Achievement Award on the opening day of the festival on Sunday.

She is in Izmir to hold several master classes during the festival, which will run until March 8.

Movies from Iran scoop awards at Khamrubu Intl. Short Film Festival

From Page 1 ▶ “Aphasia” by Saeid Alinejad also received an honorable mention in this category.

“Dancing with Rainbow” directed by Hassan Mokhtari won first runner-up award in the documentary competition, while “Hargila” by Gerrit Vyn from the United States was named best documentary.

The documentary is about a girl who embellishes her hometown Mianeh in East Azarbaijan with her murals.

In the animation competition, “The Sun” by Omid Seifali also received first runner-up prize.

The story of the movie is set in a dirty city where people are suffering. A child is born. He who has lost his mother is alone in the

city when a child feels lonely and scared. A butterfly takes him somewhere. The child sees that the sun is imprisoned in a cage in a dark room. The child releases the sun and the sun illuminates the city and removes sorrow from the people.

“The Statue” by Mohsen Salehifard won the critics award in this section.

The animation follows a sculptor who engages with the clay of his sculpture and shapes it.

Roya won the award for best female child artist for “Aphasia”, while Emad Najmabadi won the named best male child artist for his role “Aparat”.

“Aparat” also brought Erfan Ehteshami

“Dancing with Rainbow” directed by Hassan Mokhtari.

the award for best cinematographer, and Mohammad-Javad Belqadr won the award for best editor for his collaboration in “Victim”.

“Book of My Mother” published in Persian

TEHRAN – A Persian translation of Swiss novelist Albert Cohen’s “Book of My Mother” has come to Iranian bookstores.

Mohammad-Mehdi Shojaei is the translator of the book, which Paris Match called “one of the most beautiful love stories ever written.” It has been published by Mahi.

Shortly after Albert Cohen left France for London to escape the Nazis, he received news of his mother’s death in Marseille. Unable to mourn her, he expressed his grief in a series of moving pieces for La France Libre, which later grew into “Book of My Mother”.

Achingly honest, intimate and moving, this love song is a tribute to all mothers.

Cohen himself expressed, “I shall not have written in vain if one of you, after reading my hymn of death, is

Front cover of the Persian edition of Albert Cohen’s novel “Book of My Mother”.

one evening gentler with his mother because of me and my mother.”

Cohen was also the author of “Solal”, “Mangeclous”, “Belle du Seigneur”, which was awarded the French Academy’s Grand Prix du Roman; and “Les Valereux”.

Born Abraham Albert Cohen in Corfu, Greece in 1895, he was part of an important Sephardic Jewish community on the island. Albert’s

parents, who owned a soap factory, moved to Marseille, France when he was a child. Albert Cohen discusses this period in his novel “Le Livre de Ma Mere” (“The Book of My Mother”).

He studied at a private Catholic school. In 1904, he started high school at Lycée Thiers, and graduated in 1913.

In 1914, he left Marseille for Geneva, Switzerland and enrolled

in Law School. He graduated from Law School in 1917 after which he enrolled in Literature School in 1917 and remained until 1919.

In 1919, He became a Swiss citizen and that same year he married Elisabeth Brocher. In 1921, they gave birth to a daughter, Myriam. In 1924 his wife died of cancer. In 1925, Albert became director of Revue Juive (The Jewish Review), a periodical whose writers include Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud. From 1926 to 1931, he served as a civil servant in Geneva. In 1931 He married his second wife, Marianne Goss.

During the German occupation, in 1940, Albert fled to Bordeaux, then to London. On January 10, 1943, Cohen’s mother died in Marseille. That same year, he met his future third wife, Bella Berkovich.

Persian with a heavy Arabic accent

Mahdieh Jahed Taherani

When I saw the book, the first thing which drew my attention was its title. I wanted to know where the “Bazidar” is, so I ordered it quickly, but after reading the “No introduction” part, everything changed. “Bazidar, is the name of kind of a Pigeon that flies in such a beautiful

way in the blue sky and amazes whoever watches that scene...,” Pigeon fanciers know this type of pigeon very well.

“Bazidar” which is written by Mahboubeh Sadat Razavinia, and published by Soore Mehr, is about an Iraqi man who was one of Saddam’s soldiers during the Iran-Iraq war that served as chief because he didn’t want to kill his Muslim brothers.

In his old hotel in Karbala, Seyyed Abbas sat down and shared his life and memories with Mahboubeh Sadat Razavinia in his Arabic accented Persian. He told her everything from his childhood to his adolescence, his military service that coincides with the war, his engagement with an Iranian wife, escapes from the war, him trying to get a position that didn’t involve a single bullet, his fears of the Ba’athists and how he ended up being captured by Iranian forces.

What makes the book interesting is the narrator’s view. He has always maintained his faith in Imam Hussein, never offended his country and people, and even called the soldiers of his country “martyr” but he was also fair enough to talk good about Iranian soldiers and their kindness.

According to the author, Mahboubeh Sadat Razavinia, she did not change Seyyed Abbas’s characteristics and wrote everything just as he was interviewed. Although the author believes that this is what makes the book perfect, I believe it makes the book difficult to read and illegible in some parts since all of the dialogues were written in accented Persian, sometimes with no verb that made it incomprehensible.

The book cover design is another thing that makes it interesting, a gun many flowers on it, which completely matches with the context.