

Iran Understands Russia Demand for Guarantees

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Report Impact of Russian sanctions on global markets

TEHRAN- Moscow has issued a stern warning that a Western ban on Russian oil imports could more than double the price of the vital commodity to \$300 a barrel and prompt the closure of the main Russian gas pipeline to Germany.

Oil prices have already peaked to record highs of \$140 a barrel, prices not seen since the 2008 global financial crisis.

Critics argue Western governments will blame the price hikes on Russia to avoid losing voters while they take more tax from consumers and oil companies make record profits as tens of thousands if not millions of Europeans will drop below the poverty line.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak has warned that oil prices could jump to more than \$300 dollars a barrel if the United States and European Union impose sanctions on Russian oil exports.

In a video statement broadcast on state television, Novak said “It is absolutely clear that a rejection of Russian oil would lead to catastrophic consequences for the global market. the surge in prices would be unpredictable. It would be \$300 per barrel if not more.”

He also says Russia is not dependent on the West and can “reroute” its supplies elsewhere. ▶ Page 5

Report Iran, Turkey to set up SDSs warning, assessment system

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Iran Meteorological Organization (IMO) and Turkish State Meteorological Service (TSMS) signed an agreement on Tuesday to establish the Regional Center for West Asia of the WMO Sand and Dust Storm Warning Advisory and Assessment System.

Sand and Dust Storms (SDSs) are a major problem in West Asia, where their main characteristics – intensity, extent, and frequency – are either not well known or have not yet been scientifically addressed.

The growing concern of countries in the region about these phenomena has led to a number of high-level international meetings in recent years at which the creation of a system for SDS monitoring and forecasting has repeatedly been raised.

Both Iran and Turkey were concerned about the occurrence of SDSs and their impacts. So, in 2016, the IMO and TSMS started to enhance cooperation by taking measurements of dust formation, improving meteorological monitoring and forecasting, controlling soil erosion, and establishing regional cooperation projects.

During a video conference meeting, Sahar Taj-Bakhsh, head of IMO, and her Turkish counterpart Volkan Mutlu Coskun, inked an agreement to set up the Regional Center for West Asia of the WMO Sand and Dust Storm Warning Advisory and Assessment System. ▶ Page 7

Over 1,900 idle industrial units revived since last March

TEHRAN- As announced by the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), over 1,900 idle industrial units have been revived in the industrial parks and zones of the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20).

Ali Rasoulzadeh also said the number of idle units is decreasing.

Referring to the high demand for investment in industrial parks and zones he said: “Given that the demand for investment in this field is high, we seek to provide infrastructure such as water, electricity and gas for the companies so that the capabilities of these areas to attract investors will be developed.”

Ambassador: Iran ski resorts, rail routes attractive to Chinese vacationers

TEHRAN – Beijing’s ambassador to Tehran Chang Hua has said ski resorts and rail routes are amongst Iran’s top attractions for Chinese travelers.

Focusing on the interest of Chinese tourists is a top way to attract them... [For instance] many Chinese travelers to Iran find the sport of skiing and its [historical] rail routes appealing, Chang said on Monday.

The envoy made the remarks during a meeting with Iran’s deputy tourism minister Ali-Asghar Shalbafian held to discuss ways to expand tourism ties.

Shalbafian for his part underlined cultural and historical affinities shared between the two nations, adding the Islamic Republic is willing to host more travelers from China.

Last November, the Iranian official stressed the need for all-inclusive fault detection, and identification of effective factors to expand tourism ties with China in a meeting with travel experts from the state-run institutes and the private sector. “We should pay attention to the Chinese market in a more pragmatic approach,” he said in the follow-up session held to formulate new strategies to expand tourism cooperation between the two ancient countries. ▶ Page 6

Of course, the important point is that the applicants must also complete the construction, install the machinery, obtain the operation and production licenses within the framework of the obligations and within the legal period specified in the land use right contract, he added.

The official had previously said that the number of idle industrial units is hoped to reach 2,000 units by the end of the present year.

The ISIPO head had also announced that 1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to the production cycle in the industrial parks with a financing of 35 trillion rials (nearly \$140

million), providing employment for 27,000 people, in the last Iranian calendar year.

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

“Despite the two major challenges of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic, which imposed severe restrictions on the country, we tried to activate domestic capacities by turning to localizing the technology of manufacturing parts and equipment”, he added. ▶ Page 4

Iran launches second military satellite into space

TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has successfully put a second military satellite, called Noor 2, into orbit, Tasnim said on Tuesday.

Noor 2 is orbiting at an altitude of 500 kilometers (311 miles). The first military satellite, launched by the Islamic Republic in April 2020, placed the Noor, or “light” in Persian, at an orbit of 425km (265 miles) above the earth’s surface.

Putting a second satellite in space would be a major advance for Iran’s military.

The satellite was launched into space upon the three-stage Qased carrier from the Shahrood space port, Tasnim said.

The same type of rockets, which use a combination of liquid and solid fuels, carried the first military satellite.

The U.S. military says the same long-range ballistic technology used to put satellites into orbit could also allow Tehran to launch longer-range weapons, according to Reuters.

Speaking on the sidelines of the launching ceremony, IRGC chief Hossein Salami lauded the forces under his command for this great achievement.

“We thank God for giving a great gift and a great achievement to the people of Iran, and I sincerely declare that this is nothing but divine help and assistance in such a situation that you give a very heartwarming news and a great honor to the nation,” Salami stated.

Noting that activity in space is one of the cri-

teria and indicators of the developed countries in the world, the major general said that it is a great achievement that Iran can “put its eyes in the sky again and look at the earth from space.”

The highest ranking IRGC commander added, “It is an honor that in the name of a Muslim nation and an Islamic system, in the atmosphere of widespread international sanctions, the children of the Iranian nation in the Guards (IRGC), with faith and will and reliance on dynamic and creative minds, were able to put satellites in orbit.

Stating that Iran is the first Muslim country to launch a satellite into space, Salami thanked Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, for the successful launch despite the fact that country is under harshest sanctions.

“This important event and achievement are not just a technical act, rather overcoming the wills that wanted” to prevent Iran’s progress, he said.

Salami added that this achievement means Iran’s victory in the battle of technology over the enemies who wanted to keep Iran undeveloped.

“This means a clear victory that will be dedicated to the dear and great Leader of the Islamic Revolution, and the dear and honorable nation of Iran,” he added.

Salami emphasized the series of launches that Iran plans to conduct in line with the strategy of being active in space, saying they all will be done successfully in proper time.

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Russian forces widen offensive on Ukraine

By Salman Parviz

TEHRAN – Following the sequence of events before the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, it was clear that trouble was brewing in the region.

To give an example, the Russian Foreign Ministry demanded on December 10, 2021, for “legal guarantees” that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization wouldn’t expand eastward. In a blatant disregard, the Ukrainian Defense Ministry announced the arrival of the first shipment of military aid from the U.S. five weeks later, on January 22, 2022.

The hypocrisy of the West’s so-called “free press” in the so-called “civilized world” is frustrating to watch.

Recall when George W. Bush invaded Iraq on the pretext of weapons of mass destruction in 2003. The whole world was aware that there were no WMDs in Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. But media coverage by channels like BBC or CNN seldom debated this fact.

The news commentators’ cheery faces reporting from Iraq were obvious at the beginning of the invasion when the U.S. military engagement in Iraq went according to the plans. What was supposed to be the “mother of all battles” ensued into mother of all chaos, out of which Iraq still hasn’t recovered some two decades later.

Today we witness similar coverage of wars in Yemen and Syria.

Returning back to Ukraine, the official reaction of the Islamic Republic to this Russian aggression was criticism of the war but blame was put on the West for provocation. ▶ Page 5

Teams learn fate at Hazfi Cup quarterfinals

TEHRAN – The teams learned their fate at the quarterfinals round of Iran’s Hazfi Cup.

The draw was staged at the Iran Football League Organization’s headquarters on Tuesday.

Iranian giants Persepolis and Esteghlal will face their rivals in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium.

Persepolis will meet Aluminum, while Esteghlal play Nassaji.

Khalij Fars Mahshahr will face Mes Rafsanjan and Mes Kerman host Kheybar Khoramabad.

Two rare manuscript copies of Nezami’s Khamseh showcased at Mashhad exhibit

TEHRAN – Two rare manuscript copies of Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi’s Khamseh dating back to almost 650 years ago were showcased in an exhibition in Mashhad on Sunday.

The exhibition underway at the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum and Library is a prelude to a massive program Iran plans to organize next week to commemorate the greatest romantic epic poet in Persian literature, who brought a colloquial and realistic style to the

The matches will be held on April 9 and 10.

The winners of Persepolis and Aluminum match, will play the winners of Khalij Fars Mahshahr and Mes Rafsanjan in the semifinals round.

The winners of Esteghlal and Nassaji will meet the winners of Mes Kerman and Kheybar Khoramabad in semis.

The Iran’s Hazfi Cup was founded in 1975 and Esteghlal are the most decorated club with seven titles, followed by Persepolis who have won six titles.

Persian epic.

One of the copies has been written in thulth style calligraphy on 268 folios in 27 lines on each. Titles of the chapters have been calligraphed with golden and lapis lazuli inks. The two opening pages have been fully decorated with illuminations.

The other copy has been inscribed by Ahmad ibn Mohammad in naskh, which is melded perfectly with the taliq style ▶ Page 8



© Mehr/ Ali Hadadi Asl

Iranian rowers compete at Azadi Lake

TEHRAN – The second round of the 7th edition of the Iran rowing league was held on Monday in Tehran’s Azadi Lake. The Iranian men and women rowers participated in the competition. The rowers prepare for the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China.

Russian FM stands firm on guarantees from U.S.



TEHRAN — In a phone conversation between Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir Abdollahian and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov late on Monday, the two sides discussed bilateral relations, the Vienna talks, new developments in Ukraine and some other international issues.

Referring to the visit of the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi to Tehran, the two top diplomats stated that the IAEA is now on the right track of technical cooperation with Iran and a good agreement has been reached between Tehran and the Agency.

Amir Abdollahian said, “We are working seriously to reach a good and strong agreement in Vienna. Good progress has been made so far, but despite the progress, some issues have not yet been resolved in Vienna, which requires a political decision by the Western side.”

Emphasizing the need for an effective lifting of sanctions, the Iranian foreign minister stated that reaching an agreement in Vienna can expand the different fields of cooperation between Iran and other countries, including its partners.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Amir Abdollahian emphasized that Iran is against war and imposition of sanctions, and it is clear that cooperation between Iran and any country, including Russia, should not be affected by the atmosphere of sanctions.

The telephone conversation took place as Russia invaded Ukraine on February 14 and in response the West introduced sweeping sanctions against Russia.

Foreign Minister Lavrov stressed the need

for cooperation between Iran and Russia in different fields, including various areas of trade.

Referring to the negotiation process and Russia's support for Iran's rational demands, he pointed to Moscow's views in this regard.

Criticizing the sanctions imposed on Russia, Lavrov stressed the importance of cooperation between the two countries in all fields.

According to the Russia Foreign Ministry, Lavrov emphasized that the resuscitation of the JCPOA should ensure that all its participants have equal rights regarding the unhindered development of cooperation in all areas without any discrimination.

The call came after Russia demanded guarantees from the United States that the sanctions being imposed by the West on Russia over Ukraine won't impede Moscow's economic and military cooperation with Iran in case the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is revived.

Lavrov said on Saturday that the sanctions the West imposed on Russia will create a problem for the Iran nuclear deal and demanded written guarantees from the U.S. that these sanctions won't impede Russia-Iran cooperation in case the JCPOA is revived.

“We want an answer – a very clear answer – we need a guarantee that these sanctions will not in any way touch the regime of trade-economic and investment relations which is laid down in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action,” the Russian foreign minister said.

He added, “We have asked for a written guarantee ... that the current process triggered by the United States does not in any way damage our right to free and full trade, economic and investment cooperation and military-technical cooperation with the Islamic Republic.”

The two sides also exchanged views on other regional and international issues, including the Ukraine crisis, the Astana process to resolve the Syrian issue and the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Turkey.

Raisi says Iran will not tie economy to Vienna talks

TEHRAN – President Ebrahim Raisi discussed the latest developments surrounding Iran's talks with the P4+1 group of countries in the Austrian capital of Vienna aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

The president again reiterated that his administration will not link the national economy to the fate of the JCPOA.

“[Iran's] Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the negotiating team are pursuing the negotiations with diligence, but the administration does not and will not tie any [of its] moves to the talks and the JCPOA,” the president told his cabinet team on Sunday.

He went on to say that the JCPOA is not Iran's whole foreign policy, but one of its issues.

Raisi added that the secret of his administration's success over the last six months was that it “vigorously pursued all matters, including issues related to foreign policy, the banking system and oil [sales], and did not make any of them conditional on the JCPOA or a possible agreement in the Vienna talks.”

The United States unilaterally withdrew from the internationally-agreed JCPOA in 2018 and

reinstated the sanctions that had been eased under the agreement. France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, Washington's European partners in the agreement, have been strictly toying the sanctions line by ceasing trades with Iran.

The Vienna talks between Iran and the other JCPOA parties began in April on the assumption that the U.S., under the Joe Biden administration, is prepared to reverse the so-called maximum pressure approach taken by former president Donald Trump towards Tehran.

Iran has stated that it will not accept anything less than the complete lifting of all U.S. sanctions in a verifiable way. It also wants assurances that Washington would not withdraw from the agreement again.

On Friday, Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian stated over the phone with the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, that the Western side's haste to achieve a deal through the Vienna talks will not cause Tehran to ignore its red lines.

“We are ready to immediately finalize a good agreement... but the Western side's rush and haste cannot prevent Iran's red lines from being observed.”

Iran's security chief visits Uzbekistan



TEHRAN — Admiral Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security

Council, visited Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on Tuesday.

The visit took place upon invitation by Viktor Makhmudov, Secretary of the National Security Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

According to ISNA, raising the level of bilateral relations and exchanging views on regional and international issues are among the goals of Shamkhani's visit to Uzbekistan.

During the two-day visit, Shamkhani will meet with his Uzbek counterpart, as well as senior Uzbek officials.

Iranian president: Ukrainians falling victim to U.S. heinous policies

TEHRAN– Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi has said the people of Ukraine are a victim the U.S.'s evil actions, while underlining the Islamic Republic's opposition to war.

Raisi made the remarks during a cabinet meeting on Sunday, when he addressed a variety of issues, particularly the current armed conflict in Ukraine.

The comments by the president comes as Russia has so far refused to stop its war on Ukraine.

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday called for “maximum restraint” in Ukraine and said China is “pained to see the flames of war reignited in Europe,” state media reported, according to abc.net.au.

It was Xi's strongest statement to date on the conflict.

Xi, speaking at a virtual meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, said the three countries should jointly support peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV reported.

The Chinese leader described the situation in Ukraine as “worrying” and said the priority should be preventing it from escalating or “spinning out of control”, CCTV cited him as saying.

He also said France and Germany should make efforts to reduce negative impacts of the crisis, and expressed concern about the impact of sanctions on the stability of global finance, energy supplies, transportation and supply chains.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has “appreciated the



continuing direct dialogue” between Russia and Ukraine and called for an “immediate cessation of violence”.

Modi spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday and discussed the “evolving situation” in the country.

In his Sunday remarks, the Iranian president said it is in the interest of all countries that the war in Ukraine comes to an end.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is against the war and every day when the war ends sooner, it is in the interest of the nations, and the dangers, injuries and problems of the people are reduced,” the president stressed.

“The people of Ukraine, like the people of Afghanistan, Yemen and Iraq, have fallen victim to the United States' evil policies,” Iran's president added.

Last week Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian reaffirmed to his Irish counterpart, Simon Coveney, that the conflict in Ukraine is not a solution to the dispute.

Amir Abdollahian expressed Iran is ready to assist to peacefully resolve the Ukrainian crisis,

expressing hope that the existing events could be addressed through diplomacy without the intervention of other nations.

“As declared by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Islamic Republic of Iran is definitively opposed to war and the sooner this war ends, it will be to benefit of the region and nations and it will do less harm to and cause less problems for people,” Raisi noted.

In a televised speech on March 1, Ayatollah Khamenei criticized the American regime for the current Ukraine crisis and called for an end to the war in the country, saying the Islamic Republic of Iran has always opposed violence and devastation wherever in the world.

“The U.S. disrupted the stability of the country (Ukraine) by interfering in its affairs and organizing rallies and creating a color coup,” Leader said, adding, “We oppose the killing of people and the destruction of the infrastructure of nations.”

On February 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared a “special military operation” to “demilitarize” the Donetsk and

Lugansk republics in eastern Ukraine, known as the Donbass.

Putin announced the mission is aimed at “defending people who for eight years are suffering persecution and genocide by the Kyiv regime.”

The crisis has elicited a united response from the United States and its allies, who have imposed a slew of penalties on Moscow.

Analysts say Russia invaded Ukraine as the country intends to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO.

President Zelensky urged Russia's Vladimir Putin to get out of his “bubble” and “start the dialogue” about ending the invasion that entered its thirteenth day Tuesday local time.

Zelensky made the plea in a one-on-one interview with “ABC World News Tonight” anchor David Muir that aired Monday night.

Putin needs to “start the dialogue, instead of living in [an] informational bubble without oxygen...He is in this bubble,” Zelensky said.

“I think he's capable of stopping the war that he started...,” Zelensky continued, “he should know one important thing that he cannot deny, that stopping the war is what he's capable of.”

Earlier Monday, Russia continued to bomb Ukrainian cities– despite the Kremlin's claim that it would begin several cease-fires to allow refugees to flee along a “human corridor.”

Russian troops made advances in southern Ukraine, but have been met with resistance in other parts of the country.

Delegations from Iran, Turkey will travel to capitals next week

TEHRAN— Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian spoke over the phone with his Turkish counterpart on Monday, saying delegates from the two countries will travel to Tehran and Ankara next week to pursue the expansion of relations in all spheres.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Amir Abdollahian discussed the latest developments in bilateral relations, as well as some regional and international issues of mutual interest, including the Ukraine crisis.

The two sides exchanged greetings on behalf of presidents of the two countries and referred to the upcoming visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Tehran to expand ties more than ever before.

During the conversation, the Iranian foreign minister said bilateral relations are on track to develop.

Elsewhere in the conversation, Amir Abdollahian wished success for Turkey for planning to the Antalya Diplomacy Forum and trilateral talks between the foreign ministers of Turkey, Russia and Ukraine.

He said that a delegation from the Iranian Foreign Ministry will also attend the Antalya Diplomacy Forum.

Iran's foreign minister renewed Tehran's call for a political solution to the war in Ukraine.

“We support a political solution in Ukraine and a political initiative to stop the war and to focus on a diplomatic settlement, and we are ready to help advance this process,” the top Iranian diplomat stressed.

For his part, Cavusoglu emphasized the need for effective and tangible steps in advancing relations between Tehran and Ankara with the support of the two presidents. He called the

ties between the two countries excellent and friendly.

Turkey's top diplomat then explained his country's position on opposing sanctions against countries, stating that sanctions are not the solution to any problem.

The Turkish foreign minister also expressed concern over the escalation of the Ukraine crisis, the possibility of a humanitarian catastrophe and the rising wave of refugees and migrants in the country.

He said the aim of holding the trilateral meeting between the foreign ministers of Russia, Turkey and Ukraine is to establish ceasefire in the region and establish a permanent peace. He said it is very important to improve the situation in the region.

Cavusoglu once again invited the Iranian foreign minister to visit Turkey.



NATO: REDEFINING ALLIANCE WITH STABBING IN THE BACK!



1

On January 14, 1994, The Russian, Ukrainian, and U.S. presidents reaffirm Ukraine's commitment to transfer all nuclear warheads

2

December 5th, 1994, the Budapest Memorandum was Signed.

3

the UK and the United States commit to respecting Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence,

4

Ukraine is named a NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partner in June 2020

6

Although NATO expansionist agenda is regarded as the main reason for the Russian military assault in Ukraine,

7

Both US and NATO have made clear they will not commit to protecting Ukraine against Russia



Following these provocative moves, Russia lunches a military campaign in fear of NATO aggressions.

Iran understands Russia demand for guarantees

TEHRAN – Over the last few days, media and diplomatic circles have been abuzz with inaccurate speculations over how Russia's demand for guarantees would impact the course of the Vienna talks.

The Russian request for guarantees came at a time when talks in Vienna over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), were inching toward the finishing line.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the sanctions the West imposed on Russia over Ukraine will create a problem for the Iran nuclear deal and demanded written guarantees from the U.S. that these sanctions won't impede Russia-Iran cooperation in case the JCPOA is revived.

"We want an answer – a very clear answer – we need a guarantee that these sanctions will not in any way touch the regime of trade-economic and investment relations which is laid down in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," the Russian foreign minister said.

He added, "We have asked for a written guarantee ... that the current process triggered by the United States does not in any way damage our right to free and full trade, economic and



investment cooperation and military-technical cooperation with the Islamic Republic."

Iran quickly understood Russia's reasons for demanding guarantees as Iran itself has been pressing for such guarantees. Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, hinted that the Russian move was intended to secure Russia's interests and thus understandable.

"The positive and negative moves by the countries participating in the Vienna talks are being made with the aim of securing interests and are understandable. The only factor affecting our interaction with the P4+1 is securing the interests of the people of Iran. Thus, we're assessing

new elements that bear on the negotiations and will accordingly seek creative ways to expedite a solution," Shamkhani said on Twitter.

Russia is yet to explain the exact nature of the guarantees it's now demanding. But Russian officials said they want to make sure that their economic cooperation with Iran won't be hindered by sanctions imposed by the West over Ukraine.

The foreign ministers of Iran and Russia discussed the matter over the phone on Monday. During the phone conversation, "it was emphasized that the resuscitation of the JCPOA should ensure that all its participants have equal rights regarding the unhindered development of cooperation in all areas," the Russian embassy in Tehran

said on Twitter.

Russia has a right to worry about sanctions hampering its economic cooperation with Iran. But the possible fallouts emanating from the West's sanctions on Russia are manageable in terms of strengthening Iran-Russia economic ties. Iran and Russia can boost their economic cooperation even if the West continues to slap sanctions on Moscow. They have a shared maritime border in the Caspian Sea, which is one of the rare places in the world that is not under the domination of the West.

Tehran and Moscow can use maritime routes and boost their trade through devising innovative financial mechanisms that do not rely on the U.S. dollar or other Western currencies.

The Russian demands have not turned into a stumbling block and there is plenty of time to discuss and solve them. In fact, currently, the conclusion of Vienna talks is only dependent on the U.S. making political decisions on some outstanding issues that are part of Iran's red lines.

And Iran is unlikely to cross its red lines. On Tuesday, Iranian President Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi made it clear that Tehran will not back down from its red lines.

Russia envoy to Iran deplors 'misunderstandings' over Lavrov's demand for guarantees

TEHRAN – Russian Ambassador to Iran Levan Dzhagaryan has offered explanations over controversial remarks by Russia's top diplomat in which he appeared linking talks in Vienna over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal to developments in Ukraine.

In remarks to Tasnim, the Russian ambassador reacted to the recent remarks from Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who has reportedly said that Moscow wanted a written guarantee from the United States that Russia's trade, investment and military-technical cooperation with Iran under the 2015 nuclear deal would not be hindered in any way by the sanctions imposed over the conflict in Ukraine.

"There has been a misunderstanding," Dzhagaryan said.

Dzhagaryan called on the Iranian people to ignore stories from the foreign media, such as "Radio Yesterday", a sarcastic phrase referring to Radio Farda (tomorrow) -the Persian branch of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty external broadcast service.

The envoy said the Russian government will talk about the issue with Iran, adding, "We will provide the Iranian side with the necessary explanations through diplomatic resources. We will officially explain the issue to the Iranian friends."

Lavrov has said the sanctions the West imposed on Russia over Ukraine will create a problem for the Iran nuclear deal and demanded written guarantees from the U.S. that these sanctions won't impede Russia-Iran cooperation in case the JCPOA is revived.

"We want an answer – a very clear answer – we need a guarantee that these sanctions will not in any way touch the regime of trade-economic and investment relations which is laid down in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," the Russian foreign minister said.

Iran won't back down from red lines: president

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi underlined on Tuesday that Iran won't back down from its red lines in the talks in Vienna over reviving the 2015 nuclear deal.

Addressing a formal session of the Assembly of Experts, the president said, "We have not backed down and will not back down from any of [our] red lines."

He pointed to the nature of the Islamic Republic and then touched on the Vienna talks.

"The power of the Islamic Republic is based on the support of the people and their presence in various arenas, and social capital and public trust are the most important components of power, authority and national security of the country," the president said, according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

Raisi stated that the "popular administration" has announced that it expects the people to do the main task of creating change in the country.

The president refers to his

government as popular administration.

Emphasizing that the declaration of the second step of the Islamic revolution is the document and the basis of change in the government, the president stated, "The main axis of the activities of the popular administration is to establish justice and eliminate backwardness in this field."

Noting that that his government seeks to develop relations with all countries in the world, Ayatollah Raisi refuted claims that the government is only focusing on the Eastern world.

Referring to the significant increase in trade with neighboring countries, Raisi said, "Some accuse us of looking one-dimensionally to the East and say that today, as in the past, the government is looking to the East. This is not true, and the government seeks to develop relations with all countries and create a balance in the country's foreign policy."

Ayatollah Raisi went on to describe the government's actions in significantly reducing the mortality rate of COVID-19,

and said that concerns about the state of basic commodity reserves were another concern of the government at the beginning of its activity and said, "After eliminating the concerns about the stock of basic goods, the government has focused on budgeting and liquidity control, and achieved good results in this area as well."

Ayatollah Raisi added, "The budget bill for 1401 was prepared without a budget deficit and taking into account the realization of 8% economic growth, while in previous years the average economic growth of the country was less than one percent and about 4 tenths of a percent."

Iran's next year, 1401, will begin on March 21.

The president raised the question of whether it is possible to achieve the goal of 8% economic growth or not, he stated, "According to the 1401 budget document, if expenditures are controlled, revenues increase and cash flow is directed towards production."

"Naturally, when large corporations

remarks from Lavrov, saying Russia's approach toward the Vienna talks has been constructive.

"We have noticed Lavrov's comments in the media and are waiting to hear about its details through diplomatic channels," the spokesman said, according to Tasnim.

As regards the ongoing negotiations in Vienna over the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Khatibzadeh emphasized that Iran's peaceful nuclear cooperation, including the peaceful collaboration with Russia and China, should not be limited or affected by any sanctions.

"As of today, Russia's approach to achieving a collective agreement in Vienna has been constructive," the Iranian diplomat said.

"As the negotiators of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we are not astonished by the stances of countries, either the countries that have announced certain stances before or (those whose stances) we are hearing these days," he added.

Khatibzadeh said what should be taken into account in the course of the Vienna negotiations are the words and deeds combined.

The new Russian demand comes as the Vienna talks are inching toward a conclusion day after which the reimplementation of the resuscitated nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), will begin.

The draft of the possible agreement has been prepared and only a few things remain unresolved. Some of Iran's demands, particularly those pertaining to verification measures and guarantees have been incorporated into the draft agreement.

The agreement will be implemented in six phases, with Iran having weeks to verify the lifting of U.S. sanctions without having to implement its commitments under the revived deal.

SPORTS

Iranian sprinter Fasihi wins silver at Belgrade Meeting

TEHRAN – Iranian woman sprinter Farzaneh Fasihi claimed a silver medal at the 2022 Belgrade Open Meeting.

She finished in second place the 60 meters event with a time of 7.31 seconds.

Italian sprinter Zaynab Dosso won the gold medal, clocking 7.21 and Slovakian Monikka Weigertova seized the bronze with a time of 7.38.

Fasihi became the Iran's ninth woman to compete at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

She represented Iran in the women's 100 meters at 2020 Tokyo.

Iran fall short against Kazakhstan at Asian Women's Junior Handball

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Kazakhstan 30-24 in their opening match of the 2022 Asian Women's Junior Handball Championship on Tuesday.

The Persian are scheduled to play India on Thursday.

The Championship is be 16th edition of the championship scheduled to be held from Mar. 7 to 14 in Almaty, Kazakhstan under the aegis of Asian Handball Federation.

Kazakhstan, Iran, Uzbekistan, India and Thailand compete in the edition.

It's the fifth time in history that the championship is be organized by the Kazakhstan Handball Federation.

It also acts as the qualification tournament for the 2022 Women's Junior World Handball Championship, with top two teams from the championship directly qualifying for the event to be held in Slovenia.

Previously, the championship was supposed to be held in Uzbekistan, but in December 2021, AHF decided to move the event to Kazakhstan due to unavoidable circumstances.

Fans to be allowed into stadium for Tehran derby

TEHRAN – Iran's Sports and Youth Minister Hamid Sajadi has said that the fans will be permitted to enter the stadium for the Tehran derby.

Persepolis will meet Esteghlal on March 17 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Matchweek 23 of Iran Professional League (IPL).

According to Sajadi, 10,000 Persepolis fand and 10,000 Esteghlal fans will be allowed to enter the stadium.

It will require proof of vaccination for anyone entering the stadium.

Masks, social distancing and contact tracing measures will all be in place for the fans in the stadium.

FIVB opens bidding process for relocated 2022 Volleyball World C'ship

TEHRAN – Volleyball World has launched the accelerated bidding process for the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship 2022 that was removed from Russia due to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Deadline for bids to be submitted is Monday 14 March 2022.

Volleyball World expects substantial interest for this opportunity to host the best men's volleyball teams in the world.

All National Federations and potential host nation(s) are invited to submit their bid to host the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship 2022.

The FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship will see 24 nations compete for the ultimate goal of becoming the world champion.

Following the approval of the FIVB Board of Administration and in consultation with media partners and key stakeholders, the competition formula for the event has been optimized. The new formula foresees maintaining the round robin format of the pool phase with six pools of four teams.

However, a total of sixteen teams – the top two teams of each pool and four best third-placed teams – will then qualify for the knockout phase of the competition. This knockout phase will feature the round of 16, quarterfinals, semi-finals and finals. As such, there will be a total of 52 matches played over the course of the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship.

The adapted event formula allows for the consideration of multiple hosts for the pool phase, up to two hosts for the round of 16 and quarterfinals, and a maximum of one host for the semi-finals and finals.

Esteghlal complete signing of Brazilian defender Raphael Silva

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football club announced the signing of Brazilian defender Raphael Silva da Arruda on Tuesday.

The 29-year-old defender has penned a six-month contract with Esteghlal.

Born in Cuiaba, Brazil, Silva started his senior career in 2010 with Rio Preto Esporte Clube, in Paulista A2. On 19 July 2013, he joined Serie A club Associacao Atletica Ponte Preta.

Silva has also played in Portuguese team Boavist and Saudi Arabian club Al-Faisaly.

He has joined Esteghlal to strengthen the Blues' defense on their way to winning Iran football league title after nine years.

Iran runner-up at 2022 IIHF World Championship Division IV

TEHRAN – The Iranian team finished in second place in the 2022 IIHF World Championship Division IV.

Iran lost to Kyrgyzstan 13-1 in their first match but earned three wins in a row against Singapore (5-2), Kuwait (9-2) and Malaysia (7-3).

The tournament is being played in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from March 3 to 8, 2022.

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

Ex-Iran coach Frank O'Farrell dies

TEHRAN – Former Iran football team coach Frank O'Farrell died at the age of 94 on Monday.

The Irishman led Iran to Asian Games success in 1974, and set them on the road to Asian Cup success two years later and, ultimately, World Cup qualification in 1978.

In January 2006, O'Farrell was invited to Iran to attend a ceremony in honor of Persepolis' former players, along with Alan Rogers.

The former West Ham player, started his coaching career at Weymouth in 1961 and also coached Leicester City, Manchester United and Cardiff City.

Tehran Times extends deepest sympathy to O'Farrell's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

Over 1,900 idle industrial units revived since last March



From page 1 ► Sanctions have caused problems for financial exchanges and the export of goods to other countries, he said, adding, "The negative effects of coronavirus pandemic on various parts of the country, including industry, are not hidden from anyone, and the economic growth of some countries has reached below zero during this period."

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

Also, as announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi

Niaraki, over 6,500 new industrial units were established across the country during the past year which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

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

More than 1,500 idle units revived in past year

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

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

Electronic permitting system a major step to develop businesses

By Mahnaz Abdi

In recent years, policymakers have taken steps to facilitate business activities by binding ministries and executive bodies to remove additional regulations and pave the way for economic activities, but what has happened in practice has been the reproduction of rules and regulations, which has made the condition more difficult for those active in the economic sector and the managers of enterprises.

Amir Sayyah, the chairman of the Center for Monitoring and Improving Business Environment, said on Tuesday: "Our executive bodies have been accustomed for many years to send their agents to the people's place of business, and the agent observes the business and announces that the people can or cannot work, but this process must end."

"Today, we see that some organizations require several paper permits for a business that until the applicant can get the last permit, the validity of previous permits expires and has to go through the route again", he lamented.

To remove such limitation, the electronic permitting system has been launched and according to the law, March 9 is the deadline for all organizations to connect to



the national permitting system, as the issuance of permits for the start of businesses will be electronic since this date.

According to Sayyah, as of March 9, no organization has the right to require in-person application for permits, and every permit must be electronic.

In fact, the implementation of electronic permitting is a new chapter in business environment with deregulation and facilitation of the permitting process.

As reported, at the beginning of the electronic permitting project, most of the organizations did not cooperate in this field, but now all of them are seriously trying to have access to it.

With the launch of this system, applicants no longer need to apply in person to start a business and can obtain the relevant permits

electronically.

Also, before the approval of the mentioned system, it was not clear how many permit applicants each organization has, but with this measure, the amount of application or the number of permits issued for each organization can be seen in the national permitting portal.

In addition, prior to this decision, applicants were not sufficiently aware of the requirements for starting any business and were confused, but with this action, they can access all the necessary conditions for obtaining a business start permit at once.

On the other hand, by connecting to this system, the entire permitting process is reviewed and monitored, and the distance between the application registration and the time of

receipt of the permit is clear and transparent.

As stated by a board member of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), launching the electronic permitting system is a major step to develop businesses.

If permits are issued in an integrated and online manner, it will be the most important step in business development and job creation, Nasser Riyahi has noted.

Stating that nowhere in the world there is as many permits as in our country, he said: "In the world, someone who has the necessary qualifications and specifications creates a business and inspections are done while the business is running."

Meanwhile, highlighting the importance of launching the electronic permitting system, the chairman of the Center for Monitoring and Improving the Business Environment divided the most important task of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs into two parts and said: "The most important task of the ministry is that first, businesses are easily established and get permits quickly; and secondly, they develop fast and be able to grow bigger and bigger; as the older the businesses get, the more they hire, and the greater the economic growth."

Transit of goods via Iran up 70% in 11 months

TEHRAN- Transit of goods through Iran rose 70 percent in the first 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-February 19, 2022), as compared to the same period in the past year, according to the head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA).

Speaking at the 32nd meeting of the TCCIMA board of representatives, Masoud Khansari put the value of the goods transited via Iran in the said 11 months at \$12 billion, Mehr News Agency reported on Tuesday.

According to the official, the country's total non-oil trade stood at \$90 billion in the mentioned period which was also 38 percent more than the figure for the previous year.

Khansari said Iran can become a maritime and aviation transport hub in the region considering the country's huge capacities in this regard.

"Iran can be both a maritime and an aviation transportation hub [in the region] and a bridge between east and west as well as north and south," he said.

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



the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

In the south of Iran is the Persian Gulf, which is home to the world's major oil-producing countries. This region is considered the energy bottleneck of the world.

In the north of Iran is the Caspian Sea, which is the best bridge between Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan and can play an important role in trade between these countries.

The country, on the other hand, borders Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan to the west and east.

In other words, it can be said that Iran communicates with 15 countries through land and water borders, and at the same time it can

act as a bridge between these countries (with each other and other parts of the world).

However, the geopolitical potentials of the country have not been recognized fully when it comes to transit.

Back in February, Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Alireza Moghadasi said: "Based on the policies of the resistance economy and the fifth and sixth national development plans of the country, every year we should have witnessed a 10-percent growth in transit via the country, which unfortunately in recent years, after proper growth, we had a decreasing trend in transit."

"In the Iranian year 1393 (March 2014-March 2015), the transit of goods via Iran reached more than 13 million tons, after which not only we did not have growth in this due, but in 1398 and 1399, this amount fell to 7.5 million tons", he added.

"Fortunately, transit has returned to its growth path in 1400 [the present Iranian year], and is expected to reach 12.4 million tons by the end of this year", Moghadasi further stated.

ECO chamber of commerce's 19th general assembly meeting held virtually

TEHRAN – The 19th general assembly meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) chamber of commerce and industries was held virtually on Tuesday, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

The event was attended by the heads of ECO members' chambers of commerce as well as the senior members of the mentioned chambers.

Speaking in this online gathering, ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie said: "ECO member chambers need to adapt their business models to existing risks and reduce the effects of the coronavirus crisis on the regional economy by developing e-commerce and by accelerating the implementation of regional agreements."

Noting that the Economic Cooperation Organization is located at the crossroads of east-west and north-south corridors, the official noted that the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) corridor, which connects the Indian subcontinent to Eastern Europe, is located in the ECO region.

"The Kyrgyzstan-Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Iran corridor and the Bandar Abbas-Ashgabat-Almaty corridor and other important corridors are also located in the region and connect global markets from the Far East to Europe and from Russia to the Indian subcontinent," Shafeie added.

Undoubtedly, the implementation of the ITI Corridor project will help reduce transportation costs and time, and will generate revenue in trade and boost economic cooperation



between ECO member countries, he stated.

Shafeie stressed that the ECO region, with its large population and abundant economic potential, should have a larger share of the global economy.

"Existing statistics show that the organization's trade volume with the world is about \$710 billion, of which only 7.8 percent has been the share of intra-regional trade," he regretted.

According to the official, foreign direct investment (FDI) in member countries, according

to the latest available statistics, is only 1.7 percent of the total FDI in the world, which is a very low and far from the expectations and economic potential of the region.

Referring to the recent political tensions and the Coronavirus crisis, which has led to serious risks to trade and investment of ECO member countries, the ICCIMA head said: "ECO member chambers should try to adapt their business models to the existing risks and put them in use. They need to recognize themselves as representatives of small and medium-sized industries, and overcome existing problems by providing services to these industries, as well as developing e-commerce solutions, and accelerating the implementation of regional agreements."

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 first market's index fell 6,158 points, and the second market's index dropped 7,749 points.

TEDPIX lost 7,000 points (less than one percent) to 1.281 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

TEDPIX loses 6,000 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 6,263 points to 1.336 million on Tuesday.

As reported, over 6.955 billion securities worth 47.351 trillion rials (about \$189.4 million) were traded at the TSE.

Iranian market needs 1m-1.2m cars every year, says official

TEHRAN – The secretary of the Iranian Automobile Importers Association, Mehdi Dadfar, has said the country needs about one million-1.2 million cars every year, noting that the annual imports of 70,000 automobiles seems logical, IRIB reported on Tuesday.

The official mentioned the parliament's recent decision on allowing the imports of cars into the country, saying: "After four years, the government and parliament have come to the conclusion that the needs of the country's car market could be met through a combination of production and imports, which is a turning point in this industry."

"There is no doubt that the country's two major car producers have total control over the demand in the domestic market and according to the amount of production, their supply accounts for 95 percent of the market, but when the needs of the market cannot be met with domestic production, we must do so by importing cars," Dadfar stated.

The official noted that the support for domestic production should be in the form of tax exemptions or reductions in the share of social security payments, not by banning imports and disrupting the market when the demand is higher than domestic production.

\$18b to be allocated for development of refining industry

TEHRAN – Head of National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Company (NIOEC) Farhad Ahmadi said on Tuesday that 16.5 billion euros (about \$18 billion) of new resources will be allocated for the development of the country's refining industry, Shana reported.

According to Ahmadi, the mentioned budget is allocated for new refinery and petro-refinery projects across the country as well as the construction of new pipelines for the transmission of petroleum products.

"In the coming years, the implementation of several new refining projects in the oil industry have been put on the agenda, for which about 16.5 billion euros (equivalent to 18 billion dollars) will be allocated," the official told the press.

The NIOEC head mentioned the new 300,000-barrel oil refinery of Shahid Ghasem Soleimani with \$11.5 billion of investment, Khuzestan refinery with an initial investment of \$4.5 billion, implementing the second phase of the Abadan refinery's development project with €1.7 billion as some of the mentioned projects and added: "In financing the Shahid Soleimani refinery project, we will use various methods, including bank resources and public funds."

"In this project [Ghasem Soleimani Refinery], we will use the maximum capacity of domestic



contractors and manufacturers, and also this project is going to play an important role in the development of domestic industries and job creation in the country's refining and oil industry," Ahmadi said.

He further mentioned the latest status of his company's ongoing projects, saying: "Nine refining projects are underway in the company, which will be completed within the next six months."

Emphasizing NIOEC's maximum support of domestic oil industry equipment manufacturers, the official said: "Over the past four months, domestic manufacturers have been participating in seven projects being implemented by the company, and the equipment required for the company's new pipeline projects will also be provided by domestic manufacturers."

Impact of Russian sanctions on global markets

From page 1 ► Europe is already suffering from soaring energy prices that are expected to hit consumers the hardest. Gas prices in Europe hit record highs of almost \$3,900 per 1,000 cubic meters while the price of Brent crude oil surpassed \$130 per barrel for the first time in a decade.

Over the past week, U.S. gasoline prices soared by 11% to their highest levels since late July 2008. On Monday, American motorists at the gas pumps suffered a new all-time record of \$5.288 a gallon in California. Experts have speculated that the price could rise further in the near future if the U.S. and Europe ban Russian gas imports.

This could effectively harm the Democrats in the mid-term elections as voters tend to put gasoline prices among other issues at the top of their agenda at the ballot boxes.

Speaking to journalists Novak has also warned that European officials are “once again seeking to put all the blame for their own recent energy policy shortfalls on Russia,” adding that “Russia has nothing to do with the current price hike on market volatility.”

The deputy PM noted for many decades Russia has been a “reliable partner” for Europe, saying, Moscow has been supplying European nations with roughly 40% of their gas needs.

As of 2021, Russian energy supplies accounted for 17% of global natural gas consumption and 40% of Western European consumption.

Higher oil prices also have a knock-on effect on pretty much everything from consumer spending to the delivery of goods and basic services people rely on a daily basis.

For example, U.S. wheat futures have neared an all-time high on concerns that global supply shipments will be disrupted until the Russia-Ukraine conflict is resolved. European wheat has already hit record highs as more Western sanctions against Russia sparked concerns about exports from the Black Sea region. Russia and Ukraine account for at least 29% of wheat exports.

The German Finance Minister Christian Lindner says Berlin, which is Europe's largest economy, is not currently planning to stop importing Russian oil, gas, and coal but is keeping the option open.

Last month, the German government decided to freeze the certification of Nord Stream 2 which was supposed to pipe gas



from Russia to Germany.

Moscow is now considering a retaliatory measure with Novak saying “In connection with unfounded accusations against Russia regarding the energy crisis in Europe and the imposition of a ban on Nord Stream 2, we have every right to take a matching decision and impose an embargo on gas pumping through the Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline.”

The top Russian official says Moscow has so far not taken a decision on Nord Stream 1.

Experts say Germany's economy will be the hardest hit among European nations if Russian oil is sanctioned.

Inflation in Europe and America has already hit record levels and analysts say a situation could unfold with high inflation, high unemployment, weakened global growth with stagflation a very likely scenario.

The U.S. and it's Western allies are considering a ban on Russian oil over its military action in Ukraine which Moscow describes as a special operation.

One country that has been very vocal in its opposition to the sanctions regime imposed on Russia has been China.

The Chinese foreign minister described his country's relationship with Russia as “ironclad” as Beijing continues to refuse to denounce the Russian military operation despite growing pressure from the West.

Wang Yi says Russia was his country's “most important strategic partner” and that ties with Moscow constituted “one of the most crucial bilateral relationships in the world.”

Beijing says sanctions create new

problems and threaten a political solution to the conflict. Wang told reporters in Beijing “no matter how perilous the international landscape, we will maintain our strategic focus and promote the development of a comprehensive China-Russia partnership in the new era. The friendship between the two peoples is ironclad.”

Meanwhile, the Russian foreign ministry says sending foreign weapons to Ukraine will lead to a “global collapse”. Foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also warned that the West sending mercenaries and military equipment to Ukraine would cause a catastrophic development.

As fighting rages on, the UN's refugee agency says more than 17 million Ukrainians have so far fled Ukraine. Poland, which has the largest Ukrainian community in Central Europe, has received more than one million Ukrainian refugees since the conflict began on February 24.

The Polish border guard service posted on social media that “this is a million human tragedies, a million people banished from their homes by the war”. The same guards have been accused of racism by separating black refugees fleeing Ukraine from white refugees in two separate lines.

UN aid chief Martin Griffiths has called on all parties to allow safe passage for civilians leaving areas of active hostilities in Ukraine in the direction they choose. Briefing the UN Security Council, Griffiths says his office has sent a team to Moscow to work on better humanitarian civil-military coordination.

At the same Security Council session, Vasily Nebenzya, Russia's ambassador to the UN, announced

that his country will open humanitarian corridors to allow civilians to evacuate from different Ukrainian cities, including the capital Kyiv and the port city of Mariupol.

The Russian and Ukrainian envoys at the Security Council meeting accused each other of not allowing civilians to evacuate.

According to the Atomic Energy Agency, a new nuclear research facility in Ukraine has reportedly been damaged by shelling. There have been no increase in radiation detected near the damaged facility in north-eastern Ukraine.

The agency did sound the alarm with Director General Rafael Grossi saying “we have already had several episodes compromising safety at Ukraine's nuclear sites.” The agency is working to ensure nuclear safety during the conflict. “We must take action to help avert a nuclear accident in Ukraine that could have severe consequences for public health and the environment. We can't afford to wait,” Grossi said.

The Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov says Moscow could stop all operations in a matter of minutes if Ukraine ceased fighting, amended its constitution to declare neutrality, and recognized Russia's annexation of Crimea and the independence of the breakaway eastern regions in Donbas.

The U.S. and NATO have been blamed for triggering and trying to prolong the crisis by promising the former Soviet Union member NATO membership, not implementing the Minsk agreement, and sending dangerous weapons to Russian borders before abandoning Ukraine once the fighting broke out.

Russian forces widen offensive on Ukraine

From page 1 ► In a televised speech on February 28, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Iran supports stopping the war in Ukraine but blamed U.S. wrong policies for the root cause of the crisis.

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian stated that Russia's Ukraine attack was “rooted in NATO”.

Relations between Ukraine and NATO started in 1992. Ukraine applied to begin a NATO Membership Action Plan in 2008. Membership was shelved by Ukraine following the 2010 presidential election in which Victor Yanukovich came out as victor. He preferred to keep the country non-aligned. Following a coup, Yanukovich fled the country in February 2014.

Foad Izadi, an associate professor at the University of Tehran and a political analyst, commented on the telephone that U.S. politicians, including Senator John McCain helped bring about the 2014 coup in which a significant number of Russian speaking Ukrainians in the east of the country were killed. “UN data estimates a total of 14,000 people were killed, out of which eighty percent were from eastern Ukraine.”

Izadi added that during the “last eight years the U.S. created the mess that led to the Russian invasion.”

Following the 2014 coup, the interim government of A.Y. Yatsenyuk made NATO membership a priority.

Eventually, a new constitution for Ukraine was written on February 21, 2019 where Ukraine's membership of the EU and NATO are enshrined.

Cuban missile crisis

Ukraine's NATO membership scenario has similarities to the 1962 “Cuban Missile Crisis” when the U.S. would not give in to having ballistic missiles pointed in its direction from Cuba, just 90 miles off the coast of Florida. The 13-day



standoff between the former Soviet Union and the U.S. had the world at standstill as Washington kept all its forces around the world on alert.

Eventually, good sense prevailed when the two sides reached a deal. The Soviet Union asked the U.S. to remove its Jupiter missiles from Turkey as Soviet territories were within range. In exchange, then Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev agreed to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba.

Now the threats exchanged by Russia and NATO have taken a dangerous turn as President

Vladimir Putin put Russia's nuclear forces on a high alert status. Amid all the escalating tensions the Biden Administration on March 2 postponed long-range missile test.

During the conflicts' early stages, Iran Air announced an extraordinary flight repatriating some 100 Iranian students residing in Ukraine via Poland. Iran's ambassador to Ukraine, Manouchehr Moradi, paid a visit to the shelter of Iranian students still remaining in Ukraine, reported the Tehran Times.

Around the same time the Foreign Ministry rejected closure of Iranian embassy in Kyiv.

Facing a continuous barrage of attacks, including assassinations and unprecedented sanctions, Iran has been looking eastward for trade. Raisi's recent two-day visit to Russia was to boost bilateral trade. Also on the table during the visit was the renewal of a 20-year comprehensive cooperation agreement that

expired in 2021.

Last year Iran announced the 25-year comprehensive strategic agreement with China. This accord will soon enter implementation stage. Amir Abdollahian, in his first visit to China as foreign minister in January, met with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi.

Meanwhile, the negotiations on reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear accord (JCPOA) has been dragging on for months, punctuated by a long gap last year with the election of President Ebrahim Raisi. Washington has declared that it will continue to engage with Russia in Vienna over Iran's nuclear program.

On the impact of this conflict on the JCPOA negotiations, Izadi said: “It is not in the interest of Russia and China to see U.S. sanctions on Iran. We don't like to see war. Since it has happened it will not have a negative impact on the JCPOA negotiations.”

Economic fallout

Some of the world's main grain supplies are routed through the Black Sea, which borders both Russia and Ukraine, two major wheat producers. Military action could disrupt both grain production and distribution, raising food costs for consumers across the world.

Russia supplies about a third of Europe's gas, much of which is currently shipped through Ukraine. Any disruption at either end of that supply chain would force European countries to look elsewhere for fuel, most likely raising world oil prices.

Crude oil prices spiked ten percent up to over \$112 per barrel on March 2 and continued to reach more than \$125 a barrel on March 7. Most of the Russian seaborne crude exports have become untouchable for buyers following sanctions on Russia.

Reinstating the JCPOA will inject the global market with a new source of oil, pushing the prices in the opposite direction. Another incentive for Western powers to make the needed compromise to reinstate JCPOA.

Republicans will quit any nuclear deal with Iran, scholar predicts

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – An executive director and principal research scientist at the Center for International Studies predicts that Republicans will pull Washington out of any possible deal with Iran inked in Vienna.

While indirect talks between Iran and the United States on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal are close to bearing a fruit, some issues remained unsolved including guarantees that Washington will never abandon the deal again.

Many political analysts believe that America under a Republican administration won't hesitate to exit any deal with Iran.

“If Republicans regain the White House in three years, they will withdraw,” John Tirman tells the Tehran Times.

Asked about mechanism that would ensure Iran in regard with U.S. commitment to its obligations under a nuclear deal, Tirman says “There really isn't one.”

In a letter to Biden last month, 33 Republican senators said they were ready to use “the full range of options and leverage available” to ensure the White House sought approval from Congress and “that the implementation of any agreement will be severe if not terminally hampered if you do not.”

While supporters of the nuclear deal, including Democratic lawmakers and administration officials, believe Republicans won't be able to muster enough votes to stop a revival of the accord, the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action will remain uncertain due to Republican-Democrat disputes.

Despite these essential questions, talks for reviving the Iran nuclear deal are underway in Vienna.

“The two sides are negotiating seriously and there are multiple reports of nearing an agreement. If they can't reach an accord, the nuclear agreement is dead,” the American author underlines.

However, the world is facing unprecedented developments like the Ukraine war that can put world peace as well as the course of



the Vienna talks at risk.

Tirman believes that the Russia-NATO conflict can deal a hard blow to the Iran nuclear deal.

“If Russia uses the revived JCPOA and the trade provisions as a way to circumvent war-related sanctions on Russia that will be an enormous blow.”

Reportedly, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Saturday that Moscow is demanding guarantees from the U.S. before backing the Iran nuclear deal, citing the current wave of Western sanctions against Russia.

Lavrov added there are “problems that have appeared recently from the point of view of Russia's interests,” due to concerns over the terms of the deal concerning Moscow's involvement in the civilian nuclear sector in Iran and arms sales to Tehran.

Despite efforts by Israel to hamper a deal between Iran and Western powers, the nuclear talks have covered most issues and if Tehran and Washington agree, this document can go into effect.

However, there are concerns that Israel may resort to sabotage acts in the aftermath of the agreement between Iran and 5+1.

Asked about Israel's possible reaction to the success of the Vienna talks, Tirman expects that “sabotage is more likely than bombing. But they will do something to hinder Iran's nuclear program.”

Regarding the ramifications of reviving the JCPOA for the region and the world, he says “I don't expect it to change much. And there will be consequences we can't easily predict.”

Xi Jinping calls for restraint in Ukraine, says China is ‘pained’ to see war reignited in Europe

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday called for “maximum restraint” in Ukraine and said China is “pained to see the flames of war reignited in Europe,” state media reported, in his strongest statement to date on the conflict.

Xi, speaking at a virtual meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, said the three countries should jointly support peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV reported.

The Chinese leader described the situation in Ukraine as “worrying” and said the priority should be preventing it from escalating or “spinning out of control,” CCTV cited him as saying.

He also said France and Germany should make efforts to reduce negative impacts of the crisis, and expressed concern about the impact of sanctions on the stability of global finance, energy supplies, transportation and supply chains.

China, which has refused to condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine or to call them an invasion, has repeatedly expressed its opposition to what it describes

as illegal sanctions on Russia.

China's friendship with Russia, strengthened last month when President Vladimir Putin attended the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics on the same day that the countries declared a “no limits” strategic partnership, has become awkward for China as the war in Ukraine escalates.

On Monday, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said China had more power than any other country to halt Russia's invasion of Ukraine, declaring it was “up to China” to demonstrate its commitment to global peace at a “hinge point in history”.

“No country will have a bigger impact on concluding this terrible war in Ukraine than China,” Morrison said.

“So long as they have a bet each way on this, then I fear the bloodshed will continue.”

Moscow describes its actions in Ukraine as a “special operation” to disarm its neighbor and unseat leaders it calls neo-Nazis. Ukraine and its Western allies call this a baseless pretext for an invasion to conquer a country of 44 million people.

(Source: ABC)

Yemeni minister: U.S. behind siege of Yemen; no humanity seen from West

Yemen's information minister says the United States is responsible for the crippling blockade on Yemen and slammed Western powers' response to the suffering of Muslim nations for lacking humanity.

Speaking to al-Masirah TV channel, Dhaifallah al-Shami stressed that the policy of starving the Yemenis and besieging them will fail as they will not sit idly by. “The siege of the Yemeni nation is an entirely American decision. Today, the Yemeni nation warns all the arrogant powers that it is moving towards its great options,” he said.

“Our nation does not accept to die of starvation and siege. It has many options to defeat the siege.”

Shami further emphasized that the Yemenis are “steadfast and patient,” and that it is not possible to kill them by confiscating ships carrying oil derivatives to the Arab country.

“The humanity that the Western societies talk about only exists in their own societies. Muslim nations do not see their humanity and do not hear its voice,” he added. A military coalition led by Saudi Arabia launched the war on Yemen in March 2015. In addition, Riyadh has also imposed an inhumane siege on the country, cutting off the Yemeni population's access to the outside world via land, air, and sea.

The blockade includes the closure of the port of Hudaydah, which is a lifeline for millions of Yemenis.

The invading forces have also seized ships carrying critically needed petroleum products and prevented

them from entering the port, causing a fuel shortage that has knocked out generators and water pumps in hospitals and disrupted aid supplies across Yemen.

On Monday, several Yemeni cities and provinces, including the capital Sana'a, witnessed mass protests in condemnation of the siege. The rallies were codenamed “blockade of fuel is an American decision, Yemen Storm operation is our choice.”

Meanwhile, Yemen's Supreme Political Council reiterated its commitment to the will of the Yemeni nation in the face of the enemy.

“The current stage requires us to unite and firmly stand against the options that the enemy wants to impose on us using the dirty tools of hunger and intimidation,” it said in a statement.

“The enemy's pressure will not deter us from taking action to end this injustice. We must also pay more attention to the elements of power that our people have at their disposal,” the statement added.

Backed by the U.S. and major European powers, the Saudis waged the war with the objective of reinstalling the former Riyadh-friendly regime in Yemen and crushing the Ansarullah resistance movement, which has been running state affairs in the absence of an effective government in Yemen. The war has stopped well shy of all of its goals, despite killing tens of thousands of Yemenis and turning entire Yemen into the scene of the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

(Source: Press TV)

Ambassador: Iran ski resorts, rail routes attractive to Chinese vacationers



From page 1 ► “So far, steps have been taken to examine the Chinese tourism market, but today the (essential) need is to implement executive measures based on [our] fault detection and macro planning,” the official noted.

Insignificant numbers of Chinese restaurants, Chinese-language guides, or even inappropriate lodging facilities are deemed to be among the main reasons why Chinese arrivals in Iran fall short of expectations.

Experts believe that part of this failure comes from inside Iran because Chinese restaurants are scanty across the country while the cuisine is of high importance for the majority of the Chinese people. Moreover, Chinese travelers need fluent Chinese-language tour guides whose numbers are limited in the Islamic Republic.

Last year, Tehran's ex-ambassador to Beijing said Iran was seeking to become a tourist destination for millions of potential travelers from China as the two countries

are working on a 25-year comprehensive cooperation plan that includes boosting relations in the field of tourism.

Speaking in the TV program, Mehdi Safari reminded some 200 million Chinese tourists to visit different countries annually, adding “according to this agreement Iran will become one of the tourist destinations for Chinese travelers so that Iran can attract one to two million Chinese tourists to the country.”

In 2019, the Islamic Republic waived the visa requirement for Chinese nationals willing to visit the country. The decision was made to attract more foreign tourists to the country; however, it was a unilateral measure, because Iranian tourists visiting China still need visas.

Home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, with historical and urban settlements dating back to 7000 BC, Iran is expecting to increase the number of tourism arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million by 2025.

Tehran-Baku flights resume after two-year halt

TEHRAN – Iran's flag carrier IranAir resumed its once-weekly roundtrip Tehran-Baku flights after a suspension that was prolonged for about two years due to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

According to an announcement by the airline, the flight departs from Imam Khomeini International Airport at 2:00 p.m. on Monday. The return flight leaves Heydar Aliyev International Airport the same day at 4:55 p.m. local time.

Azerbaijani officials have said travelers over 18 years of age who have a vaccination card in English with a QR Code or those who received their last vaccine shot in the past 14 days can travel to Azerbaijan, IRNA reported.

The Iranian airline says passengers must hold a negative PCR test in English with a QR Code upon arrival in Azerbaijan, the report added.

Furthermore, On March 4, the low-cost Azerbaijani airline Buta Airways began its Baku-Tehran service, which was suspended due to the pandemic. Its flights from Heydar Aliyev International



Airport to Tehran Airport and back are operated once a week – on Fridays.

Only passengers who are allowed to fly under the current epidemiological restrictions will be accepted on these flights. Passengers traveling on this route should ensure that their COVID-19 test results are valid for 72 hours before departure.

Citizens of Iran, upon entering the territory of Azerbaijan, must provide a valid document confirming the full course of vaccination against COVID-19, as well as take PCR testing for coronavirus infection.

Help! Tang-e Chogan bas-reliefs, majestic treasures of Sassanid art, under invasion of lichens, fungi, and leaky rocks

TEHRAN – Some of Tang-e Chogan bas-relief carvings, celebrated as majestic treasures of Sassanid art, are under threat of complete destruction due to lack of proper maintenance and natural causes such as lichens, fungi, and the leakage of water through the rock-carved reliefs.

For years, lichens and vegetation growing in the cavities and cracks are gradually destroying these irreplaceable antiquities at Tang-e Chogan, situated in the ruined ancient city of Bishapur in southern Iran. And now, the leakage of water has accelerated such destruction.

“The sixth relief of Tang-e Chogan has severely been damaged and the water flowing from it has not been restrained yet,” Mehr news agency said on Tuesday.

The news agency had earlier reported about the chaotic situation of the sixth relief, which has been seriously damaged.

As mentioned by the Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies, in a report published in Persian media outlets in March 2010, experts warned about the growth of the various types of fungi, lichen and plants on the stone structures at the UNESCO-registered Persepolis as well.

Lichens and vegetation growth are clearly visible on all six bas-reliefs. However, no proper action has been taken to solve the serious problems of that massive work of art.

“Unfortunately, this bas-relief (the No. six) suffers from a water

flow penetrated its surface from behind the mountain walls, causing lichens and massive erosion,” Mehr quoted a cultural heritage expert, Mohsen Abbaspur, as saying on Tuesday.

Other [neighboring] bas-reliefs are naturally exposed to light, wind, rain that accelerate their erosion, he added.

“To prevent the complete destruction of these valuable historical monuments, first of all, an all-inclusive scientific study should be done concerning the stone layers behind the reliefs. In that case, according to scientific conclusions, restoration of the outer shell should be carried out.”

“Otherwise, any action, whether strengthening or restoration, will be practically unstable, and over time, we will again see the outflow and effect of water on the inner and outer shells of bas-relief carvings,” the expert explained.

The gorge of Tang-e Chogan was once a royal site of the traditional polo game dedicated to Sasanian kings and courtiers. It is home to six reliefs related to Shapur I and Bahram I and II. There is also a large statue of Shapur I, which is six meters high, located in the Shapur Cave, at a height of about 700 meters from the river bed.

However, Tang-e Chogan embraces larger and more



crowded reliefs than any other Sassanid era reliefs, with three of them being more than 30 square meters in size and a body of more than 30 persons in each relief. So the reliefs of this gorge are unique in Iran and only the ancient relief of Khosrow Parviz's hunting scene in Taq-e Bostan in Kermanshah is comparable to them.

The first relief, which is larger and more crowded than any other relief, is a scene celebrating Shapur I's victory over the Roman Empire. Shapur

I can be seen in the center of the relief riding on a horse and Gordianus's corpse is under the feet of Shapur's horse, and Valerian's hands are held captive in Shapur's hand and Philip kneels in front of Shapur's horse and demands peace. The Persian military and officers are also behind Shapur in five rows of horses and the Roman officers and noblemen are seen in 5 rows carrying gifts and offerings in front of King Shapur I.

The second relief represents the victory of King Bahram II over the Arabs, on the left is Bahram on horseback, and the Arabs are led by Iranian commanders to offer the king horses and camels.

The third one shows the ceremony of the Bahram I receiving the royal ring from

Ahura Mazda. The engraving of this amazing relief is very artistic and even the wrinkles and the details of the clothes and so on are all beautifully illustrated. Everything in this relief fits in amazingly well. Even the physical details of the horse and the veins on the horse's legs have been shown.

The fourth depicts the scene of the victory of Bahram II over the rebels, in which the king sits on the throne in the center while on his right side stand the Iranian commanders and soldiers with respect and the rebels and captives on the left. They are brought by the Iranian soldiers to the presence of the king.

The fifth relief located on the right side of the gorge is the most intact and complete relief among the others. It is about Shapur's victory over the Roman Empire.

The sixth relief, located at the right side of the gorge and exactly next to the road, has suffered the most damage over time and its upper parts have almost been destroyed. This relief depicts the ceremony of Shapur I receiving the Fareh-izadi (the royal ring) from Ahura Mazda, as well as his victory in the war against the Romans. In this relief, both King and Ahura Mazda (the creator and highest deity of Zoroastrianism) are shown riding on horses and facing each other. The Shah is taking the King's diadem from Ahura Mazda. Under Ahura Mazda's horse feet, the Ahriman (the devil) is lying and beneath Shapur's horse's feet is the corpse of Gordianus.

Possible nuclear deal expected to lift Iran tourism, Dutch envoy says

TEHRAN – Dutch envoy to Iran Frank Mollen has said a possible nuclear deal between Iran and world powers would give a boost to the tourism industry of the ancient land.

“In these uncertain times, good news can be a boost. An agreement in Vienna would be such a boost, also for tourism to Iran,” Mollen tweeted on March 4.

“Diplomacy is often most effective 'behind the scenes. Such efforts we rarely tweet about. I do tweet about for example getting to know the proud history and culture of the ancient country I live in Iran.”

Talks on restoring a deal to curb Iran's nuclear program and ease sanctions are near a conclusion, sources close to the negotiations say.

Some experts believe even before the



Foreign travelers sip traditional beverages during their visits to the UNESCO-registered Imam Square in Isfahan.

coronavirus pandemic, Iran's tourism was already grappling with some challenges, on top of those Western

“media propaganda” aimed at scaring potential travelers away from the Islamic Republic.

They say Iran is still somehow “unknown” for many potential travelers due to such a “media war”.

Many consider bright prospects for the tourism sector of the country if it vigorously pursues comprehensive strategies to counter U.S.-led propaganda and strict sanctions, yet does its best to loosen tough travel regulations.

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

Mud-brick caravanserai undergoes restoration to host modern trippers

TEHRAN – Restoration work has commenced on Sadrabad caravanserai to turn the 19th-century inn into a tourism destination.

Located in Mohammadabad village of Qom province, the two-storey caravanserai has two courtyards and six watchtowers, the provincial tourism chief said on Monday.

Worn-out bricks, cracks, rooftops, as well as interior and exterior walls, are subject to the restoration work, Alireza Arjmandi said.

The mud-brick caravanserai has been registered as a national cultural heritage under the number 1668.

Iran has recently submitted an inclusive dossier on its caravanserais to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. The dossier comprises the obligatory data about a selection of 56 caravanserais, which are scattered across the ancient land. And the shortlist includes qualified caravanserais located in at least 24 provinces.

Caravanserai is a compound word combining “caravan” with “sara”; the former stands for a group of travelers and the latter means the building. They



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

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

A time travel to forgotten ages

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

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

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

It's not hard to fancy the hustle and bustle of merchants bargaining on prices, recounting their arduous journeys to one another while their camels chewing hay!

Passing major roads in the country, one may see

crumbling caravanserais many of which were abandoned for ages. In the Information Age, such guest houses have largely lost their actual usage.

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

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

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National plan aims to promote environmental protection among students

TEHRAN – The Ministry of Education has prepared a plan with the goal of promoting the importance of environmental protection among students nationwide.

Called “supporters of the environment”, the plan will be implemented in the next school year (starting September 23), highlighting the environment’s significance in a healthy life, ILNA quoted Sadeq Sattari, an official with the Ministry of Education, as saying on Tuesday.

Preserving vital natural resources, institutionalizing the culture of environmental protection, expanding the society’s knowledge about the environment, and boosting the participation of students in environmental protection activities are among the main objectives of the plan, he explained.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday emphasized the need to develop non-fossil sources of energy, including renewables, and expand activities to protect the environment.

The destruction of forests and the environment and vegetation is equivalent to the degradation of national interests, and the depletion of part of the forests



for construction, except in emergencies, is definitely to the detriment of the nation, he explained.

He made the remarks on the occasion of National Tree Planting Day, which is annually celebrated on the fifteenth day of Esfand, the last month on the Iranian calendar. The day also marks the beginning of the National Week of Natural Resources.

“One of the serious tasks toward protecting the environment is to preserve the two natural assets and vital reserves, namely water and soil, and to avoid taking them for granted. In this line, authorities must pay attention to expert points of view.”

The Leader further called on people to plant and protect trees, saying that doing such important works requires national support. Tree planting is among the activities that can prevent the disappearance of forests around and inside cities through expanding vegetation cover.

On the occasion of Clean Air Week, nine training packages on environmental literacy as well as procedures for activities and jobs were unveiled on January 22.

These works are entitled climate change, biodiversity, waste, ecotourism, sports and environment, sports and civic activities with the aim of en-

lightening, educating, and promoting environmental culture with special priority on empowering educators, and facilitators to provide appropriate environmental education to members of the community as well as public participation in environmental protection.

Every year, January 19, is the National Clean Air Day in Iran in order to remind and highlight the main factors in maintaining air quality, as well as promoting a sense of responsibility and citizen participation in protecting the urban environment and fulfilling social responsibility for the environment.

Called “supporters of the environment”, the plan will be implemented in the next school year (starting September 23), highlighting the environment’s significance in a healthy life.

Iran, Turkey to set up SDSs warning, assessment system

From page 1 ► Two weeks later, a memorandum of understanding will be also signed among the two officials to assign each country’s measures and tasks, and a task force will be formed to implement the plans and launch the regional center.

The virtual ceremony was attended by the representatives of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

The center aims to perform SDS monitoring, prediction, and assessment and provide guidance for the SDSs mitigation in the regional countries.

SDSs affecting Iran

Dust events originate predominantly in arid or semi-arid environments, which account for some 33 percent of the total world land area. In fact, the northern hemisphere generates some 90 percent of global airborne mineral dust, where it is also deposited.

Most “dust storm” occurrences are in the region beginning on the west coast of

North Africa and extending through West Asia into Central Asia. North Africa is the main dust source area, alone responsible for generating more than 50 percent of the total desert dust in the atmosphere and almost five times as much as the second main source, the Arabian Peninsula.

In Iran, internal dust sources estimated at 34.6 million hectares, generate an average amount of 4.22 million tons of dust per year, of which 122.7 kilograms is raised per hectare annually.

Of this area, about 1.4 million hectares are from arid wetlands and about 2.5 to 3 million hectares are in habitats managed by the Department of Environment.

A study conducted on 6 provinces of Khuzestan, Ilam, Kermanshah, Sistan-Baluchestan, South Khorasan, and Hormozgan showed that this phenomenon has incurred a loss of about 590 trillion rials (nearly \$2.1 billion) in a 3-year period.

Glaciers in Iran shrink by 21% in 8 years

TEHRAN – The total area of glaciers in Iran was estimated at 9 square kilometers in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended March 20, 2021), decreasing by 21 percent compared to the year 1392, the water studies institute affiliated with the Ministry of Energy has said.

To date, eleven glacial regions have been identified in the country with an area of 34.72 square kilometers, according to data provided by the institute.

Although the area of glaciers in Iran is notably smaller in comparison with many Asian and European countries, they are significantly important as they are located in arid and semi-arid areas.

Over the past 23 years, climate change has led to dryness of lakes and wetlands, land subsidence, sand and dust storms, air pollution, and some other predicaments in Iran.

The consequences of industrial life in the country caused a special condition that when heavy rainfall begins, the lands being unable to absorb it, flooding rages across the county, Reza Shahbazi, deputy head of Geological Survey and Mineral Exploration, has said.

Iran is currently in a period of prolonged drought, yet during this period occasionally experienced heavy rainfall over short periods of time, he stated.

Examination of indicators such as rainfall, the difference with long-term averages, and evaporation rate, shows that our country has been in a period of drought since 1998, however, over some years, normal averages of rainfall poured over the country, he added.

Referring to rainfall fluctuations, he ex-



plained that sometimes an area received a year of rainfall only in a few days, as it has recently rained as much as a year in one day in Bushehr.

Today we face a series of extreme, and abnormal events that can be a sign of “climate change” and the nature of climate change is creepy and its gradual occurrence, so that the exact time of these events and changes cannot be understood, he highlighted.

“Since the beginning of the twentieth century and the increasing use of fossil fuels in the world, the average carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has risen from 250 ppm to more than 400 ppm, and this 1.7-fold increase in carbon dioxide is directly related to rising global temperatures and events such as torrential rains, dust, etc.

About 60 years ago, Iran has moved towards industrialization, during which the pressure on water resources and lands with all kinds of exploitation has increased, and today we are witnessing the destruction of land in the form of water and soil erosion, as well as vegetation depletion.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON MARCH 8

New cases	5,841
New deaths	144
Total cases	7,102,159
Total deaths	138,260
New hospitalized patients	988
Patients in critical condition	3,428
Total recovered patients	6,747,070
Diagnostic tests conducted	47,884,518
Doses of vaccine injected	143,490,366

Siberian crane wintering in Iran back home

TEHRAN - The last remaining western Siberian crane, called ‘Omid’ (meaning Hope in Persian), has returned to its main habitat after spending 131 days in Fereydunkenar wetland, northern Mazandaran province.

Omid is a male Siberian crane, notable for being the only remaining Siberian crane that keeps returning to Iran, after flying 6,000 km each year, since 2007.

Despite losing his couple Arezoo (meaning Wish in Persian) seven years ago, he comes back to winter in the wetland every year ever since, except for two years during the past 14 years. Locals are very much fond of him and call him Omid as it brings hope with him.

Omid’s annual trip to Mazandaran is very important for environmental and wildlife lovers, considering that it is the last survivor of the western Siberian cranes. This year, he arrived a week earlier.

According to the International Crane Foundation website, this critically endangered

species is now only found in one main population in East Asia, with a few birds remaining in the historic Western/Central population.

Every year, from Early-September to Late-February, Iran hosts rare species of migratory birds heading from north to the southern countries due to reduced seasonal temperatures and food availability.

Among the various groups of migratory birds wintering in Iran, the largest population belongs to the group of geese, swans, and ducks amounting to 781,499 and the smallest population of 7 are the long-tailed ducks or oldsquaw.

The provinces of Mazandaran and Golestan are the first provinces with the highest number of migratory birds for having sufficient resources, as the movement of migratory birds is closely linked to the seasonal availability of resources.

The annual census for migratory birds in Iran begins in the middle of the Iranian calendar month of Dey (December 22-January 20) and ends in the middle of the month of Bahman (January 21-February 19), which will be a 1-month period from January 1 to 31.



According to the wintering census last year, 90 species of migratory birds with a population of over 500,000 migrated to the three wetlands of Miankaleh, Sorkhrud, and Azbaran, reservoirs and protected areas of the province, which is predicted to reach up to 700,000 this [Iranian calendar] year.

West Asia’s largest COVID-19 vaccine plant inaugurated

TEHRAN – Iran on Tuesday officially inaugurated a coronavirus vaccine production unit which is said to be the largest of its kind in West Asia.

Health Minister Bahram Einollahi attended the inauguration ceremony of the plant which will produce 300-350 million doses of COVIRAN Barkat vaccine per year, IRNA reported.

The vaccines will be supplied to the domestic market and their surplus will be exported.



The process for global registration of the COVIRAN Barkat vaccine for coronavirus started on January 27 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.

Made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, COVIRAN Barkat was unveiled on December 29, 2020, and received the license for public use on June 14, 2021.

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

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

In June 2021, Hassan Jalili, the vaccine’s production manager, said eleven countries from Asia and South America, and a European country have asked for importing COVIRAN vaccine.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

4\$m budget allocated to promote non-motorized transport

A total budget of 170 billion rials (around \$4 million) has been allocated to promote bike lanes across the capital city of Tehran, encouraging the residents to ride bicycles, Sakineh Ashrafi, deputy mayor of Tehran for planning, urban development and council affairs has said.

One of the main issues taken into consideration through the next year’s budget bill, was development of non-motorized transportation, which focuses on active transportation and human powered transportation including walking and bicycling, she explained.

According to Tehran third development plan, biking as a green transport has been taken into consideration in order to mitigate traffic congestion and air pollution, she further noted, ISNA reported on Sunday.

تصویب اعتبار ۱۷ میلیاردی برای توسعه دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی در پایتخت

سکینه اشرفی معاون برنامه‌ریزی، توسعه شهری و امور شورای شهردار تهران از تصویب حدود ۱۷۰ میلیارد ریال اعتبار برای توسعه دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی در پایتخت خبر داد.

وی اظهار کرد: یکی از موضوعاتی که در بودجه سنواتی سال آینده شهرداری تهران به آن توجه شده، موضوع توسعه حمل و نقل عمومی غیرموتوری از جمله دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی است.

به گزارش روز یکشنبه برگزاری ایسنا وی ادامه داد: در برنامه سوم توسعه شهر تهران، موضوع توجه به دوچرخه‌سواری به عنوان یک حمل و نقل پاک برای کاهش ترافیک و آلودگی هوا مورد توجه و تاکید قرار گرفته است.

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Managing Director: **Mohammad Shojaeian**
Editor-in-Chief: **Ali A.Jenabzadeh**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
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MARCH 9, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There is no greater wealth than wisdom, no greater poverty than ignorance; no greater heritage than culture and no greater support than consultation.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:15 Evening: 18:24 Dawn: 4:59 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:23 (tomorrow)

Jalal ad-Din Rumi: Teachings

Part 3

He also berates a religious rival who has lured away one of his own disciples, saying: “He has trapped him with rosaries, litanies, and prayer-rugs”, and criticizes the ulema for knowing all about the outward minutiae of religion while remaining clueless about the inner dimension, which in his view is what actually counts.

The frequency with which Rumi repeats such teachings is most probably due to his immediate audience of seminary students.

Rumi’s teachings manifest his own extensive education, both in the religious and in the physical sciences. Yet he frequently critiques scholars, whether religious or non-religious, and stresses the superiority of mystical knowledge.

His most famous teaching story about this point is probably The Grammarian and the Boatman (Masnavi). In this story, the grammarian’s smugness is mocked, because, in spite of his knowledge of grammar and condescension towards the boatman who is ignorant of it, he does not know how to swim, and the boat is sinking.

Rumi also uses this story as an occasion to comment on the superiority of selflessness, using the analogy of a corpse floating on the sea, but there is no discussion of mystical knowledge here.

Later in that same first book of the Masnavi, mystical knowledge is exemplified in the final pair of interweaving stories about Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS). Imam Ali (AS) is depicted as being in total surrender to God, which means that his every action is Divinely directed and in harmony with God. He neither takes revenge against an enemy soldier when sorely tempted to, nor tries to avert his own death when forewarned about it.

Book Three of the Masnavi focuses specifically on epistemology, an open agenda that is discussed at length in its prose introduction and exordium (Masnavi).

Rumi’s approach is to discuss in ascending order different forms of knowledge, from the immediate, face-value interpretation of things to reasoned scheming, and ultimately divinely communicated knowledge.

It is the last of these that represents his own understanding of certain knowledge, and he explains in various stories how selflessness is a prerequisite.

For instance, in one story Moses (AS) is pestered by someone who wants to know the language of all the animals. After trying to dissuade him and consulting God, Moses (AS) reluctantly teaches him a limited amount, but this is enough for the man to discover that he cannot cope, and he ends up learning about his own imminent death from a clairvoyant rooster (Masnavi).

In contrast, a dervish accepts the amputation of his hand for a crime he has not committed, because through divine communication he felt that he had earned this for another reason, and a court official feels compelled to return to his ruler, from whom he had previously fled, even though the latter wishes to execute him (Masnavi).

For Rumi, divine communication of the highest kind is not restricted to prophets. In the Fihe ma fih, he teaches this explicitly, while at the same time acknowledging that it is in contravention of Muslim theological dogma: “When it is stated that after the Prophet Muhammad (S) and the other prophets, wahy (divine revelation) is not sent down to other people, that is not the case.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Two rare manuscript copies of Nezami’s Khamseh showcased at Mashhad exhibit

From Page 1 ► of Iranian calligraphers. The opening folio of each chapter has been embellished with illuminations.

Nezami’s reputation rests on the Khamseh which is a pentalogy of poems written in masnavi verse form (rhymed couplets) and totaling 30,000 couplets.

The collection includes the didactic work Makhzan ol-Asrar (The Treasury of Mysteries), three traditional love stories of Khosrow and Shirin, Leili and Majnun, and Haft Paykar, and the Eskandar-nameh, which records the adventures of Alexander the Great.

Rare copies of the Khamseh are kept in Iranian libraries, but the two versions kept at the Central Library of the University of Tehran and the library of the Shahid Motaahhari School and Mosque in Tehran were added to UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register list in 2011.

Speaking during the opening ceremony of the exhibition, Iranian culture minister aide

An expert (L) briefs a group of cultural officials visiting an exhibition of artworks and books on poet Nezami Ganjavi at the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum and Library in Mashhad on March 6, 2022.

Mahmud Shalui, who is also the director of the commemoration program for Nezami, said, “Nezami Ganjavi is one of the guardians of Persian literature and language, and many programs should be organized every year to commemorate the

great poet.”

He pointed to the modern society’s necessity for spirituality and noted, “In all his works, this world-renowned Persian poet is presenting spiritual thoughts, which can be

Iran plans to commemorate Nezami Ganjavi in a weeklong program beginning on Esfand 21 in the Iranian calendar year (March 12), which is celebrated by Iran as Nezami Day every year.

Audiobook takes Persian listeners to romantic world of Nazim Hikmet, his wife Piraye

TEHRAN – An audiobook narrating the love letters Turkish writer Nazim Hikmet’s wife, Piraye, wrote to him during his long captivity has been released in Tehran for Persian listeners.

The letters have been accumulated by Turkish writer Nazan Arisoy in the book “Being Nazim in Piraye” (“Piraye’de Nazim Olmak”) published in Turkey in 2018.

Bahman Vakhshour and Maryam Moqaddam are the narrators of the audiobook produced by Avaye Chirok based on a Persian translation by Yasaman Puri. The Persian edition was published by the Sang publishing house in 2019.

Hikmet (1902–1963) was a Turkish poet, playwright, novelist, screenwriter, director and memoirist, who was acclaimed for the lyrical flow of his statements.

Described as a “romantic communist” and “romantic revolutionary”, he was repeatedly arrested for his political beliefs and spent much of his adult life at Bursa Prison or in exile.

Hikmet never read most of the letters sent by Piraye, his third wife, as his warden confiscated them beforehand.

Hikmet’s imprisonment at Bursa Prison and his relationships with Piraye and his translator and lover Munevver Andac have been portrayed in “Mavi Gozlu Dev” (“Blue Eyed Giant”), a 2007 Turkish biographical film about Hikmet, whose poetry has been translated into more than fifty languages.

Despite his persecution by the Turkish state, Hikmet has always been revered by the Turkish nation. His poems depict the people of the countryside, villages, towns and cities of his homeland.

Following his death, the Kremlin ordered the publication of the poet’s first-ever Turkish-language collected works in communist Bulgaria, where at that time a large and still recognized Turkish national minority existed.

The eight volumes of these collected works, “Butun Eserleri”, appeared at Sofia between 1967 and 1972, that is, in the very last years

Cover of the audiobook of the Persian translation of “Being Nazim in Piraye”.

of the existence of the Turkish minority educational and publishing system in Bulgaria.

“Descendants”, “Zaferanieh, near Sunset” win awards at Philippines film festival

TEHRAN – Iranian films “The Descendants” and “Zaferanieh, near Sunset” have won awards at the Pambujan International Film Festival in the Philippines.

“The Descendants” directed by Yaser Talebi won one two best film awards of the festival in the competition for the full-length narrative films last Friday.

In this drama, Jacob’s family worries about Farrokh, the son of the family. Farrokh left Iran to continue his studies but he has not been in touch with them for a long time. Jacob travels to Sweden to look for his son.

“Zaferanieh, near Sunset”, a drama on drug addiction in Tehran directed by Mohammad Kharrazzadeh, received one of the two runner-up awards in this category.

The Russian war drama “The Final Stand” directed by Vadim Shmelyov was the other winner of

“The Descendants” directed by Yaser Talebi.

the best film award.

The film is about the incredible self-sacrifice of the Podolsk cadets in defense of their country in October 1941 near Moscow. The cadets of the Podolsk artillery-infantry schools are ordered to take up defenses on the Ilyinsky line.

The other runner-up award in the narrative films category went to “Tutuge” directed by Virlanwana Langgong from Indonesia.

“Once Upon a Time on All Hollows’

Eve” by Jaroslaw Gogolin from the UK, “The Herald and the Horror” by Jayvee Margaja from the Philippines and “Boxer Blood and Sweat” by Nima Nadaf from Germany were also honored with third best film prizes.

The awards for best documentary films were given to “The Wounded Souls of the Rann” by Dinesh Lakhanpal from India and “Puso Ng Pinoy Bboy” by Clifton Abuan from the United States.

What do we know about the people who make salt – the most humble and yet the most important ingredient of our food? Seventy percent of the salt produced in India is made in Gujarat and more than forty percent of that in the Rann of Kutch by the Agariyas. For centuries they have been working in horrifying, subhuman conditions, caught in a debt trap. “The Wounded Souls of the Rann” provides a glimpse into their lives.

Built Lands directed by Arturo Dueñas Herrero from Spain and “Wherever We May Be” by Adrian Ellis Alarilla, Jed Yabut, Joseph Unsay, Kenneth Cardenas, Pat R., Pauline M. and Zoë Ciela Guzman from the United States won the runner-up awards in the documentary films category.

Several other movies by Iranian filmmakers were also honored with awards in the short competition of the festival.

“The Last Day of a Condemned Man” at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – A new Persian translation of Victor Hugo’s book “The Last Day of a Condemned Man” has been published by Saleess.

The novella, which was originally published in 1829, has been translated by Mohammad Qazi.

Deeply shocking in its time, “The Last Day of a Condemned Man” is a profound and moving tale and a vital work of social commentary.

A man vilified by society and condemned to death for his crime wakes every morning knowing that this day might be his last.

With the hope for release his only comfort, he spends his hours recounting his life and the time before his imprisonment. But as the hours pass, he knows that he is powerless to change his fate. He must follow the path so many have trod before him—the path that leads to the guillotine.

Hugo wrote this story to express his belief that the death penalty should be abolished.

Several Persian translations of the book have been published by various Iranian companies.

The latest one done by Banafsheh Farisabadi was released by the Cheshmeh publishing house.

Front cover of the Persian translation of Victor Hugo’s book “The Last Day of a Condemned Man”.