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IAEA Chief Visits Iran as Vienna Talks Reach Critical Point

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Tehran, Yerevan explore avenues of economic co-op

TEHRAN – Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi-Amin, who has traveled to Armenia on top of a delegation, met with Armenian Economy Minister Vahan Kerobyan on Thursday to discuss mutual areas for economic cooperation.

During this meeting, the two sides explored various issues and talked about ways of expanding trade relations between the two countries, the Industry Ministry's news portal Shata reported.

Speaking in the meeting, Fatemi-Amin pointed to the close cultural and political relations between the two countries and said economic relations should also be developed

in line with cultural and political ties.

"Improving economic relations is a joint task that both sides must work to achieve," Fatemi-Amin said, adding: "The economies of Iran and Armenia are complementary and we have a lot of common areas with great capacities to cooperate on."

"Armenia as a member state of the Eurasian Economic Union and a country neighboring Iran is of great significance. We can export technologies in many industrial sectors to Armenia and import our required industrial know-how from the country," said the Iranian official.

He further underlined Iran's efforts for developing international trade corridors including the north-south corridor, saying: "Four main routes are defined in the north-south corridor, one of which passes through Armenia, and the strengthening of transit cooperation between the two countries should be done through this corridor."

The Iranian minister of Industry, Mining and Trade also mentioned the issues related to transportation and money transfer and noted that such issues have been resolved and last year the two sides successfully tried various methods, including barter trade. ▶ Page 4

Report NATO wants bloodshed in Ukraine to continue

It has become quite clear that NATO, particularly by the U.S. and Britain as two of its key members, has no desire for a peaceful settlement to the crisis unfolding in Ukraine.

The conflict could easily have been avoided in the first place as far back as early January this year when Russia provided several proposals to NATO and Washington on how to de-escalate the tensions by offering security guarantees.

Moscow has been calling for Ukraine, it's neighbor and former Soviet republic, to be a neutral country, neither pro-Russia nor a NATO member.

From the outside that sounds like a relatively reasonable and simple demand, considering the Americans promised Russia they would not take measures to offer former Soviet republics, Ukraine in particular, NATO membership, a move that effectively expands American-led military forces eastward towards Russia's border.

For decades critics have been warning against this move and against threatening Russia and the consequences that such measures can lead to.

The last American ambassador to the Soviet Union, Jack Matlock, speaks extensively about this. He says there was definitely assurances provided to the Russians about NATO expansion. Assurances and promises that America has broken and how Washington has a culture of cheating. ▶ Page 5

Report Wildlife population shrinking towards extinction

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – The entire populations of wildlife species are shrinking and the remaining populations will go extinct in the near future unless humans change their practices.

On December 20, 2013, at its 68th session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed March 3 – the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973 – as UN World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants.

World Wildlife Day has now become the most important global annual event dedicated to wildlife, which will be celebrated in 2022 under the theme "recovering key species for ecosystem restoration", to draw attention to the conservation status of some of the most critically endangered species of wild fauna and flora, and to drive discussions towards imagining and implementing solutions to conserve them.

According to data from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, over 8,400 species of wild fauna and flora are critically endangered, while close to 30,000 more are understood to be endangered or vulnerable. Based on these estimates, it is suggested that over a million species are threatened with extinction. ▶ Page 7

Interview Basketball expert Kiani optimistic on Davari's plans

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN – Iranian basketball expert, Ghasem Kiani, believes that the election of Javad Davari as the head of the Iran basketball federation will help the country's basketball in the future.

On Monday, Davari was elected as president of the Iran basketball federation for a four-year term till 2026. He replaced Ramin Tabatabaei in the position.

Davari, 38, was a professional basketball player and the point guard of the Iranian national basketball team in the 2008 Olympic Games.

"Good for basketball," said Kiani in his interview with Tehran Times. "In every aspect, Davari is suitable for the presidency of the basketball federation."

"Davari, as a player, was one of the best of the golden generation of Iranian basketball. He was a hardworking and smart player who played the role of leader in his teams in the best way possible. He is educated and familiar with the principle of management as we3ll," Kiani added. ▶ Page 3

In memory of recently-deceased Iranologist; Roger Mervyn Savory

TEHRAN – Roger Mervyn Savory (27 January 1925 – 17 February 2022) was a British-born Professor Emeritus at the University of Toronto who was an Iranologist and specialist on the Safavids.

His plentiful writings on Safavid political, military history, administration, bureaucracy, and diplomacy translated into several languages have had a great impact in understanding this period.

According to an article authored by Iranian researcher Ali Salarishadi, as long as the researchers of the Safavid history are concerned, the name of Roger Mervyn Savory is a historian whose name is well known and familiar to all. The Safavid dynasty was one of the most significant ruling dynasties of the country, often considered the beginning of modern Iranian history.

Savory is an author whose name has repeatedly been a leader in the majority of works full of replicas in Safavid history. His career has led Safavids studies, especially in Iran, under his control, and the Iranian and Orientalism researchers in this field repeatedly cite him.

Furthermore, Savory's information and views on the history of the Safavids are one-sided, influenced by the official Safavid sources, and are supposedly exaggerated.

Beirut UNESCO Palace hosts Iran's National Orchestra performance

TEHRAN – Iran's National Orchestra gave a performance as part of an Iranian cultural festival on Wednesday night at the Conference Hall of the UNESCO Palace in Beirut.

The concert under the baton of Bardia Kiaras with vocalist Arash Kamangar was performed in two sections, the first of which featured "In Praise of Morning", "Khusheh

Chin", "Fascinating Spring", "The Message" and "Kind-Religion Soil".

The concert then went on with "Restless for Balqis" composed by Iranian musician Fardin Khalatbari with lyrics from Ahura Iman in sympathy with Lebanon on the disastrous blast in Beirut in 2020. ▶ Page 8

Iran condemns deadly terrorist attack in Pakistan

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Friday strongly condemned a terrorist attack on a mosque in the Risaldar Alley in Peshawar, Pakistan, saying it is aimed at dividing Muslims.

Khatibzadeh also expressed condolences to the bereaved families and wished a speedy recovery for the injured.

On Friday, a suicide bombing inside a Shia mosque rocked Peshawar's Kocha Risaldar neighborhood, with medical officials reporting that at least 30 bodies were transported to the Lady Reading Hospital.

According to an official from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, at least 80 people were harmed, as reported by the Pakistani media outlet, Dawn.

Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif, spokesman for KP province, said at least 30 persons were killed in the incident, which he described as a suicide attack. He went on to say that the attack was carried out by two terrorists.

Mohammad Ijaz Khan, the Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) of Peshawar, stated one police officer was killed, while Asim Khan, the media manager of Lady Reading, said 30 bodies had been brought to the hospital so far. ▶ Page 2

Interview Many Americans still cling to Trump as their savior: anthropologist

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Despite his hypocrisy, Donald Trump is regarded as a savior by many Americans, an associate professor of anthropology says.

"Donald Trump took on the role of 'populist' and became regarded as the 'voice of the people' – the disenfranchised, the victims of economic change brought about without their consent," Phillips Stevens Jr. from the State University of New York at Buffalo tells the Tehran Times.

"Most people in America recognize that Trumpism – selfish, arrogant, and deceitful – is not the ideal version of Americanism. But many Americans still cling to Donald Trump as their savior, and, although popular acceptance of this aberrant political ideology is declining, its future is uncertain."

Following is the text of the interview:

The American society is suffering from problems such as racism, xenophobia, violence, etc. However, some politicians add fuel to these problems. How do you see the future of democracy and freedom in the U.S. in light of such socio-cultural challenges?

America has undergone great change over the past 5 years, since 2016. The two strongest agents of change have been Trumpism and the COVID-19 pandemic. America exemplifies the inherent weaknesses of liberal democracy, of the sort shared by smaller and less complex democracies elsewhere in the world. Liberal governments, liberal values, loose socio-cultural restrictions, ▶ Page 5



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Treated wild birds released into nature

A number of wild birds have been released back into their natural habitat after being treated at a resort in the northwestern city of Tabriz on Thursday.

Hosting over 600 species of birds, Iran is a climatically rich country, so it is said that the number of bird species in Iran is higher than in the whole of Europe.

A wide range of wetlands is the reason behind migratory birds choosing Iran for an annual wintering habitat, as a large number of birds fly a thousand miles each year to benefit from this rich climate.

Iran, a major oil and natural gas supplier, can help stabilize volatile market: Atlantic Council

TEHRAN - As fuel prices skyrocket following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Iran as another major supplier of oil and natural gas is poised to play an important role, the Atlantic Council said in a commentary on March 3.

Before Donald Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal and the imposition of sanctions on Iran's oil exports, Iran produced 3.8 million barrels of oil per day. Afterwards, this dropped as low as 1.9 million barrels and currently it is about 2.4 million barrels. It will take time for the country's production to return to pre-sanction levels due to this significant drop as well as low levels of investment in recent years. However, Iran's oil and gas condensate reserves in tankers, as well as onshore oil storage facilities, will help Iran accelerate its exports which currently total more than 1 million barrels per day. Some sources predict that with the lifting of the sanctions, Iran could ship an additional 500,000 barrels of oil per day to international markets from April to May, and by the end of this year this figure could reach an additional 1.3 million barrels per day.

All of this assumes that current talks in Vienna on reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) are successful. Without sanctions relief, any new disruptions in U.S. supplies could boost oil prices beyond \$100 a barrel to as high as \$150. As reported by GasBuddy, the United States is already struggling to cope with its highest level of inflation in four decades. The price of gasoline has risen about \$4 a gallon in many parts of the country since the Ukraine crisis began.

Iran has said that it is ready to increase its oil exports significantly if sanctions imposed by the Trump administration are lifted, but it will take time to restore relationships with customers in Europe and Asia. In February, officials from the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) traveled to Seoul, the capital of South Korea, to hold talks with several refineries on the prospects for resuming oil deliveries.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has increased its forecast for demand growth in 2022, stating that global demand for oil will increase by 3.2 million barrels per day this year to a record 100.6 million barrels per day. These forecasts show that there is a market for more oil and that this is an opportunity for producers to increase oil sales and export revenues.

Iran will clearly be a major beneficiary of this increase if it can resolve its problems

Iran FM discusses Vienna talks, Ukraine crisis with Irish counterpart

TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held phone talks on Thursday night with his Irish counterpart, Simon Coveney.

The two foreign ministers discussed bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues, including the Ukraine crisis and the Vienna talks.

Referring to the Irish foreign minister's visit to Tehran last month and his meeting with Coveney on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, Amir Abdollahian expressed hope that Iran-Ireland cooperation will increase effectively and that economic and trade relations will be enhanced more than ever before through drawing up a roadmap.

The top Irish diplomat also spoke of the Vienna talks, saying all parties are willing to take the final step, and efforts are being made to achieve maximum confidence and trust to reach a deal.

Coveney called the issue of economic guarantees important for Iran and said, "As a facilitator of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, we have redoubled our efforts and Ireland for its part can play its reassuring role."

Resolution 2231 endorsed the nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA, in July 2015.

with the United States over a return to the JCPOA. Iran is asking the U.S. government to remain committed to the deal in the event of a change of administration in Washington. But this is something that President Joe Biden, or any other U.S. leader, cannot promise. Tehran must decide whether it is worthwhile to reach an agreement that could last only three years.

After the JCPOA went into implementation in 2016, Iran increased its oil production much faster than expected. Most analysts had predicted that Iran would increase its production by 500,000 barrels per day within a year after the lifting of sanctions, but in fact Iran reached this figure in less than four months, and by the end of the year had increased production by nearly one million barrels.

After sanctions were reimposed following the US withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, Iran stored oil in tankers. It is estimated that Iran has stored more than 85 million barrels of oil and gas condensate at sea. These supplies can be exported rapidly if sanctions are lifted.

The elimination of important oil exporting countries from the market has major ripple effects. Other producers often raise prices and pursue their own interests. Even if Iran returns to the market, not all problems of oil and gas will be solved, but an Iranian return can have a major psychological impact in helping the oil market move towards equilibrium. There is also the possibility that Iran can play a role in replacing Russian gas exports to Europe.

To fully benefit from market shortages, Iran will also need investment. In September 2021, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji said that the Iranian oil industry needed \$160 billion in investment to reach its potential. At the current time, Iran has not played a major role in the global market for natural gas. It has even reduced gas exports to Turkey and Iraq due to a shortage of natural gas for domestic needs and lack of investment in energy infrastructure.

Iran has survived sanctions by selling oil to China in the grey market. Other producers, especially Russia and Saudi Arabia, want Iran's return to the market to be gradual, but Tehran wants to regain market share as soon as possible. Iran will face many challenges in the energy market in the coming months, and without active energy diplomacy and a realistic foreign policy, even the Ukraine crisis will not be sufficient to allow Iran to play an important role.

Amir Abdollahian says war is not solution to Ukraine crisis

Elsewhere in the conversation, Amir Abdollahian said, "War is not the solution to the crisis in Ukraine and no other crisis."

He however noted that the root cause of the crisis and efforts by NATO to spread militarism in the region should not be overlooked.

In this regard, the top Iranian diplomat referred to the experience of the 20-year presence of the United States and NATO in Afghanistan.

He said, "Also, in the case of the Yemeni crisis, the war should be stopped and a political solution should be the first priority." Amir Abdollahian added that the recent Security Council resolution on Yemen does not take into account the realities in this country and will not help end the war against it.

The Irish foreign minister also said that Dublin did not support the resolution on Yemen and is seeking dialogue in the country.

"We believe that the United Nations should help the negotiation process to resolve the crisis in countries where we are witnessing a humanitarian catastrophe," Coveney noted.

The foreign ministers of Iran and Ireland also stressed the need to continue consultations in efforts to develop bilateral relations and resolving regional and international issues.

TEHRAN - "We believe that the current text of the resolution before the General Assembly lacks impartiality and realistic mechanisms for resolving the crisis through peaceful means.

Furthermore, not all member states of the United Nations were given the opportunity to engage in negotiations on the text of the resolution," Takht Ravanchi said on Wednesday.

"The current text of the resolution before the General Assembly lacks impartiality and realistic mechanisms, there was not the equal opportunity to engage in opportunity for all members," he said.

He stated that Iran is deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and reaffirmed Tehran's principled stance on the need for a peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, as well as for all parties to fully respect the well-established provisions of the UN Charter and international humanitarian law.

"The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine is of great importance for Iran," he said, adding that "sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states must be fully respected."

"We note that the current complexities in the fragile region of Eastern Europe have been exacerbated by the provocative actions and decisions of the U.S. and NATO," he said, emphasizing the need to address the

Iran's UN envoy: Resolution against Russia not impartial



underlying causes of such crises in order to find long-term and permanent solutions.

"The security concerns of Russia must be respected," he added.

"The provocative actions and decisions of the U.S. and NATO makes the current situation in region of Eastern Europe more complex."

Takht Ravanchi reiterated Iran's opposition to all conflicts and damage perpetrated on civilian lives and infrastructures.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran calls for urgent cessation of hostilities and de-escalation of tensions in the current conflict. In this regard, Iran underlines the essentiality of dialogue to address issues of concerns to all sides leading to long-lasting results," Takht Ravanchi added.

He encouraged the UN to avoid using double standards, especially when it comes to maintaining international peace and security, stating, "It is unfortunate to note that the UN,

in particular the Security Council, has at times neglected this principle which has undermined its credibility. A case in point is the Security Council's handling of the conflict in Yemen."

Takht Ravanchi went on to say that the Iranian government will continue to advocate for a "comprehensive, peaceful, and sustained" resolution to the current conflict "including an immediate ceasefire and start of the dialogue as well as provision of humanitarian assistance to the people in need."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran calls for urgent cessation of hostilities and de-escalation of tensions in the current conflict. In this regard, Iran underlines the essentiality of dialogue to address issues of concerns to all sides leading to long-lasting results," Takht Ravanchi added.

On Wednesday, the United Nations General Assembly approved an anti-Russian resolution sponsored by the United States and Albania. An earlier resolution by UN Security Council was rejected by Russia, a permanent member of the council.

The resolution was approved by the Assembly with 141 votes in favor, five votes against, and 35 abstentions.

It "deplores" Russia's continued military action in Ukraine and demands that Moscow cease fighting and withdraw its soldiers.

IAEA's Grossi to visit Iran in possible boost to JCPOA

TEHRAN - The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed on Thursday that its chief Rafael Mariano Grossi will visit Tehran on Saturday.

The visit has raised the prospect of progress on one of the last issues blocking a revival of the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The visit by the UN nuclear watchdog's director general was reported overnight by the Nournews news agency affiliated with Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) as negotiators in Vienna seek to restore U.S. and Iranian compliance with the deal.

"Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi will travel to Tehran for meetings with senior Iranian officials on Saturday. They will discuss outstanding safeguards issues with a view to address(ing) them," the IAEA said in a

statement.

Tehran wants the issue of uranium traces found at several old but undeclared sites in Iran to be closed even though Western powers say that is a separate issue to the deal, which the IAEA is not a party to, several officials have told Reuters.

"If Grossi's trip could help the agency and Tehran to reach a roadmap to resolve existing safeguard issues, it can help revival of the nuclear deal in Vienna," Nournews said in its report, without citing a source.

The report of Grossi's trip coincides with the final stages of negotiators trying to salvage the 2015 deal between six world powers and Iran that imposed restrictions on Tehran's nuclear activities in exchange for the lifting of sanctions.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the pact in 2018 and

reimposed tough economic sanctions. That led Iran to breach many of the deal's restrictions in retaliatory measures. Iran lifted restrictions on its nuclear activities one year after the U.S. left the deal and the remaining members to the agreement, especially the Europeans, failed to compensate Iran for the sanctions.

Iran's move was in accordance with paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which has provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.

Three Iranian officials close to the talks said a wide array of sanctions, including those keeping Iran from exporting its oil and those on Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Ebrahim Raisi, were to be removed if the 2015 pact was revived.

Expert: U.S. mafia regime is responsible for Ukraine crisis

TEHRAN — An expert on America said on Friday that the main concern of a politician in the U.S. is to gain more money and personal interests and this is due to the influence of money on the American political system.

Fouad Izadi made the comments in an interview with IRNA in regard to the statements by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on March 1 who described the United States as mafia regime.

Noting that mafia regime means that those who have no moral or obligatory principles are harming both their own country and others for their own self-interest, and this shows the role of money in the American political system as researched by American political scientists.

"In fact, there is a lot of research and statistics that show that in the U.S. election, the winner is the one who spends more than his opponent," he added.

Izadi, a professor at the University of Tehran, went on to say that it is mafia what bring

to power governments in the United States.

"In the U.S., a person who comes to power and is elected to Congress receives such communications and financial aid for personal gain, and acts in line with the goals of those who have donated money. Thus, this government becomes a mafia government that is ready to launch coups, crimes and killings in order to achieve its goals, such as the coup in Ukraine in 2014, which is still influenced by the result of that coup."

He added that the Americans overthrew the government elected by the people of Ukraine and finally, through a velvet revolution, brought their "puppet government" to power.

"In November 2013, the popularly elected government of Ukraine had a choice between a trade-economic package proposed by the Europeans and a trade-economic package proposed by the Russians, and then government of Ukraine chose the Russian package which was suitable for their national



interests," Izadi remarked.

The expert on U.S. affairs continued by saying that the choosing of the Russian package is why the Americans went to undermine the rule of law and staged a coup with the NGOs they established in Ukraine, and then the government that came to power was influenced by the extreme right, many of whom were neo-Nazis.

"So they began to put pressure on the Russian minority, which led to a civil war that killed 14,000 people, and according to UN figures, 80 percent of those 14,000 killed were Russians," he remarked.

Since after the coup the government in Ukraine was pro-Western they knew that NATO membership was not in

their interest, nevertheless, since they were puppets of the United States, they sought NATO membership, which caused such a crisis in Ukraine, and this shows how Americans create crisis.

The academic added, "In 2008, George W. Bush Jr. discussed Ukraine's membership in NATO for the first time, although according to NATO rules, a country with an internal conflict cannot join NATO. The Ukrainian government could have easily said that NATO membership was not on the agenda at the moment, but it did not put pressure on the United States because there was going to be a crisis in Ukraine that the Americans would benefit from, so the problem in Ukraine today is mainly sponsored by the United States."

He emphasized that the Western-minded parties around the world create problems for countries that should be learned as a lesson.

"The Westerners are examples of misery, war and creating problems for countries," he concluded.

Iran condemns deadly terrorist attack in Pakistan

From page 1 ▶ There was no quick claim of responsibility from a group.

According to witnesses, at least 150 worshippers were inside the mosque at the time of the explosion.

Similar attacks have occurred in Peshawar, which is located close to the border with

neighboring Afghanistan and is 190 kilometers (120 miles) west of the capital Islamabad.

A witness, Shayan Haider told Al Jazeera that he was preparing to enter the mosque when the huge explosion pushed him to the street.

"When I opened my eyes, there was dust and

bodies all everywhere," he added.

Imran Khan, Pakistan's Prime Minister, denounced the bombing.

Pakistan has seen an uptick in violence in recent months. Dozens of military soldiers have been murdered in a series of attacks on army outposts along Afghanistan's border.

Grossi visits Iran as Vienna talks reach critical point

TEHRAN – Rafael Grossi, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), is expected to pay a visit to Tehran on Saturday amid reports of an imminent deal in Vienna, where Iran and world powers are putting the final touches on how to revive a 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The visit of the chief of the United Nations nuclear watchdog is likely to remove the remaining obstacle to reaching a deal in Vienna.

Grossi was to head to Tehran late on Friday and have a meeting with Mohammad Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), on the following day.

The visit comes against a backdrop of a highly charged atmosphere in Vienna. The talks there have been moving ahead slowly in the last few weeks. Despite significant progress, the negotiating parties have been unable to conclude and announce a deal. And over the past few days, there have been a lot of projections that the deal could be announced at any moment.

The anticipations about the deal were mainly propagated by Western media, which Iran advised to avoid disseminating “premature good news.”

“Vienna Talks still continue.



Premature good news does not substitute good agreement,” said Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Twitter.

Khatibzadeh reiterated the position Iranian officials have been adopting over the course of the talks is that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed upon.

“Nobody can say the deal is done, until all the outstanding remaining issues are resolved. Extra efforts needed. Everybody is now focused on the final critical steps,” the spokesman added.

There are a number of “outstanding” issues in the talks that need to be addressed if a deal is to be reached. One such issue is IAEA’s allegations about Iran’s past nuclear activities. Iran has said the allegations are politically

motivated and thus should be ended before a deal is made in Vienna.

The visit of Grossi is an important opportunity for Iran and the IAEA to reach a sort of agreement on safeguards issues, among other things.

Nour News, a website close to Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, said the aim of Grossi’s visit is probably to reach a “joint roadmap” for resolving safeguards issues that are raised between Iran and the IAEA. The website said these issues have been one of the most important reasons why Vienna talks are progressing slowly.

But things are beginning to fall into place for agreement in Vienna given the positive trend of cooperation between Iran and the

IAEA. According to Nour News, over the past ten days, there have been “very difficult and challenging” negotiations between Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog. And in recent days, these negotiations facilitated the continuation of understandings between the two sides.

These understandings are expected to be completed during Grossi’s visit. If Grossi succeeds in drawing up a joint roadmap for resolving the remaining safeguards issues, Nour News said, one can hope that one of the important obstacles to reaching an agreement in Vienna would be removed.

As things stand, deal in Vienna is in the cards. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has said his country is ready for finalizing a good and immediate deal. On the other side, the European Union has said that Iran’s demands at the talks have been met.

“We believe that Iran’s demands have been mostly met in the future agreement,” EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told the Iranian foreign minister in a phone conversation on Friday.

Therefore, the visit of Grossi will highly likely facilitate the deal in Vienna in terms of removing the remaining issues between Iran and the IAEA which have prevented the deal so far.

SPORTS

Basketball expert Kiani optimistic on Davari’s plans

From Page 1 ▶ Kiani, the former coach of Iran’s youth basketball team, criticized the former president of the basketball federation.

“Mr. Tabatabaei was not the best choice for the basketball federation. In the previous editions of the basketball federation’s presidential elections, the those who deserved to be elected as president, failed to participate in the elections.

“The basketball community expected more from him, but he couldn’t fulfill his promises. His biggest problem was his choices in various managerial positions in the federation. Those who were chosen could not help the federation in a positive way.

“But Davari, since the beginning of his presidency, with the choices he has made, has proven that he can contribute to the development of basketball.

“The most crucial point is that special attention should be paid to training courses for coaches, referees, women, and lower age groups. Also, strengthening the technical staff of the senior national team, which Davari himself talked about, is a very proper and necessary decision for Iranian basketball,” Kiani concluded.

Iran are scheduled to meet Kuwait on Sunday. The tournament is being played in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from 3 to 8 March 2022.

After the tournament was cancelled the last two years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all teams stayed put in their divisions.

Tehran to host Asian Beach Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Tehran, capital of Iran, was chosen to host the 8th Asian Men’s Beach Handball Championship.

The competition will be held from March 22 to 31.

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

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

Esteghlal eye Brazilian defender Raphael Silva

TEHRAN – Brazilian defender Raphael Silva da Arruda entered Tehran, capital of Iran on Friday to finalize his contract with Esteghlal football team.

The 29-year-old player had most recently played in Saudi Arabian club Al-Faisaly.

Silva started his playing career in his homeland club Rio Preto in 2010.

Esteghlal, who are looking to win Iran league title after nine years, are going to sign Silva as one of replacements for Mohammad Hossein Moradmamand and Siavash Yazdani, who were forced to leave the team due to military service.

2022 ACL (West) Group Stage centralized in S. Arabia

TEHRAN – The AFC Champions League 2022 (West) Group Stage centralized matches will be held in Saudi Arabia from April 7 to 27.

Four-time Continental club champions Al Hilal SFC will begin their title defense in the Saudi Arabian capital, Riyadh, where the 17-time Saudi Pro League winner will face Group A contenders Tajikistan’s FC Istiklol, Qatar’s Al Rayyan SC as well as the winners of the Playoff Stage match between Sharjah from the United Arab Emirates and Iraqi side Al Zawraa Club.

Similarly, Riyadh will also be the host city for the matches in Group B, featuring this year’s debutant Mumbai City from India, UAE’s Al Jazira, Saudi Arabia’s Al Shabab and three-time AFC Cup winner Air Force Club of Iraq.

Group C, which will be headlined by Iranian side Foolad FC and 2015 finalists Shabab Al-Ahli Dubai, Qatar’s Al Gharafa and Ahal FC of Turkmenistan – the first ever Turkmen representative in the AFC Champions League Group Stage – will be held in Jeddah.

Meanwhile, just northwest of Riyadh, Buraidah will provide the stage for Group D, which includes Iran’s Sepahan FC, who reached the final of the 2007 edition, Qatar’s Al-Duhail SC, two-time Semi-finalists Pakhtakor of Uzbekistan and the winners of the Playoff Stage tie between Al Taawoun FC from Saudi Arabia and Syrian side Al Jaish.

The single round Knockout Stage matches for the AFC Champions League 2022 (West) will be held from February 3 to 10, 2023, with the Round of 16 scheduled for February 3 and 4, before the Quarter-finals are held on February 7 and the Semi-finals taking place on February 10, with the coveted Final to be staged over two legs on February 19 and 26, 2023.

Iran warns of humanitarian calamity in Afghanistan

TEHRAN – Zahra Ershadi, deputy permanent representative of Iran to the UN, has said that Afghanistan still faces the possibility of a humanitarian calamity.

The Iranian diplomat made the remarks in a statement to the Security Council of the United Nations which held a meeting on the situation in Afghanistan.

“We take note of the Secretary-General’s recent report on the situation in Afghanistan, and its implications for international peace and security. This report has provided a good update on the UN’s activities in Afghanistan, including its humanitarian efforts. According to the report, the situation in Afghanistan has remained challenging and Afghanistan is grappling with a rising humanitarian crisis, a major economic downturn, the crippling banking and financial systems, and the challenges related to the establishment of an inclusive government. The risks of a humanitarian calamity remain. More than 20 million people, or half of the population, are still in critical need of assistance, and immediate action is required to avoid the economic collapse of the country,” Ershadi told the UN body.

She added, “We are deeply concerned about the potentially disastrous ramifications of this situation for the region’s security and stability, particularly those of neighboring countries. If the situation is not addressed effectively, the country’s socioeconomic collapse is possible, resulting in widespread destitution and a large influx of migrants into neighboring countries who are already overburdened with hosting millions of refugees. We, once again, urge the international community, particularly donor countries, to meet their responsibilities to



Afghanistan’s neighbors in order to assist refugees and displaced persons.”

Ershadi expressed Iran’s support for the United Nations’ efforts to meet Afghanistan’s expanding humanitarian needs.

She stated, “As we have emphasized on several occasions, the frozen assets of Afghanistan belong to the Afghan people and their release, which is critical for restoring the Afghan economy and saving lives, should not be politicized or conditional in any manner.”

The Iranian diplomat also highlighted Iran’s concerns on terrorist activities in neighboring Afghanistan.

Ershadi said, “Iran remains deeply concerned about terrorist activities in Afghanistan. According to the SG’s report, terrorism is still a major challenge in Afghanistan. Attacks claimed or ascribed to ISIL-KP have intensified and spread outside its previously focused locations in Kabul and eastern Afghanistan. The United Nations has recorded 152 attacks by the group in 16 provinces between 19 August and 31 December 2021, compared to 20 attacks in five provinces during the same period in the previous year.”

She added, “This trend underlines the

international community’s continued demand that the Taliban must commit to fighting terrorism and ensure that Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for terrorist groups like Daesh and Al-Qaida that have been responsible for heinous acts of terror, not only in Afghanistan, but throughout the region and beyond.”

Ershadi pointed out, “Of the same importance, the international community should continue to emphasize the need for establishing an inclusive and representative government in Afghanistan. We expect the Taliban to take serious steps to ensure the government’s true ethnic and political inclusivity. To that end, Iran continues to engage with all parties in Afghanistan, including the Taliban, to address different challenges facing that country. The Taliban needs to be responsive to the demand for the establishment of an inclusive government that truly represents Afghanistan’s multi-ethnic society.”

She stated, “The Taliban should also heed the international community’s call for the protection of human rights, particularly the rights of women and minorities. We continue to consult with Afghanistan’s neighbors, as well as regional and international partners, including the United Nations, in order to assist Afghanistan in achieving long-term peace, security, and stability.”

Ershadi concluded, “And finally, we stress UNAMA’s vital role in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan, and support the extension of its mandate. We consider that the situation requires a strong UNAMA mandate in order to help the people of Afghanistan and maintain peace and security in that country.”

Western rush in Vienna won’t prompt Iran to cross red lines: FM

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian underlined on Friday that Tehran wants a good and immediate deal in Vienna but Western rush for a deal won’t cause it to cross its red lines.

Amir Abdollahian made the remarks in a telephone conversation with European Union’s chief diplomat Josep Borrell.

During the phone talks, Borrell said that the demands Iran had at Vienna talks have been mostly incorporated in the deal being hammered out in the Austrian capital.

Amir Abdollahian and Borrell

discussed the Vienna talks that aim to get anti-Iran sanctions lifted.

“We believe that Iran’s demands have been mostly met in the future agreement,” Borrell said.

Borrell added that he, as the coordinator of the talks between Iran and the P4+1 group, would like to declare that the negotiations are making progress and headed for a final deal.

Amir Abdollahian also thanked the high coordinator of the EU in the Vienna talks. He said Iran is ready for finalizing a good and immediate deal.

Amir Abdollahian however noted that the rush on the part

of the Western side will not cause Iran to cross its red lines, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

The Iranian foreign minister also welcomed a finalization of the agreement as soon as possible. He added that the prerequisite for the presence of foreign ministers and the announcement of a final deal is contingent upon respecting the red lines of Iran, including effective economic guarantees.

Amir Abdollahian noted that top Iranian negotiator Ali Bagheri and senior experts of the Islamic Republic of Iran will remain in Vienna for active consultations with all delegations and that



the Iranian negotiating team will seriously continue efforts to reach a final and good agreement.

The top Iranian diplomat also said he is ready to fly to Vienna once the Western parties accept the remaining red lines declared by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran football’s assembly to be held on May 10

TEHRAN – Extraordinary assembly of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) will be held on May 10.

Ehsan Osouli, member of FFIRI’s board of directors, said new president of the football federation will be elected in the assembly.

Shahaboddin Azizi Khadem was temporarily removed from the presidency of the football federation on February 17.

Mirsahd Majedi was appointed as interim head of the federation until an extraordinary assembly is held in May. The board of directors had earlier announced Mehrdad Seraji as the interim president but changed their decision.

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

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

2022 WCQ: Iran to play Lebanon in Mashhad

TEHRAN – Iran national football team will host Lebanon in Mashhad in the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifier.

The match has been scheduled for Mar. 29 and the Iranian football federation has announced that they will host the Lebanese team in Mashhad’s Imam Reza Stadium.

Iran lead Group A with 22 points.

Dragan Skocic’s men have already booked their place in the 2022 FIFA World Cup as the first Asian team. Iran earned a late 2-1 win over Lebanon in Sidon on Nov. 11.

Iran will participate in the FIFA World Cup for the sixth time.

The Persians booked their place in the 1978 FIFA World Cup for the first time.

Iran waited 20 years to make it happen once again when they advanced to the 1998 FIFA World Cup in France. Iran advanced to the FIFA World Cup for the third time in 2006 in Germany.

The ‘Persian Leopards’ booked back-to-back place in 2014 and 2018 and sealed their berth for the time in a row in late January with a win over Iraq.

Iran fall short against Kyrgyzstan at IIHF World Championship Division IV

TEHRAN – Iran suffered a 13-1 loss against Kyrgyzstan in the 2022 IIHF World Championship Division IV.

Tehran, Yerevan explore avenues of economic co-op



Industry Minister Reza Fatemi-Amin (R) and Armenian Economy Minister Vahan Kerobyan

From page 1 ► Fatemi-Amin, further put Iran's total foreign trade in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20) at about \$100 billion, saying that over 80 percent of the mentioned figure is related to non-oil trade which has been realized through similar methods such as barter trade.

"We can swap the products of Iran and Armenia with those of other Arab countries and the export of live cattle and meat can also be done with this method," the minister said.

Iran's exports to Armenia up 20%

Later, on Thursday evening, in an interview with the national TV Fatemi-Amin note that the goal for his visit to the neighboring country has been to strengthen the economic ties between the two countries via joint investments.

"This visit is focused on deepening ties between Iran and Armenia via joint ventures," Fatemi-Amin said.

He further noted that the expansion of the country's foreign trade is one of the government's major priorities.

The official put the value of Iran's exports to Armenia at \$500 million in the current Iranian calendar year and said the exports to Armenia have increased by 20 percent compared to the figure for the previous year.

TSE's main index drops 7,000 points in a week

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 7,000 points (less than one percent) to 1.281 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

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

The government has applied several new changes in the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21) which according to experts and analysts will ensure the stock market's stability and growth in the coming years.

Reducing taxes on production units active in the stock market, strengthening the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund, eliminating subsidized foreign currency allocations, and stabilizing the ownership interest of the mines are some of the measures considered in the budget bill to support the capital market.

Allocating a 20-percent tax on legal entities is considered in next year's budget

NITC plays significant role in boosting Iran's oil export

TEHRAN- Iran's Oil Minister Javad Oji praised the performance of National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) Head Hossein Shiva in the cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Iran's Maritime News Agency (MANA) published on Friday.

The minister admired the actions and performance of the NITC in supporting and helping to continue the export of oil and oil products.

The performance of National Iranian Tanker Company and round-the-clock efforts of the sailors of the company's fleet in transporting oil and oil products have been in the center of attention of the country's authorities these days, as

Iranian and Armenian businessmen hold B2B meetings

During the visit of the Iranian delegation to Armenia, several specialized meetings were also held between the businessmen of the two countries and the representatives of the two sides' private sectors held B2B meetings to exchange ideas and learn about potential areas for mutual cooperation.

According to Iranian Commercial Attaché to Yerevan Akbar Godari, such meetings between the businessmen of the two countries could pave the way for the expansion of trade relations between Iran and Armenia in the future.

Godari noted that one of the main reasons for the unsatisfactory levels of economic relations between the two neighbors is the lack of knowledge and acquaintance between the two countries' traders.

The official noted that during a series of events organized by Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industries, the representatives of the two sides' companies active in various areas including medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, knowledge and technology, and home appliances have held meetings and discussed areas of common interest.

Fatemi-Amin visited Armenia on top of a high-ranking delegation on Thursday and Friday mainly to follow up on the implementation of economic agreements previously reached between the two sides.

The minister was accompanied by Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman-Pak and a handful of officials from his ministry during this visit.

Trade relations between Iran and Armenia have dramatically expanded after Iran signed a Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in October 2019.

The Republic of Armenia is a landlocked country located in northwestern Iran. The two countries share a 44 km border.

bill which is less than the previous years. Reducing the taxes imposed on production units will make them more profitable and therefore their performance in the stock market will improve.

Also, the direct taxes collected from production units is expected to be injected into the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund in order to be used to improve and develop the market.

Based on the next year's budget bill, no subsidized foreign currency will be allocated to special entities to import certain goods. Experts and analysts believe that this decision is going to have a very positive impact on the stock market since it will prevent rent and unrealistic pricing.

The draft of the national budget bill also indicates that the government will be less reliant on the stock market to compensate deficits and fund various development projects, which is another positive aspect of the mentioned bill since the stock market will be less affected by the politics and will follow a normal trend created by supply and demand.

it was appreciated by the oil minister and also welcomed by other members of the cabinet.

Meanwhile, in an interview conducted by IRNA last month, the minister of cooperatives, labor and social welfare had said the shipments of crude oil and oil products by the fleet of National Iranian Tanker Company have increased significantly over the past few months.

Hojatollah Abdolmaleki praised the performance of NITC head and noted that transportation and export of crude oil and petroleum products by the company's fleet have witnessed a serious leap in the mentioned period.

ECO secretary-general visits Iran's southern Shahid Rajaei port

TEHRAN - Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Khosro Nazeri, along with some of the members of the organization's Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR), visited Iran's Shahid Rajaei Port in southern Hormozgan Province on Thursday, the portal of Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) reported.

As reported, the mentioned visit, as well as a specialized meeting between Hormozgan Province's private sector representatives and the CPR members, was organized by Bandar Abbas Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture.

During their visit to Shahid Rajaei Port, Nazeri and his companions became acquainted with the port's latest achievements and developments in various areas and were informed about the latest operational status of the largest commercial port in the country.

As the country's largest and most advanced commercial port, Shahid Rajaei accounts for more than 57 percent of Iran's total annual commodity transportation.

During this visit, Head of Hormozgan Province Ports and Maritime Department Alireza Mohammadi Karaji-Ran, who



ECO Secretary-General Khosro Nazeri (2nd R) visits Iran's southern Shahid Rajaei Port

was also accompanying the ECO delegation, introduced the capacities and advantages of investment in Hormozgan Province and Shahid Rajaei port, saying: "Hormozgan province has 2,200 kilometers of sea borders, with 14 small and large islands and 32 active ports, through which most of the country's commodity exchange is carried out."

"Due to being located at the center of the north-south corridor, Shahid Rajaei Port connects Asia to Europe, which is a very positive feature for foreign investment and the development of maritime activities," Karaji-Ran said.

Referring to the strategic role

of Hormozgan Province's ports, especially Shahid Rajaei, in the transit of goods through Iran, the official reminded that the port accounts for more than 55 percent of the total exports and imports and 80 percent of the transit carried out through the country's ports.

The official further referred to the ongoing development projects in this port, saying: "With the completion of the third phase of Shahid Rajaei Port's development project and its container terminal, which is one of the most important and largest port development projects in the country, vessels with capacities of over 18,400 TEU can

berth at this port.

***ECO pursues facilitation of trade among members

The ECO representatives further explored the potential areas for economic cooperation with Iran during a meeting with the members of Bandar Abbas Chamber of Commerce on Thursday.

Speaking in this gathering, Nazeri stressed that ECO seriously pursues the facilitation of trade among its members, IRNA reported.

According to the official, since the costs of trade in the ECO region are very high, the ECO Secretariat seeks to implement a free trade agreement (known as ECOTA) among the member countries, with the aim of facilitating trade by reducing tariffs and increasing intra-regional trade.

"Some studies have been carried out in this regard and the ninth meeting of the ECOTA Cooperation Council is scheduled to be held in 2022 and hopefully some progress will be made," Nazeri said.

CPR members also stressed the significance of trade fairs and exhibitions in ECO member states, noting that holding exhibitions by ECO member countries through their chambers of commerce is crucial for regional economic integration and trade expansion.

Iranian, Tajik energy ministers discuss co-op in various areas

TEHRAN - The energy ministers of Iran and Tajikistan, as the chairs of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, met in Tehran on Wednesday to discuss cooperation in various areas, the portal of Iranian Energy Ministry Paven reported.

Addressing the press after the meeting with Tajik Minister of Energy and Water Resources Daler Juma, Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian referred to the emphasis of the presidents of both countries on the development of relations, especially in the economic field.

"Reviewing the statistics of Iran's exports to Tajikistan in the current [Iranian calendar] year (ends on March 20) indicates that we are witnessing an acceptable growth in this field," Mehrabian said.

He noted that there are many areas for cooperation between the two countries, saying: "The presence of Iranian companies in some projects in Tajikistan and participation in the construction of hydropower plants is an example



Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian (R) and Tajik Minister of Energy and Water Resources Daler Juma speak to the press in Tehran on Wednesday

of such cooperation."

Referring to the positive cooperation between the two countries in various fields including transit of goods, Mehrabian expressed hope that with the potential and capacity that exists in the two countries, the two sides will be able to

enhance such cooperation.

Juma for his part, mentioned his country's abundant water resources and noted: "Tajikistan has good water reserves which can be used for electricity generation; this can create opportunities for cooperation between the two countries."

He further referred to a joint hydropower plant project which is being implemented by the two countries, saying: "This is the fourth and largest project in Tajikistan currently underway. The Republic of Tajikistan is very pleased to carry out the largest hydropower plant project with a production capacity of 3,700 megawatts (MW) with engineers from Iranian companies."

The official expressed his country's willingness for benefiting from Iran's technical and engineering services in the coming years.

"We plan to build more than 700 MW of power plants using various sources such as solar and wind power in the near future," he added.

Over 1m TV sets manufactured in 10 months

TEHRAN- As announced by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, 1.017 million TV sets have been manufactured in the country during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-January 20, 2022).

The ministry's data show that the TV manufacturing has fallen 0.1 percent in the 10-month period of this year, from that of the previous year.

Home appliances manufacturing has increased 78 percent to stand at 15 million sets in the past Iranian calendar year.

Rise in home appliances manufacturing and export has been also planned for the current year.

Manufacturing of home appliances in Iran has risen 9.7 percent during the first half of the present year.

Last year, the industry was able to achieve 78 percent growth despite the restrictions on the manufacturing sector, Deputy Industry, Mining and

Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki has said, adding, "While foreign brands left Iran, manufacturers were able to achieve this leap by relying on domestic capacities."

Back in April 2021, the official had said that considering the Iranian home appliance industry's infrastructure and capacities, the country will be able to become an exporter of such products in the near future because most of the raw materials needed by the mentioned sector are produced domestically.

Stating that the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry will definitely support domestic manufacturers and national brands, the official added: "Today we have the necessary manpower, knowledge, and infrastructure in the field, so there is no reason to look for foreign sources to meet the country's demands."

Over the past few years, the Iranian government has been following a new

strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has been one of the pioneers in this regard and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years so that this industry's production capacity increased by 24 percent in the past Iranian year, and by 10 percent in its preceding year.

In early April 2021, the secretary of the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran said, "We expected to produce about 12 million units, including small and large appliances in the previous year, however, the figure increased to about 15 million by the yearend, registering a 24 percent growth compared to the preceding year."

"We also had good growth in

after-sales service, product quality improvement, indigenization and exports, so that last year \$345 million worth of home appliance products were exported," Abbas Hashemi added.

Pointing to the advantages of home appliance industry in Iran, the official said: "Production of home appliances in the country is an advantage considering cheap energy and workforce and the country's geographical situation," he noted.

"This industry should be more supported," he stressed.

Regarding the return of foreign brands to the country, Hashemi said: "We should prevent the imports of foreign finished products into the country in order to support domestic producers."

He further noted that foreign companies can invest in this industry and co-produce their products with local manufacturers.

Zahedan-Chabahar railway to be completed by Mar. 2024

TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC) has said the Zahedan-Chabahar railway project, in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, is going to be completed by the end of Iranian calendar year 1402 (March 20, 2024).

According to Kheirollah Khademi, over 120 trillion rials (about \$463.3 million) is required to complete the project based on the mentioned schedule, IRIB reported.

The official put the current physical progress of the project at 57 percent, saying that 70 percent of the baseline for the railway has been already laid.

To accelerate the project, the track-laying operations of the mentioned railway are currently being conducted from both ends of the line that is from both Chabahar port and Zahedan.

The track-laying operations of the railroad from the Chabahar end were started in early November 2020 in a ceremony attended by former Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami, while from the Zahedan end the operations had been started in early July that year.

The 628-kilometer railway project which is aimed to connect Chabahar to Zahedan (the capital city of

southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province) is an important part of the north-south transportation corridor.

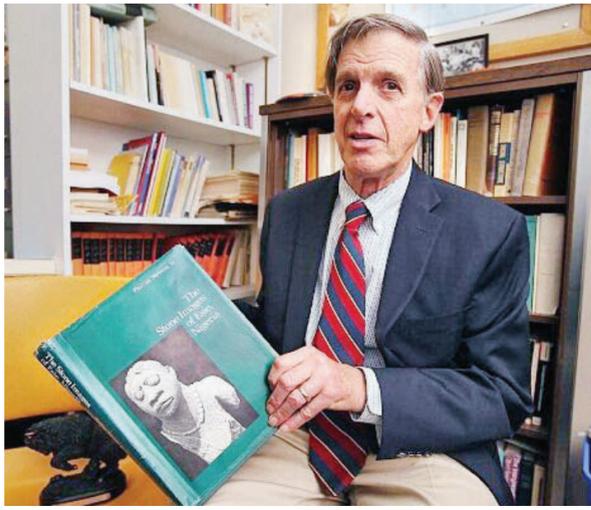
Connecting the ports to the railway network is an issue seriously emphasized and followed up by Iran over the recent years, as the country is strongly pursuing the objective of boosting exports and transit via its ports.

Chabahar Port in southeast Iran is the most prioritized one for railway connection as the port's exemption from the new round of the U.S. sanctions on the country is an opportunity for the development of export, transit, and also transshipment.

Many Americans still cling to Trump as their savior: anthropologist

From page 1 ► all allow for expressions of discontent. America is an extremely complex and extremely heterogeneous country and with increased immigration, it is becoming more complex and heterogeneous. Even in good, prosperous times lots of people are unhappy with something. The campaign and election of President Donald Trump in 2016 tapped into and aroused and gave a collective voice to many dissatisfied people, especially in rural areas. Cities can have areas of squalor and poverty, but - as in all parts of the world - folks in rural areas develop grand but unrealistic ideas about life in the cities, the centers of commerce, education, arts, health care, and government. And they are envious of the imagined life of urban people. They are certain the city-dwellers are getting much larger pieces of the economic and cultural pie. When a universal stressor like a pandemic of a highly contagious and potentially fatal disease sets in and permeates all aspects of life, the expressions of unhappiness intensify and scapegoating and conspiracy theories become widespread. That happened in the 15th century with the bubonic plague ("The Black Death") and in 1918 with the Spanish Flu. The same kind of social responsibility can occur with other broad causes of social stress and anxiety-like environmental disasters - earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, floods - or war, economic depression, etc. These are historic and universal trends that have happened to many societies under similar conditions, and they generate social scapegoating reactions like racism, anti-Semitism, general xenophobia, domestic violence; and individual pathologies like alcoholism and drug abuse.

Do you think racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia are rooted in American society or it is policy-makers who promote hatred? For example, Trump and certain Republicans, directly or indirectly, provoke racism or discrimination against minorities.



ers who promote hatred? For example, Trump and certain Republicans, directly or indirectly, provoke racism or discrimination against minorities.

American conservatism has valued individual accomplishment and was wary and suspicious of different lifestyles; values, government and outsiders, and such values have intensified and have been the bases for new forms of defiance. "Gun rights," based on the felt need to defend conservative values, has been a dominant theme in American culture and politics. Sexuality is central to human concerns; and with recent advances in medical science and the recognition of certain aberrant sexualities as natural human variations, the rapid liberalizing of sexual attitudes became another conservative reaction to liberal values. Conservatives tend to be more actively religious than liberals, and religious conviction has always been strong in American popular values. Abortion has been an especially

divisive issue, and religious belief underlies anti-abortion activism.

The American history is a witness to deep-rooted racism against Blacks and other minorities. Apparently, the political system has failed to tackle these issues that can turn into threats against national security and values. Where does the problem lie?

"America is an extremely complex and extremely heterogeneous country."

As an anthropologist, I conclude that racism, deep-seated antipathy

toward people of different ethnicities, especially those whose differences are displayed in physical features, is rooted in an inherent suspicion of outsiders which had a clear adaptive advantage over the course of evolution, but which is easily changed in early childhood and through socialization. American racism, however, is unique, deep, intertwined with the nation's history. It is different from but has been compared to the Hindu caste system. America's early dependence on Black slavery is an extremely painful legacy for both Blacks and whites. History is important in all cultures and provides grounding for identity and relations with others. Like many nations with histories of inhumanity toward specific groups of people, America is still in the process of confronting, understanding, and reconciling its history.

Given Trump's big social base, what will be implications of his possible re-election in 2024 elections?

Donald Trump took on the role of "populist," and became regarded as the "voice of the people" - the disenfranchised, the victims of economic change brought about without their consent. Most people in America recognize that Trumpism - selfish, arrogant, and deceitful - is not the ideal version of Americanism. But many Americans still cling to Donald Trump as their savior, and, although popular acceptance of this aberrant political ideology is declining, its future is uncertain.

America is still an enviable democracy, as evidenced by continual immigration and the people's demonstrated concern for and largesse to those whose rights are threatened. As a current example, Americans loudly join most of the rest of the world in our praise of and concern for the Ukrainian people, and huge gifts of money, food, and material are being donated now.

U.S. getting closer to reviving Iran nuclear deal but officials warn efforts could still fail

The Biden administration is inching closer to an agreement to salvage the Iran nuclear deal but there are still a number of unresolved issues that could cause the efforts to fail, a senior administration official and State Department spokesperson told CNN.

"While there has been significant progress and we are close to a possible deal, a number of very difficult issues remain unresolved," the spokesperson said this week when asked about the progress in the talks.

Another administration official warned that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed." Iranian experts point out that while the sticking points at the negotiating table have reduced, there is always a chance new issues will emerge at the last minute.

CNN previously reported that the Biden administration had hoped to reach a new deal by the end of February, so the pressure is on to reach a breakthrough in the coming days.

U.S. special envoy to Iran Rob Malley remains in Vienna, Austria, where Iran and the United States are engaged in a final round of indirect talks -- mediated by China, Russia and European parties to the agreement -- over a return to the 2015 deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) that put verifiable limits on Iran's nuclear program.

Some administration officials say that the war in Ukraine -- which is impacting global energy prices, a major concern for the Biden administration domestically -- has added a sense of urgency to efforts to secure a deal, but other administration officials warn against linking the two crises.

Outcome could be critical for Biden

Still, the ultimate fate of the deal -- one of President Barack Obama's signature foreign policy accomplishments that President Donald Trump walked away from in 2018 -- could end up as one of the most consequential foreign policy legacies of the Biden administration, beyond the end game of Russia's war in Ukraine.

On Capitol Hill, Democratic lawmakers who supported the original Iran nuclear deal say it's clear there are still issues that need to be resolved. They say they're still hopeful that the negotiators can get there -- but aren't sure if it will happen.

"It feels like it's been a little bit of a roller coaster the last 10 days. My impression is there's still sticking points," said Sen. Chris Murphy, a Connecticut Democrat. "Given the briefings we've received on the state of Iran's nuclear program, it would be insane for the United States not to get back in a deal -- if a deal is there to be had."

Sen. Ben Cardin, a Maryland Democrat, said, "I think there's still hurdles. And so I don't think it's immediate, but I think there's been progress made. I've expressed major concerns."

"You can't put it back together again as it was in 2015," he added. "So it's difficult to figure out how do you modernize the deal comparable to where it was before."

Sen. Chris Coons, a Delaware Democrat, said he's not sure how some of the biggest points

of contention -- Iran's release of hostages, the waiving of U.S. sanctions -- can be reconciled.

Impact of energy price rises

Some experts believe the increase in energy prices in the wake of Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine could impact the negotiations.

About one million barrels of Iranian oil each day are taken off the global market, according to Henry Rome, who covers Middle East politics as deputy head of research at the Eurasia Group. He said if a deal is agreed, Iran would be able to increase its production over the course of a few months to bring most of those barrels back online, in addition to quickly releasing a substantial amount of oil that it currently has in storage.

"I think the overall Ukraine crisis puts a lot of pressure on Western governments to get a deal sooner than later, although it also probably is encouraging Iran to ask for more," Rome said. "If there's a deal, it would provide some important relief to an extremely volatile energy market."

Earlier this week the U.S. and its allies agreed to release 60 million barrels of oil from their reserves.

Russia's representative in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, on Thursday suggested the talks are close to a conclusion.

"A very useful meeting this evening with the chief Iranian negotiator Dr. Ali Bagheri Kani. We discussed what else needs to be done to finalise the #ViennaTalks on #JCPOA," he tweeted. On Wednesday, he said that the talks were "almost over."

Many Iran experts are closely monitoring IAEA Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi's planned visit to Tehran for meetings with senior Iranian officials on Saturday. They believe that one of the few existing sticking points with Iran is resolving outstanding issues related to IAEA inspections in the country.

Concerns continue to mount, particularly in Congress, about the Biden administration agreeing to a deal that gives too much to the Iranians and does not build in strict controls on Iran's nuclear program.

Gabriel Noronha, a former State Department official who worked on Iran during the Trump administration, said he is hearing from current government officials who are voicing concerns about the possibility of the US lifting sanctions on certain Iranian individuals.

"My former career @StateDept, NSC, and EU colleagues are so concerned with the concessions being made by @RobMalley in Vienna that they've allowed me to publish some details of the coming deal in hopes that Congress will act to stop the capitulation," he wrote Wednesday on Twitter, citing concerns that the Biden administration is planning to rescind an executive order signed by Trump, which sanctioned Iranians in the office of the supreme leader.

The State Department spokesperson said the administration would not negotiate in public or respond to specific claims about sanctions they might lift as part of a mutual return to full implementation of the JCPOA.

(Source: CNN)

NATO wants bloodshed in Ukraine to continue

From page 1 ► But America's cheating and lies are not just limited to Russia-Ukraine. They date back to many wars and U.S. invasions, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere.

This crisis could have been so quickly resolved with just a treaty or a declaration of neutrality on the part of Ukraine. That would have allowed Kyiv to have warm ties with the West and the East.

Unfortunately, the U.S. and other Western military-industrial complexes thrive on tension, it's the only way they can persuade Congress and parliaments and convince lawmakers to vote in favor of legislation approving huge military spending.

Money that could be spent instead on rising healthcare problems, poverty, homelessness, damaged infrastructure, rising record inflation levels, and so many other issues in need of urgent attention back home.

NATO has proceeded to pump even more weapons to Ukraine, not giving a damn about the possibility of Ukrainians and Russians being killed. Critics say Ukraine is being used by imperialist powers to create a crisis with its eastern neighbor.

The colonial and imperialistic ideals of America and its NATO military alliance also played a major role in rejecting Moscow's proposals. Those proposals were rejected in the first few days of January and continue to be rejected today.

Instead, Washington not only placed American weapons in Ukraine and on Russian borders threatening Moscow's security, which is itself a violation of the UN charter.

Article two, paragraph four of the United Nations charter states: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State."

What can be more threatening than placing missiles and other weapons on another country's border?

Even now, the U.S. and NATO can very easily end the conflict by declaring they have no intention of including Ukraine in the Western military alliance and announce an end to NATO's open-door policy, with which many of the newest members in Eastern Europe joined in violation of NATO owns membership rules on existing territorial disputes.

Can you imagine what the Pentagon's reaction would be if Russia included Mexico or Canada as part of a defensive or military alliance, expanding Moscow's military presence on American borders?

Meanwhile, the U.S. has shown no interest in peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv; despite both sides holding a second round of talks on



the Belarusian border.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price has dismissed the peace attempts saying "now we see Moscow suggesting that diplomacy take place at the barrel of a gun".

Despite Washington's negative attitude, progress has been reported in the talks with Russia and Ukraine agreeing to the need for humanitarian corridors to help civilians escape the conflict.

The Kremlin says "substantial progress" had been made in the negotiations while the Ukrainian side pointed to an understanding on helping ordinary people.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak noted that a temporary halt to fighting in select locations was also possible. "That is, not everywhere, but only in those places where the humanitarian corridors themselves will be located, it will be possible to cease fire for the duration of the evacuation," he said.

Ukraine and Russia have also seen eye-to-eye on the delivery of medical and food supplies to the regions where the heaviest fighting has been taking place.

Delegations from Kyiv and Moscow will meet again next week the Belarusian state news agency Belta cited Podolyak as saying.

The U.S. and its Western allies responded by imposing more sanctions on Russia.

The United Nations has said one million people have now fled, seeking refuge in neighboring countries mostly in Poland and also Russia.

While Ukraine has essentially been left abandoned by Washington (much to the frustration of Kyiv), the U.S. first lady Jill Biden did wear a Covid-19 mask in honor of Ukraine, which will no doubt help towards finding peace to the conflict.

Then come the British and American officials and their mainstream media's double standards on the unfortunate conflict in Ukraine.

U.S. administration officials and their British government counterparts say that occupied people in Ukraine have the absolute right to take up arms against an (imaginary) occupier.

While the argument is logically and

correct; why has it been used only now and only for Ukraine where Washington and London are shedding crocodile tears for the Ukrainians instead of making real attempts at ending the fighting instead of abandoning what NATO describes in public as its ally.

And why is the same not said about the Palestinians who have been resisting the Israeli occupation for decades? Palestinians are instead referred to as "terrorists" for resisting the Israeli regime's occupation of their land.

The reality is Russia is not occupying Ukrainian land and has stated it has no intention of doing so, in addition to the fact that the conflict has not lasted for more than 10 days.

On the other hand, for 100 years, the Palestinians have been subject to occupation and they are denied weapons as an occupied people to resist an occupier and those who try to send weapons to the Palestinian resistance fighting the occupation are punished.

Essentially the West has shot itself in the foot for making such statements of double standards. It's one rule for Ukraine because NATO is involved here and another for Palestine.

And what about other people who are under occupation? Do the occupied people in Iraq have the absolute right to take up arms against the American occupation? An occupation that has been classified as such by Iraqi parliament legislation, the country's Prime Minister, and a million man march in Baghdad.

Anti-American sentiment is so high in Iraq right now after Washington assassinated General Qassem Soleimani, who commanded the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, and Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis, the deputy commander of the anti-terror popular mobilization units and arguably the most respected and decorated military commander in Iraq.

Under the logic of the American administration and the British government, shouldn't the Iraqis have the absolute right to take up arms against the occupiers; instead of being labeled as terrorists.

What about Syria, where American forces illegally occupy large parts of the country's east and northeast. The U.S. entered the country from Iraq without an invitation from the government in Damascus and without a UN mandate so the Syrians have the absolute right to resistance against American forces.

And the same of course can be said for Hezbollah in southern Lebanon who have been liberating their land from Israeli occupation.

But this slip of the tongue will soon be totally forgotten about once NATO gets what it wants from the conflict in Ukraine.

Zelensky left Ukraine for Poland, Russian State Duma speaker says

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky earlier said that he has not left the country's capital Kiev due to the ongoing Russian military operation in Ukraine to "demilitarize and de-Nazify" the country.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has left Ukraine and is currently in Poland, Russian State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin asserted.

Shortly after Volodin's statement, Verkhovna Rada asserted that Zelensky did not leave Ukraine and remains in Kiev.

Several Western countries have expressed concern in regard to Zelensky's safety. Particularly, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Paris was ready "to help him if necessary". It was also reported that the United States offered him evacuation, but he refused.

Reports that Zelensky left the Ukrainian capital emerged earlier last week, with the president refuting them and posting several video



messages in which he said he remained in Kyiv.

In late February, Russia launched a military operation in Ukraine with the goal to "demilitarize and de-Nazify" the country. The operation began after a request for help from the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. After the start of the operation, a massive wave of anti-Russian sanctions followed from the West.

(Source: Sputnik)

In memory of recently-deceased Iranologist; Roger Mervyn Savory



1982, was appointed a Fellow of the College. He was elected to the Governing Council of the University of Toronto and served as an Executive of that Council from 1983-1987.

He retired in 1987 and was appointed Fellow Emeritus of Trinity College. In retirement, Roger continued tutoring Ph.D. students and continued to write articles and books, adding to an extensive list of over fifty publications inclusive to 2004. In 2003, he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Sacred Letters (honoris causa) by the University of Trinity College.

In 2011, he was presented with a Festschrift, edited by one of his students, Dr. Colin Mitchell, currently a professor in the Department of History at Dalhousie University.

The famed Iranologist spent his last months at The Glebe Centre Long-Term Care in Ottawa. In the minds of some researchers, Savory is known as a powerful expert and distinguished Safavidologist.

Rare Quran manuscripts made national heritage

TEHRAN –A total of seven sets of manuscripts of the Holy Quran have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

Dating from the Safavid era (1501-1736) to the Qajar period (1789-1925), the manuscripts are being kept at the Museum of Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization in Qom province, the provincial tourism chief said on Thursday.

“Adding these valuable moveable properties to the national heritage list could benefit their owners,” Alireza Arjmandi added.

Situated adjacent to salt-covered deserts, golden dunes, running sands, and jagged mountains, Qom is home to major religious madrasas (schools) as well.

Apart from sightseers and pilgrims who visit Qom to pay homage, it is also a top destination for Shia scholars and students who come from across the world to learn Islamic studies at its madrasas and browse through eminent religious bookshops.



Qom, which its antiquity goes back to the Sassanid era (224 CE-651), has many must-see destinations such as historical mosques, mansions, and natural sceneries scattered across the city as well as towns and villages nearby.

One of the most visited natural spots of Qom is Hoz-e Soltan, an eye-catching salt lake in the middle of the desert. The visitors could easily walk in the shallow parts and enjoy the shapes created by the salt, however, the center of the lake could be dangerous, as it is muddy and could easily trap people.

Austria updates travel regulations for Iranian visitors



TEHRAN – Vienna has updated travel regulations for Iranian nationals and visitors arriving in Austria as of February 22.

To enter Austria, proof of vaccination/recovery or a negative COVID test is mandatory as two-dose vaccinations are currently valid for 270 days after the second or any additional dose.

Moreover, there need to be at least 14 days in between the first and second jab and 90 days between the second and third one.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccination is valid for 270 days, 22 days after the first dose. Furthermore, Sinopharm, BioNTech/Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Covishield, Covaxin, Covovax, Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, Nuvaxovid (Novavax), and Sinovac are valid for entering

Austria.

Only BioNTech/Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, and Nuvaxovid (Novavax) are currently recognized for the “3-G” rule when in Austria. To prove “3-G” status, travelers can use the NHS COVID app or the EU COVID Pass. In that regard, printed versions and medical certificates of vaccination or recovery are also accepted.

Additionally, proof of recovery can be used for 180 days to enter Austria. A medical certificate including the date of recovery is needed. Please note if traveling from the UK: An NHS email/text of a positive test is not sufficient.

The PCR test is valid for 72 hours. The certificate needs to be issued by an official medical authority (such as a test center or a pharmacy) and include the date and time the test was taken.

Children under the age of 12 do not need to show proof of vaccination/recovery or a test.

For people traveling to Austria without proof of vaccination/recovery or a negative test, they need to be self-isolated immediately.

Travelers entering Austria with “3-G” proof do NOT need pre-travel clearance so pre-travel clearance is required when entering without “3-G” proof.

Berlin show features 5,000 years of Iranian arts and culture

TEHRAN – For the first time in a Berlin institution the cultural history of Iran – from the early civilizations through to the modern era – is the focus of a major art-historical survey exhibition.

The exhibition shows around 320 objects from the Sarikhani Collection as well as numerous collections of the National Museums in Berlin, highlighting Iran's outstanding importance as a source of inspiration and center of intercultural exchange between the Mediterranean, China, and India from the first advanced civilizations of the 3rd millennium BC to the end of the Safavid Empire in the early 18th century.

The tightly-selected works on exhibit bear witness to the central role that Iran played as a site of innovation, as a melting pot and cultural powerhouse connecting Africa, Asia, and Europe, according to organizers.

The objects, many of which have never been shown before, illustrate the outstanding importance of Iran as a driving force for intercultural exchange and provide insights into the art of the courts and urban elites.

In a chronologically structured course with seven stations, they illustrate incisions, adaptations, and transformations.

Highlights are the pre-Islamic empires of the Achaemenids and Sassanids, the formation of a Persian-Islamic culture, and the artistic masterpieces of the 9th to



13th centuries as well as the heyday of the Safavids.

It takes visitors on a journey through time and the country's rich cultural heritage. Some of the highlights along the way include the empires of the Achaemenids and Sassanids, the formation of a Persian Islamic culture, the extraordinary artistic achievements of the 9th to 13th centuries, and the Golden Age of the Safavids.

Furthermore, the exhibition will explore the central role that Iran has played in the context of cross-regional political, economic, and cultural relations. As a “cultural highway” connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe, Persia is a place of extraordinary ethnic and linguistic diversity.

Situated between deserts, mountain ranges, and bodies of water, Iran is home to great historical civilizations, yet its artistic achievements are unknown to many outside of scholarly circles.

Not only situated in one of the oldest and most important cultural regions in the world but Iran has also been home to key cultural, artistic, and scientific trends and discoveries that have had wide-ranging impacts, reaching all the way to Europe.

As mentioned by organizers, the exhibition – a must-see for lovers of painting and ceramics in particular – shows how, over the course of several thousand years, a specifically Iranian cultural identity emerged from Persian as a language of instruction and cultural production, an identity that was continuously transforming, particularly among the cross-regional networks of traders and scholars and at moments of radical change, such as war or forced migration. Time and again, invaders and invaded alike adopted the language and culture, renewing and reforming it as they went.

Time and again, migration and the

exchange of cultural knowledge and technologies along the Silk Road(s) have formed the foundations for innovation and creativity.

From the early civilizations, Elam and the ancient Kings of Persis with their seat in Persepolis to the incursions of Genghis Khan and the important imperial city of Isfahan right through to the beginning of the modern era, the evolution of Iran is arranged into a chronological tour, illustrated with traditions, transformations, and complex relationships.

Additionally, the event which will be running through March 20, 2022, presents a rich kaleidoscope of the cultural creativity of urban societies. It seeks to independently showcase – though without losing sight of the present – a long-standing national culture that is of the utmost importance for us too. Indeed, it might be one of the most important cultures anywhere in the world.

Handicraft sector creates over 300 jobs in Bushehr

TEHRAN – The handicrafts sector has generated over 300 job opportunities in the southwestern Bushehr province during the current Iranian calendar year 1400 (started March 21), the provincial tourism chief has said.

“A total of 349 new jobs were created for the province's artisans and crafters in almost eleven months,” Mohammad Hossein Arastuzadeh explained on Friday.

Throughout the mentioned period, over 120 billion rials (\$463,000) were paid in loans to the crafters practicing various fields of handicrafts including wickerwork, woodcarving, pottery, and woodturning, the official added.

All resources will be used to boost employment and support fellow artisans and craftsmen in the province to develop and grow their home-based businesses, he noted.

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.

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

three ones come next.

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

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

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

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

National Seal of Excellence granted to eight handicrafts

TEHRAN – The National Seal of Excellence has been awarded to eight high-quality works handcrafted by the natives of Qom province, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

Traditional jewelry, tereutics, and engraving on semi-precious stones are among the works awarded with the National Seal of Excellence, Ali Rezai said on Thursday, IRNA reported.

Winners were picked by a panel of national juries from a shortlist of 14 works, the official added.

The National Seal of Excellence is given to high-quality, selected works to support craftspeople, improve the quality of their works and preserve the originality of this industry, and create sustainable employment.

Qom has been designated as the national city of handmade rings as almost 1,200 crafters and artisans are active in the production of handmade jewelry and rings in workshops across the province.



The semi-precious stone mines, which are scattered across the province, are also one of Qom's potentials to be developed in this field of handicrafts. Besides domestic travelers, foreign tourists, who are mostly from Arab countries and the Persian Gulf littoral states, are traditionally the main customers of these handmade products.

The second-holiest city of the country after Mashhad, Qom is home to both the magnificent shrine of Hazrat-e Masumeh (SA) and the major religious madrasas (schools).

Historical mansions in Tehran approved as national heritage

TEHRAN –A total of five historical mansions, scattered across the Iranian capital, have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Thursday in separate letters to the governor-general of the province, Mehr reported.

The first time Tehran is mentioned in historical accounts is in an 11th-century chronicle in which it is described as a small village north of Ray.

Ray, in which signs of settlement date from 6000 BC, is often considered to be Tehran's predecessor. It became the capital city of the Seljuk Empire in the 11th century but later declined with factional strife between different neighborhoods and the Mongol invasion of 1220.

Tehran has many to offer its visitors including Golestan Palace, Grand Bazaar, Treasury of National Jewels, National Museum of Iran, Glass & Ceramic Museum, Masoudieh Palace, Sarkis Cathedral, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, and Carpet Museum of Iran, to name a few.

'Sanctions run counter to UN Charter, Sustainable Development Goals'

TEHRAN – Illegal sanctions against nations are in a clear contradiction with the UN Charter and Sustainable Development Goals, Department of Environment chief Ali Salajegheh, has said.

"Fifty years have passed since the world's first major environmental event, the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm. The establishment of the UNEP as the main coordinating body for environmental activities has played an important role in recognizing and analyzing challenges related to the natural and human environment, developing plans and agreements, and promoting environmental knowledge and information," he said addressing the closing ceremony of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) on Thursday in Nairobi, Kenya, IRNA reported.

"Illegal and inhumane economic sanctions against nations, along with their negative consequences for the enjoyment of



fundamental human rights are in clear contradiction with the spirit of the UN Charter and the content of the Sustainable Development Goals. Sanctions have hampered timely and cost-effective access to the goods and technologies needed to ensure the ecosystem's safe management and recovery.

As global development progresses, we have taken important steps to set up the Department of Environment, which is

also celebrating its 50th anniversary, as the highest regulatory body and policymaker to improve, protect and manage the country's environment.

During these years, Iran has faced many problems, including the imposed war and unilateral illegal sanctions, which have led to economic challenges and have had an impact on the preservation of the environment as a vital element of human life.

Multilateralism, peace, and cooperation in today's world, along with the observance of justice and equality, is a definite necessity for improving the environment for all.

As environmental challenges such as the water crisis, the rise of sand and dust storms as a cross-border issue, and direct effects of climate change resulting from economic sanctions are increasing, Iran is working with member countries and international organizations to improve and enhance the environment."

On Wednesday, Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program, praised Iran's approach toward environmental protection.

Environmental measures and protection of natural resources, waste management, and other measures show Iran's environmental approach, she said on the sidelines of the Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) held in Nairobi from February 28 to March 2.

The influence of Avicenna on medical studies in the West

Part 4

In some universities book 2 on materia medica was read together with other pharmaceutical treatises of Arabic origin. For surgical training, in so far as this took place on the academic level, Avicenna's surgery (Canon 4.3-5) was among the standard textbooks.

This selection was of course influenced by the wealth of commentaries on the Canon, which in the absence of a systematic inventory (a first attempt by Eckleben has left many gaps) cannot yet be adequately surveyed. The most numerous are exegeses of Canon 1.1 and 4.1. No Latin commentary on the entire work is known to exist.

The most comprehensive commentary, produced by Jacques Despars (d. 1458) after more than twenty years' work and printed in toto at Lyons in 1497-98, deals only with Canon 1.3 and 4 (Jacquart, Un médecin, pp. 109-12).

Outstanding among the numerous exponents who wrote in the heyday of Canon-exegesis in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were certain professors of the then pre-eminent north Italian

universities, whose commentaries were widely used as textbooks and quite frequently printed after the introduction of printing in the mid-fifteenth century.

In addition to Dino del Garbo, Gentile of Foligno (d. 1348), Ugo Benzi of Siena (d. 1439), and Jacopo of Forlì (d. 1414) dealt with several parts of the Canon; others, like Giovanni Matteo Ferrari of Grado (d. 1472) and Giovanni Arcolani (d.1458), commented only upon individual sections.

Leonardo of Bertapaglia wrote a commentary on the surgical chapters in 1424 (Thorndike, Science and Thought, pp. 60-65). As Jacquart (Le regard, pp. 43-76) has shown in the case of Despars, the exegetic writings were often amplified with personal observations and experiences of their authors.

These hitherto neglected sources are therefore likely to provide interesting evidence of the ways in which the Canon stimulated new developments in Western medicine.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

WHO pledges to speed up registering Iranian vaccines

TEHRAN – World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has pledged to expedite the process of evaluating and registering Iranian vaccines to receive an emergency use license, appreciating Iran's efforts to develop vaccines against the global pandemic.

He made the remarks during a meeting with Kazem Gharibabadi, the Judiciary's deputy chief for international affairs and secretary of Iran's Human Rights Headquarters, on the sidelines of the 49th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

"Iran's high progress in the health system and the expansion of health network coverage throughout the country has increased the rate of vaccination.

The high rate of vaccination in Iran, as well as the inoculation of foreign refugees, are among other good public control measures

that have stabilized the country's health condition," he stated, IRNA reported.

Referring to the impact of U.S. sanctions on drugs and medical equipment, he said that humanitarian items should be exempted from economic sanctions so that we will take the necessary steps in this regard.

He also promised to speed up the process of registering domestically produced vaccines in Iran.

Gharibabadi for his part explained the most important measures in health coverage, achievements in the field of pandemic control and vaccination, increasing life expectancy, reducing child mortality, number of active hospitals and beds, universities, and medical schools, considering these developments under harsh sanctions.

He further pointed to the negative effects of sanctions on the right to life and the right



to health of children and patients, especially specific or rare diseases, and highlighted that the humanitarian exception are merely claims on paper and in practice, access to medical items and equipment needed for patients was not available, especially during the outbreak of COVID-19, and this policy is a continuation of a blatant violation of human rights.

Meanwhile, WHO representative to Iran Jafar Hussain said in September 2021 that the

Organization was collecting the necessary information for the registration and certification of Iranian-made coronavirus vaccines.

On January 28, the process for global registration of the Iranian-made "COVIRAN Barekat" vaccine started by holding a virtual meeting with the World Health Organization officials.

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

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

WHO, IRCS to share Iranian-made vaccines

The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) is ready to provide the Iranian-made vaccine to countries that need it, in coordination with the WHO and the Ministry of Health.

IRCS Director Pir-Hossein Kolivand made the remarks in a meeting with WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Ahmed Salim Saif Al Mandhari on the sidelines of the Conference of Humanitarian Leadership for the MENA Region held on Monday in Cairo, the capital of Egypt.

During the meeting, Kolivand announced readiness to cooperate with the World Health Organization in various fields, including the issue of coronavirus and refugees.

Al-Mandhari for his part referred to his visit to the monitoring center of the Emergency Organization of Iran, expressing hope that these experiences to be transferred to countries in need.

If the final approval of the homegrown vaccines is obtained, we can carry out the steps to transfer vaccines to the countries in need, he stated.

Wildlife population shrinking towards extinction

From page 1 ► Continued loss of species, habitats, and ecosystems also threatens all life on Earth, including us. People everywhere rely on wildlife and biodiversity-based resources to meet all our needs, from food to fuel, medicines, housing, and clothing. Millions of people also rely on nature as the source of their livelihoods and economic opportunities.

Ways to prevent poaching, habitat destruction

Kheirollah Moradi, head of the department of environment in Kordestan province, said that by implementing long-term training programs, people's misconceptions about wildlife must be changed in order to take effective measures to preserve the biodiversity and wildlife.

Habitats and wildlife in most parts of the world are in poor condition, and regarding the country's habitats and wildlife, we must boldly say that a large population of different wildlife species are declining and even endangered, he further lamented.

Reducing the number of animal species will reduce their genetic diversity, and this will greatly reduce the wildlife's resistance to diseases, natural and man-made phenomena, he highlighted.

The best way to reduce the threat to wildlife is to protect the natural habitats,

which are the most important measures to continuously educate local communities and improve the economic situation of locals by generating alternative income to prevent poaching and habitat destruction, he suggested.

Persian species in danger

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

Out of 1,300 species of animals in the country, 130 of which are endangered.



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.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

'Further measures required to preserve forests'

Iran's forest area is approximately 12 million hectares with 0.2 hectares per capita, which is one quarter of the world average, so attention to preserve the forest areas must be four times the global attention, faculty member of the Research Institute of Forests and Rangelands has said.

Mohammad Darvish made the remarks on the occasion of the National Tree Planting Day, in which people are encouraged to plant trees across the country, held on the first day of the National Week of Natural Resources annually observed on March 6 to 13.

Unfortunately, forests have been taken for granted in the country, as 2 million hectares of the northern forests has been depleted since 1330s (1950s), thus no serious protection measures have been taken, he said.

Currently, 1.6 million hectares of the northern forests remain in the country, which was 3.5 million hectares in 1330s, so 2 million hectares of forest areas have undergone deforestation, he further lamented.

حفظ جنگل ها نیازمند اقدامات بیشتر

بر اساس آخرین آمار موسسه تحقیقات جنگلها و مراتع، وسعت رویشگاههای جنگلی ایران حدود ۱۲ میلیون هکتار و سرانه هر ایرانی از جنگل، کمتر از دو دهم هکتار است که یک چهارم سرانه جهانی می شود بنابراین باید توجه ما به حفظ رویشگاههای جنگلی، ۴ برابر توجه جهانی باشد.

محمد درویش روز چهارشنبه همزمان با روز درختکاری و آغاز هفته منابع طبیعی در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: به نظر می رسد در کشور آن طور که باید به درختان و حفاظت از آنها توجه نمی شود؛ نابودی دو میلیون هکتار از جنگل های شمال از دهه ۳۰ تاکنون گواه این ادعاست.

بنا به گفته عضو هیات علمی موسسه تحقیقات جنگلها و مراتع کشور، حدود ۱.۶ میلیون هکتار از جنگل های شمال کشور باقی مانده است که این رقم در دهه ۳۰ حدود ۳.۵ میلیون هکتار بود یعنی در این مدت حدود دو میلیون هکتار عرصه جنگلی را از دست داده ایم، البته نیمی از ۱.۶ میلیون هکتار موجود نیز تا حدود زیادی تخریب شده است.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON MARCH 4

New cases	6,470
New deaths	154
Total cases	7,080,217
Total deaths	137,593
New hospitalized patients	1,275
Patients in critical condition	4,056
Total recovered patients	6,709,131
Diagnostic tests conducted	47,571,202
Doses of vaccine injected	142,340,426



MARCH 5, 2022

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: 18:21 Dawn: 5:05 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:28 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries



* A collection of paintings by Dorsa Adasi is on display in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibit named "Balneum Mariae", will run until March 15 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

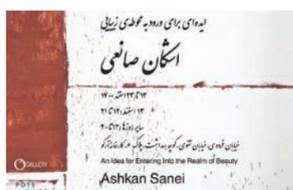


* Paintings by Kusha Musavi, Mehdi Farhadian, Nastaran Safai, Maryam Farshad, Mohammad Eskandari, Sara Tavana and several other artists are on view in an exhibition at Aran Gallery.

The exhibition will run until April 1 at the gallery located at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle-le-Chateau St.

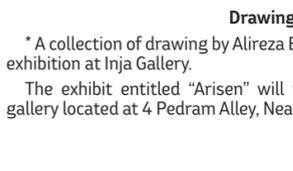
* Nazamin Ushani is hanging her latest collection of paintings in an exhibition at Golhaye Davudi Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until March 9 at the gallery located at 263 near Nejatollahi St., Taleqani Ave.



* Argo Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Ashkan Sanei.

The showcase entitled "An Idea for Entering Into the Realm of Beauty" will run until March 14 at the gallery located at 6 Behdasht Alley, Taqavi St. off Ferdowsi St.



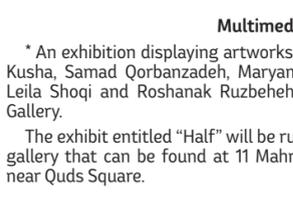
* A collection of drawing by Alireza Espahbod is on display in an exhibition at Inja Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Arisen" will run until March 14 at the gallery located at 4 Pedram Alley, Neauphle-le-Chateau St.



* Shiva Farshchi is displaying her collection of resin photos in an exhibition at Ayrik Gallery.

The exhibition named "Good Feelings" will run until March 14 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.



* An exhibition displaying artworks in various media by Afshin Kusha, Samad Qorbanzadeh, Maryam Taherirad, Zohreh Solati, Leila Shoqi and Roshanak Ruzbehani is underway at Sharif Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Half" will be running until March 14 at the gallery that can be found at 11 Mahruzadeh Alley, Shariati Ave. near Quds Square.



* Artworks in different media by a group of artists, including Mehrad Mehrju, Amaneh Shayegan, Sina Musavi, Mahsa Lotfi, Pegah Iranmehr and Ahmad Turani, are on display in an exhibition at Zhinus Gallery.

The exhibit will continue until March 8 at the gallery, which can be found at 21 Fatemi St., off Vali-e-Asr Ave.

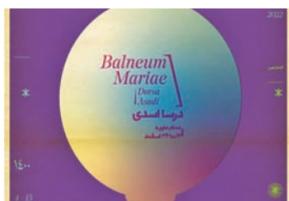
* An exhibition of artworks in different media by Mojgan Molai, Paria Gholami, Ghazal Agahi, Nadia Barati, Alireza Ahmadi, Soroush Ale Yasin and several other artists is underway at Ehsan Gallery.

The exhibit will run until March 9 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

Painting

* Shalman Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Fatemeh Najjari, Gohar Latifi, Zeinab Abdollahi, Mahdieh Zamani, Narges Jannesari, Neda Perangi and several other artists.

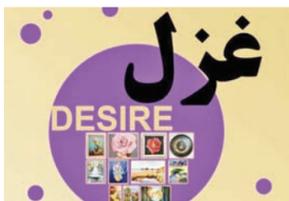
Entitled "Hooran", the showcase will run until March 9 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.



Resin photo

* Shiva Farshchi is displaying her collection of resin photos in an exhibition at Ayrik Gallery.

The exhibition named "Good Feelings" will run until March 14 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.



Beirut UNESCO Palace hosts Iran's National Orchestra performance

From Page 1 ► Conducted by Lebanese maestro Andre Alhaj, the National Orchestra also recorded the music video "Restless for Balqis".

It was released during a special ceremony at Tehran's Rudaki Hall in September 2020. Hussein al-Ajami, an advisor at the Lebanese Ministry of Culture, also attended the ceremony.

The Iranian cultural week named "Alfajr Cultural Days", opened with a performance by the National Orchestra last Monday at the Lebanese Association of Arts in Beirut.

An Iranian delegation headed by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili also attended the performance.

Esmaeili held meetings with his Lebanese counterpart, Abbas Mortada, discussing the expansion of cultural relations between the two countries.

The cultural program is being organized in collaboration with the



Iran's National Orchestra performs a concert during the Alfajr Cultural Days at the Conference Hall of the UNESCO Palace in Beirut on March 2, 2022.

association, a Hezbollah-run center that is also known as Rissalat.

Exhibitions of artworks, including paintings, photographs, cartoons and handicrafts, are currently underway during the event.

Groups of artists in different media are participating in the festival to hold workshops and performances at several cultural centers across Beirut.

Several Iranian films, including director Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian's political thriller "Trace

of Blood", have been chosen to be screened at the festival.

Groups of Iranian literati and Lebanese cultural figures have also been invited to hold poetry nights and literary sessions during the festival, which will end on Saturday.

Film Movement Classics buys rights to Farhadi's early films

TEHRAN – Film Movement Classics, a North American distributor of foreign films based in New York City, has acquired the rights to 2K digital restorations of Oscar winner Asghar Farhadi's early films "Dancing in the Dust" and "Beautiful City".

The dramas will be screened at movie theaters and available on all leading home entertainment and digital platforms on March 25. Deadline announced on Thursday.

Farhadi's 2003 feature directorial debut "Dancing in the Dust" follows Nazari who is pressured into divorcing his wife because of her family's bad reputation. This leads to money problems, and before long, he's on the run due to debts that he can't pay. Hiding out in the desert, he meets an eccentric elderly man who makes a living by collecting venom from poisonous snakes. Nazari becomes his unlikely partner and gets an unexpected chance at redemption.

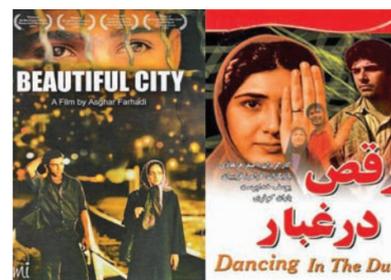
The film won the awards for best director, screenplay and supporting actor at the Asia Pacific Film Festival in the year of its release.

It also received a special prize from Russian film critics at the 25th Moscow International Film Festival.

"Beautiful City" is Farhadi's second feature made in 2004. The drama is about 16-year-old Akbar, who is being held in a rehabilitation center for killing his girlfriend. He's been sentenced to death, but has to reach the age of 18 before the sentence can be carried out. Now, the day following his 18th birthday, he's transferred to an adult prison where he must wait to die. However, the sentence could be changed to life imprisonment if the bereaved father, Rahmati, forgives the young man his horrific crime. With Rahmati unreceptive, Akbar's friend and sister try to elicit sympathy by raising money for an operation needed by Rahmati's adult stepdaughter.

The film won the Grand Prix at the Warsaw International Film Festival, and also received a Golden Peacock and a special jury award at the International Film Festival of India.

"Over the past two decades, Farhadi has built an enviable filmmaking career one feature at a time," said Film Movement



A combination photo shows posters for "Dancing in the Dust" and "Beautiful City".

President Michael Rosenberg.

"As he refines and evolves his craft, he's continued to turn out one powerful film after another – from 'A Separation' and 'The Salesman' to this year's 'A Hero'. But cinema aficionados will certainly be excited to chart his growth with these dramas, his first two cinematic gems, both beautifully restored in 2K," he added.

Ashura from a different view

Ali Mirza Jafari

The book "Confessions of a killed scribe" by Sasan Nategh, is about the Day of Ashura, which has been published by Soore Mehr publication. For so long, Ashura's symbol has been a red flag, but this time, a white flag appears on the book's cover.

Many books have been written about the Battle of Karbala, but I have never read about it from the view of Imam Hussein's enemies like Umar ibn Sa'd, and maybe this is what encouraged me to keep reading. The book also includes flashbacks to the times of Abu Sufyan and Mu'awiyah and engages the reader throughout a 100-year era.

Apart from the story of Karbala, we will also read about a scribe



who was once one of Mu'awiyah's relatives, but eventually ran away from Mu'awiyah's palace and settled in desserts.

In seven chapters, the author

of the book uses the element of imagination to tell the story from the view of two separate people, one is a young shepherd and the other is a scribe in the Umar ibn

Sa'd's army who records the events.

The story has other characters whom the author has used to narrate the events. Each character has their own story and comes to Karbala to get what they want, like revenge, money, or love.

Among different stories, we will also read some parts about the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Imam Ali (AS).

Reading the book, I felt as if I were sitting next to the young shepherd or the scribe and watching all the events by myself. This book is such a great and simple book of Ashura with 234 pages that you may recommend to teens.

Jalal ad-Din Rumi: philosophy

Part 4

(2). Human beings as God's beloved. The hadith of the Hidden Treasure tells us that God created the universe to be known and recognized (an o'raf), that is, by "others" (aghyar), since he knows himself.

The others are the entire universe in its infinite expanse, everything that is not God. Among these others, only those who have been taught "all the names" (Q. 2:31) have the capacity to recognize God in the fullness of himself, and these are the children of Adam, who was allamahol-asma bag, "Master 'He-taught-him-the-names".

In order for God to be the object of love, he must first be recognized, and since only human beings have the capacity to recognize him, only they can love him.

God's first beloved is Muhammad (S), the greatest of the prophets and the recipient of the message that embraces all knowledge of God.

It is he concerning whom God said, "But for you, I would not have created the spheres." Muhammad (S) is the root, and all things are his shadow. "The mystery that began as the seed of the spheres ended as the lord of 'But for you'".

The gardener planted the seed for the sake of the fruit (the Prophet), so in fact it is the fruit that gave birth to the tree. Rumi's depiction of the Prophet as God's original beloved gave his commentators plenty of justification to see references in his works to what the Sufi theoreticians called "the Muhammadan Reality," i.e., the logos in God, that through which all things were created.

Despite Rumi's stress on the Prophet (S) as the supreme object of divine love (e.g., in his long description of him as God's "witness," shahed, that is, the one in whom God contemplates beauty), his basic message is that all human beings are loved by God, even if God's love is focused on the prophets and saints.

"Man is the substance, and the heavens are his accident; all things are branches and steps—he is the goal" (Masnavi). "In form man is a branch of this world, in attribute its foundation" (Masnavi). Thus God invites everyone to be his "friend" (wali), that is, one of his saints, and Rumi constantly urges his readers to become lovers (e.g., in ghazals which begin with "asheq sho!" "Become a lover!").

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued