

TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 50,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 43rd year | No. 14178 | Thursday | March 10, 2022 | Esfand 19, 1400 | Sha'aban 7, 1443

Russia Clarifies Demand for Guarantees

Page 3

Report

Nasrallah: "U.S., UK pushed Ukraine to war"

The Secretary-General of Hezbollah says "the United States and Britain pushed Ukraine into war," as Washington ditched its plan to send Polish fighter jets to Ukraine after Warsaw finally agreed to the idea.

According to experts, the next few days will be critical for the tide of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Experts have noted Moscow will advance on its goals soon while Washington is looking to prolong the war, with observers highlighting it's not in America's interests for the conflict to end at this moment in time.

In what had been a long thought out plan, Poland finally agreed to provide all its MiG-29 fighter jets (28 planes in total) to the U.S., which in turn was supposed to hand them over to Ukraine and replace the Polish fleet with American made fighter jets. This was a strong request by the Ukrainian government.

Ukraine's embattled armed forces desperately need warplanes. However, any new jets need to be ones that Ukrainian pilots have been trained to operate, which means they have to be Russian-made MiG-29 fighter jets.

Western countries have been increasingly supplying arms to Ukraine to avoid a swift Russian victory. But so far all the anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles transferred have only helped slow down the Russian advance. ▶ Page 5

Iran able to produce 600m doses of COVID vaccines annually

TEHRAN - Thanks to the capacity of knowledge-based companies, Iran is able to produce 600 million doses of vaccine against coronavirus annually, the head of the Food and Drug Administration, has said.

A total of 21 knowledge-based companies are operating to produce 50 million doses of vaccine monthly and 600 million doses annually, IRNA quoted Bahram Daraei as saying on Wednesday.

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

Considering that five coronavirus vaccines have so far been produced domestically, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, the former head of the Food and Drug Administration, said in June 2021 that Iran is one of the few countries that has all vaccine production platforms.

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

On February 7, ISNA reported that two domestic companies have completed the animal phase of a clinical study to develop vaccines against the Omicron strain.

Domestically-made vaccines

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.

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

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

Yemen: Years of Silence/Deafness

What Happened to the Children and People of Yemen During the Years of Silence of the International Community?



TEHRAN — As the Yemen war is raging unabatedly, the international community maintains its deafening silence on the atrocities led by the Saudis in Yemen.

As the global community turns to pay attention to the "blue eyes and blonde hairs"

that are under the Russian attack in Ukraine, the European powers are leaving both Yemen and Ukraine stranded. However, there is a big difference. The Yemenis have been stranded for more than seven years, while the Ukrainians have been stranded for 14 days.

A United Nations report published in November had projected that the death toll from the Yemeni war would reach 377,000 by the end of 2021, including those killed as a result of indirect and direct causes. ▶ Page 2

ICCIMA selected as periodic chair of ECO chamber of commerce, industry

TEHRAN - During the 19th general assembly meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI), the periodic chairmanship of ECO CCI was transferred to Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), the portal of ICCIMA reported.

During the meeting, which was held vir-

tually on Tuesday, the chairmanship of ECO CCI was transferred from Turkey to Iran for a period of three years, and Mohammadreza Karbasi, the ICCIMA deputy head for international affairs, was selected as the secretary-general of ECO CCI.

The Economic Cooperation Organization or ECO is an Asian political and economic intergovern-

mental organization that was founded in 1985 in Tehran by the leaders of Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Republic of Uzbekistan are at present the member states of ECO. ▶ Page 4

Iran unchanged in FIBA ranking

TEHRAN - Iran basketball team remained unchanged in the latest FIBA World Ranking Men released on Wednesday.

The Iranian team are in the 23rd place.

The U.S., Spain and Australia remained top three, while France swapped spots with Slovenia, going from five to No. 4 on the back of their two wins over Portugal - 94-56 at home and 69-56 in Portugal.

Those two victories secured Les Bleus qualification for the Second Round of European Qualifiers. Slovenia meanwhile lost twice to Finland, 86-76 on the road and then 83-79 at home.

In Asia meanwhile, Kazakhstan had a strong window with wins at Iran (73-69) and Bahrain (95-48) to reach the Second Round with a 4-0 mark and jump two spots in the World Ranking to 68. Lebanon rose one spot to 54 after a 74-63 defeat in Jordan and an 81-68 victory in Saudi Arabia.



Iran Regional Music Orchestra makes debut with Nezami songs

TEHRAN - Iran Regional Music Orchestra gave its first concert on Tuesday evening at Tehran's Vahdat Hall by performing songs from the Persian romantic poet Nezami Ganjavi. ▶ Page 8

"Sari 2022" to be inaugurated next week

TEHRAN-The "Sari 2022" event aiming to introduce capacities of the Caspian Sea province of Mazandaran is scheduled to be inaugurated in the capital city of Sari on March 17, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The opening ceremony will be attended by Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Hand-

icrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami and a number of ministers and representatives from the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), CHTN quoted Mehdi Izadi as saying on Wednesday.

The event will open in both formal and public sections on March 17 and 18, and this will

mark the beginning of exhibitions, festivals, and other side-events, the official added.

Exhibitions of local food, handicrafts, and traditional arts, and flowers and herbs will also be held on the sidelines of the event, he noted. ▶ Page 6

From Inside

- IRGC: Israel will surely 'pay the price' for killing two advisors in Syria P2
- E3 issues joint statement on cooperation between Iran and IAEA P2
- Iran, Azeri FM's hold phone conversation P3
- Iranian lawmakers renew demand for guarantees in Vienna talks P3
- Iran Gas House inaugurated P4
- 'Refining, petro-refining projects to be facilitated in near future' P4
- IRENEX launches its 1st futures contracts P4
- Neglected craft of jajim-bafi to be revived in Ilam P6
- Historical caravanserai getting ready to host Noruz travelers P6
- 'Achievements in empowering women are undeniably remarkable despite sanctions' P7
- 100 scholarships to be awarded to Muslim students P7
- WOW Film Festival picks "Ballad of a White Cow", "Sun Children", "Zalava" P8
- Persian readers discover "Modern Love" in Iranian bookstores P8

Interview

Media highlight Ukraine war because Ukrainians have similar features with the West: ex-White House adviser

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - An American academic and former advisor to the White House on Russian affairs says that Western mainstream media pays more attention to the Ukraine case because the country bears a great resemblance to Europe.

"The clothing of the people, the look of the buildings, all seems similar to those of the audience of such reporting," John Colarusso tells the Tehran Times.

"These aspects are a sort of symbology. So, the war is frightening, and therefore a catastrophe," Colarusso adds.

The war in Ukraine has other aspects that maybe not seen by ordinary people in the West. Western mainstream media pay more attention to the suffering of the Ukrainian people. Reporters sometimes use racist language while depicting the situation in Ukraine.

But people in West Asia raise questions about wars in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen, asking: Are they justified wars? They ask why is there a kind of disparity when it comes to sympathy with people who are exposed to war?

"War in the Middle East (West Asia) simply is played out against scenes that are less familiar to the audience of the mainstream media. The one exception is war with Israel," Colarusso argues. ▶ Page 5

Iran, Uzbekistan sign joint security cooperation document

TEHRAN - Top security officials of Iran and Uzbekistan have signed a joint document for security cooperation.

The document was signed by Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and his Uzbek counterpart Viktor Makhmudov.

The document is intended to lay the ground for the formation of a joint security commission between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Uzbekistan, according to Fars News. It also provides areas for joint cooperation between Tehran and Tashkent in the fight against terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking and other transnational organized crime.

Within the framework of this document, a wide range of intelligence and security cooperation has been initiated between the two countries, and meetings of the Joint Security Commission will be held annually to evaluate the results of cooperation in Tehran and Tashkent.

Shamkhani put the document in the broader context of Iran's plan to boost ties with countries in the region. ▶ Page 3

Time to revive the Iran nuclear deal: American Prospect

TEHRAN - Writing an article in the American Post on March 7, senior American journalist Ryan Cooper said it is time to lift sanctions on Iran by restoring the 2015 nuclear deal, especially as the world is facing a sharp rise in oil prices.

Donald Trump introduced a total oil embargo against Iran after his administration quit the nuclear deal - JCPOA - in May 2018. This happened despite the fact that Iran was fully loyal to the terms of the JCPOA.

Cooper says Iran did nothing to deserve sanctions. He notes Trump "betrayed Iran for no reason".

The journalist suggests it is "time to make amends", especially as the price of oil "is shooting through the roof" due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Western sanctions on Russia.

Following is the text of his article:

Negotiations with Iran over reviving the Obama-era nuclear deal have gained new urgency. American policymakers are now overwhelmingly concerned with Russia, and eager to get more oil supply online. Iran, of course, would very much like the punishing sanctions inflicted on it removed. A deal may be reached imminently.

This is an excellent idea for three reasons.

First and perhaps most important is basic fairness. Iran did nothing to deserve the sanctions it is currently suffering. On the contrary, Donald Trump unilaterally reneged on the first iteration of the deal inked in 2015 for no reason, other than the war lust of Iran hawks in the D.C. "Blob," as President Obama's foreign-policy aide Ben Rhodes memorably dubbed the bloodthirsty foreign-policy establishment.

This fact is often lost in chauvinist American media. It was a blatant betrayal of promises the American government had already made. One administration said that if Iran fulfilled certain conditions, it could get sanctions lifted, and it duly complied. Then our janky Constitution elevated a reality TV sex pest to the presidency, and he stabbed Iran in the back. He compounded the betrayal by assassinating a popular Iranian general, which nearly caused a full-blown war.

The reimposed sanctions have bitten hard into the Iranian economy, causing serious inflation, shortages of all kinds of goods (including medicine, which greatly hindered its response to the pandemic), and widespread poverty. As always, ordinary Iranian people suffered the most from American sanctions, not the elite. Removing them would help restore a modicum of prosperity to a citizenry that has felt immeasurable pain for half a decade through no fault of its own.

The second reason is oil, the price of which is shooting through the roof. Before Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine, oil was already near historic highs, thanks to the combination of high demand from the booming Biden economy and supply disruptions from the pandemic. But since the invasion, it has shot up another 10 percent or so, as of the time of writing. Despite the fact that the sanctions regime clamped on Russia exempts most oil and gas transactions, many traders are reportedly avoiding Russian oil out of fear or solidarity with Ukraine, and multinational oil and gas firms are pulling out of Russia as well. Meanwhile, the Russian economy is cratering, and the war might disrupt production. Further price increases are highly likely.

As much as it pains me to say as a climate hawk, it would be nice to have some more oil over the next few months. It is still maddening that the world didn't build out masses of zero-carbon energy a decade ago so humanity was not so dependent on filthy oil energy. And as Alex Pareene argues, it is still a good idea to start doing that now, as quickly as possible.

But that will take years at a minimum, and in the immediate future, oil shooting up to \$150 or \$200 a barrel would be an economic disaster. It would mean higher inflation, both directly and because oil is a key input to hundreds of industrial processes, not to mention shipping and transportation of goods. Higher gas prices

especially would knock more points off Joe Biden's approval rating. It would threaten the economic recovery and potentially even slow down a green transition, as cash that could have gone into zero-carbon energy instead goes to higher energy bills.

Contrary to witless propaganda from conservatives, fracked oil from domestic U.S. producers is not going to cut it. Wells take months to years to drill and get producing, and in any case fracking firms ruled by Wall Street's whims are none too eager to expand supply because they are currently collecting easy fat profits, and returning them to investors in dividends and buybacks.

However, that is not true of Iran. Bloomberg reports that the country has approximately 103 million barrels literally loaded up on tankers ready to go tomorrow. That is not all that much in the grand scheme of oil production, amounting to somewhat more than one day's worth of global oil demand. But it would still be a sizable supply injection in a market that has become very tight. Then Iran has something like 1.5 million barrels a day of additional capacity that could likely be brought online very quickly. Better still, unlike fracking wells, this would not require wasteful new investment—just turning on the machinery that has been idled since the Trump betrayal. It's the best source of supply available.

I believed then, and believe now, that Iran could easily make a better friend to America than its neighbors in the region.

The third reason is diplomacy. Iran has long been a fairly close Russian ally, in part because of aligned interests, and in part because of the isolation imposed by America. Peeling Iran away from the Russian camp would further isolate the Putin government, defuse a potential source of dangerous conflict, and possibly even lead to a salutary regional realignment.

When the nuclear deal first passed, I argued that its greatest potential benefit was its example—the U.S. dealing fairly with an overwhelmingly Muslim country in a way that cuts against the wretched tit-for-tat politics of the war on terror. I believed then, and believe now, that Iran could easily make a better friend to America than its neighbors in the region.

Just look at the total uselessness of America's other so-called allies in the Middle East (West Asia) in the current crisis. Neither Saudi Arabia, nor the Persian Gulf monarchies, nor Israel are supporting the effort against Putin. Every one of these nations treats the U.S. with entitled contempt, expecting U.S. backing for whatever they feel like, and providing no similar compromises in return. Israel demands free use of the American veto at the UN Security Council, while spying constantly on the American government, and refusing to heed American requests that it stop building settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Saudi Arabia spends ungodly sums buying influence in Washington, and according to the CIA, its dictator Mohammed bin Salman ordered the assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, a U.S. legal resident who was also a Washington Post columnist. Bin Salman has since refused to apologize or even admit what he did. The Saudis have also deepened their relationship with Russia and are refusing to increase oil production amid spiking prices.

Unlike the brutal Saudi dictatorship, Iran is at least sort of democratic. Unlike Israel, it does not maintain an apartheid regime over millions of people.

Anyway, sorting out America's diplomatic relationships in the Middle East (West Asia) so they make some sense would take a long time. But that is all the more reason to get started now. Reportedly, Iran would like assurances that it will not be betrayed again, for obvious reasons, though it's hard to see how Biden could provide them. I would advise Iranian negotiators to strike while the iron is hot—and once that oil money starts flowing, invest it in non-oil businesses, especially zero-carbon energy. Oil may be expensive now, but it's only a matter of time before the price collapses once more.

IRGC: Israel will surely 'pay the price' for killing two advisors in Syria

Brash act by the child-killing regime won't go unpunished, Foreign Ministry says

TEHRAN - The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Tuesday that the Israeli regime will surely "pay the price" for martyring two of its advisors in Syria.

"Undoubtedly, the Zionist regime will pay the price of this atrocity," the IRGC Public Relations Office said in a statement.

It named the two victims as Colonel Ehsan Karbalayi-Poor and Colonel Morteza Saeed-Nezhad, who were martyred following a missile attack by the Israeli regime on the outskirts of Damascus, the Syrian capital, a day earlier, Press TV reported.

In a statement on Wednesday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh also strongly condemned this criminal act, saying that the act is rooted in "the aggressive, occupying and terrorist nature of the Israeli regime."

Khatibzadeh stressed that Iran will not let this brash act and other moves by the "child-

killing" Zionist regime's terror machine "go unpunished".

One of the goals of the axis of resistance in the region is to hold the Israeli apartheid regime accountable for such inhumane crimes, he said.

Khatibzadeh also offered condolences to the families of the two martyrs.

Advisory presence in Syria

Iran maintains an advisory mission in Syria, helping it in the face of foreign-backed terrorism. Back in 2017, the advisory assistance helped Syria defeat the Takfiri terrorist group of Daesh.

The Monday attack does not mark the first time the Israeli regime targets the Iranian military advisors. Last time, the occupying regime martyred a number of Iranian advisors during an attack on the T-4 airbase near the city of Homs in Western Syria in 2018.

Deafening silence for Yemen, loud outcry for Ukraine

From page 1 ▶ On October 2021, the United Nations children's agency said that at least 10,000 children have been killed or injured in Yemen in violence linked to years of war in the impoverished country.

The figure only included child victims whose fates were known to the organization and there were countless others, the UNICEF spokesman James Elder said.

"UNICEF urgently needs more than \$235m to continue its life-saving work in Yemen till mid-2022," he added.

When Joe Biden was campaigning for presidency in 2020, he vowed to end the war in Yemen. Yet, one year into the office he has not taken any action to end the inhumane siege on Yemen.

At least four million people have been displaced by the seven years of war, two million

of which are children.

The U.S. has not yet ceased arms transfers, funds, and logistical and intelligence support for the Saudi-led coalition against Yemen. So far Biden has been unable to define clearly what he considers as "offensive operations," which he vowed to end.

While the United States announced an end to supporting offensive operations, it has refrained from pushing Saudi Arabia to end a blockade on the coast of Yemen, which has prevented fuel tankers from entering Hodeidah, the main port and access point for humanitarian aid to flow into the country.

War is horrible, frightening, and difficult, but what makes it more horrible is that the international community is looking at these two wars through the double standards.

"Unfortunately, Europeans

and Americans are viewing the Ukrainian situation more favorably for aid and assistance than Yemen or Afghanistan. Some claim that this is due to the inherent racist or Islamophobic tendencies in Europe and the United States. There is no question that Ukraine is seen as White and Christian (President Zelensky is, however, the only international Jewish head of state outside of Israel). And that seems to be a factor in driving aid to Ukraine as opposed to other countries where help is needed," William O. Beeman, an American academic told the Tehran Times.

Many of the Western mainstream media outlets have stationed reporters in Kyiv, yet, how many CNN reporters are there in Ma'arib?

The deafening silence of the UN secretary general about the Yemen crisis is outrageous.

"The United Kingdom stands with the people of Ukraine in the face of Russia's outrageous onslaught on freedom and democracy," said Richard Oppenheim, the British ambassador to Yemen.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is rightly condemned by the British ambassador in Yemen. However, it should not be forgotten that Britain is a key component of Saudi Arabia's horrific killing machine in Yemen.

Even for those used to the legendary deceit of the British diplomatic service, the hypocrisy is obscene. Oppenheim may hold the title of British ambassador to Yemen, but he is not actually in Yemen.

He is headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and his primary responsibility is to regurgitate Saudi talking points.

E3 issues joint statement on cooperation between Iran and IAEA

TEHRAN - The UK, France and Germany, the three European countries which are still party to the 2015 nuclear (JCPOA), delivered a joint statement to the IAEA on Wednesday addressing Iran's implementation of its obligations under its NPT Safeguards Agreement.

The statement by the E3 followed after IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi met with Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) chief Mohammad Eslami in Tehran on March 5. On the same day, the IAEA and Iran issued a joint statement agreeing on closer cooperation.

Following is the text of the statement posted on gov.uk/government on Wednesday, March 9:

France, Germany, and the United Kingdom thank Director-General Grossi for his report on the implementation of safeguards in Iran, contained in GOV/2022/5.

We fully support and commend the IAEA for its professional, independent and impartial verification of Iran's safeguards obligations, and its efforts to fully clarify information concerning the correctness and completeness of Iran's declarations under its NPT Safeguards Agreement. We re-emphasise the importance of the IAEA continuing to evaluate all safeguards-relevant information available, in line with its mandate.

It is in this context that we note the recent Joint Statement between the IAEA and the AEOI which aims to "accelerate and strengthen their cooperation and dialogue aimed at the resolution of the issues" as mentioned in details in the Director General's report contained in GOV/2021/52. We strongly urge Iran to now seize this opportunity and fully cooperate with the IAEA after more than two years without substantive engagement. Iran needs to



provide the technically credible information, documentation and answers that the Agency deems necessary without any delay, as it is legally obliged to do so.

We reject any public suggestion there is a "political solution" to these issues - the Agency must be able to perform its technical mandate free of political pressure. We remain as committed as ever to upholding the Agency's independence. It is only through Iran's full and substantial technical co-operation with the IAEA that the Director General would be able to report these issues have been clarified and resolved and are no longer outstanding.

The E3 deeply regret that - despite repeated calls by Board members and the June 2020 resolution adopted by the Board of Governors - these safeguards issues have neither been clarified nor has Iran declared related nuclear material, equipment, activities or locations. These are not merely issues of the past: these are about the present and the future, the integrity of the safeguards regime. Indeed, as the DG has repeatedly reported, the Agency had found indications that nuclear material had been present at three undeclared locations. The whereabouts of this nuclear material are still unknown to the Agency. It is essential that the IAEA be able to fully account for nuclear material as per its mandate.

We take note of the Agency's assessment



Israel keeps a significant military presence in Syria's occupied Golan Heights, which it uses as one of its launchpads for attacks against the Syrian soil.

The Tel Aviv regime mostly keeps quiet about its attacks on the Syrian territory, which many view as a knee-jerk reaction to the Syrian government's increasing success in confronting terrorism.

Blast in occupied territories

Also on Tuesday, Hebrew-language sources reported of a "massive blast" in the Gush Dan area, along the Mediterranean coastline in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The explosion was heard as far as several kilometers away, with some residents of the Israeli-occupied West Bank reporting hearing as many as seven blasts.

The Israeli police have said they were investigating the incident.

that it has "no additional questions on the issue related to Location 2 and, therefore, that this issue could be considered as no longer outstanding at this stage". We re-emphasize that legally Iran is legally obliged to declare all nuclear activities and clarify them in a complete manner.

The Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, together with the Additional Protocol, present the current verification standard. We remain deeply concerned that Iran has stopped applying the Additional Protocol more than a year ago. We urge Iran to fulfil its obligations under the CSA and to reapply and ratify the Additional Protocol as soon as possible. This would be an important confidence-building step. It is also a necessary condition for the IAEA to eventually reach the Broader Conclusion that all nuclear material in Iran remains in peaceful uses.

We recall that implementation of the Modified Code 3.1 is a legal obligation for Iran under the Subsidiary Arrangement to its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement which cannot be modified or stopped unilaterally.

The E3 take note that there have been no further instances of intimidation of IAEA inspectors in Iran since the last report. We reaffirm that the Director General should provide further updates if this situation changes. In addition, we call on Iran to provide the necessary written clarifications requested in the Agency's letter dated 16 November 2021.

Recalling the resolution adopted by the Board in June 2020 upon our initiative, we will follow the implementation of the Joint Statement closely and encourage the Director General to continue reporting to the Board of Governors, as appropriate. We would welcome making this report contained in GOV/2022/5 public.

TEHRAN – Russia has provided clarifications on its demand for written guarantees from the United States regarding the talks in Vienna over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

The clarifications were offered in a briefing meeting at the Russian embassy in Tehran with a limited number of reporters. In the meeting, Russian Ambassador to Iran Levon Dzhagaryan spoke in detail about the Russian special military operation in neighboring Ukraine. But he also spoke broadly about the Russian demand in Vienna.

Responding to questions from the Tehran Times about the nature of guarantees Russia is now demanding at Vienna talk, the Russian ambassador lambasted Western media for spreading misinformation about the Russian demand, underlining Russia's "positive" approach toward the 2015 nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), both during the 2015 negotiations that culminated in the deal and the current talks to revive it.

"You now are hearing contradictory voices claiming that Russia does not want the JCPOA talks to succeed," the ambassador told the reporters, noting that these voices are wrong. Because Russia "has adopted a positive approach toward both the JCPOA negotiations in 2015 and the current talks. But it is natural that we will take into account our interests," he added.



The Russian demand for guarantees was first made public by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in a joint press conference with Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Ruslan Kazakbayev in Moscow on March 5.

Responding to a question on the prospect for the conclusion of the Vienna talks in the near future, Lavrov said, "Some problems regarding the interests of the Russian Federation have arisen recently. Agreements on resuming the JCPOA provide for a package of reciprocal commitments."

He added that the original JCPOA "provided for the absence of any obstacles to trade, economic and investment relations with Iran and to the implementation of military-technical cooperation projects with it. This could seem all right, but the avalanche of aggressive Western sanctions that is still rolling down gives one food for thought. These sanctions should be primarily reviewed by the lawyers."

He then broached the issue of

guarantees. "We would like to receive a clear answer. We need guarantees that sanctions will not affect in any way the regime of trade, economic and investment ties set out in the JCPOA on Iran's nuclear program. We asked our American colleagues (because they are running the whole show here) to give us guarantees in writing, at least at the level of the Secretary of State, that the current process launched by the US will not impinge in any way on our free full-scale trade, economic, investment and military-technical cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran," he said.

The European parties to the JCPOA hinted that the Russian demand is "extraneous" in their March 8 joint statement to the IAEA Board of Governors.

Iran, however, has so far refrained from evaluating the Russian demand and preferred to pursue the matter through diplomatic channels. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian spoke over the phone

with Lavrov on Monday. Dzhagaryan said the two went over the Russian demand for guarantees in detail.

The Russian foreign minister told his Iranian counterpart 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," according to a Russian foreign ministry statement.

Dzhagaryan reiterated this in his Wednesday briefing meeting, saying that Russia wants the Vienna talks to achieve its goal. "But we will also take into account our interests," he reiterated.

When asked to provide details about the guarantees Russia is seeking, the ambassador said he is not authorized to give details in this regard. But he said that "we asked the U.S. to give us a clear text on the guarantees that do not have any brackets so that we review."

Dzhagaryan said he is in regular contact with Iranian officials and they are fully aware of the Russian demand.

The Tehran Times asked the Russian ambassador whether the possible Western failure to provide written guarantees would impinge on the conclusion of the Vienna talks. "I'm not authorized to make predictions. Only the heads of the negotiating delegations in Vienna and the high-ranking officials in Moscow are in the know about this," he said.

Iran, Azeri FMs hold phone conversation

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and his Azeri counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov have discussed developments in bilateral cooperation between the two countries and also regional developments over the phone.

In this conversation, Amir Abdollahian commemorated the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Baku, saying ties between the two countries have now reached the stage of progress. Referring to the developments in the South Caucasus region, Amir Abdollahian said the common goal of Iran and Azerbaijan is stability and peace in that region. The Iranian foreign minister expressed hope that the remaining issues between the Republic of Azerbaijan and

the Republic of Armenia will be resolved with foresight and without foreign intervention.

Amir Abdollahian then spoke about an increase in traffic between the two neighbors. He stressed the need to increase the number of flights between Iran and Azerbaijan and reopen the land border between the two countries. He also underlined Iran's readiness to expand economic and energy relations with Azerbaijan, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

Referring to the holding of a joint Iran-Azerbaijan Economic Commission in the near future, the top Iranian diplomat reaffirmed the seriousness of the Iranian side to achieve positive results from this commission.

The Azerbaijani foreign minister for his part

expressed pleasure with the development of cooperation between Tehran and Baku in recent months and welcomed the holding of the Joint Economic Commission of the two countries. Referring to the 30th anniversary of Tehran-Baku relations, Bayramov described the level of bilateral ties as growing.

The top Azerbaijani diplomat also spoke about the visit of the minister of roads of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Baku, calling it a sign of good relations between the two neighboring countries. Bayramov stressed Azerbaijan's full readiness to implement economic agreements with Iran.

During the phone call, the two foreign ministers also discussed some regional and international issues.

Iran, Uzbekistan sign joint security cooperation document

From Page 1 ▶ "Activating regional capacities to create lasting stability is considered a prerequisite to the development & promotion of regional cooperation in the 13th administration. Establishment of a joint security commission between Iran & Uzbekistan is a crucial step in this direction," he said on Twitter.

In a meeting with his Uzbek counterpart, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council said the prevention of the spread of terrorism and extremism in the region among the two countries' common security concerns and stressed the need to work to counter these threats.

Shamkhani met with Makhmudov, the National Security Adviser to the President of Uzbekistan, before Wednesday noon.

During the meeting, the two sides expressed hope for the impact of the signing of the joint security cooperation document between Iran and Uzbekistan on the development of comprehensive relations between the two countries, and discussed how to participate in bilateral and regional issues.

Referring to Uzbekistan's crucial geopolitical position in the heart of Central Asia and its special place in security and regional cooperation, Shamkhani said, "Issues such as preventing the spread of terrorism and extremism in the region are among the common security concerns of the two countries, and we must try to be more successful in countering these threats."

Shamkhani added, "The common borders of Iran and Uzbekistan with Afghanistan require increased cooperation to resolve problems and establish peace and stability in this country."

He expressed hope for further



acceleration of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries and said, "Fortunately, with the will of the presidents of the two countries, economic cooperation has grown by 70%, and this process needs to continue to achieve growth of at least \$1 billion."

The Uzbek National Security Adviser also stressed the need to speed up the implementation of agreements reached by the two countries' top officials to maximize bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, transit and security dimensions.

"Your visit to Uzbekistan could play a decisive role in accelerating the developing relations between the two countries and establishing fruitful security cooperation to maintain peace and stability in the region," Makhmudov said.

He expressed satisfaction with Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and said, "Uzbekistan, as the current chairman of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, will use all its potential for Iran's permanent membership in the organization."

It is worth mentioning that the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council was also expected to meet with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in his two-day visit to Uzbekistan.

Iranian lawmakers renew demand for guarantees in Vienna talks

TEHRAN – A group of Iranian lawmakers have urged Iranian negotiators in Vienna to secure demands that the United States won't quit the 2015 nuclear deal again in case it is revived.

The lawmakers urged the negotiating team in the talks with the P4+1 group of countries in Vienna to protect the fundamental elements of the country's nuclear program as the "strongest guarantee" that the United States will never repeat the violation of its obligations as per the landmark 2015 Iran deal, Press TV reported.

"We call on the negotiating team to seriously pursue obtaining adequate economic, technical and political guarantees from the American side to ensure that this country will not repeat its illegal withdrawal from the agreement," the legislators said in a statement issued on Tuesday.

It also stressed the importance of demanding compensation from the United States for the damages it has inflicted on the Iranian people's livelihood.

The Iranian lawmakers called on the negotiating team not to be bound by deadlines set by the West, follow up on national interests and main demands, and observe the country's red lines, without wasting time.

"Now that the Ukraine crisis has led to an increase in the West's need for Iran's energy, America's need for a reduction in oil prices must not be met without the fulfillment of Iran's demands," they said.

The Iranian lawmakers urged a "comprehensive and effective" removal of the US sanctions, rejecting any pretexts such as the non-nuclear label of the restrictions or their being unrelated to the 2015 deal, officially named the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

According to the statement, verification of the sanctions removal is a legitimate right of

the Islamic Republic.

"Verification of the sanctions removal must be objective, accurate, and purely done by Iran. Weak statements of the United States and Europe should not suffice," it said.

It added that the precise settlement of the safeguards issues between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is necessary in order to achieve a durable agreement in Vienna, and the UN nuclear watchdog must close the case of baseless claims against Iran.

The lawmakers said they would pursue any agreement which would enable Iran to enjoy all the economic benefits stipulated in the JCPOA and restore the Iranian nation's rights.

While emphasizing the importance of sanctions removal, they said the key to solving the problems of the country's economy is neutralizing the sanctions and called on the administration to adopt strategies to make that happen.

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."

Referring to the issue of nuclear talks, the president explained the government's strategy in this regard, "In the first step, the government seriously pursued the lifting of sanctions, and in the second step, it seeks to lift the sanctions in negotiations that are based on complete respect."

Raisi emphasized, "The popular administration is following the nuclear talks in full accordance with the principles and framework set by the Supreme Leader and has not and will not back down from any of the announced red lines."

SPORTS

Fajr Sepasi part ways with Kalantari: IPL

TEHRAN – Fajr Sepasi football club parted ways with Aliasghar Kalantari on Wednesday.

Mehrzad Madanchi has been appointed as the club's interim coach.

Fajr Sepasi sit 14th in the 16-team table, two points above the relegation zone.

Under Kalantari's tutelage, Fajr Sepasi earned just two wins in 21 matches. The Shiraz based football club suffered 10 losses and seized nine draws.

Fajr Sepasi are scheduled to play Padideh on Saturday.

Sudanese forward Okello to join Paykan

TEHRAN - Sudanese striker Tito Okello is on the verge of joining Iranian football club Paykan.

The 26-year-old forward almost joined Shahr Khodro from Kenyan team Gor Mahia in February but his deal was not finalized.

Now, the Tehran-based football club are going to sign the forward.

Okello made his debut for South Sudan on October 10, 2020, against Cameroon B.

Paykan, headed by Mojtaba Hosseini, sit sixth in Iran Professional League (IPL) table.

Iran's Hazfi Cup final date revealed

TEHRAN – The final match of the Iran's Hazfi Cup will be held on April 27.

The quarterfinals round of the competition was held on Tuesday and the teams discovered their fate in the stage.

The quarterfinals round will be held on April 9 and 10.

The semifinals are scheduled for April 17 and 18.

Esteghlal are the most decorated club with seven titles, followed by Persepolis who have won six titles.

American point guard Jerome Randle joins Mahram

TEHRAN - American-Ukrainian professional basketball player Jerome J. Randle joined Iranian team Mahram.

The 34-year-old point guard has joined Mahram from Ukrainian club Budivelnik. Randle has joined his countryman Daluan Michael Summers in Mahram.

Mahram lead the Iranian Basketball Super League (IBSL) in the current season.

Jahanbakhsh winner of Eredivisie Goal of Month

TEHRAN – Alireza Jahanbakhsh's strike against Cambuur was chosen as Goal of the Month February of the Eredivisie.

He scored a wonderful goal as Feyenoord defeated Cambuur 3-1 in Matchweek 23 of Eredivisie.

Jahanbakhsh defeated his teammate Luis Fernando Sinisterra Lucumi to win the award.

The winger took the 'Goal of the Month' trophy for the second time this season.

Iraq to host first AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to Qatar contest

TEHRAN - The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has confirmed that Iraq will host their upcoming AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to Qatar™ Group A tie against the United Arab Emirates on March 24, 2022, at the Al-Madina International Stadium in Baghdad City.

The decision, which was confirmed by FIFA, will see Iraq play their first AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to Qatar™ on home soil since the start of the campaign.

In January this year, international A national team football marked its return to Baghdad after more than eight years when the men's national team beat Uganda 1-0 in a friendly tie at the Al-Madina International Stadium – the first international in the capital since a match against Liberia in 2013.

In October 2019, Iraq defeated Hong Kong 2-0 in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ and AFC Asian Cup China 2023™ Preliminary Joint Qualification Round 2 at the Basra Sport City, which was their first Qualifier on home soil since 2011, the-afc.com.

Iraq have amassed five points and currently occupy fifth place in Group A after eight matches. They will play their final Group A contest away against Syria on March 29 at the Rashid Stadium in Dubai.

Mahmoud Miran named technical director of Iranian judo teams

TEHRAN – Former Iran judo player Mahmoud Miran was appointed as technical director of the youth and junior judo teams.

He finished in joint fifth place in the heavyweight (+100 kg) division at the 2004 Summer Olympics, having lost the bronze medal match to Dennis van der Geest of the Netherlands.

Miran lost in the first round of 100 kg division in judo during the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia to Frank Möller of Germany.

He has won a gold medal in the 1996 Asian Championship in Ho Chi Minh City.

The judo player also won three silver medals at the 2000 Osaka, 2007 Kuwait City and 2008 Jeju City.

Miran has also won eight bronze medals in Asian Championships.

FIFA postpones Ukraine's World Cup qualification playoff against Scotland

TEHRAN – FIFA has postponed Ukraine's World Cup qualification playoff match against Scotland on March 24, world football's governing body said in a statement.

The winners of the game at Hampden Park in Glasgow will take on Austria or Wales for a place in November's World Cup finals in Qatar.

Ukraine's Football Association had asked FIFA to postpone the qualifier following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"Following consultation with UEFA and the four participating member associations in Path A of the European qualifying play-offs, it was unanimously agreed in the spirit of solidarity to accept," FIFA said in a statement.

"The match between Scotland and Ukraine ... will now be postponed to the existing June window, and consequently, the match between the winners of Scotland v Ukraine and Wales v Austria will also be postponed.

"The match between Wales and Austria (March 24) will remain as scheduled ... owing to the need to limit the disruption to the competitive matches already scheduled for the June window."

Russia, who have been suspended from international soccer by UEFA and FIFA, were scheduled to host Poland in a qualifying playoff match on March 24.

FIFA added that Poland would receive a bye to the next round, and play either Sweden or the Czech Republic for a spot at the World Cup, a decision that was sharply criticized by the Swedish Football Association (SvFF).

Iran Gas House inaugurated



NIGC Managing Director Majid Chegni (R) and IIES Acting Head Mohammad-Sadeq Jorak

TEHRAN- Iran Gas House was inaugurated in a ceremony attended by Majid Chegni, the managing director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), and Mohammad-Sadeq Jorak, the acting head of Iran's Institute for International Energy Studies (IIES), at the place of IIES on Wednesday.

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) to establish Iran Gas House was also signed in the same ceremony, Shana reported.

The establishment of a gas house in the IIES in order to make optimal use of the capacities and capabilities of the IIES to meet

the needs of the NIGC in the field of strategic studies was proposed by Chegni in January.

Regular problem-solving, monitoring and analysis of challenges and issues in the field of gas at the national and international levels, presenting action plans (solutions and strategies), and compiling policy recommendations and problem-based reports with the aim of effective decision-making and creating a suitable environment for timely, correct and informed decision-making for the policy makers and strategic planners of National Iranian Gas Company are the main missions of Iran Gas House.

In the gas house, systematic cooperation is made between the Institute for International Energy Studies and National Iranian Gas Company for conducting strategic studies of the NIGC in the form of five general axes including market analysis and trade of natural gas and gas products, future research and supply and demand modeling of natural gas and gas products, optimization and culture of gas consumption, governance, development and innovation in the business of National Iranian Gas Company and the development of management, human resources, productivity and social responsibilities.

IRENEX launches its 1st futures contracts

TEHRAN- In a ceremony on Wednesday, attended by Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) Head Majid Eshqi, Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) launched futures contracts for the first time.

The contracts were launched for the naphtha and methanol trades at the IRENEX.

Iran first launched futures contract, a new financial instrument in Iran's capital market, in December 2018.

Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) officially launched the mentioned contract in a ceremony at the place of Central Securities Depository of Iran (CSDI), which is the sole registrar, central custodian and clearing house for the Iranian financial market of four exchanges including TSE, Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), and IRENEX.

Addressing the mentioned ceremony,

SEO head at the time, Shapour Mohammadi, said that futures are some very important instruments for the market balance, while they are also some strong hedging tools.

They provide investment opportunities for those who are seeking the amount of profit more than they can earn in the normal market deals, the official noted.

He further highlighted the significance of taking the advantage of new financial instruments to grab the opportunities for market arbitrage (purchasing and selling the same security at the same time in different markets to take advantage of a price difference between the two separate markets).

Futures contracts (more colloquially, futures) are financial contracts obligating the buyer to purchase an asset or the seller to sell an asset at a predetermined future date and price.

Export from Zanzan province increases 108%

TEHRAN - The value of export from Zanzan province rose 108 percent during the first 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021-February 19, 2022), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Mir-Hashem Seyed-Ahmadi, the director-general of the province's customs administration, put the value of export from Zanzan at \$489.04 million in the first 11 months of this year, and at \$235.53 million in the same time span of the previous year.

He named zinc ingots, transformers and accessories, lead ingots, Polypropylene, nuts and dairy products as some major exported items and said that Turkey, China, Iraq, UAE, Russia, Pakistan, India, Oman, Uzbekistan and Georgia were the 10 countries to which the main goods of the province were exported, among which Turkey with 50 percent share worth \$244.317 million was on top of the list.

The official further announced that commodities worth \$448 million were imported to the province in the mentioned 11-month period, with a 33 percent growth from \$336

million in the same time span of the past year.

As previously announced by the deputy head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 38 percent during the first 11 months of the current year.

Foroud Asgari said that Iran traded over 149.4 million tons of non-oil products worth \$90 billion with other countries in the mentioned period.

He noted that the weight of trade in the mentioned period also grew by 12 percent in comparison to the figure for the previous year's same 11 months.

The official put the 11-month non-oil exports at 112.658 million tons valued at \$43.517 billion, with a 40-percent rise in value and 10 percent growth in weight.

The Islamic Republic imported 36.777 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$46.577 billion in the first 11 months of the present year, with a 36 percent growth in value and a 19 percent rise in weight year on year, according to the official.

IRICA has previously announced that the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.



IRICA former Head Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi had put the weight of non-oil trade at 146.4 million tons and said that the figure showed a 25-million-ton annual decline, which is the result of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic.

Iran's non-oil export was 112 million tons valued at \$34.5 billion, and that of import was 34.4 million tons worth \$38.5 billion in the past year, the official added.

Among the country's non-oil export destinations, China was the first, with importing \$8.9 billion worth of products, Iraq was the second with importing \$7.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates the third with importing \$4.6 billion,

Turkey the fourth with importing \$2.5 billion, and Afghanistan the fifth with importing \$2.2 billion, Mir-Ashrafi announced, and named gasoline, natural gas, polyethylene, propane, and pistachio as Iran's major exported products during the past year.

He further named Iran's top sources of non-oil imports in the said time, as China with exporting \$9.7 billion worth of products to the Islamic Republic, the UAE with \$9.6 billion, Turkey with \$4.3 billion, India with \$2.1 billion, and Germany with \$1.8 billion, respectively, and mentioned corn, cellphone, rice, oil meal, and oilseeds, wheat, and raw oil as the major imported items.

ICCIMA selected as periodic chair of ECO chamber of commerce, industry

From page 1 ▶ The ECO permanent secretariat is based in Tehran, but the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry secretariat is rotated between members over a three-year period.

Both secretariats will now be based in Tehran for a period of three years. The issue was mentioned by Karbasi, the new secretary-general of the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at the 19th general assembly meeting of ECO CCI. He expressed hope that regular meetings would be held between the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry and ECO to review the dimensions of joint cooperation and use the capacity of the private sector to develop cooperation.

The mentioned meeting 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.

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."

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

'Refining, petro-refining projects to be facilitated in near future'

TEHRAN- Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji said that the implementation of refining and petro-refining projects will be facilitated in the near future.

Making the remarks in a Tuesday meeting on report about the mentioned projects, the minister said, "In this regard, with the consultations we had with the cabinet, it was possible to provide facilities from the National Development Fund (NDF)".

During the meeting, Oji reviewed the progress of refining and petro-refining optimization projects and the reasons for the delay of some of these projects, and offered solutions to solve problems.

He further pointed to the Islamic Revolution Leader's emphasis on the country's refining capacity, as well as the insistence and pursuit of the government, parliament and the National Development Fund to facilitate investment in this area and stressed that Oil Ministry spares no effort to advance refining and petro-refining projects.

Based on the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21), Oil Ministry has been authorized to use various resources including private sector

and foreign investments to construct petro-refineries with a total capacity of 300,000 barrels per day.

The decision in this regard was announced during a Parliament's (Majlis) open session on Sunday in which MPs reviewed the government expenditures in the next year's national budget bill, Shana reported.

Earlier in January, the oil minister said some major domestic banks are going to form a consortium with a total investment capacity of four billion dollars to implement petro-refinery projects across the country.

"A large part of the financial resources required for the implementation of the country's oil projects will be provided with the support of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, and this includes the financial resources needed for the refining sector as well," Oji said.

Increasing the country's petro-refining capacity has recently become a hot topic among Iran's top research institutions and research centers as a key defense mechanism against the impacts of the U.S. sanctions on the country's oil industry.

Experts and analysts argue that in addition to generating more revenue, the



conversion of crude oil to oil products will have many other benefits including creating new job opportunities, economic prosperity, and reviving other industries. And most importantly, it will lead to a stronger economy that could easily withstand the U.S. pressures.

In this regard, the importance of moving toward the construction of petro-refineries instead of refinery complexes has been emphasized.

Recent studies indicated that the Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of petro-refiners, depending on their configuration, varies from 16 percent to 20 percent, which is 3-4 times more profitable compared to the old refineries and petrochemical complexes.

TEDPIX gains 11,000 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 11,779 points to 1.348 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 7.614 billion securities worth 46.24 trillion rials (about \$184.96 million) were traded at the TSE.

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

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

Capital market in a country eliminates the enterprises' need for external financing that requires forex rate risk; and plays an important role in risk sharing and the effectiveness of capital allocation in various economic sectors, and as a result increases economic growth and welfare in society.

In Iran, where the capital market plays a small role in the long-term financing of enterprises, the government can play an important role in the development of the capital market and take initiatives to develop this market and increase its efficiency.

Two recent measures taken by the Iranian government indicate that the government is determined to support the capital market and strengthen this market's role in the national economy.

The first one was the six clauses in the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (starts on March 21) on supporting the capital market.

The budget bill, submitted by president to the parliament on December 12, has paid

special attention to the capital market and bourse companies.

The measures considered in the budget bill and its overall positive effects on the capital market includes 1- Reforming the price of gas feed, as well as electricity, water, oxygen and other utilities for the petrochemical units, refineries, steel reduction units, and downstream industries 2-Reducing taxes on production units active in the stock market 3-Strengthening Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund 4- Reducing the government's revenue from selling bonds 5-Eliminating subsidized foreign currency allocations 6- Eliminating pre-ordered pricing.

Reducing the taxes imposed on production units will make them more profitable and therefore their performance in the stock market will improve.

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

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

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

From page 1 ► Analysts say what is left of Ukraine's air force will sustain further losses and it will soon reach the point where it is unable to defend itself from attack in the skies. A new fleet of warplanes would ensure (at least for a limited period) the air space above Ukraine remains contested, and would perhaps make Russia think twice about airstrikes on the capital Kyiv.

However, Washington appeared stunned by Poland's announcement and the Pentagon has now dismissed the whole operation citing "logistical challenges".

So was the whole idea just to boost Ukraine's morale after Kyiv voiced its anger at its allies lack of support?

Referring to the abandonment of Ukraine, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, affirmed that "the wounded who fought the Israeli occupation are the witnesses in a time of denial, and evidence of the continuation of the resistance."

Nasrallah, who made the remarks during a speech on the annual Lebanese occasion of the "Day of the Wounded," indicated that "the events in Ukraine are very important in terms of lessons and lessons learned from them," and said, "Washington calls on Russia not to target civilians, so what does it have to say about the victims of American wars?"

Nasrallah recalled that "American planes bombed Afghan weddings, and claimed that they were training centers [for militants]," despite later acknowledging women and children had been killed.

In related context, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah asked: "What about the Israeli massacres and war crimes in occupied Palestine, and the siege of Gaza?" He added: "And what about the massacres of the Saudi coalition against civilians in Yemen? Why is the world silent about the siege of Yemen?"

Sayyed Nasrallah stressed that "those who belong to the world of the white man are just a commodity and a tool for the Americans," adding that "thousands of trial sessions must be held for the American and European armies because of their crimes all over the world."

He explained that "the world was silent about the Takfiris' targeting of Friday prayers in Pakistan last week," stressing that



Nasrallah: "U.S., UK pushed Ukraine to war"

"Washington is not satisfied with not condemning the Israeli crimes in Palestine, but rather prevents the world from condemning them as well."

Sayyed Nasrallah declared that "there is daily evidence in the world that trusting the Americans is stupidity, foolishness, ignorance, and neglect of the nation and the homeland," adding, "We have all seen how the United States left Afghanistan and abandoned those who trusted it there."

He pointed out that "several European countries, including Germany, did not want things in Ukraine to reach the point where they are now," and stressed that "the United States and Britain pushed Ukraine into war."

And he added, "Washington stresses daily that it will not send American planes and soldiers to Ukraine, despite the fact that it pushed the region to war." He says Washington is effectively telling the Ukrainians "you fight [against Russia], we are not ready to fight for your sake. the most we can do is impose sanctions because we have a goal to weaken Russia, the reality is your problems are not our problems."

The Hezbollah Chief stressed that "there is a feeling of betrayal and disappointment among Ukrainian officials, and [Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky] has backed down, he is now ready to

discuss Moscow's demands, if [the U.S.] allows him because he knows clearly that those who promised to stand beside him and support him.. abandoned him."

On the level of humane treatment of refugees fleeing armed conflict, Sayyed Nasrallah clarified that "dealing with refugees exposes discrimination based on religion, race, and color. Is this Western civilization?" he asked.

Nasrallah addressed the Lebanese officials, saying that "submission to American dictates will not save Lebanon, but rather will increase its problems."

The Hezbollah Secretary-General indicated that "Lebanon voted against Russia at the United Nations, although it could have chosen to abstain from the vote," explaining that "Lebanon is required to tell the Americans that the Lebanese are not slaves to it, as this is what sovereignty dictates."

Sayyed Nasrallah said that "the statement issued by the Lebanese Foreign Ministry regarding Ukraine was written in the U.S. embassy," and asked, "Where is the disassociation that the government calls for? Why did the advocates of neutrality remain silent in front of the Lebanese statement?"

He added, "All the talk we heard about neutrality and disassociation is just an excuse to evade responsibilities towards the

Palestinian cause and the war on Syria and Yemen," noting that "when it comes to the Americans, the talk about neutrality and disassociation disappears."

Nasrallah clarified that "the Foreign Ministry's statement regarding the Russian operation in Ukraine drops the lie and delusion that Hezbollah dominates the decisions made by the Lebanese state."

The question that, "If Hezbollah had dominated the state's affairs, would the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have issued a statement of this kind?"

On the issue of Lebanon's energy problems, Nasrallah revealed for the first time that "a Russian company submitted to Lebanon an offer over the establishment of an oil refinery with Russian financial backing."

He added that "the Russian company announced its readiness to secure all Lebanon's need for oil derivatives," and added that "the company confirmed that it is able to sell oil derivatives in the Lebanese currency, not in dollars."

Nasrallah said, "So far, Lebanon has not issued a response, after negotiations that lasted for a year and a half with the Russian company," noting that "the American embassy is preventing the Lebanese response to the Russian offer."

He explained that "the Americans are preventing Lebanon from moving towards the option with Russia without presenting an alternative."

Nasrallah reiterated that "if Hezbollah had dominated the decisions of the Lebanese state, the Russian offer would have been accepted a year and a half ago and the energy shortage problems would have been solved," calling on "Lebanese officials to take the decision and accept the proposal because the queues have returned in front of the gas stations."

The Secretary-General of Hezbollah concluded his speech by calling on the Lebanese state to "save all the Lebanese stranded in Ukraine, and to take care of those who managed to get out and reach Lebanon," and demanded that it "a minimum level of freedom, independence and patriotism, and to think about the country's interest."

Media highlight Ukraine war because Ukrainians have similar features with the West: ex-White House adviser

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

Is there any correlation between nationalism and racism? Trump's case showed that people who underline nationalistic values can be racist.

Yes. Naive nationalism is simply a large-scale social grouping, and social groupings are based on shared features. Such features can be racial, in the simplest cases. Sophisticated nationalism is aware of this problem and tries to embody group identity through symbols. Nationalism was originally built on the idea that a nation represented the political will of a coherent, single people sharing a common language and history. Unfortunately, there is no nation on earth that meets such standards except some of the small nations in the Pacific Ocean.

Why do Western mainstream media highlight the Ukraine war as a catastrophe while they neglect other wars and crises in West Asia, regarding them as normal phenomena?

Because the clothing of the people, the look of the buildings, all seem similar to those of the audience of such reporting. These aspects are a sort of symbology. So, the war is frightening, and therefore a 'catastrophe.'

War in the Middle East (West Asia) simply is played out against scenes that are less familiar to the audience of the mainstream media. The one exception is the war with Israel. An analyst said to me once that the Israelis are just "like us." Then I showed him footage of Netanyahu and his cabinet dancing in a circle. He was taken aback and admitted that maybe there were cultural differences.

The manipulation of empathy by governments can play a crucial role in marshaling a nation's support of one side in a conflict. The media seem instinctive to follow government pronouncements. It is "easy



information." Such manipulation is made easier if one party in a conflict more closely resembles the audience of the media.

Matters of state, however, often do not align with simple cultural patterns. In this case, Russia attacking Ukraine, they do.

Some Western reporters have been pointing to Ukrainian people as Europeans who enjoy a higher standard of living than West Asians. What is the implication of such an attitude towards Muslim people?

It is bad for Muslims because it implies that any strife is simply a product of their assumed inferior cultural level.

How can media entrench racism and disparity in society via mirroring the events and stories based on stereotypes? There are stereotypes about Eastern, Muslim and West Asian people.

Stereotypes are simple, easy for the media to use, at least initially, when the reporters are not familiar with a people or region. They resort to them quite unconsciously. Often these stereotypes are acquired when the reporters were children, having picked them up from movies or children's books. Such stereotypes are often based on some slight physical difference or some marked cultural feature, such as manner of dress or foreign language. As events progress, however, stereotypes often fall away and more realistic reporting emerges.

Saudi, UAE leaders reject calls with Biden as US seeks help on oil price surge



according to the report.

Saudi Arabia has also been pushing for legal immunity in the US for bin Salman, who is accused of ordering the gruesome murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018.

"The Saudis have signaled that their relationship with Washington has deteriorated under the Biden administration, and they want more support for their intervention in Yemen... help with their own civilian nuclear program as Iran's moves ahead, and legal immunity for Prince Mohammed in the US," the journal quoted Saudi officials as saying.

On Tuesday, Biden announced an immediate ban on Russian oil and other energy imports.

The ban pushed oil prices to \$130 a barrel, the highest level in 14 years. Retail gasoline prices in the United States also surged to an all-time record, with the average cost of a retail gallon of gasoline hitting \$4.173.

"We're moving forward with this ban understanding that many of our European allies and partners may not be in a position to join us," Biden said. "The United States produces far more oil domestically than all of European countries combined. In fact we are a net exporter of energy, so we can take this step."

(Source: Press TV)

Ukraine's Zelensky says he has 'cooled' on joining NATO and is open to discussions about control of Russian-backed separatist regions

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that he had "cooled down" about Ukraine's bid to join NATO amid Russia's war with the Eastern European country.

"Regarding NATO, I have cooled down regarding this question long ago after we understood that NATO is not prepared to accept Ukraine," Zelensky told ABC News in an exclusive interview that aired Monday night.

Zelensky added: "The alliance is afraid of controversial things and confrontation with Russia. I never wanted to be a country which is begging something on its knees. We are not going to be that country, and I don't want to be that president."

Ukraine's pursuit of NATO membership has been cited by Russian President Vladimir Putin as a justification for his decision to invade Ukraine.

In 2008, Ukraine applied to begin a NATO Membership Action Plan, and the alliance welcomed Ukraine's bid, pledging that the country would eventually become a member, while declining to offer a timeline.

In addition to his NATO comments,



Zelensky said on Tuesday that he was open to discussions about the control of Russian-backed separatist regions in eastern Ukraine, which could be an opening for peace talks with Russia.

"It is important to me how people who want to be part of Ukraine will live there. I am interested in the opinion of those who see themselves as citizens of the Russian Federation. However, we must discuss this issue," Zelensky said.

Before Putin launched Russia's war on Ukraine, he signed a decree recognizing the separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in the Donbas, an eastern region in Ukraine, as independent states. Putin demanded

guarantees that Ukraine would not join NATO in the run-up to his invasion, a demand the alliance's leaders repeatedly rejected.

"The people who elected me are not ready to surrender. We are not ready for ultimatums," Zelensky said. "But we can discuss with Russia the future of Crimea and Donbas."

A senior U.S. defense official who briefed reporters Tuesday estimated that up to 4,000 Russian troops had died since Putin launched Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24. The official said Russia had lost about 5% of its vehicles and weapons, leaving it plenty of combat power. The CIA director also warned Tuesday that Putin was «likely to double down and try to grind down the Ukrainian military with no regard for civilian casualties.»

But Russia's military is still expected to subdue the Ukrainian resistance if hostilities continue — at 900,000 active-duty troops and 2 million reservists, the Russian military is eight times the size of Ukraine's, according to a report from The Washington Post.

(Source: news.yahoo.com)

Power cut at Ukraine's Chernobyl nuclear plant

Power has been completely cut off at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, the site of the world's worst nuclear disaster in 1986, Ukraine's energy operator Ukrenergo said on Wednesday. The state-run nuclear operator Energoatom warned that

radioactive substances could be released because it cannot cool spent nuclear fuel.

Energoatom said there were about 20,000 spent fuel assemblies at Chernobyl that could not be kept cool, the Japan Times reported.

Russian forces took control of the site after they invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. Due to ongoing military activity, "there is no possibility to restore the lines," Ukrenergo said in a statement on its Facebook page. In a later post, Ukrenergo said backup generators were being used for critical systems,

but warned that this would only provide power for up to 48 hours.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba called for a cease-fire to allow repairs at the plant. After 48 hours, "cooling systems of the storage facility for spent nuclear fuel will stop, making radiation leaks imminent," Kuleba wrote in a Tweet. "Putin's barbaric war puts entire Europe in danger. He must stop it immediately!"

On Wednesday, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) tweeted to say it had been informed about the loss of power at Chernobyl, and



quoted Director-General Rafael Grossi as saying that the "development violates key safety pillar on ensuring uninterrupted power supply," adding that "in this case IAEA sees no critical

impact on safety."

The previous day, the IAEA, citing information from Ukrainian officials, expressed concern about the well-being of the staff working at the plant and noted that monitoring systems were not transmitting data.

"I'm deeply concerned about the difficult and stressful situation facing staff at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and the potential risks this entails for nuclear safety. I call on the forces in effective control of the site to urgently facilitate the safe rotation of personnel there," Grossi said in

a statement, using the Ukrainian spelling for the plant.

The IAEA also said that eight of Ukraine's 15 reactors were currently operating, including two at the Zaporizhzhya plant, which was seized by Russian forces last week after a firefight that drew worldwide condemnation.

Azby Brown, the leader researcher for monitoring organization Safecast, said last week that the radiation monitoring network near Chernobyl appeared to go offline after Russian forces took control of the plant.

“Sari 2022” to be inaugurated next week



From page 1 ▶ Back in February, the official announced that the successful organization of the international event is of high importance for the country, and Mazandaran in particular.

“The province must introduce the capacities of the region in the international arena, with the participation of all institutions, especially the honorable people of Mazandaran.”

Iranian cities of Sari, the capital of Mazandaran province, and Ardabil, the capital of Ardabil province, were selected in 2019 as the cultural capitals for the Economic Cooperation Organization for 2022 and 2023 respectively.

Sari was selected as the tourism capital of ECO during the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, preceded by the 5th High-Level Experts Group (HLEG) on tourism, which was held on October 3-4, 2019, in Khujand, Tajikistan.

“Sari 2022” is considered the best opportunity for cooperation between Iran and ECO member states and, given this opportunity, all potentials can be used for the prosperity and branding in the field of tourism and economy.

Local officials believe Mazandaran, which is a top destination for domestic travelers, can be turned into a destination for foreign travelers as well through careful planning.

Local officials believe Mazandaran can be turned into a destination for foreign travelers through careful planning.

Iranian handicrafts: Zilou-bafi

TEHRAN –Zilou is a beautiful yet simple and humble handwoven traditional floor covering made by desert people in Iran.

Zilou-bafi of Meybod, in the central province of Yazd, is a name widely known throughout Iran. In houses and occasionally Mosques, this floor covering, which resembles klim, is usually seen with square patterns and limited colors.

Zilou is mostly made from cotton yarn, and preparing this yarn is the first of many steps involved in making it. Therefore, this craft is more common in agricultural regions, and the cotton yarn used in Zilou is produced locally.

Arid and hot conditions in the province of Yazd made it an ideal place to produce Zilou people over time. Because they are light and cold, these handwoven floor coverings are used in such areas. In addition, they have beautiful patterns and unique colors. Historical documents also say that the oldest piece of Zilou remains in Jameh Mosque of Meybod.

The Zilou weaving machine looks very much like the looms used to weave carpets. Carpets and klms also share many of the same motifs and patterns as Zilou. However, there are some motifs in the Zilou that can be seen in Iranian architecture as well.

Zilou has two main groups of patterns,



geometric and herbal. Diamonds and squares and crosses are known to be dominant in the geometric group. Zilou patterns usually consist of two patterns, Goldani and Mehrabi. There is a third kind of Zilou pattern that is completely unique. On the market, they are usually offered in two colors, one of them being white. Zilou is known for three famous combinations: white and blue, green and beige, and blue and beige. Zilou is used primarily for flooring.

In addition to houses, they are very suitable for mosques due to their simplicity and serenity. Also, Zilou has been used in recent years for bags and cushions, which has resulted in more prosperity for this ancient handicraft from the desert lands of Iran.

Historical caravanserai getting ready to host Noruz travelers

TEHRAN-A clean-up project has recently been commenced on the Qajar-era (1789-1925) Haj Kamal Caravanserai in Robat Karim, Tehran province, Robat Karim’s tourism chief has said.

The project aims to make the historical site ready to welcome visitors and travelers during the upcoming festivities of the Iranian new year (Noruz), Hamid Karimi announced on Wednesday.

The project, which is being carried out in collaboration with Robat Karim Municipality, involves cleaning the caravanserai’s surrounding area as well as planting flowers inside the historical inn, the official added.

The historical structure is one of the popular tourist destinations in the region and has been inscribed on the National Heritage list, he noted.

Robat Karim is home to many historical and cultural monuments due once being placed on the important historical Silk Road.

Possible UNESCO tag for Iranian caravanserais

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

Last year, the tourism ministry announced that Iran is developing a dossier for a selection of its historical caravanserais for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list. In this



regard, cultural heritage experts are assessing such monuments that are scattered across the country to make a shortlist in terms of their architecture, historical and cultural values.

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

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

A typical caravansary

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

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

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

Such roadside inns were once constructed along ancient caravan routes in the Muslim world to shelter people, their goods, and animals. The

former Silk Roads may be the most famous example dotted by caravanserais.

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

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

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

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

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

Neglected craft of jajim-bafi to be revived in Ilam

TEHRAN- The ancient handicrafts skill of jajim-bafi, which had been almost fallen into oblivion, is planned to be revived in the western province of Ilam, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Jajim is a handwoven rug that is thick and has no lint, made of wool and cotton with long wrapping and stripped and colorful pattern.

Depending on the allocated budget, different jajim-bafi training courses will be held next year to promote this field, CHTN quoted Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh as saying on Tuesday.

Moreover, the province’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department aims to make documentaries on jajim-bafi and grant permissions for individuals and workshops in this field, the official added.

Home to almost half of Iran’s UNESCO sites, western Iran is a land of hospitable people, wild extremes, and wilder history, and it may be an independent traveler’s adventure playground. The region also witnessed the rise and fall of many great empires once bordering Mesopotamia,



Ottoman Turkey, and Czarist Russia.

From the fecund Caspian coast to the stark, mountainous northern borders, and the crumbling desert ruins of the southern plains, the region hosts everything from paddy fields to blizzards to Persian gardens.

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

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran’s

number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

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

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

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

Historical mansion in Qazvin turns into tourism complex

TEHRAN-The historical mansion of Yazdiha in the northwestern province of Qazvin has turned into a tourism complex, the head of the Fund for Development of Handicrafts and Handmade Carpet and Revitalization and Utilization of Historical and Cultural Places, has announced.

The Qajar-era (1789-1925) mansion, which was previously ceded to the private sector, has been fully restored, Hadi Mirzai said on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony of the complex on Tuesday.

Also known as the Mirianzadeh Mansion, the historical building is one of the monuments owned by the tourism ministry and was used as an office space, and some parts were abandoned for decades, the official explained.

The monument was granted to the private sector for better maintenance and preservation, and after two years of restoration and renovation, it finally becomes a tourism complex, he noted.

Some historical sites and monuments across Iran have been temporarily ceded to the private sector during the past couple of years under the close supervision of the Fund, to achieve higher productivity and better maintenance.

The lack of a sufficient government budget for the restoration of all centuries-old sites is the main reason behind ceding the projects.

In 2019, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts announced that of the numerous historical

buildings and structures that are scattered across Iran, some 2,500 ones need restoration.

Qazvin was once the capital of the mighty Persian Empire, under Safavids, from 1548 to 98. It is a major tourist destination with a wonderfully restored caravanserai-turned-arts precinct, some quirky museums, and a handful of decent eating options. For most travelers, Qazvin is also primarily the staging point for excursions to the famous Castles of the Assassins and trekking in the sensational Alamut Valley.

Also known as the castle of the Assassins, the 12th-century Alamut castle is nestled on top of a peak. It was once a shelter for the followers of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070-1124) who was a spiritual leader of an Islamic



sect. In the early 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book “The Valleys of the Assassins”.

Qazvin is also home to one of the biggest roofed caravanserais of the country, Sa’d-al Saltaneh caravanserai. Dating back to the Qajar era, it’s a place for discovering tens of Hojreh or shops, cafes, yards, and a stunning mosque. It’s a place for visitors who want to experience the culture, culinary, and hospitality of Iran.

'Achievements in empowering women are undeniably remarkable despite sanctions'

TEHRAN – Zahra Ershadi, Iran's ambassador and deputy representative to the United Nations, has said that Iran has made significant progress in empowering women, despite U.S. illegal and inhumane sanctions.

She made the remarks at a meeting of the Security Council on women, peace, and security held on Tuesday.

"The United States-imposed illegal and inhumane sanctions against the country have negatively affected the financing and executing of the programs planned by the Government, civil society, and private sectors aiming at women advancement and empowerment. However, Iran has made significant achievements in this regard.

Women have an undeniable role to play in promoting dialogue and confidence in the peace and security process. It is a well-known fact that encouraging women to participate in the peace process increases the possibility of peace.

As a result, women's participation in the peace process increases the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, enhances civilian protection, contributes to the political settlement of disputes and the maintenance of long-term peace, and accelerates economic reconstruction," she highlighted.

Referring to the situation of women in the region, she stated that "the Palestinian women and girls continue to suffer because of the decades-long occupation and human



rights violations, as well as the Israeli regime's colonial and apartheid policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

In Afghanistan, the current situation has severely affected Afghan women's rights, including their political and socio-economic rights, such as the right to education, work, and political participation. The Taliban should heed the international community's call to protect human rights, particularly women's rights.

Issues concerning women and girls are the responsibility of the General Assembly. The Security Council should only address this issue if it is directly related to the maintenance of international peace and security."

On February 15 Ershadi slammed U.S. sanctions against the Iranian nation, saying "these illegal actions have directly impacted the lives of

the Government of Iran has provided special financial packages as well as social and economic rehabilitation plans for poor and people in the vulnerable situation along with economic support measures, especially for small businesses," the Iranian diplomat said.

"In the meantime, treatment programs have been provided for around 4 million legal and illegal Afghan refugees," she concluded.

Claudio Providas, UNDP Representative in Iran, has said Iran was among the first countries to be hard hit by COVID-19.

In an article published by the Tehran Times on Monday, he wrote that the pandemic broke out at a time when the nation was still reeling under the impact of the unilateral economic sanctions, and this added to the pressures on daily life, particularly on women.

"The participation of Iranian women in the economy post-pandemic declined. The effect of this reduction was worse among Women's Head Households (WHH) - and in low-income households headed by women, the situation was even more complicated.

According to the Statistical Center of Iran, out of twenty-two (22) million families in Iran, over three (3) million are WHH and most of them are in less-developed areas. The Government prioritized such families for targeting socio-economic support."

Iran's most vulnerable citizens, including women, children, and patients."

"What is further distressing is the reality that many children have lost their lives as a result," she said, IRNA reported.

"As our President stated in his address to the UNGA session, imposing unilateral sanctions against the Iranian people, particularly sanctions on medicine and humanitarian items, are criminal acts on par with crimes committed against humanity. Those who sanction countries should not go unpunished for such heinous crimes," Ershadi said addressing the United Nations Commission for Social Development.

Iran has repeatedly denounced the sanctions as an act of "economic war", "economic terrorism", and "medical terrorism".

"Under the current circumstances,

100 scholarships to be awarded to Muslim students

TEHRAN – Scholarships will be awarded to 100 talented students of the Islamic world studying in Iranian universities at the master's and doctoral levels in basic sciences, Sa'dollah Nasiri, the chancellor of Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University, said.

He made the remarks at the opening ceremony of the International Year of Basic Sciences on Wednesday.

Proclaimed for 2022 by the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly 2 in December 2021, the day aims to stress that the applications of basic sciences are vital for advances in medicine, industry, agriculture, water resources, energy planning, environment, communications, and culture.

On this occasion, it was decided to grant 100 post-doctoral recruitment capacity or study opportunities in basic sciences to doctoral graduates or faculty of neighboring and Islamic countries to put research on the agenda under the supervision of the country's leading professors, Nasiri added.

He went on to note that the birthday anniversary of Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (March 4) is pro-

posed to be approved as the national day of basic sciences in the Iranian calendar.

Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni commonly known as al-Biruni, was a Khwarazmian Iranian scholar and polymath during the Islamic Golden Age. He has been called variously the "founder of Indology", "Father of Comparative Religion", "Father of modern geodesy", and the first anthropologist.

520,000 foreign students in Iran

The Iranian minister of foreign affairs has said that more than 520,000 foreign students in Iran study for free and that the vaccination of Afghan asylum seekers has been considered and taken on a par with that of Iranian citizens.

Some 57,675 college students from 133 countries are studying in Iranian universities, many of whom have returned to their country with the outbreak of the pandemic.

Some 30,600 of the whole students are studying in universities affiliated with the Ministry of Science, while 25,000 others are receiving education in Azad University, and about 2,000 in medical universities.



Fifty-seven percent of the international students are studying for a master's degree, 27 percent for a bachelor's degree, and 15 percent for a Ph.D. degree, while the remaining one percent study at other levels.

Law, Persian literature, and computer engineering are the top three fields of study for foreign students in Iran, while civil engineering, business management, political science, English language and literature, Quran and hadith sciences, international relations, electrical engineering, and other majors with the highest number of non-Iranian students.

WFP delivers food packages to Sistan-Baluchestan

TEHRAN – Some 450 food packages donated by the UN World Food Program have been distributed among the needy people of Sistan-Baluchestan province, the director of the provincial Red Crescent Society, has said.

The scheme was implemented in order to help the livelihood of low-income families affected by coronavirus pandemic in Nimroz, Chabahar, and Zabol cities, IRNA quoted Alireza Mirbahaoddin as saying on Wednesday.

Food items included rice, oil, tea, canned beans, tuna, pinto beans, lentils, sugar, and salt, he noted.



Hunger increases worldwide

A report jointly prepared by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO shows that currently around 690 million people or 8.9 percent of the world population are hungry. Compared to the previous figures, this number is up by 10 million people in one

year and by nearly 60 million in five years.

"The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020" also indicates that the number of people affected by severe food insecurity has experienced a similar upward trend over the last five years. In 2019, close to 750 million—or nearly one in ten people in the world—were exposed to severe levels of food insecurity.

The figures reveal that about 2 billion people in the world did not have regular access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food in 2019.

Considering the widespread impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is estimated that the pandemic may add between 83 and 132 million people to the total number of undernourished in the world in 2020 depending on the economic growth scenario.

While the burden of malnutrition in all its forms remains a challenge for the world, current estimates reveal that in 2019, 21.3 percent (144 million) of children under 5 years of age were stunted, 6.9 percent (47 million) wasted, and 5.6 percent (38.3 million) overweight.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

'Water transfer from Sea of Oman entails no considerable environmental risk'

Transferring water from Sea of Oman to central drought-ridden provinces of the country, provided that the environmental requirements are met, will not pose threats to the environment, Issa Kalantari, the Department of Environment (DOE) chief has announced.

To provide the amount of water needed for the country, agriculture and industries, there is no choice but to use seawater, the incredible and abundant resources, now and in the future, Kalantari stated, IRNA reported on Monday.

He went on to say that Iran located in an arid and semi-arid area, is facing environmental problems including water shortage, sand and dust storms due to low precipitation amounts coupled with climate change.

شیرین سازی و انتقال آب دریای عمان مشکل زیست محیطی ندارد

معاون رئیس جمهوری و رئیس سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست کشور گفت: شیرین سازی و انتقال آب دریای عمان به استان های مختلف به شرط رعایت الزامات محیط زیستی مانع زیست محیطی ندارد و از نظر این سازمان بلا مانع است.

عیسی کلانتری دوشنبه شب در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا در چابهار اظهار داشت: برای تامین آب کشاورزی، آشامیدنی و صنایع کشور چاره ای جز استفاده از آب دریا نداریم و باید چه اکنون و چه آینده به این منابع بیکران و بسیار فراوان رجوع کنیم. وی افزود: ایران کشور پر آبی نیست و سالها با بحران بی آبی، خشکسالی و مسائل زیست محیطی، گرد و غبار و ریزگردها مواجه است.

Glaciers of Iran

(Part 1)

GLACIERS and ice fields in Iran. Due to Iran's location in the very center of the arid dry belt, stretching from North Africa in the west to Central Asia in the east, and also due to its very specific topography, glaciers and/or permanent ice fields are restricted and concentrated in a very few locations.

The admittedly hypothetical reconstruction of the recent snow line for Iran reveals an average height of approximately 4000 m in northern Iran and about 5000 m in the southwest of the country. Mountains and mountain ranges, however, reach more than 4000 m in only a very few places.

The combination of snow line and topography explains why glaciers and ice fields are very rare in Iran; they are found mainly in the Zagros and Alborz ranges.

Small and isolated occurrences have been described for the volcanoes in northwestern Iran.

Glaciers in general may be defined as masses of ice which, in an ideal case, move slowly down a slope from above the fictitious snow line under the force of gravity.

They owe their existence to the snowfall which is pressurized into granular ice or, under conditions of continued pressure over long times and great depth of the layers, into clear ice.

From the originating snow fields glaciers may extend well below the snow line forming those typical tongue-shaped forms that are so characteristic of many high mountain areas of the world.

The combination of Iran's present day hypothetical snow line and the country's topography is the cause of the very specific forms of glaciers, ice fields, and related glaciological phenomena.

Their overall characteristics can be summarized as follows: (1) regional concentration in a very few locations; (2) very limited spatial extents and consequently only rudimentary forms; and (3) an intricate combination with other glacial and periglacial phenomena. On the whole, there are three areas of glacier occurrence in Iran: The Alborz, the volcanoes of northwest Iran, and the Zagros ranges.

Glaciers and ice fields in the Alborz

Topography and climate in the Alborz are the decisive factors for only a very limited number of glaciers and ice fields.

According to Hans Bobek (1937, 1953, 1957), the only remarkable existence of a glacier is to be found near the Alam Kuh (4,840 m) in the Takht-e Soleyman massif

in the central Alborz.

Bobek (1957, p. 243) mentions a glacier tongue of approximately 4 km in length as well as eight to ten small ice fields, most of them in the form of small cirque glaciers. Furthermore, there seems to be a small glacier north of Hazarcham Pass near Lashkarak.

On the basis of these observations, Bobek suggests the height of the recent snow line to be approximately 4000 m, with a depression of about 700 m during the last ice age and a correspondingly larger net of glaciers, originating in the Takht-e Soleyman massif.

In spite of its much greater height, Mount Damavand (5,678 m, q.v.) has no glaciers, although more or less permanent ice fields have been described.

This is especially true for the summit crater of the isolated volcano, where permanent snow and ice fields have developed, under the influence of high radiation and evaporation, into "nieve ve los penitentes," a specific form of snow ablation (Schweizer, 1969). Otherwise, Pierre Bout et al. are right in their statement that "the existence of real ice field seems to be possible only at one of the barrancos" (p. 77).

Glaciers and ice fields in northwest Iran. In contrast to the exposed mountain ranges of the Alborz, the mountain masses of northwestern Iran, especially in the province of Azarbaijan, are characterized by more pronounced occurrences of glaciers and snow fields.

This is especially true for the massif of the Kuh-e Sabalan (4,740 m), where Gunter Schweizer (1970, p. 168) has identified and documented altogether seven glaciers with a maximal length between 400 and 900 m and maximal width between 150 and 650 m. Most of these glaciated areas are, like those of the Takht-e Soleyman group, in a northerly exposition.

Originating in heights between 4,250 m and 4,700 m, the lowest occurrence of blank ice is 3,980 m.

This means that the (hypothetical) snow line is at an elevation of around 4,200 m.

The question remains whether these occurrences should be termed "glaciers" or it would be more appropriate to call them ice fields. This, however, is an academic question.

The fact is that glaciation in northwestern Iran during the Pleistocene period reached a much larger extent than at present. Schweizer (1972) suggests a Quaternary snow line depression of more than 800 m.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica



COVID-19 UPDATES ON MARCH 9

New cases	5,008
New deaths	173
Total cases	7,107,167
Total deaths	138,433
New hospitalized patients	911
Patients in critical condition	3,265
Total recovered patients	6,754,234
Diagnostic tests conducted	47,961,837
Doses of vaccine injected	143,791,282



MARCH 10, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Do not feel ashamed if the amount of charity is small because to refuse the needy is an act of greater shame.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon: 12:15 Evening: 18:25 Dawn: 4:58 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:21 (tomorrow)

Jalal ad-Din Rumi: Teachings

Part 4

He specifically points out the superiority of this kind of discipleship to the fulfillment of ordinary religious requirements, because of its efficacy for this purpose (Masnavi).

The master is needed at various stages in the path for advice about how to navigate the path, both to inspire the beginner (Masnavi), and also to assist at the later stages, when there is the hazard of a fall through pride after mystical accomplishments, as illustrated in the story about the Prophet Muhammad (S) and Zayd (Masnavi).

There are many false masters, and the way to distinguish between them is through their inner purity, not their outward appearance, actions, and claims, though even disciples of a false master may succeed on the Path, if they are sincere, through God's mercy (Masnavi).

What is forbidden for a disciple may be correct for a master, so extra caution is required in discerning the genuine one and also in remaining loyal to him (Masnavi).

Although Rumi frequently draws on material from his seminary educational background, the

vision of Sufism which he conveys using that material is not one that is easily harmonized with scholastic Islam.

His priority is overcoming the self in order to experience God directly, and he sees this as an endeavor that all his readers should aspire to according to their capacity.

Scholars who join him are reassured that they will gain a "soul" for the corpse-like knowledge that they already possess, rather than have to abandon that knowledge altogether, but no suggestion is made that their education is beneficial for the Sufi path (Fihe ma fihi).

Rumi also draws on other fields of knowledge, such as medicine and astronomy, without any implication that they are inferior to scholastic religious knowledge.

Rather, he uses such knowledge as a means to express his mystical vision of creation as being enchanted in its entirety, with even inanimate objects being in communication with the Divine.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

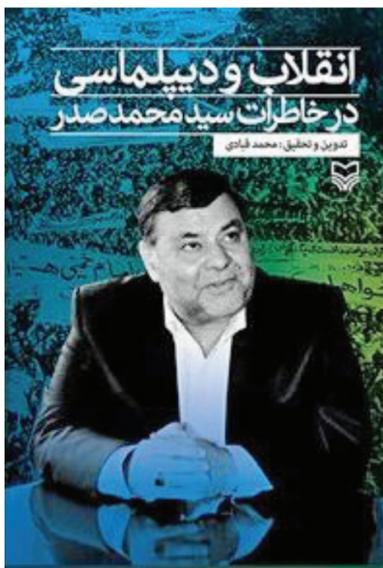
Concluded

"Revolution and diplomacy" in narratives

By Mohammad Reza Kaeni

The book we'll be discussing is about Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Sadr, a diplomat and a combatant of the Islamic revolution. Mohammad Ghobadi wrote this collection in the form of questions and answers, which has been published by Soore Mehr Publication.

"I met Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Sadr for the first time in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building to set up future interviews with him. His office was at the end of a salon on the second floor which was like a museum containing the gifts of ambassadors and foreign officials. Until that day, I had never seen him up close, but I had read about him in news and article and knew that he was a realist diplomat, and to be honest, being Ayatollah Seyyed Reza Sadr's son and Imam Musa Sadr's nephew brought me closer to him. In recent years, he has been identified as a critic in the field of diplomacy, and he wasn't afraid to criticize, just as wasn't afraid to be criticized. It was quite easy and enjoyable to talk with him; yet, he had some excuses; according to him, all of his words were based on memory and that he had forgotten many things, but I believe his forgetfulness was due to his position! He consented to share his memoirs with me on the condition that I would not shorten his words or add a prejudiced footnote, so his insistence



inspired me to compile his memoirs into a set of questions and answers," said Mohammad Ghobadi, in the introduction of his book.

Yazdi poet awarded at the Fajr Festival



Alieh Mehrabi was the winner of the adult-classical poetry category of the Fajr International Poetry Festival. "Animah is a collection of sonnet poems I wrote between 2015 and 2019. This book, published by Soore Mehr, contains sonnets with a variety of themes and subjects, including social, ritual,

and romantic," said Mehrabi.

"Four of my seven published books are religious poems, so I'm more likely to be remembered with religious poems. But poetry is a means of awakening people's souls for me, and I have done so without limiting myself to a religious subject," she added.

Regarding the poetic meaning of his poems, he said that in any way that words can express, his ultimate purpose is awakening and awareness.

Mehrabi noted that she has written religious poems for the spirit of prayer and hope, love sonnets for sympathy with lovers, and resistance poems for the attitude of stability and battling.

It is also worth mentioning that this lady poet's book won first place in the 16th International "Fajr Poetry" Festival.

Iran Regional Music Orchestra makes debut with Nezami songs

From Page 1 ► Formerly known as Sazneh Ensemble, the orchestra has been active since 2017. Seven regional music experts are collaborating with the orchestra featuring 45 players and ten singers who are working under the supervision of Payman Bozorgnia.

"The orchestra is composed of outstanding performers from the country's regional music," Bozorgnia said on stage before the beginning of the concert.

"By this concert, we intend to take you on a journey to the heart of Iran's regional music, introducing parts of the country's folk music," he added.

In his short speech, Iran House of Music managing director Hamidreza Nurbakhsh, who was in attendance at the performance, said, "Due to the dispersion of regional musicians across the country, it's difficult to form a regional music orchestra."

He added, "Our music is rooted in the country's regional music and it's our duty to pave the ground for them to represent their art."

"There has been no replacement for those regional musicians who have passed away over the past few decades; most of them were real gems who garnered the acclaims of the audience



and critics in international performances," he noted.

"Unfortunately however, no plan has yet been implemented in the country for supporting them so as to enable them to continue and maintain their art for future generations," he lamented.

Nurbakhsh warned the cultural officials about the issue.

"Due to limited facilities, Sazneh

has always given its performances under difficult conditions," he said and added, "For this concert, the orchestra had only three or four days to rehearse, however, their performances have always been amazing."

"This orchestra must be strongly supported so that similar groups from across the country can emerge," he stated.

Nurbakhsh said that the establishment of a variety of regional music groups can help improve tastes in music in the country.

The concert was a prelude to a massive program Iran plans to organize next week to commemorate Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi, who brought a colloquial and realistic style to the Persian epic.

Persian readers discover "Modern Love" in Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – "Modern Love: True Stories of Love, Loss, and Redemption" by American writer Daniel Jones has been published in Persian.

Published by Qoqnu, the book has been translated into Persian by Farshad Rezaei.

It has the most popular, provocative and unforgettable essays from the past fifteen years of the New York Times "Modern Love" column, including stories from the upcoming anthology series starring Tina Fey, Andy Garcia, Anne Hathaway, Catherine Keener, Dev Patel and John Slattery.

A young woman goes through the five stages of ghosting grief. A man's promising fourth date ends in the emergency room. A female lawyer with bipolar disorder experiences the highs and lows of dating. A widower hesitates about introducing his children to his new girlfriend. A divorcee in her seventies looks back at the beauty and rubble of past relationships.

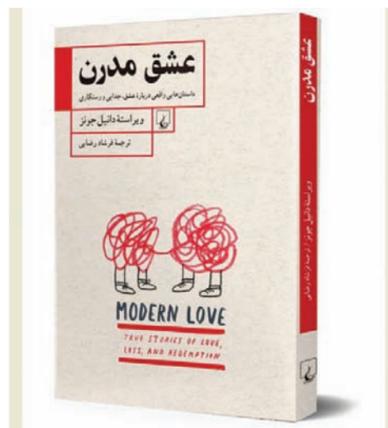
These are just a few of the people who tell their stories in "Modern Love", featuring dozens

of the most memorable essays to run in The New York Times "Modern Love" column since its debut in 2004.

Some of the stories are unconventional, while others hit close to home. Some reveal the way technology has changed dating forever; others explore the timeless struggles experienced by anyone who has ever searched for love. But all of the stories are, above everything else, honest. Together, they tell the larger story of how relationships begin, often fail, and, when we're lucky, endure.

Edited by longtime "Modern Love" editor Daniel Jones and featuring a diverse selection of contributors, this is the perfect book for anyone who's loved, lost, stalked an ex on social media, or pined for true romance: In other words, anyone interested in the endlessly complicated workings of the human heart.

Jones books also include "Love Illuminated: Exploring Life's Most Mystifying Subject", "The Bastard on the Couch" and the novel "After Lucy".



Front cover of the Persian translation of Daniel Jones' book "Modern Love".

WOW Film Festival picks "Ballad of a White Cow", "Sun Children", "Zalava"

TEHRAN – Iranian films "Ballad of a White Cow", "Sun Children" and "Zalava" are competing in the 21st edition of the Wales One World Film Festival.

This year's festival runs online from February 25 until March 13.

"Ballad of a White Cow", a co-production between Iran and France directed by Behdash Sanaeiha and Maryam Moqaddam, follows Mina, a woman whose life is turned upside down when she learns that her husband Babak was innocent of the crime for which he was executed.

The authorities apologize for the mistake and offer the prospect of financial compensation. Mina starts a silent battle against a cynical system for her own and her daughter's sake. Just as her money is running out, a stranger named Reza knocks at her door, saying he has come to repay a debt he owed



"Zalava" directed by Arsalan Amiri.

to Babak. Mina is guarded at first, but increasingly lets Reza into her life, unaware of the secret that ties them to one another.

It won third place in the 2021 Berlinale Competition Audience Award and the Student Jury Award at the 11th edition of the International Crime and Punishment Film Festival in Istanbul, Turkey.

"Sun Children", director Majid

Majidi's acclaimed child labor drama, will also be reviewed.

It is about 12-year-old Ali and his three friends, who work hard together to survive and support their families. In a turn of events that seems miraculous, Ali is entrusted to find hidden treasure underground.

"Sun Children" was selected for the foreign-language film category longlist at the 93rd

Academy Awards. However, it failed to receive a nomination in the finals for the Oscar race.

The story of "Zalava" directed by Arsalan Amiri is set in 1978 in a small village called "Zalava", where the villagers claim that a demon is among them.

A young sergeant who investigates the claim crosses paths with an exorcist attempting to evict the demon from the village. He arrests the exorcist on a charge of fraud, but suddenly finds himself stuck in a cursed house with his lover. The villagers, who believe they are both possessed by the demon, decide to kill them.

The film won the grand prize at the 36th Venice International Film Critics' Week. Amiri has also won the award for best director for the movie at the 8th Duhok International Film Festival in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

Still alive after being shot by 13 bullets

An interview with Javad Kamour Bakhshai

"Safe Place for Bullets," narrates the story of Abd-al Reza Albohghish, a Khorramshahr resident who was present in Khorramshahr's 34-day defense and defended his city with all his heart, and eventually survived after being shot 13 times by an Iraqi soldier.

The author first wrote the book "Sheikh Sharif," and then went to find Albohghish as a witness of the Ba'athist regime's crimes in Iraq.

***How did you find your subject and your narrator?**

Writers usually use the method of finding a new subject while working on an existing one. During my research process to write "Sheikh Sharif," who was the first martyr clergy in the

holy defense, I realized that the only witness and observer of Sheikh Sharif martyrdom was alive, and finding him took a lot of time, but when I found him, I discovered that, in addition to his story about what happened to Sheikh Sharif, he had his own long story.

"Which part of "Safe Place for Bullets" made the most impression on you?"

His wife worked as a nurse in a hospital, and the impressive moment was when she met him there while was waiting for him.

*** What are your views and feelings regarding the book?**

I believe the significant point of this book is the narrative of people who believe in defending their country without knowing how

to fight and how defending continued until the last breath. Those warriors were legends with the potential to be the subject of a novel or movie.

*** What distinguished Albohghish from the other participants in Khorramshahr's 34-day resistance?**

Many stories have been published about this subject, and the best of them is "Da (Mother)". Each of them has its own impact and importance, and writing the narrator's memories is important for two reasons; first, he is the only witness and observer of Sheikh Sharif's martyrdom, second, Albohghish himself, was a symbol of a defenseless fighter facing an armed and aggressor army.