



Congratulations on Ramadan arrival

Report T

The Ukraine conflict backfired on the U.S. dollar

The perception among many that the United States is the most powerful country in the world because of its military power cannot be further from the reality on the ground.

Indeed, congress is set to approve a record of more than \$773 billion for America's military budget next year, which is the highest level this century; and perhaps even provide President Joe Biden more than he asked for; as was the case last year.

If there is one issue that both Democrats and Republicans can agree on with enthusiasm, then it's the military budget which remains a bipartisan congressional matter at the expense of the U.S. taxpayer.

But with all this military spending, it's difficult to remember the last time America emerged victorious from the many wars it has waged.

The embarrassing so-called withdrawal in August last year from Afghanistan, as men not equipped with military helmets but turbans and not wearing military boots but sandals converged on Kabul will go down in history as a classic case in point.

If that was described by Washington as a withdrawal then we really need to think how fleeing a country would look like.

But this is Washington's game plan: create tension around the world, most recently in Eastern Europe and lately near China or Iran to justify to the American nation back home the increase of the military budget.

Many pundits and analysts who appear on American mainstream media have some connection to the arms manufacturers and sell the narrative to American taxpayers while arms manufacturers like Lockheed Martin or Boeing stand to make more profit; a portion of which ends up in the pockets of congress members.

But has this tactic - with America the leading advocate for expanding NATO eastwards towards Russia - about to backfire when the unfortunate ensuing Russian-Ukraine conflict erupted? ▶ Page 5

Report T

Palestinians begin new phase of intifada right before Ramadan

TEHRAN— As the holy month of Ramadan is approaching, the Palestinians are commencing a new phase of resistance, or as they say, intifada.

Last Ramadan, the occupied territories witnessed bloody strikes by the Israeli forces, as well as brutal evictions, especially in Sheikh Jarrah.

However, this year, Hamas asked the Palestinians to hold their regular prayers and worships in the al-Aqsa mosque. The movement also warned the Israelis against any action towards the Palestinian worshippers.

The new phase of intifada began on March 27, where according to the Palestinian news agency Shahab, two simultaneous shootings took place in the city of Bnei Brak near Tel Aviv.

Israel's Channel 12 reported that four people were killed in the shootings.

Medical sources in Tel Aviv said the shooting killed five people.

Five people were killed and six others were injured in a shooting in Bnei Brak, east of Tel Aviv, Israeli medical sources said in a press release.

One of the combatants is a 26-year-old Palestinian from the village of Yabad near Jenin in the northwest, Israeli state TV reported.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the body of another operative who was shooting on a motorcycle was found on a street.

Israeli War Minister Benny Gantz spoke with security officials about the attack in Bnei Brak.

Reacting to the anti-Israeli operation on March 29, former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "Israel is facing a wave of dangerous attacks that is unprecedented." ▶ Page 2

Leader Ushers in New Year With Message of Self-Reliance ▶ Page 3



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Iran's oil production back to pre-sanction level: oil min.

TEHRAN- Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji said that the country's crude oil production has reached the pre-sanction level.

Saying that the current capacity of Iran's oil production has reached more than 3.8 million barrels per day (bpd), the minister said, "We hope that through the efforts of all those active in this sector, we will reach higher figures in the exports of crude oil, gas condensate, oil products, and petrochemicals in [the current Iranian calendar year] 1400 (started on March 21)".

"By taking effective measures in onshore and offshore oil fields, drilling new wells, repairing wells, rebuilding and modernizing facilities, and oil collection centers, the current oil production capacity has reached before the sanctions, and we have no problem in performance and this amount of production", Oji added.

"Iran's oil exports have risen under the toughest sanctions and without waiting for the outcome of the Vienna talks," the minister had said in mid-March.

The increase was thanks to "different methods used to win contracts and finding different buyers," the official added.

"The rise had even increased the bargaining power of our team in Vienna," he said, without elaborating.

Tehran's oil exports have been limited since former U.S. President Donald Trump in 2018 exited the 2015 nuclear accord and reimposed sanctions. ▶ Page 4

Iran improves rank in health technology

TEHRAN - Based on innovative indicators of health technology development in 2021, Iran was ranked 60th among 132 countries, which shows an improvement of 60 steps compared to 2014, the deputy health minister for research and technology, has announced.

A total of 1,670 knowledge-based firms are operating in the health sector, ISNA quoted Younes Panahi as saying on Thursday.

He added that there are 13 science and technology parks and 95 technology growth centers in the field of health, while 343 technological products have so far been licensed, and 335 inventions in medical sciences have been patented.

The health technology development is evaluated by the Global Innovation Index with seven indicators, including institutional structure, human capital and research, infrastructure, market and business complexity, technological knowledge, and creativity, he explained. ▶ Page 7

Iran jointly nominates Iftar for UNESCO tag

TEHRAN -Iran has submitted a dossier on the Iftar meal to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for a possible joint registration between the Islamic Republic, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan.

During Islam's holy month of Ramadan, believers abstain from food and drink during daylight hours, and break their fast with the iftar evening meals which vary from simple plates

of bread, dates, cheese, and tea to heavy ones.

On March 29, Ali Darabi, the deputy minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts said the dossier of 'Iftar and its related social and cultural traditions', had been sent to the UN body for further consideration.

Darabi noted that the inscription file "has been compiled at the suggestion of Iran and with the cooperation of Turkey, Azerbaijan,

and Uzbekistan, and will be presented to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage committee in 2023."

Moreover, the official said that the spiritual tradition of pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) along with sustained efforts to safeguard hospitality services for Razavi pilgrims may soon join UNESCO's listing of cultural treasures. ▶ Page 6



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Iranians celebrate Nature Day nationwide

TEHRAN — Iranians celebrated the Nature Day, also known as Sizdah Bedar, on Saturday nationwide by spending the day outside in the nature.

As a deep-rooted and long-standing tradition, Iranians usually spend the last day of Noruz holidays (starting on March 21) in the nature in big or small groups. Families usually set up camps, make lunch, and play outdoor games.

Report T

Ukraine war clearly manifests racism

TEHRAN - In parts of his remarks on the first day of Norouz (the Persian New Year), Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed to examples of racism in the Ukraine war, saying, "In the issue of Ukraine all noticed Western racism."

The Leader said while people were fleeing the war, they stopped the refugees to separate the black people from the whites.

Reportedly, there have been widespread reports from African students fleeing the country that they faced segregation, racism and abuse.

The Leader also said Western officials clearly regret in their media outlets that this time the war is not in the Middle East and it is in Europe.

"It means that if war and bloodshed and fratricide is in the Middle East, as they call it, it is not problematic, but if it is in Europe, it is problematic. This is utter racism," the Leader pointed out.

The insultation against the people of color in Ukraine reverberated across the world.

For example, CBS News senior foreign correspondent Charlie D'Agata said the war in Ukraine is particularly shocking because the country is "relatively civilized" and "European" compared to Iraq and Afghanistan.

D'Agata's characterization was among a flurry of similar commentary in the media that critics have slammed as racist and, in some cases, historically inaccurate, according to Yahoo News. ▶ Page 2

Leader lauds acclaimed war drama "The Situation of Mehdi"

TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has praised the acclaimed Iranian war drama "The Situation of Mehdi" for its "accurate details and true narrative."

The film, which is actor Hadi Hejazifar's directorial debut, depicts part of the life story of Mehdi Bakeri, the chief of IRGC 31st Shura Division that carried out several major operations during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, and his brother Hamid.

In a statement published by Payman Jebelli, the managing director of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), the producer of the drama, said that the Leader, who is also considered as a noted literary figure, watched the film on March 25.

"After watching the film, the Leader made the comments that follow," Jebelli said. ▶ Page 8

Foreign Ministry felicitates Islamic Republic Day

TEHRAN — On the occasion of Islamic Republic Day, Iran's Foreign Ministry released a statement celebrating the day.

In the statement, the ministry hailed the festive day, calling it a “turning point” in the history of Iran.

Iran was declared Islamic Republic on April 1 as 98.2% voted in a national referendum for the establishment of republic system. The referendum took place on March 30-31, 1979.

The following is the full text of the statement:

“Farvardin 12 (April 1), as a lasting part of the Iranian history and the manifestation of republicanism and the religious democracy of the sacred establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the realization of the will of the noble and proud people of Iran, has been rightfully called a concrete example of a Day of God and a festive day for the great Iranian nation.

It is an auspicious day that became a turning point in the history of the great Iranian nation's Revolution and a prelude to the establishment and consolidation of the Islamic Republic of Iran's sacred establishment, which is the fruit of years of bravery and sacrifices by the courageous people of Iran in defending their colossal achievements.

It is a day that will live in history on thanks to the epic participation of the noble and history-making Iranian people in the countrywide

referendum and the decisive vote of over 98 percent in favor of the Islamic Republic.

The great gift of this great anniversary and massive national movement was the realization of the slogan of ‘independence, freedom, and the Islamic Republic’ and the start of the holy path of religious democracy in a world divided between the ideologies of the communist East and the capitalist West. It is a unique achievement that has served as a criterion of measurement for the agents and servants of Islamic Iran all these years in the spheres of domestic policy and foreign relations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs offers congratulations on the anniversary of this day of God to Iran's wise Leader and honorable nation and pays tribute to the memory of Imam Khomeini and martyrs of the Islamic Revolution.

The Ministry once again reaffirms its full commitment to the lofty ideals of the Islamic Republic, the late Imam (Khomeini) and the Revolution's wise Leader, emphasizing that it will spare no effort to fulfill the interests of the great Iranian nation on the foreign policy front and via the expansion of balanced, diverse relations with different countries, especially the neighbors, and will remain steadfast in paving the way for Islamic Iran's development, prosperity and progress and consolidating the Islamic Republic of Iran's holy establishment.”

Iran welcomes UN initiative in brokering truce in Yemen

TEHRAN - The United Nations said all sides in Yemen's seven-year war agreed to a two-month truce starting Saturday, a move greatly welcomed by Iran.

The truce marks a breakthrough in efforts to ease a conflict that's triggered a humanitarian crisis in the poor Arab country.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh expressed hope that the initiative by Hans Grundberg, the UN Secretary General's special envoy for Yemen, would lay the foundation for a “complete lifting of siege” on Yemen and “permanent ceasefire” in line with finding a “political solution” to the seven-year conflict in the country.

“We hope that on the eve of the holy month of Ramadan and with a priority to humanitarian issues and maintenance of ceasefire we will witness amelioration of humanitarian condition and exchange of prisoners of war between the warring sides,” Khatibzadeh said in a statement.

A Saudi Arabia-led military coalition has been battling Houthis in Yemen since 2015, with the war spilling into neighboring countries. The Houthis have escalated attacks on Saudi energy and military facilities in recent weeks, as well as making their first deadly attack on the United Arab Emirates this year.

Riyadh issued a blunt warning late last month that oil exports may be disrupted unless its Western allies do more to help.

On Friday, Grundberg said that the parties had agreed “to halt all offensive military air, ground and maritime operations inside Yemen and across its borders.”

Houthi spokesman and chief peace negotiator Mohammed Abdulsalam welcomed the announcement, which comes as the Muslim world prepares for the Ramadan religious holiday, Bloomberg reported.

Previous attempts to end the fighting have failed, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres acknowledged the fragility of the peace effort.

The ceasefire “opens the door to addressing Yemen's urgent humanitarian and economic needs and creates a genuine opportunity to restart Yemen's political process,” he told reporters in New York. “These agreements are always fragile,” he said, urging parties to build on the momentum and make sure “the truce is fully respected.”

Under the terms of the ceasefire, ships



carrying fuel will be able to enter the Houthi-controlled Hodeidah port, while commercial flights can operate in and out of Sana'a airport to some destinations in the region.

The truce can be renewed beyond the initial two months with the consent of the parties, the UN said.

U.S. President Joe Biden welcomed the agreement, but said the terms of the ceasefire were just a first step.

“The ceasefire must be adhered to, and as I have said before, it is imperative that we end this war,” Biden said in a statement on Friday that thanked Oman for helping broker the accord.

A few days ago, the Iranian Foreign Ministry had welcomed a peace initiative proposed by the chairman of Yemen's Supreme Political Council.

“The plan which Sanaa has proposed with goodwill carries a strong message about a decisive will to end the war, lift oppressive siege on the people and resolve the Yemen crisis politically,” Khatibzadeh said in a statement.

If a “serious and positive” approach is taken toward the initiative it can create a “proper ground to end the war,” Khatibzadeh remarked.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman added, “We hope that on the eve of the holy month of Ramadan a priority is given to humanitarian issues and witness a progress on exchange of prisoners, cessation of clashes and national reconciliation in the country of Yemen.”

Iran has been calling for an end to the Saudi-led war on Yemen since it started in March 2015. In April 2015, Iran presented a four-point plan to then United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon Based in which Tehran proposed a ceasefire, end the blockade on Yemen, provide humanitarian aid the people, and establish an inclusive national unity government.

Ukraine war clearly manifests racism

From page 1 ▶ While reporting from Kyiv a day after Russia began its invasion of Ukraine, D'Agata said of the latter country, “This isn't a place, with all due respect, like Iraq or Afghanistan, that has seen conflict raging for decades.”

“This is a relatively civilized, relatively European — I have to choose those words carefully, too — city, where you wouldn't expect that or hope that it's going to happen,” he said.

Mohsen Pakaein, Iran's former ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan, says the remarks by the Leader obviously shows racist approach of the West toward Africans in Ukraine.

Writing on the Khamenei.ir website, the former diplomat says ethnic Asians, including Indians, were also subjected to racism while trying to flee the war in Ukraine.

For example, Pakaein says, some Africans and Asians were not allowed to board trains to leave the country and they were forced to spend the night in train stations.

Such discriminatory behavior prompted the African Union to issue a formal statement to condemn “misbehavior” toward Africans.

The head of United Nations refugee agency, United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), also spoke out against the “ugly reality” that some refugees fleeing across the Ukraine border, and third country nationals, have been subjected to racism and discrimination.

In a statement issued marking the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Filippo Grandi said that although he had been “humbled” by the outpouring of support seen by communities welcoming well over millions of Ukrainian refugees since the Russian invasion began, many minorities — often foreigners who had been studying or working there — had described a very different experience.

“We also bore witness to the ugly reality, that some Black and Brown people fleeing Ukraine — and other wars and conflicts around the



world — have not received the same treatment as Ukrainian refugees,” he said, according to allAfrica.com.

Representatives from the three African nations on the UN Security Council — Kenya, Ghana, and Gabon — all condemned reports of discrimination against African citizens at the Ukrainian border. “In the unfolding emergency, there have been disturbing reports about the racist treatment of Africans and people of African descent seeking to flee Ukraine to safety. The media is covering these appalling incidents and several states have confirmed that their citizens are suffering such treatment. We strongly condemn this racism and believe that it is damaging to the spirit of solidarity that is so urgently needed today.”

To exemplify racism by the Europeans, Poland is an example.

Poland refused to accept decision by the European Commission to accept Syrian refugees, however, it has announced that it is ready to host hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees.

A former Ukrainian deputy prosecutor general has also said he is saddened while he notices that European citizens with “blue eyes” and “blonde hairs” are being killed by missiles launched by Russia. The Bulgarian prime minister has also described Ukrainian refugees as “intelligent and educated”.

These moves and remarks show that racism is still high in some European states, especially those in Eastern Europe. Contrary to such revolting behaviors or remarks, non-European countries warmly welcomed refugees from Europe during World War II.

Moreover, the West, including Europeans, have been oblivious to the sufferings of people in West Asia. Yemen is a concrete example. The West not only did not make efforts to stop the war in Yemen, they even misused the situation to sell arms to the Saudi-led coalition in the war on Yemen. They were thinking of their pockets and not wedding ceremonies that turned out to be tragic scenes in the Saudi bombardments.

Iran defies Human Rights Council resolution

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Friday dismissed the Human Rights Council resolution on the human rights situation in Iran as totally unacceptable and illegal.

Khatibzadeh said the drafting of the resolution by the UK and other Western governments and repetition of unfounded claims are based on wrong and malicious information.

Referring to efforts by Western governments to continue their Iranophobia project and defamation against the Islamic Republic, Khatibzadeh said these countries who have a long track record of clear human rights violations through arms sales to despotic and occupying regimes, have turned the issue of human rights into a tool to satisfy their political greed and achieve their political goals.

The spokesman noted that such immoral and unjustified moves not only will fail to help improve the human rights situation and respect for them at the global level, it also amplifies negative stereotyping and political defamation against nations and have caused serious damage to the true meaning of human rights.

Khatibzadeh added that Iran strongly condemns the move by the British government

and other drafters of the resolution, which is a blatant example of abusing the lofty concepts and values of human rights for the purpose of bigoted political goals and considers it as lacking any legal value and effect.

On the resolution that extends the mission of the UN special rapporteur in Iran, Khatibzadeh noted that the recent reports show the rapporteur acts according to the British, Zionist and U.S. drafters of the resolution and has turned the UN's human rights mechanisms into a tool to achieve the heinous and illegal goals of the foregoing regimes.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman underlined that what has happened in the UNHRC resolutions in recent years have practically been unilateral defamation against Iran by the drafters of the motions.

Khatibzadeh further said those governments who themselves violate the rights of other nations have lost the moral ground to judge the human rights situation in any country and that they must be held accountable for their crimes and gross violations of human rights.

He added that as Iran has frequently declared, naming a special human rights rapporteur for a country like Iran is basically unjustified and

unconstructive.

The spokesman noted that Iran is a country that has stuck to its commitments regarding the rights of its citizens and the international community despite oppressive pressures from the U.S. economic terrorism.

The diplomat also stressed that Iran is a religious democracy that has taken steps toward promoting and improving human rights at national, regional and international levels within the confines of its religious obligations and its constitution and ordinary laws.

According to Khatibzadeh, Iran considers itself duty-bound in practice to observe human rights.

The spokesman reiterated that those who drafted the resolution must first condemn the U.S. actions in line with its economic terrorism and its move to intensify unilateral, oppressive sanctions and their destructive impact on the access of Iranians to basic needs such as medical equipment and items during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman concluded his statement by saying that such efforts to change the place of defendant and the plaintiff will yield no results for those who drafted the anti-Iran resolution.

Palestinians begin new phase of intifada right before Ramadan

From page 1 ▶ Coinciding with the start of the conciliatory meeting in Negev, the occupied city of al-Khadira, in south of Haifa, witnessed an anti-Israeli operation.

The operation, which took place in the city of al-Khadira, between Tel Aviv and Haifa, wounded at least six Israelis, four of whom are reported to be in critical condition.

An Israeli police spokesman confirmed that two Israeli gunmen shot dead in Herbert Samuel Street in the city of al-Khadira.

According to the spokesman, several policemen were among the wounded, while a large number of security forces were dispatched to the scene.

The media reported that two attackers were shot dead by Israeli forces.

Israel's Channel 14 also announced that in addition to the two operators, two Israeli immigrants were killed and three other Israelis were injured in the incident.

A reporter for the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper also posted a picture of the operation on his Twitter account, saying, “Al-Khadira ... smells like intifada.”

Israeli journalists also spoke about the flow of anti-Zionist operations on their pages in social media.

One of them wrote, “This is the second attack inside the Green Line in less than a week. This time, Operation al-Khadira was carried out with firearms while a regional meeting is being held in Negev.”

Another Israeli journalist also wrote, “After the Be'r Al-Saba' operation and upon the arrival of Ramadan, the Israeli police had expanded its presence in various centers, including in the al-Khadira area.”

Israeli Army's Radio also reported the arrival of the Israeli Internal Intelligence Service (Shin Bet) to investigate the operation.

Israel's Channel 14 admitted in a breaking news that all four wounded, who were taken to the hospital, are in critical condition.

The Israeli army kept patrolling around the scene of the operation, fearing possible fighters for a few days.

An expert on Arab affairs considered the operation in al-Khadira as a message to the foreign ministers of six countries participating in the Negev meeting.



The foreign ministers of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Morocco, Israel and the United States participated in the Negev summit on March 29.

Hassan Hanizadeh told the Tehran Times that the al-Khadira operation is a “bloody intifada.”

He added that the participants of the Negev summit have received the message.

According to the Hebrew-language media, al-Khadira operation took place in the heart of Israel, where such an incident had not taken place in the region for a long time.

A witness to the incident told the Israeli army radio, “I heard between 50 and 60 bullets being fired at the scene in al-Khadira.”

Israeli media reported that the police investigation shows that the two operators of the attack had handguns and after attacking and disarming the police officers, they took M16 automated weapons

from them and carried out their operations.

The Israeli police chief also confirmed that two of the dead were police officers.

Meanwhile, Kahn TV, Israel's state TV claimed in a report that the attackers were residents of the city of Umm al-Fahm, located in the occupied territories of 1948.

On the other hand, the Hebrew-language media reported that Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett had left for the scene, while an Israeli security official also informed the regime's media that a large-scale security operation had begun in the city of Umm al-Fahm.

After hours of confusion, Zionist sources announced the identities of the two fighters and emphasized that Khalid and Ayman Aghbariyeh carried out the operation.

Gantz also convened a security meeting at the invitation of Aviv Kochavi, the Israeli army's chief of staff, Shin Bet officials and the Israeli police chief.

According to the Israeli media, since the beginning of March, nine operations have taken place in different parts of the occupied territories, in which 6 Israelis were killed and 25 others wounded.

Iran FM says had good meeting with Chinese counterpart

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, who travelled to China for a meeting on Afghanistan, has said that he had “good” exchange of views with his Chinese counterpart.

“A good meeting w/ State Councilor FM Wang Yi in Tunxi,” Amir Abdollahian said on Twitter at the end of his trip to China.

He added, “Thanked him for successfully hosting neighbors of Afghanistan. We properly exchanged views on bilateral matters. We insisted on maintaining cooperation & countering coercion, unilateralism & inhuman leverage of sanctions.”

The meeting took place on the sidelines of a regional meeting on Afghanistan which was hosted by China.

The Iranian foreign minister expressed hope that Afghanistan would be stable and developed at the start of his trip to China. “I am pleased to attend a meeting of Afghanistan’s neighbors in China. Afghanistan deserves more international attention. Iran and China reaffirm their support for independence, national unity, and the people’s right to self-determination, and hope to see a stable, developed, and interactive Afghanistan,” he said on Twitter.

The conference of the foreign ministers of Afghanistan’s neighbors was held in China with the participation of the neighbors of Afghanistan and Russia. The Iranian foreign minister met with a number of foreign counterparts participating in the Afghanistan meeting.

Amir Abdollahian and China’s top diplomat and member of the Chinese State Council Wang Yi held talks over bilateral, regional and international issues on the sidelines of the meeting.

The two foreign ministers underlined the need to speed up finalizing introduced projects and to continue consultations over expansion of economic cooperation between Tehran and Beijing, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

Amir Abdollahian extended President Raisi’s greetings to the Chinese president and, given the strong support of the high-ranking officials of China and Iran for bilateral cooperation, underlined the need for realizing the huge potentials of the two nations, especially in economic spheres. Iran’s foreign minister further referred to the importance of people-to-people exchanges between Iran and China. Amir Abdollahian then described the facilitation of the return of Iranian students to China as an effective move to this end.

He said although Covid-related restrictions prevented them from returning to China, it is appropriate that things would return to the pre-pandemic era with the cooperation of the relevant Chinese sectors.

The top Iranian diplomat referred to Tehran-Beijing cooperation in international bodies, describing the



joint fight against efforts to politicize the issue of human rights and against interference in the internal affairs of other countries as a key aspect of this cooperation. Amir Abdollahian spoke of the illegal use of sanctions by Western governments against independent nations. He said fighting this issue is important for the purpose of helping stability and preventing crises.

Wang, for his part, extended the Chinese president’s warm greetings to President Raisi and appreciated the Iranian side’s participation in the third conference of Afghanistan’s neighbors.

Wang then underscored the need for cooperation and close consultations between Tehran and Beijing to make their strategic 25-year pact operational and also the need for cooperation in international bodies.

The two foreign ministers also exchanged views on the latest developments in the Vienna talks and underlined the need to fight against unilateral and illegitimate sanctions imposed by some Western countries.

An inclusive government will guarantee security in Afghanistan

Also, the Iranian foreign minister met with the Taliban’s top diplomat Amir Khani Muttaqi. Amir Abdollahian and Amir Khan Muttaqi, acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan’s ruling system, held talks over issues of mutual interest on the sidelines of the conference of the foreign ministers of Afghanistan’s neighbors in Tuxi, China.

In the meeting, the Iranian foreign minister said the formation of an inclusive government with the participation of all ethnic groups will guarantee security, stability and development of Afghanistan. Amir Abdollahian then underlined the need for the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan.

The top Iranian diplomat also said Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) underline the necessity of observing the rights of women. He described women’s right to education at all levels and also their social participation as a highly important issue.

Amir Khan Muttaqi, for his part, promised in the meeting that Afghanistan will not be a launching pad for threats against neighbors and stressed the need to fight terrorism.

He also said the water treaty between Iran and Afghanistan must

be implemented.

During the meeting on Afghanistan, Iran called for the return of tranquility to Afghanistan. The Iranian foreign minister expressed hope a “calm Afghanistan” will be established in Iran’s vicinity.

“Neighboring countries should play an important role in establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan because peace and stability in Afghanistan, just like insecurity, can have a direct impact on its neighbors,” said Hossein Amir Abdollahian in the meeting of Afghanistan’s neighboring countries in China, which also brought together delegates from the Taliban, Indonesia and Qatar.

“In the previous meeting, the Islamic Republic of Iran put forward two clear proposals. First, that we should reinforce mechanisms required to help promote security in Afghanistan, and that a clear security mechanism should be devised within the framework of the existing organizations or as an independent body to coordinate policies to fight terrorism and to exchange experience and information to contribute security both in Afghanistan and in the whole region,” he explained.

“Our second proposal is that a regional mechanism as well as a financial fund should be established to help Afghan people, one which would contribute to Afghanistan’s reconstruction and development,” the minister said.

“Our lingering concern is the threat of terrorism spreading from within Afghanistan, the expansion of Daesh and its recruitment inside Afghanistan as well as in some regional countries along with moves that Daesh makes to train its operatives and further expand toward the northern areas of Afghanistan,” he added.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is concerned over and increasing number of Afghan refugees. Over the past seven months, around one million Afghan women, children and men entered Iran, and now the number of Afghan refugees who are our guests has risen to around 5 million. There is grave concern in this regard, especially at a time when international organizations pay little attention to refugees in countries neighboring Afghanistan,” he said.

Amir Abdollahian: “To us, women’s role in Afghanistan is very important”

The foreign minister also touched upon the necessity of women playing

a role in Afghanistan.

“To us, women’s role in Afghanistan is very important. Islam is a progressive religion and that of mercy, which believes women have every right to be present in different areas. It is necessary to once again stress the importance of women’s role in the Muslim Afghan community,” he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the top diplomat referred to the issue of unfreezing Afghanistan’s assets and the United States’ claim of contributing to Afghanistan’s reconstruction.

“It is important to unfreeze Afghan people’s assets outside the country in order to serve them. The United States’ occupation of Afghanistan 20 years ago, and now its confiscation of Afghanistan’s assets, are inappropriate moves. The U.S. occupied Afghanistan for 20 years, but failed to build even a small room as a clinic for Afghan people. But today, the Americans speak of reconstructing Afghanistan. If they were really interested in helping, we wouldn’t be witnessing the deplorable humanitarian situation in Afghanistan,” he regretted.

“All the pledges we make today are related to an important issue. Afghanistan needs the establishment of an all-inclusive government represented by all groups. The formation of a government guarantees stability, security, progress and welfare in Afghanistan. We have not come together today to decide for the Afghan people; rather, we are here to help all Afghan people have a bright and prosperous future full of welfare,” he said.

The Iranian foreign minister continued his consultations on Afghanistan with other foreign ministers participating in the diplomatic gathering including Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. In this meeting, Amir Abdollahian underlined the need to continue political talks between Moscow and Kiev, ruling out war as the solution to crises in Ukraine, Yemen, Afghanistan and so on.

For his part, the Russian foreign minister referred to his country’s willingness to cooperate with neighbors especially Iran in all fields. Lavrov said relations between Tehran and Moscow have special significance and underscored Russia’s readiness to expand cooperation with Iran. In the meeting, the foreign ministers of Iran and the Russian Federation also discussed other issues including the trend of developments in Afghanistan and the Tehran-Moscow cooperation in this regard, the speeding up of Iran’s accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the latest state of the Vienna talks and close cooperation between the delegations of Iran and Russia during the negotiations and also their cooperation in the Caspian Sea region.

SPORTS

Iran to face England and U.S. in 2022 World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran national football team learned their fate at the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

In the draw ceremony held in Doha Friday night, the ‘Persian Leopards’ are drawn in Group B along with England, the U.S. and the winners of Scotland vs Ukraine, who then face Wales in the final.

Iran will play England on Nov. 21.

The National Team will face UEFA Path A on Nov. 25 and meet the U.S. four days later.

The 2022 World Cup will take place in Doha, Qatar from Nov. 21 to Dec. 18.

Those Qatar 2022 groups in full

Group A: Qatar, Ecuador, Netherlands, Senegal

Group B: England, Iran, the U.S., Scotland/Wales/Ukraine

Group C: Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Poland

Group D: France, UAE/Australia/Peru, Denmark, Tunisia

Group E: Spain, Costa Rica/New Zealand, Germany, Japan

Group F: Belgium, Canada, Morocco, Croatia

Group G: Brazil, Serbia, Switzerland, Cameroon

Group H: Portugal, Ghana, Uruguay, South Korea

Iran ready to qualify for next round: Skocic

TEHRAN – Iran national football team head coach Dragan Skocic says that they want to book a place in the 2022 FIFA World Cup next round for the first time ever.

The ‘Persian Leopards’ are drawn in Group B along with England, the U.S. and the winners of Scotland vs Ukraine, who then face Wales in the final.

“Every opponent in the World Cup are difficult but we are determined to qualify for the next stage. I think England are the best team in our group but the other teams are spirited as well,” Skocic said.

“We are a good team as well and want to advance to the next stage for the first time.

Team Iran last faced the U.S. at the World Cup when they won the match 2-1 in 1998 in France.

The Iran coach sidestepped the political fracas, saying they are focused on the tournament.

“I am thinking only about football and not exterior things. I hope that football makes a good contact and good relationship between people and that is what people expect of sport,” he said.

“Our opponents are star-studded teams but we know what we could be capable of as a team. Our players are ready to show how good they are,” the Croat added.

“Iran have previously shown that they are a team to beat. We will be there to get the better result than the previous World Cups.

Iran will begin the prestigious campaign with a match against England on Nov. 21. Skocic says that he has a good knowledge of English.

“I know English and their coach Gareth Southgate. They are a strong team and we have a good knowledge of them than the other teams in our group,” he said of Three Lions.

Referee Hamid Khoshkhan dies

TEHRAN – Iranian referee Hamid Khoshkhan passed away on Tuesday.

He died at the age of 83 in Tehran.

Khoshkhan officiated Tehran derby between Esteghlal and Persepolis twice.

Tehran Times extends deepest sympathy to Khoshkhan’s family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

Iran football federation apologizes to women

TEHRAN – The Iranian football federation has apologized to the women who were prevented from attending the qualifying match against Lebanon.

The Iranian team defeated Lebanon 2-0 in Group A of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifier on Tuesday.

Originally the sports ministry had made 2,000 tickets available to women for the match but they were prevented from entering.

The final qualifier took place in Mashhad’s Emam Reza Stadium, where the ‘Persian Leopards’ won the match 2-0 thanks to goals from Sardar Azmoun and Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

The Iranian women were sprayed after trying to enter the stadium.

The football federation announced that it feels responsible for what happened in Mashhad and is sorry about that.

Iran unchanged in FIFA ranking

TEHRAN – Iran national football team remained unchanged in the FIFA ranking released on Thursday.

Dragan Skocic’s team, who finished first in Group A to confirm their spot in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, are 21st in the ranking.

Japan and Korea Republic maintained their positions as Asia’s second and third best teams at 23rd and 29th respectively.

Brazil are now in the first place, followed by Belgium, France, Argentina, England, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, and the Netherlands, making the top 10.

Milan eye Mehdi Taremi: report

TEHRAN – Porto football team forward Mehdi Taremi has been linked with a move to Italian giants AC Milan.

The Italian team continue to be linked with a number of different strikers as they look to inject some youth into a department that currently only has a 35-year-old Olivier Giroud and a 40-year-old Zlatan Ibrahimovic, with the latter out of contract at the end of the season, the website sempremilan.com has reported.



Divock Origi of Liverpool is still the hottest name in the media, but Alessio Lento of Calciomercato.it is reporting that Milan has initiated preliminary contacts for Taremi, the Iranian striker at FC Porto who the Rossoneri faced off against in the UEFA Champions League group stages.

Their initial asking price is €20m, which is considered too high by Paolo Maldini and Ricky Massara, but a new meeting is expected to discuss Taremi. The 29-year-old has 18 goals and 16 assists in 39 games across all competitions for the Portuguese side, as per Transfermarkt.

Leader ushers in New Year with message of self-reliance

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has once again chosen a name of economic nature for the Iranian New Year, building on a decades-long tradition of laying out the general path of the country in the year ahead.

Over the last decade, the Leader successfully shielded the country’s economy from severe Western sanctions by putting the limelight on certain sectors that play a pivotal role in sustaining and boosting the economy. And the result was a sheer success. Over the past 10 years, Iran has largely been under tough Western sanctions except for the brief period from 2016 to 2018, when a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major world powers brought about a fleeting sanctions relief. Despite all pressures and sanctions, Iran’s economy not only didn’t collapse but made great progress in many vital sectors.

Thanks to the Leader’s emphasis on the economy, Iran successfully managed to weather the economic storms caused by U.S. sanctions. This was partly because the Leader accurately realized which front needs more attention and effort. At the beginning of every Iranian new year, Ayatollah Khamenei chooses a slogan that serves as a guiding principle for all state institutions, especially those involved in achieving economic growth and development.

In his latest new year speech, Ayatollah Khamenei expressed satisfaction with the work done in line with last year’s slogan.

“For the year 1400 SH, I chose the slogan ‘Production: Support and the Elimination of Obstacles.’ Good work was done toward that end and continues to be done, and this must be done. In recent years, I have focused on ‘production’ for the slogan of the year, accompanied by certain descriptive terms. The reason is that production is the key to solving the economic problems of the country. National production is indeed the main path that needs to be taken for moving past the economic hardships and difficulties that exist in the country. In other words, the

most important economic issues of the country can be resolved by boosting and improving national production. This is the nature of production,” the Leader said on March 20, 2022, according to khamenei.ir.

The last Iranian calendar year -1400 – ended on March 20.

“That is why we have placed great emphasis on production; because it boosts economic growth, it creates employment, it reduces inflation, it increases per capita income and it improves public welfare. Furthermore, it also brings about psychological effects since it boosts national self-confidence and creates a sense of dignity in the nation. Production is such an elixir. National production is this important if it is carried out in the best possible way, God willing.” The Leader added,

He noted, “That is why I have stressed the importance of production in recent years. And this emphasis was effective. Praise God, it has had good results. I wish to highlight production this year too, but with a new added layer and a new aspect. I wish to emphasize a production that has two characteristics: one is that it should create jobs and the other is that it should be knowledge-based. We must encourage knowledge-based production—one that is reliant on new scientific advances—and a production that generates employment. Of course, all kinds of production generate employment. But some kinds of production do not create much employment despite the fact that they require a huge investment while other kinds of production create abundant employment opportunities.”

He said, “If we make knowledge-based production the main criterion, and if we pursue the kind of production that is knowledge-based with the characteristics that I will mention in my New Year’s speech, I believe we will witness tangible progress and a good move forward in achieving all of our economic goals. The same is true of production that creates jobs. Therefore, this year’s slogan is ‘Production: Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating.’”



Iran's oil production back to pre-sanction level: oil min.



From page 1 ► Iran views U.S. sanctions as illegal and has said it will make every effort to sidestep them.

The Islamic Republic's oil exports have risen to more than one million barrels per day for the first time in almost three years, based on estimates from companies that track the flows, reflecting increased shipments to China.

Iran increased exports in 2021 despite

the sanctions, according to estimates from oil industry consultants and analysts. But they remained well below the 2.5 million bpd shipped before sanctions were reintroduced.

Back in January, Head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr said the country's oil revenues have increased significantly over the past few months and the country has received the payment for all its crude oil sales since the new government administration.

"In the thirteenth government, part of the country's lost oil markets has been revived and we have received the payment for all the oil we have sold so far," Khojasteh-Mehr said.

According to the official, the private sector is also contributing greatly to the country's current oil sales.

Hamedan province records lowest annual inflation rate

TEHRAN – A review of the latest statistical data released by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) shows that Hamedan province with 36.3 percent recorded the lowest inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on March 20, which marks the end of the past Iranian calendar year 1400.

The highest 12-month inflation rate is related to Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad province with 48.2 percent, according to the SCI's statistics.

The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) has put Iran's average inflation rate in the said twelve-month period at 40.2 percent.

The center put the country's point-to-point inflation rate at 34.7 percent in the last month of the past year, which means families have paid an average of 34.7 percent more for purchasing the same package of commodities and services in that month, compared to the same month in the preceding year.

The inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on March 20 was 39.7 percent for the urban households, and 42.8 percent

for the rural households.

The point-to-point inflation rate was reported to be 34.5 percent for the urban households and 35.8 percent for the rural ones, according to the SCI.

The Statistical Center of Iran had put the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on March 20, 2021 (the end of the Iranian calendar year 1399) at 36.4 percent, rising 2.2 percent from the figure for the twelve-month period ended on the last day of the preceding year.

In late November 2021, the head of Iran's Budget and Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) had said, "Considering the recent data provided by the Statistical Center of Iran the inflation is expected to be curbed in the next Iranian calendar year (begins in March 2022)."

"No Money creation has taken place in the last three months, and a recent report by the Statistics Center of Iran shows that inflation is declining, these are indications that the inflation could be curbed by the next year," Masoud Mir-Kazemi said at the time.

Export from Ilam province increases 116% in a year

TEHRAN- The value of export from Ilam province rose 116 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), from its preceding year, a provincial official announced.

Ruhollah Gholami, the director-general of the province's customs department, said that 2.27 million tons of commodities worth over \$1b were exported from the province in the previous year, indicating also 121 percent growth in terms of weight year on year.

The official named agricultural products, stones, ceramics, metal products, petrochemicals, iron ore, cement clinker, plastic products, glass, vehicles, and car parts as the main exported items in the past year.

As previously announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran's Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 38 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400, as compared to its previous year.

Alireza Moqadasi put the country's non-



oil trade at 162 million tons worth \$100 billion in the past year.

He said that Iran exported 122 million tons of non-oil products worth \$48 billion in the previous year, which was \$14 billion (41 percent) more than the figure for its preceding year.

The country's non-oil trade record in 1400 was reached while the toughest sanctions were imposed on Iran, but thanks to God and the efforts of entrepreneurs, producers and the cooperation of foreign trade-related organizations, a historical record was achieved in the past year which was unprecedented in recent decades, the official underlined.

an official with Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) announced.

Morteza Afrasiabi, the acting head of the IFO's fishery development department, said that of the mentioned figure, 277,000 tons will be fishes bred in cages and 70,000 tons will be shrimps.

Achieving the targeted 714,000 tons of fishery requires infrastructure as well as credits and banking facilities, the official added.

CBI firmly supports knowledge-based firms: governor

TEHRAN- The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced the bank's serious and firm support to the knowledge-based companies.

Ali Saleh-Abadi made the remarks in line with the slogan of the present Iranian calendar year 1401 (began on March 21), which is named "Production: Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating" by Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

Referring to the role of knowledge-based products in the national economy and the serious support of the banking network in this area, he said: "By allocating targeted credits to economic sectors, it is possible to provide prosperity for production and sustainable employment."

The CBI governor further noted that production chain financing is a successful tool for boosting production, adding, "It should be also considered that the allocation of targeted credits can also lead to a boom in production. In explaining this point, I must say that we started the production chain financing category last year, so that credit instruments can be used to move production, and this category will be pursued vigorously this year as well."

In early January, Central Bank of Iran and Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with seven acting banks to collaborate on implementing a supply chain financing plan to



provide facilities to production units across the country.

The MOU was signed in a ceremony attended by CBI Governor Ali Saleh-Abadi, Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin, and Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi.

Under the framework of the mentioned MOU, CBI and the Industry Ministry will cooperate with the acting banks to provide facilities to production units in various sectors including metals, construction, automobiles, home appliances, machinery, foodstuff, as well as chemical and petrochemical industries.

Unlike traditional methods of providing direct facilities by financial institutions, supply chain financing is a form of financial transaction wherein a third party facilitates an exchange by financing the supplier on the customer's behalf.

Also, it refers to the techniques and practices used by banks and

other financial institutions to manage the capital invested into the supply chain and reduce the risk for the parties involved

In this method, the production units can also receive other credit instruments such as bonds and negotiable instruments instead of cash facilities, which in addition to reducing the need for liquidity, bank resources are also directed to productive activities.

Based on the MOU, the plan is going to be implemented in a pilot phase and then will become fully operational after being finalized.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Saleh-Abadi said the implementation of this plan will reduce the non-current receivables of banks and it will also make it easier to manage liquidity and monitor the appropriate allocation of banking resources.

Fatemi-Amin for his part said at the ceremony that with the supply chain financing, banks will pay facilities based on electronic

invoices under the framework of the country's comprehensive trade system.

"This makes receiving facilities transparent and companies cannot get multiple loans for one purpose," he added.

The official noted that this method is a very effective work in a financing process that increases access to financial resources and prevents the diversion of resources, in other words, by implementing this plan, manufacturing companies and banks will both benefit.

Further in the ceremony, Finance Minister Ehsan Khandouzi underlined some of his ministry's programs for developing the country's productive sectors, saying: "Our main goal is to be able to shorten all the avenues that lead the financing of production sectors to support manufacturing and exporting enterprises so that traders and producers are less concerned about financing."

Measures such as the supply chain financing scheme not only help and facilitate the financing process but also make the relationship between producers and the banking network more regular, he said.

According to Khandouzi, completing the financing chain, expanding the scope of the chain activities in industrial sectors, and completing the supporting banking network are three steps that should be monitored.

'Renovation of digging fleet a necessity in oil, gas industry'



TEHRAN- The managing director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) said that rebuilding and renovating the digging fleet is a necessity in the country's oil and gas industry.

Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr reiterated that reducing the cost and time of digging operation is a symbol of oil and gas industry's knowledge-based upstream sector.

"In this regard, the drilling fleet of National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) must be rebuilt and modernized, and at the same time we must take care of the entire drilling fleet and drilling industry in the country so as not to harm this industry, because about 50 percent of development and investment costs in the upstream sector are related to drilling", the official stressed.

Underlining that NIDC is the most resistant sector of oil industry, Khojasteh-Mehr said that NIOC supports all companies active in the field of rebuilding and renovating the digging fleet.

The NIDC managing director has announced the use of more than 82 percent of the company's operational capacity in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20) in the implementation of oil industry programs in the field of maintaining and increasing oil production capacity in the country.

Explaining the performance of the NIDC in 1400, Hamidreza Golpayegani has said: "While at the beginning of the year, 55 drilling rigs out of a total of 73 were operational, with the development of activities, this number reached 60 rigs during the year."

As the official has announced, NIDC dug and completed digging operation of 75 oil and gas wells in the past Iranian calendar year.

According to Golpayegani, the drilled wells consisted of six development, five exploratory, and 64 workover ones.

The official stated that 56 of the mentioned

wells were drilled in the operational zone of the National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC), 10 wells were drilled in the fields under the supervision of the Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), three in the fields under the operation of Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), one in the field under the supervisor of Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC), three wells in the framework of project and two in the operational zone of the drilling management department of National Iranian Oil company (NIOC).

He said that 76,125 meters of drilling was conducted for drilling the mentioned wells, adding that 44 light and heavy drilling rigs of NIDC are operating in the operational zone of NISCO, two rigs including one onshore and one offshore, in the zone of IOOC, seven rigs in the zone of PEDEC, six rigs in the zone of the drilling management department of NIOC, and one rigs in the project of using underground waters implemented by the Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology.

NIDC owns 70 light, heavy and super-heavy drilling rigs, including 67 onshore drilling rigs and three offshore rigs.

The company managed to carry out 10,182 meters of horizontal and directional drilling in 43 oil and gas wells across the country during the Iranian year 1399.

Some 654 meters of core extraction drilling was also conducted in the mentioned period which was a huge achievement for assessing the condition of the country's oil and gas reserves.

Back in July 2021, NIDC's Director of Renovation and Upgrading Shahram Shamipour had announced that the company had allocated 5.2 trillion rials (about \$18 million) for the renovation and upgrading of its drilling rigs and equipment in the company's operational, technical, specialized, and logistical departments.

According to him, the renovation and upgrading operations are aimed at improving the performance of these rigs which are active in the country's oil and gas field development projects.

Shamipour noted that the equipment going through renovation operations include fluid pumps, draw-works machinery, charting tools, pumps for cementing and acidizing trucks, tow trucks, cranes, piping machines, generators, hydrogen sulfide gas treatment systems, acid-coated storage tanks, and cement transport bunkers.

Considering the National Iranian Oil Company's strategies for strengthening the presence of domestic companies in the development of the country's oil fields, NIDC, as a major subsidiary of the company, has been supporting such companies by lending them drilling rigs and other necessary equipment.

After the U.S. reimposition of sanctions against Iran, indigenizing the know-how for the manufacturing of the parts and equipment applied in different industrial sectors is one of the major strategies that the Islamic Republic has been strongly following up to reach self-reliance and nullify the sanctions.

Oil, gas, and petrochemical industries have outstanding performances in this due, with indigenizing the knowledge for manufacturing many parts and equipment that were previously imported.

Among different sectors of the mentioned industries, drilling could be mentioned as a prominent example in this regard.

from the country, the official stated.

Fishery production has increased noticeably in Iran in recent years.

Enjoying high quality, Iran's fishery products were sold easily in the export markets, and also some new export destinations welcomed these products in the past three years; as new markets including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations opened up for Iranian fishery products.

Annual fishery output of 714,000 tons targeted

TEHRAN- Production of 714,000 tons of fishery has been targeted for the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21),

Over the past three years, the efforts of the Aquatics Production and Trade Union of Iran, and the non-governmental sector have led to the addition of markets in countries such as Oman and Malaysia to Iran's target export markets in the field of fishery.

Iran exported 62,500 tons of fisheries in the first half of the past Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22, 2021), according to an official with the IFO.

Isa Golshahi, the IFO's director-general

for quality improvement, processing, and market development, said that live, frozen and processed fisheries and aquatic products have been exported to different countries in the first six months of the previous year.

More than 27,000 tons of fish, 201 tons of ornamental fish, 8,900 tons of shrimp, 6,500 tons of canned fish, 1.1 tons of farmed caviar based on the country's customs statistics, and two tons of trout baby were exported

The Ukraine conflict backfired on the U.S. dollar

From page 1 ▶ While American weapons may appear impressive to countries who seek to buy them; Washington really relies on the American dollar as its most powerful weapon of imperialism and the American dollar mostly relies on the sale of global oil or Petrodollars to be more precise.

For many OPEC members and other oil exporters, experts agree that Petrodollars (U.S. dollars) are the main source of revenue with which oil exporters settle sales because the dollar is the most widely used currency, making it easier for them to invest export proceeds.

The massive sanctions imposed by the West on Russia over its military conflict with Ukraine has forced Russian President Vladimir Putin to sign an order prohibiting supply of Russian energy to “unfriendly” countries that have slapped sanctions on Moscow unless they pay in Rubles.

Putin says “If such payments are not made, we will consider this a default on the part of buyers, with all the ensuing consequences. Nobody sells us anything for free, and we are not going to do charity either – that is, existing contracts will be stopped.”

According to a statement by Kremlin, the order came into force on 1 April.

The order stipulates that when buyers from “unfriendly” countries pay for Russian energy, they should transfer forex to the Russian bank Gazprombank, which will then use it to buy rubles. Gazprombank, which has not been sanctioned, will process the transactions.

Moscow moved to switch currencies in energy contracts when Western sanctions restricted Russia's access to the global financial system. The move is aimed at confronting Western sanctions. About one third of Europe's gas is sup-



plied by Russia for example.

And over a quarter of the European Union's imported crude oil comes from Russia. In 2021, the EU imported \$108 billion worth of energy from Russia, by far its biggest import from the country.

Over the past years, Russia has also created quite a significant achievement with its homegrown payment system, Mir, which Moscow has full control over.

The system is not just effective in Russia but in other countries as well with Iran among the latest to hold discussions over the potential interlinking between Tehran's finances and Mir with the goal of bypassing the global banking system SWIFT.

Analysts say this would pose a significant risk to the worldwide dominance of the American dollar. The extent of the control over financial institutions and payment systems like SWIFT gives too much power to the U.S.

It is one of the main ways in which Washington exercises its global hegemony, in particular when it uses SWIFT against its adversaries. Such as independent countries like Russia, Iran, Venezuela, and others. The sanctions on a country's banking sector can have devastating effects especially when a country cannot pay for humanitarian goods during times of

humanitarian crises.

Experts say it's a very important payment system, a big step toward a multi-polar world, and effectively bypasses what rights groups have described as cruel unilateral sanctions if countries can link up to new payment systems without the United States.

The latest sanctions on Russia and the toll is has taken on the global economy has left many heads of state considering alternative plans.

Experts say there is a growing need for countries to trade in their own currencies. The interbank settlement system allows central banks of different countries to trade or settle their debts without the involvement of any other foreign actor. It will allow for economic growth in commerce between two nations without the involvement and interference of any other state.

Mir is a classic example of how to circumvent Western sanctions and American dollars. The American administration has warned of food shortages and many other commodities, in essence saying America will have to suffer and pay for what many experts argue was a conflict in Eastern Europe that America itself engineered.

Russia is after all the largest country in the world and you can't isolate such a large country from

the world economy without expecting to have reverberations on the global economy.

The sanctions regime will play out to the detriment certainly of the European economy which is already suffering from record levels of inflation. But also elsewhere, the blowback is already being seen around the world with record inflation in the United States also.

Dollar dominance appears to be on the decline as other currencies arise. Other countries within Eurasia giving more consideration towards trading in their own currencies to be on the safe side. That will strengthen the sovereignty of those nations and will weaken the global hegemony of the United States.

The Petrodollars itself came about in In 1979 when the United States and Saudi Arabia negotiated the United States-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation. They agreed to use U.S. dollars for oil contracts.

Today reports are emerging that Saudi Arabia has advanced “actively” talks with China to price its oil sales to Beijing in the Chinese currency, the Yuan, a move that would further dent the U.S. dollar's dominance of the global petroleum market.

It also marks another shift by the world's top crude exporter, unhappy at Washington's lack of support for the war on Yemen, towards Asia.

The days of oil-exporting nations receiving dollars for their exports and not their own currency appear to be closely coming to an end, which is great news for oil-exporting nations because if the value of the dollar falls, it won't affect their revenue.

And it took an American administration that doesn't appear to be the smartest tool in the box, to start a conflict with Russia, for the whole world to wake up and smell the coffee.

Russian analyst says world order to become more multipolar

TEHRAN– Russian expert says the world order will change in the future, adding that the world is multipolar and yet the US is trying desperately to hold on to the illusion of its own exceptionalism.

A couple of weeks ago, Russian President Vladimir Putin officially announced the start of a “special military operation” against Ukraine, saying that the operation in Ukraine is not the beginning of a war, but an attempt to prevent a world war.

But many countries around the world, including Europe and the United States, immediately condemned Russia's move as a war against Ukraine and began to redouble their diplomatic and economic pressure on Russia. The West imposed fresh sanctions on Russia, aimed at cutting off its largest banks and preventing the country from importing critical technology.

Since the beginning of the conflict, the Russian and Ukrainian delegations have met several times for talks to compromise.

To know more about the issue we reached out to the deputy head of the Sputnik news website and radio, Tatiana Kukhareva.

Here is the full text of the interview:

Why did recent tensions lead to confrontation in Ukraine? What could be done to avoid war and settle the problems via talks?

An eight-year-long war between Kyiv and the Donetsk and Luhansk republics can hardly be called tensions, and frankly, it shouldn't be. For eight years, Moscow was trying to ‘dialogue’ with Kyiv, which was killing civilians in the DPR and LPR with no mercy or regret, bombing schools, hospitals and residential areas; all the while calling it an “anti-terror operation”. Russia's military operation could have been avoided, should Kyiv have abided by the Minsk agreements and have stopped the shelling, which it never did.

Nowadays Russia is accused of violating Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. What is Russia's stance on this issue? And what is Russia's plan for Ukraine?

The demilitarisation and denazification of a state that engaged in nothing short of the genocide of its own people, whose only crime was to exercise an essential right of any people to self-determination, back in 2014. When it comes to the accusations of violating Ukraine's sovereignty – this is questionable, to say the least. Russia's only aim here is demilitarisation; it's not looking to occupy, dissect or otherwise change Ukraine. However, the right of a people to self-determination is a cardinal principle in modern international law. Hence Moscow has requested that the right of the DPR and LPR to secede from Kyiv be respected, and it has nothing to do with Ukraine's territorial integrity or sovereignty whatsoever. The ongoing operation is aimed at de-



stroying the Nazi elements that sprung to power during the violent coup in Kyiv back in 2014 and demilitarisation in order to finally ensure the end to an 8-year-long massacre in the Donbas.

After about 20 days since the beginning of Moscow's operation in Ukraine, Many Western analysts say that Russia has not been able to advance its goals in Ukraine rapidly, as expected from Russia's military power. Do you think so? Why?

Russia is exactly where it needs to be at the moment. From the beginning of the operation, the Russian Ministry of Defence has been adamant about the fact that its first priority is the safety of the civilian population of Ukraine. It is extremely easy to bomb cities into the ground and claim control: we've seen how the US army does exactly that all over the Middle East. However, such scenarios are completely unacceptable for Moscow. The only targets of this operation are the Nazi formations and their leadership – and the Russian troops have been extremely successful at terminating them while doing their absolute best to preserve the infrastructure and ensure the civilians are not harmed.

Many believe that if Russia succeeds in the current Ukraine arena in the post-war period, we will see changes in the current world order based on US hegemony. What is your opinion on this?

We will and it's long overdue. The world is multipolar and yet the US is trying desperately to hold on to the illusion of its own exceptionalism. This is why the Biden administration is now blaming its own economic shortcomings and overwhelming levels of inflation on Russia and has declared a full on economic war against Moscow – all the while trying to present it as a world-wide war. However, the world is not limited to the US and Western Europe, and this tough realization is inevitable this time around.

There have been three rounds of talks between Russia and Ukraine since the beginning of Russia's operation. Is there any hope to stop the bloodshed via talks?

Of course, there is. Kiev simply needs to agree to Moscow's demands: they are very simple and long overdue.

Russia's Achilles heel is its economy. The West has imposed large-scale sanctions against Russia. Can Russia withstand economic pressures? What is the economic situation in Russia, and what effects have the sanctions had on the country's economy?

The beauty of the world we live in is in the fact that it's not limited to the West. There is also the East, and if you look at the list of the world economies – there are quite a few eastern economies at the top of that list. But regardless of that, what we've learned from the 2014 sanctions is that they created an enormous amount of opportunities for Russian businesses and allowed us to reshape our economy at the time – and this time around, it is no different. Russia not only can and will withstand these pressures but will also make the best of them and come out stronger on the other end.

What about the public opinion of the Russian people with respect to the ongoing operation in Ukraine?

As opposed to the rest of the world – the Russian people have been aware of the genocide of the people of Donbas. If anything – the majority of the population of Russia were baffled that nothing was done to protect the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine sooner.

The United States and its allies are making some efforts to exclude Russia from the energy market and even from the UN Security Council. Is this possible?

While the latter is simply illegal at this point, as Russia is a permanent member of the UNSC – the former is an oxymoron. Russia is the third largest oil producer as well as the largest oil exporter. With all due respect, the US cannot cover the void that would be left on the market should Russia magically disappear from it. It's quite similar to Europe and Russian gas. Talking the talk is one thing – especially in the spring – it all comes down to walking the walk when summer ends and Europeans need something to warm their homes with.

Some analysts believe that the Ukraine war is a quagmire that the Americans cleverly prepared for Russia, which over the long term will pave the way for the disintegration of the Russian Federation, like what happened to the USSR. What is your opinion on this?

The US was undeniably very present in Ukraine; it supported the completely illegal coup d'état and the Nazi formations that made it happen; it was pumping the country full of money and weapons. However, the mere thought that Russia could be manipulated by the very crude American dealings in Kyiv is somewhat insulting. Modern Russia is far from the USSR, and it is only Americans, who lack knowledge of history, who are able to concoct such weird conspiracy theories.

(Source: Mehr News Agency)

Chinese president warns it could take decades to repair economic damage caused by Ukraine crisis

Chinese President Xi Jinping has urged the EU not to “tie the whole world” to the crisis in Ukraine and warned it could take decades to repair the economic damage.

In a virtual summit with European Union leaders on Friday, Xi told European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel that the crisis must be “properly handled”.

“Many people are very worried that the current situation may destroy the achievements of decades of international economic cooperation. If the situation continues to deteriorate, it is estimated that it may take years, or even decades, to recover afterwards,” Xi said, according to a statement from the Chinese foreign ministry.

The EU said later that it urged Beijing not to “interfere” with sanctions on Russia and while the two sides agreed on working to end the conflict, they had expressed “opposing views” on the situation.

Xi warned against a chaotic response that would “tie the whole world to the crisis [and means] people of all countries will pay a heavy price”.

“The more critical the situation, the more sobriety and calm is needed,” the Chinese leader said.

“The current world economic structure is a framework formed by the long-term efforts of all countries in the world. All parties should cherish this achievement and not easily impact the existing world economic system.

“There should be no politicizing, instrumentalizing and weaponizing the world economy that causes serious crises in the fields of world finance, trade, energy, science and technology, food, industrial chains and supply chains.”

Von der Leyen said after the talks: “We exchanged very clearly opposing views. This is not a conflict. This is a war. This is not a European affair. This is a global affair.”

She added: “We made very clear that China should, if not support, at least not interfere with our sanctions [on Russia] and that equidistance is not enough; that active engagement for peace is important and that each player should play its role.”

Xi said China supports the EU's efforts to resolve the crisis politically, and that Beijing would work with Europe to prevent a larger-scale hu-



manitarian crisis. Xi also backed a leading role for the EU in talks with other parties, including the United States and NATO.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has put a further strain on China's relations with the EU, which have already been damaged by tit-for-tat sanctions over alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang that led to a major investment deal being suspended.

China has not condemned Russia's actions and there have also been reports that Moscow has asked China for military and financial assistance and for help in getting around the sanctions.

China has criticized the sanctions and warned the crisis is already having a spillover effect on other countries.

A commentary published by the social media account of People's Daily, the Communist Party's mouthpiece, warned of the impact on natural gas supplies. It said half the EU's gas imports come from Russia and switching over to supplies from the U.S. will raise costs and increase delivery times.

The EU-China summit was divided into two parts, the first of which was a two-hour discussion between Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, von der Leyen, Michel and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.

Li said China and Europe should jointly safeguard energy and food supplies and the stability of industrial and supply chains.

(Source: news.yahoo.com)

IRGC is a national army and no national army can be named terrorist: Iran

TEHRAN – Kamal Kharrazi, chief of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations (SCFR), said on Sunday that the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) is a national army that its name must definitely be removed from the so-called U.S. list of foreign “terrorist” organizations.

However, the U.S. envoy for Iran Robert Malley, said the military force will remain under sanctions even if a deal is reached in Vienna to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA.

Speaking at the Doha Forum international conference, Kharrazi said the IRGC is a national army and thus naming it a terrorist organization is unacceptable.

“The name of the IRGC should be removed from the U.S. list of foreign terrorist organizations. The IRGC is a national army and no national army can be considered a terrorist group,” noted Kharrazi who was Iran's foreign minister from 1997-2005.

Iran, he said, will not back down from efforts to secure a removal the IRGC from the list.

Kharrazi also pointed to the talks in Vienna aimed at resurrecting the JCPOA ditched by the U.S. in May 2018.

“A nuclear deal is imminent, but issues depend on America's political will. There must be guarantees that the U.S. will not withdraw from the nuclear deal once again in the future,” he added.

Kharrazi stressed that the U.S. policy of “maximum pressure” has failed and that the Islamic Republic will need time to verify the removal of the sanctions.

Malley remained defiant, telling the con-



ference that the IRGC will remain sanctioned under U.S. law.

“Regardless of what happens to the IRGC issue that you raise, our view of the IRGC is many other sanctions on the IRGC will remain. This is not a deal that intends to resolve that issue,” Press TV quoted Malley as saying

He also said a deal in Vienna was not “inevitable” and not “just around the corner”.

“I can't be confident it is imminent... A few months ago we thought we were pretty close as well,” Malley said.

“We've been pretty close now for some time. And I think that tells you all you need to know about the difficulty of the issues,” he said.

“In any negotiations, when there's issues that remain open for so long, it tells you something about how hard it is to bridge the gap.”

Malley said, “The sooner we get back into the deal, which is in our interest, and presumably Iran's interest, the more faithfully we implement it, and the more we can build on it to address the other issues between us and Iran and between Iran and the region.”

Qajar-era Haft-Seen on view at Qom museum



TEHRAN-A Qajar-era (1789-1925) Haft-Seen table has been put on show at the museum of the holy shrine of Hazrat Masumeh (SA) in Qom.

The museum's Haft-Seen is composed of historical and valuable items dating back to the Qajar era, the director of the museum has said.

Such innovative ideas could attract more visitors while introducing Persian rich culture, which is combined with Islamic themes, Mohammad Baqer Meshkati explained on Saturday.

During Noruz, Iranians gather around a Haft-Seen, Haft-Seen table, an arrangement of seven symbolic items, all of which start with the letter 'S' in the Persian alphabet. Its items include sabzeh (wheat, lentil, or mung bean sprouts), samanu (a sweet pudding made with germinated wheat), seeb (apple), senjed (the dried fruit of the wild olive, oleaster), somagh (sumak), serkeh (vinegar) and seer (garlic).

Site for high-wire cycling inaugurated in northwest Iran

TEHRAN – A recreational site for high-wire cycling has recently been inaugurated in the ancient city of Hir, northwest Iran.

The site of suspended cycle lanes, which lets riders glide over a deep valley, is situated near a suspension bridge in Ardabil province.

It was officially inaugurated on April 1 during an opening ceremony attended by Nader Fallahi, the provincial tourism chief, and a host of local travel insiders.

Ardabil is home to a variety of “scary” glass bridges. Moreover, it embraces the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and

Various pastries are placed on the table as a symbol of sweetening the year to come. Common ingredients include flower waters and warm spices like cardamom, almonds, and pistachios (used both whole and ground to a powder), chickpea flour, rice flour, and, of course, plenty of sugar. (Blanched ground almonds are also the main ingredient in toot, which means mulberry in Persian.) Sweets that carry with them all the love, care, and hopes for a sweeter new year.

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

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

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

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



carpet trade tradition.

Ardabil is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardabil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

From page 1 ► For Muslims, the ninth month of the lunar Islamic calendar, Ramadan, also known as “Ramazan-e Karim” (benevolent/merciful Ramadan), is a time for, more than ever, practicing humility, patience, simplicity, empathy, and acceptance when things don't go their way. It's also a time to make stronger bonds of fellowship.

Muslims observe religious fast from dawn (fajr) to sunset (maghrib) and pray more than usual and with even more intensity to get closer to God. Ramadan is traditionally a time of great hospitality and generosity, so go ahead and accept Ramadan sweets or invitations to feasts, parties, and family gatherings. For Muslims, everything is done ceremoniously and consciously in line with what has been passed down from generation to generation.

Their goal to observe Ramadan rituals is to resist temptation in all forms. The purity of thoughts, intentions, and deeds is underlined while the road to self-discipline, self-control, sacrifice, and compassion and affection is paved by willpower and endurance.

Visiting Iran during Ramadan can be a memorable, first-hand experience for many foreigners. During such a time, however, there are some dos and don'ts you should be mindful of.

As a foreign traveler, you should be respectful of the culture and

Iran jointly nominates Iftar for UNESCO tag



beliefs of the country you are the guest. Avoid eating in front of Muslims during the month, just eat somewhere quiet, or at least in obvious tourist areas.

Eating, drinking, and smoking in the public are strictly prohibited as they are considered acts of temptation; especially for locals, where failing to observe Ramadan

may attract penalties. However, there are exceptions for the ill, pregnant, or physically weak people and even long-distance travelers!

In reverse, during Ramadan, one can eat their heart out from sunset to sunrise. Pretty much every restaurant, food stand, and even household have food ready

after dark.

After a long day's observance of fasting from dawn, Muslim families gather at sunset to break their fast over a meal known as Iftar, which is typically more than just food at the end of a ritualistic day.

During the daytime all restaurants and coffee shops are closed, however, by the sunset, street Iftar meals are ready to grab for those who cannot reach home in time for breaking their fast.

To bring more comfort to the faithful, work schedules in Iran are modified during this month to make the experience of this month as convenient as possible.

This year's Ramadan begins today April 3 and is estimated to end on May 1. Ramadan comes to an end by Eid al-Fitr, a joyful holiday when Muslims celebrate 29 or 30 days of dawn-to-sunset fasting; complemented by lots of traditional food and family get-togethers.

Because of the nature of the lunar calendar system, the dates of Ramadan vary each year and there is always a sort of disagreement among scholars as to when does Ramadan precisely start or come to an end.

By tradition, the new moon crescent which is sighted by the naked eye marks the beginning of a new lunar month but these days Muslims prefer to lean towards astronomical calculations to avoid such confusion.

84% rise in tourist visits to Kermanshah sites during Noruz

TEHRAN- Visits by Noruz trippers to historical sites in the western province of Kermanshah grows 84 percent over the Iranian new year holidays (started March 21) compared to the same period three years earlier, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

Nearly 173,000 travelers toured historical sites in Kermanshah including Taq-e Bostan, the UNESCO-registered Bisotun, the ancient Temple of Anahita, and Moaven al-Molk and Biglarbeigi Tekyehs during the period, CHTN quoted Ali Saber as saying on Friday.

Back in November, provincial tourism chief Jabbar Gohari announced that the tourism industry of Kermanshah has taken some 670 billion rials (about \$2.5 million) hit from the coronavirus outbreak.

Some 1,130 tourism workers across the province have lost their jobs, he added.

A significant part of the tourism industry was damaged by the coronavirus restrictions, which reduced the activity of various sectors to five percent of what it was before the pandemic, the official explained.

Inscribed into the base of a towering cliff, Taq-e Bostan comprises extraordinary Sassanian bas-reliefs of ancient victorious kings divide opinions. Late afternoon is the best time to visit, as the cliff turns a brilliant orange in the setting sun, which then dies



poetically on the far side of the duck pond.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting king Darius I and several other figures. UNESCO has it that Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values in the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs. The inscription, measuring about 15 meters high and 25 meters wide, was created on the order of King Darius I in 521 BC. It bears three different cuneiform script languages: Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian.

Located in Kangavar, the Temple of Anahita is believed to date from circa 200 BC. Several column bases and ruins of a wall remain from the magnificent Greek-style temple. The temple was used during the Parthian era (248 BC–224) as well as the Sassanid era (224–651).

Sassanid palace in southern Iran to undergo restoration

TEHRAN – Restoration work will commence on a crumbling Sassanid palace, which is situated in Sarvestan, southern Iran.

A budget of 40 billion rials (about \$151,000) has been allocated to the restoration project, Sarvestan's tourism chief said on Saturday.

Covering an area of 25 hectares, the Sassanid-era (224–651) monument has three iwans (porches), a large square hall under a large brick dome, and a rectangular courtyard, surrounded by the residential quarters, Hossein Purasad explained.

Located inside a UNESCO-registered ensemble, the palace has long fascinated archaeologists, architects, and historians of art for its extraordinary architectural elements.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled “Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region”-- to its World Heritage list. The ensemble is comprised of eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan. It reflects the optimized utilization

of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan which are amongst the highlights of the ensemble.

Crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians. Rock-carved sculptures and bas-reliefs on abrupt limestone cliffs are widely deemed as characteristics and striking relics of Sassanian art, top examples of which can be traced at Bishapur, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rajab in southern Iran.

and clothing are noteworthy. It has considerable potential to become a vibrant tourist attraction because of its changing natural landscape.

The province is also a hub for making wool felt products, majorly of which are exported abroad. It is home to some 500 crafters, in over 250 workshops, making handmade felt products.

Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari registers 86,000 overnight stays

TEHRAN – Noruz travelers made over 86,000 overnight stays in the lesser-known Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province during the Persian new year holidays (started March 21).

“A total of 86,454 vacationers made overnight stays during Noruz holidays at authorized accommodation centers such as hotels,

traditional lodging houses, eco-lodge units, apartment hotels, guest houses, and tourist centers,” the provincial tourism chief said on Friday.

Some 4,300 beds in hotels, apartment hotels, guest houses, eco-tours, and other tourism centers were prepared across the southwestern

province for the accommodation of travelers and tourists during the mentioned period, Alireza Jilan added.

An off-the-beaten-path tourist destination, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, is the birthplace of various unique traditions and rituals relative to the tribal lifestyles. Special forms of music, dance,

\$76m earmarked to support cooperatives

TEHRAN – A total budget of 20 trillion rials (nearly \$76 million) has been allocated for cooperatives in line with the goal of developing the national economy, the minister of cooperatives, labor and social welfare has announced.

In line with the government's macro-policies, in addition to consolidating current job opportunities, the creation of one million new jobs is targeted by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 2023), IRIB quoted Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki as saying on Saturday.

In this regard, a new line of the budget has been allotted amounting to 20 trillion rials (nearly \$76 million), he further stated.

Some 97,000 cooperatives are active across the country, which



has created more than 1.8 million direct jobs, former minister of cooperatives, labor, and social welfare, Mohammad Shariatmadari,

said in July 2021.

Cooperatives have been acknowledged as associations and enterprises through which citizens can

effectively improve their lives while contributing to the economic, social, cultural, and political advancement of their community and nation.

Cooperatives also foster external equality. As they are community-based, they are committed to the sustainable development of their communities – environmentally, socially, and economically. This commitment can be seen in their support for community activities, local sourcing of supplies to benefit the local economy, and in decision-making that considers the impact on their communities.

Despite their local community focus, co-operatives also aspire to bring the benefits of their economic and social model to all people in the world.

First fallow deer fawn born in new year



TEHRAN – The first fallow deer fawn in the new Iranian calendar year, which began on March 21, was born in Arsanjan county of Fars province, the head of the provincial department of environment, said on Saturday.

With the birth of this fawn, the population of this valuable species has reached 58, IRNA quoted Hassan Ebrahimi as saying.

The number of Persian fallow deer in Khalil-Beyg Forest reproduction site has grown relatively well due to the absence of conflicts with leopard species, providing se-

curity, feeding, and distribution of fodder in dry seasons, monitoring, and patrolling, and optimal management, he explained.

Deer reproduction and breeding site in Arsanjan county started its activity in 2010 with 7 fallow deer, which is now one of the most successful regions in the country in breeding this unique species, he noted.

The Persian fallow deer is a rare deer native to West Asia, today occurring only in Iran. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has long classified the Persian fallow deer as endangered in 1996, vulnerable in 2006, and endangered in 2010. A situation that has not changed much over the years.

The main habitat of fallow deer in the country includes western and southwestern areas, but the declining trend in the number of these valuable species in the 1330s (falling from 1951-1961) led to measures to save them in the late decade.

For the past 60 years, the species are inhabiting protected areas, and the most important center for the reproduction of fallow deer is the semi-natural breeding site of

Dasht-e Naz in the city of Sari, where in the last two years the population of the species has grown significantly.

Another habitat for the reproduction of valuable species is the Ashk Island of Lake Urmia, which has become a safe place to protect the species from extinction due to the difficult access of illegal poachers.

Persian fallow deer population in the Dasht-e Naz site has increased by about 60 percent, amounting to 53, in less than two years.

Over the years, 8 areas in different provinces were considered for the breeding of this species, as well as four private breeding centers and zoos, where fallow deer were kept, but some of them did not appear successful and closed down, according to the Department of Environment (DOE).

Iran's Environment and Wildlife Observatory recently announced that out of 320 fallow deer counted in 2008, only 30 remain on Ashk Island today, and this subspecies is on the verge of extinction.

Iran improves rank in health technology

From Page 1 ► Indicators of innovation in higher education, graduation, access to information and communication technology, indigenous infrastructure, gross capital formation, production of knowledge and inventions, scientific and citational articles, gross domestic product, and national industrial projects, are Iran's strengths in the 2021 evaluation.

Referring to new plans to promote product sales in the health sector, he noted that the ratio of production of products and services to articles should increase 10 times and the ratio of inventions to total articles is planned to increase by 30 times.

The Innovation and Prosperity Fund has paid a total of 240 trillion rials (nearly \$960 million) to support knowledge-based companies over the last [Iranian calendar] year (March 2021-March 2022).

Technology advancement

Today, the country's knowl-

edge-based ecosystem accounts for more than 3 percent of GDP. And the figure is projected to reach 5 percent, however, the main goal is to step toward a 10 percent share in GDP, Sattari told Fars on February 13.

The share of knowledge-based companies in the country's economy has exceeded 9 quadrillion rials (about \$34 billion), and since 2019, it has experienced a growth of more than 450 percent, he stated.

The knowledge-based ecosystem is a newly-emerged ecosystem but has so far been able to solve many of the country's problems.

The Innovation and Prosperity

A total of 1,670 knowledge-based firms are operating in the health sector.



Fund affiliated with the Vice Presidency of Science and Technology has earmarked a sum of 170 trillion rials (nearly \$650 million) to support knowledge-based companies over the past 4 years.

There are currently 6,263 knowledge-based companies operating in the country, offering advanced products and services in various fields of technology to domestic and

foreign markets, and some of them have entered international markets, Siavash Maleki, deputy head of the Fund, stated.

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in, leading to import reduction.

Health tips for Ramadan

Part 1

Ramadan, the month of mercy for Muslims, begins today in Iran. Despite the long fasting days, it might give people a chance to improve upon their physical and mental health.

Though in Islam there are reasons (considering each person's state of health) that might excuse one from fasting. Those who are suffering medical conditions, such as diabetes, hypotension, or hypertension, may or may not be able to fast depending on their doctor's opinion.

Ramadan is a brief spell of abstinence as God- who had created us all- has seen fit for human beings to limit their food intake for some days throughout the year. Fasting is also being observed in some other religions or other philosophies as well to some extent by cutting down on foods and drinks.

Fasting, the way it is recommended in Islam by abstaining from eating and drinking from dawn to sunset, is the best method to ensure a healthy body. Likewise, when someone comes down with an illness due to mal-temperament, or as used in Persian 'Sou-e-mizaj', the doctor should advise them to abstain from using food stuff that makes them sick in the first place and then start consuming food and drinks which help them to restore health.

Although long fasting hours may cause difficulties, the Iranian-Islamic traditional medicine has provided us with some useful tips which both help to rid the body from

waste material built up in body for several months by giving it a complete break from food and move towards a healthier life.

Breaking fast with date and lukewarm water

Due to the effects of fasting on emptying of the digestive tract particularly during long summer days the Iftar meal- when people end their fast at sunset- should not be heavy and filled with foods and drinks. It is better to break the fast with some lukewarm boiled water and dates and then have a light meal 20 to 30 minutes later.

This way the date and the lukewarm water would enter the digestive system and by producing saliva, stomach acid, and digestive juice in the gastrointestinal tract it would prepare us for a proper meal.

Timing to start eating

Those who might not be able to wait for 20 to 30 minutes due to great sense of hunger can reduce the time to 10 minutes and those with strong digestive system can start eating right away, though generally many have poor digestive systems and need to wait a little longer.

No Zulbia and Bamiyeh

It is strongly recommended to avoid consuming Zulbia and Bamiyeh (traditional deep-fried sweets) in any case.

The author, Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, is an Iranian-Islamic traditional medicine researcher.

To be continued

All refugees, even unauthorized ones, vaccinated: IRCS chief

TEHRAN – The head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society has said all refugees in the country, even unauthorized ones, have been vaccinated against coronavirus.

For many years, Iran has been hosting Afghan refugees, Pir-Hossein Kolivand said, adding, some five million Afghan refugees are living in Iran, all of them have been vaccinated, even those who have entered the country illegally.

"Migrants in Iran have the opportunity to invest in development projects. They are benefiting from all kinds of welfare and educational services. In which country migrants are treated like this? These are achievements that Iran has made, turning the country into a role model for other countries," IRNA quoted Kolivand as saying.

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

However, in light of the pandemic, all refugees, even those undocumented, benefited from access to free primary health services and free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like Iranian nationals.

World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Iran Jaffar Hussain has said it is a great achievement for Iran that the government is vaccinating every Afghan refugee going to the vaccination center even before



receiving COVID vaccines from Humanitarian Buffer (COVAX).

Without any discrimination, Iran has provided various services to a large number of refugees and foreign immigrants in the fields of education, health, treatment, livelihood, vocational training, and employment, with minimal assistance from the international community.

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

António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, has praised Iran's generosity which – for decades – has hosted millions of Afghans in need.

In December 2021, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Filippo Grandi, thanked Health Minister Bahram Einollahi for including Afghan refugees in Iran's COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON APRIL 2

New cases	1,887
New deaths	37
Total cases	7,166,371
Total deaths	140,277
New hospitalized patients	326
Patients in critical condition	1,697
Total recovered patients	6,882,030
Diagnostic tests conducted	48,538,845
Doses of vaccine injected	147,093,281

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Afghans life in Iran provided new model of migration

The friendly coexistence of Afghans with Iranians has set a new pattern in migration, secretary of human rights headquarters in Iran has stated.

The two nations of Iran and Afghanistan share similarities in religion, culture and civilization, Ali Bagherikani said on Thursday during a meeting with Afghan immigrants in Tehran.

The west is using all the capacities to turn the differences between the two nations of Iran and Afghanistan into a dispute and then a conflict in order to achieve their illegitimate interests, he lamented.

"The effort of the Human Rights Headquarters is to highly protect the right of immigrants living in Iran," he highlighted.

زندگی افغانستانی‌ها در ایران الگوی جدیدی از مهاجرت ارائه کرده‌است

دبیرستاد حقوق بشر جمهوری اسلامی ایران می‌گوید همزیستی ملاطفت‌آمیز افغانستانی‌ها با ایرانی‌ها، الگوی جدیدی را در مهاجرت ارائه کرده‌است.

به گزارش ایرنا، «علی باقری‌کنی» روز پنجشنبه در دیدار با مهاجران افغانستانی در تهران اظهار داشت: اشتراکات دینی، فرهنگی و تمدنی دو ملت ایران و افغانستان بسیار به هم نزدیک است.

وی افزود: غربی‌ها از همه ظرفیت‌ها استفاده می‌کنند تا تفاوت‌های دو ملت ایران و افغانستان را به اختلاف و سپس نزاع تبدیل کنند تا به منافع نامشروع خود برسند. او گفت: تلاش ستاد حقوق بشر آن است که کوچکترین حقی از مهاجران مقیم ایران ضایع نشود.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

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

Prayer Times» Noon:13:08 Evening: 19:49 Dawn: 5:21 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:47 (tomorrow)

What’s in Tehran art galleries

Carpet

* A collection of Iranian carpets by different weavers is currently being shown in an exhibition at Saless Gallery.

Entitled “Lion and the King”, the exhibit will be running until April 5 at the gallery that can be found at 148 Karim Khan Ave.

* A group painting exhibition is currently underway at Inja Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “Manufact” will run until April 15 at the gallery located at 4 Pedram Alley, Neauphle-le-Chateau St.

Abulqasem Ferdowsi: Life

Part 6

But when it comes to the domination of Iran by her enemies, especially at the end of the Shahnameh, he is violently opposed to both Arabs and Turks.

Certainly, these attitudes were in the poet’s sources, but he incorporated them into his work with complete conviction. Generally, it seems as though the ethical values of the poet’s sources and of the poet himself reciprocally acted on one another.

In this way, certain ethical values of the Shahnameh, such as praise for effort, condemnation of laziness, recommendation of moderation, condemnation of greed, praise for knowledge, encouragement of justice and tolerance, kindness towards women and children, patriotism, racial loyalty, the condemnation of haste and the recommendation of deliberation in one’s actions, praise for truthfulness and condemnation of falsehood, the condemnation of anger and jealousy, belief in the unstableness of the world, which is everywhere evident throughout the Shahnameh especially at the ends of the stories, and so forth, are considered also to be values held by the poet himself.

Other opinions of the poet are his belief in the genuineness of the narratives in his sources and his strong belief in the lasting values of his own work, a subject referred to frequently in the Shahnameh.

Finally, it seems as though he was a man who was fond of pleasantries and witticisms. The sum of such heartfelt, mature, and eloquently expressed views and ethical precepts regarding the world and

Calligraphic painting/sculpture

* A collection of calligraphic paintings and sculptures by a group of 44 artists, including Hossein Ehsai, Shaqayeq Yazdani, and Sepideh Majd-Kian, is on view in an exhibition at Ragadid Complex.

Behdad Najafi is the curator of the exhibit, which will run until April 20 at the gallery located at the Enqelab Cultural and Sports Complex.

Painting

* Riscree 29 Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Ilia Tahamtani.

Entitled “The Will to Power”, the exhibition will be running until April 25 at the gallery located at 31 Aqabozorgi St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.

* Paintings by Samaneh Abri, Maryam Amir-Vaqefi, Pune Oshidari, Hoda Boluri, Ahu Hamedi, Parham Qalamdar, Omid Mehdizadeh and Keiman Mehabadi are on display in an exhibition at Bavan Gallery.

The exhibit will run until April 17 at the gallery located at 7 Abdo off Lareztan St. off Motahhari Ave.

Leader lauds acclaimed war drama “The Situation of Mehdi”

From Page 1 ▶ “The Situation of Mehdi” was excellent, full of accurate details and containing a true narrative...

“The characters of the Bakery martyrs, especially the leading character Mr. Mehdi, have been portrayed accurately and delicately...

“This movie is among those films that one wants to watch again...

“All members of the cast and crew, the director and producer of this good film should be acknowledged...”

“The Situation of Mehdi” premiered in February at the 40th Fajr Film Festival and won the Crystal Simorgh of Iran’s most important film event.

IRGC deputy chief Brigadier General Ali Fadavi, Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf and several other officials also praised the movie.

“The Situation of Mehdi” by Hadi Hejazifar.

The film, which garnered several other awards, including the Fajr award for best directorial debut for Hejazifar, also won prizes at the National Will Manifestation Awards, a gala event that is a supplement to

the Fajr Film Festival.

The awards are presented to those films that promote issues being pursued by public organizations and institutes. Juries from the organizations select winners from the films screened at the Fajr Film Festival every year.

“The Situation of Mehdi” was selected as best film by the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs, Municipality of Tehran, Municipality of Mashhad, Mostazafan Foundation, Public Culture Council and several other organizations and institutes.

The best film prize of the 11th edition of the Qoqunus Screen Awards was given to “The Situation of Mehdi”.

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

“White and Colorful” by Mohammadreza Masumi wins Greenstorm Global Photography Award

TEHRAN – “White and Colorful” by Iranian photographer Mohammadreza Masumi has won the 13th edition of the Greenstorm Global Photography Award, the organizers announced last week.

The award is organized in collaboration with the Greenstorm Foundation in Koch, India every year with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

The theme for this year’s contest was “Restore Green Lineage” based on the UNEP theme for 2021 World Environment Day — Ecosystem Restoration.

“White and Colorful” was selected as the winner through a public poll, in which thousands of photography enthusiasts and laypeople from all over the world participated.

“Masumi’s winning entry depicts a breathtaking sight of a man-made forest in Iran spreading through the region of Khalkhal. It exhibits a remarkable human attempt to restore the balance of nature by revitalizing the environment,” Greenstorm Foundation said in a press release.

The photo has previously won the gold medal of the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) at the 2nd Issyk-Kul International Exhibition of Photography in Kyrgyzstan.

The Greenstorm Foundation also announced Jophel Botero Ybiosa from the Philippines as the first runner-up, while Hadi Dehqanpur, also from Iran, was chosen as the second runner-up for the award.

Speaking during the award ceremony, former international diplomat and MP from Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala, Shashi Tharoor said that environmental degradation affects everyone regardless of their political or ideological affiliations.

“They have cross-sectoral implications, public health dimensions, impact on the economy and the workforce of today’s India. Solving this crisis may well prove to be the single most important moonshot of our generation,” he noted.

Twenty-five photographs curated by an eminent jury comprising jury chair Prathap Suthan from New Delhi, Mumbai-based wildlife

“White and Colorful” by photographer Mohammadreza Masumi won the 13th edition of the Greenstorm Global Photography Award in Kochi, India.

photographer Aishwarya Sridhar and landscape architect Michael Little from Bengaluru were competing for the awards.

The photos were chosen from 3,519 submissions by photographers from 42 countries, including the U.S., England, Canada, Algeria, Brazil, Iran, Malaysia, South Korea, Morocco and Vietnam.

Greenstorm Foundation is a not-for-profit public trust formed to impact appropriate behavioral changes among people through the power of creativity.

AFI Silver hosts Festival of Films from Iran

“The Salesman” by Asghar Farhadi.

TEHRAN – The AFI (American Film Institute) Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Washington D.C. is hosting the Festival of Films from Iran.

The annual series that opened Friday provides a look at both the latest films from Iran and selected classics, which this year include retrospectives dedicated to filmmakers Shahram Mokri and two-time Oscar winner Asghar Farhadi.

The festival began with a screening of Farhadi’s acclaimed movie “Fireworks Wednesday” starring Taraneh Alidoosti and Hedyeh Tehrani.

The suspenseful drama tells the story of marital intrigue and betrayal set against the backdrop of the Persian New Year. Ruhi, a young bride-to-be, is hired as a maid for an affluent family in Tehran. Upon arriving she is suddenly thrust into an explosive domestic conflict.

The wife is convinced her husband is having an affair with a recently divorced woman living next door and enlists Ruhi as a spy, to follow her husband and confirm her suspicions. What Ruhi discovers, however, threatens not only their marriage but her own future.

One more screening has also been arranged for the film for April 6.

The festival went on Saturday with reviewing Mokri’s first feature “Ashkan, the Charmed Ring and Other Stories”, a delightfully offbeat

black-and-white comedy about the mysterious workings of fate, played out in deadpan Jim Jarmusch-like vignettes.

His second feature “Fish & Cat” also was screened at the same time. The film is an unclassifiable, brilliant single-shot meditation on 1970s American slasher films like “Friday the 13th”, but filtered through a purely art-house lens.

Panah Panahi’s striking feature debut “Hit the Road” has also been selected to be screened.

Iranian movies line up for Istanbul Film Festival

Hoda Zeinolabedin and Navid Purfaraj act in a scene from “Zalava”.

TEHRAN – Four Iranian movies will be competing in the 41st Istanbul Film Festival, the first and oldest international film festival in Turkey.

“Hit the Road”, “Tonight’s Homework”, “Zalava” and “Until Tomorrow” will be screened in the different categories of the event, which will take place from April 8 to 19.

Directed by Panah Panahi, “Hit the Road” will be screened in the Young Masters section.

A chaotic, tender family is on a road trip

across a rugged landscape, but to where? In the back seat, dad has a broken leg, but is it really broken? Mom tries to laugh when she’s not holding back tears. The kids keep exploding into choreographed car karaoke. All of them are fussing over the sick dog and getting on each others’ nerves. Only the mysterious older brother is quiet. They have left Tehran for the north, towards the Turkish border, but it is as if they left life itself behind.

“Tonight’s Homework” has been chosen to be screened in the Documentary Time category.

Abbas Kiarostami’s 1989 film “Homework” posed questions to students at a public school, about homework, punishments and their dreams, in an effort to portray the Iranian society of the future. Filmed in 2021, “Tonight’s Homework” repeats Kiarostami’s questions, asking them to today’s students. Some 30 years later, one thing is certain: the educational system, society and the country itself have all changed dramatically. Co-directed by Ashkan Nejati and Mehran Nematollahi, “Tonight’s Homework” highlights a country’s social transformation from a generation that grew

up during war to today’s children.

“Zalava”, winner of the grand prize at the 36th Venice International Film Critics’ Week, will compete in the Mined Zone category.

The movie 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.

“Until Tomorrow” by Ali Asgari will be screened in the No More Flowers section.

It tells the story of how a single mother’s courage is tested when she resorts to desperate measures to hide her illegitimate child from her parents.

The Istanbul Film Festival is organized by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts.