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Lack of American Political Decision Brought Vienna Talks to a Halt

► Page 3

Report

Yemen truce goes into effect

Yemen's armed forces have announced their commitment to a temporary truce with Saudi Arabia which has been waging war on its neighbor for more than seven years.

The spokesman for Yemen's Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, says "according to what was agreed upon with the national delegation in Muscat, we announce the implementation into force of the humanitarian and military truce and our commitment to a comprehensive cessation of military operations as long as the other party adheres to it."

Saudi Arabia also declared it's a commitment to the ceasefire despite reports emerging that Saudi forces launched an artillery attack on the Yemeni border region of Sa'ada killing three civilians.

In a statement, the UN special envoy to Yemen, Hans Grundberg said "the two-month truce started at 7 pm (1600 GMT) tonight. As of tonight [Saturday], all offensive ground, aerial and naval military operations should cease"

Grundberg had earlier announced the agreement from Amman, Jordan, after meeting separately with both sides from the brutal war on Yemen. He said he hoped the truce would be renewed after two months with both parties consent.

According to Grundberg, the two sides have also agreed to another meeting to open roads in Taz city along with other provinces.

"The success of this initiative will depend on the warring parties' continued commitment to implementing the truce agreement with its accompanying humanitarian measures," said the Swedish diplomat.

He also expressed hope "the goodwill that we saw from all sides in public will translate into long-term de-escalation of inflammatory media rhetoric and hate speech." ► Page 5

Difficult task ahead of Iran in World Cup: Ansarifard

TEHRAN – Iran national football team captain Karim Ansarifard says that they have been drawn in a difficult task and there is no guarantee of success in the competition.

The 'Persian Leopards' have been drawn in Group B along with England, the U.S. and one of Wales, Scotland, or Ukraine.

Ansarifard will represent Iran in the FIFA World Cup for the third time. The 32-year-old forward was a member of Iran national football team in the 2014 and 2018 FIFA World Cups.

"I'm very worried because I see so many fans and experts show increased satisfaction for our group. They must understand how tough our mission is and there is no guarantee a spot in the next round," Ansarifard posted on his Instagram account.

"As a small member of Iran football, who has experienced the FIFA World Cup twice, I have to say so many people do not take the World Cup seriously.

"We are scheduled to play England in the opening day. They are one of the favorites to win the title, the nation that invented football. We are not alike at all," the AEK Athens striker added.

"Wishes won't wash dishes. We have to fight until death for our reputation. The National Team need good warm-up and good training camp ahead of the competition.

"I ask all the fans and my teammates take the World Cup seriously and don't let the officials to forget their duties for supporting the team," Ansarifard concluded.



© Reuters

Imran Khan dissolves parliament amid reports of U.S.-parliament collusion

TEHRAN — On Sunday, Imran Khan, Pakistan's prime minister, single-handedly stood against what he called "falsehood and treason," and dissolved the parliament, as well as the cabinet, on the charges of colluding with the U.S. to overthrow him.

Khan escaped a bid to be deposed as Pakistan's prime minister on Sunday when the deputy speaker of parliament ruled that a no-confidence motion was illegal.

Pakistan's President Arif Alvi dissolved the National Assembly on the advice of Prime

Minister Khan, Geo News reported.

"I call upon the people of Pakistan to prepare for elections," Khan said. Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farukh Habib has said that elections will be held within 90 days. ► Page 2

Iran registers highest production growth among world's top steelmakers: WSA

TEHRAN – Iran's crude steel production increased by 11.8 percent in the first two months of 2022 when the production by the world's top 64 steelmakers declined by 5.5 percent, according to the World Steel Association (WSA)'s latest report.

Iran was ranked first among the world's top steel producers in terms of production

growth, followed by India, Germany, Russia, and the United States, IRNA reported, citing the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

Based on the report, Iran produced 5.3 million tons of crude steel during the mentioned two months.

According to IMIDRO's estimations, the country's crude steel production in February stood at 2.5 million tons which was also 3.7 percent higher than the same month in 2021.

Meanwhile, WSA stated that crude steel production by the world's top 64 producers fell 5.5 percent to stand at 299.4 billion tons in the first two months of 2022. ► Page 4

Report

A swift move towards knowledge-based economy

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei designated the Iranian New Year (1401) as "The Year of Production: Knowledge-Based and Job Creating".

Strengthening knowledge-based companies is on the agenda, raising hope for reducing obstacles on the path to development.

The Leader has called on all Iranians, including citizens and government officials, to work hard to boost knowledge-based production and create new jobs.

Meanwhile, Ali Kheiroddin, the deputy minister of science for technology and innovation, has said that by 2026, the share of the knowledge-based economy in the national GDP should reach 50 percent. ► Page 7



© ISNA / Hadi Zand

Schools officially reopen after two years

TEHRAN – All educational centers and universities started operation in person on Sunday, after 25 months of online education due to the coronavirus pandemic, IRIB reported. Following the decision of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control and President Ebrahim Raisi, all universities affiliated with the ministries of ► Page 7

Jameh Mosque of Ardestan: place of worship or museum of architectural styles

TEHRAN – Named after an oasis town in the heart of the Iranian Plateau, the Jameh Mosque of Ardestan is one of the best-preserved places of worship that still features a variety of ancient architectural styles.

Situated in Isfahan province, Ardestan was one of the most flourishing towns of the region

during the Middle Ages, mostly renowned for its pomegranates, and silk production.

The two-story hypostyle mosque is an early Islamic building with many accretions over its long history of use. It incorporates successive architectural styles of the Sassanids, Buyids, Seljuks, and Safavids.

However, a majority of what its visitors see date from the Seljuk era (ca. 1040–1196). According to Encyclopædia Iranica, most of the Seljuk decoration is concentrated within the sanctuary while the dome chamber closely follows the pattern of the Isfahan school in its multiple lower openings and its zone of transition. ► Page 6

From Inside

- President: Tehran supports Baghdad's unity, independence, security **P2**
- Special envoy: Taliban agrees to honor Iran's water rights **P2**
- Iran Foreign Ministry spokesman wraps up visit to Africa **P3**
- U.S. shows once again it is enemy of Iranian people: government **P3**
- Loading, unloading of goods in ports up 17% in a year **P4**
- 'Annual growth of 12.5% in industry, 10% in mining, trade targeted' **P4**
- Average daily gasoline consumption rises 27% during new year holidays **P4**
- Millions of Iranians choose Mazandaran for Noruz vacations **P6**
- Discover dazzling rock-carved legends at Tehran museum **P6**
- Ramadan rituals in different cities of Iran **P7**
- "Tawaf" by Mirali Parandak wins gold medal at Romanian photography exhibition **P8**
- "The Family of Pascual Duarte" comes to Iranian bookstores **P8**

Interview

Saudi Arabia, UAE view Biden admin as unreliable partner: professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – A professor of government at Georgetown University in Qatar says that leaderships in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates look at the Biden administration as an unreliable partner who is not worthy to jeopardize the ties with Russia.

"They feel that under Biden the United States has not been a reliable partner, especially since the close, personal relationship that existed with the Trump White House is gone and since the U.S. is indirectly talking to Iran in Vienna," Mehran Kamrava tells the Tehran Times.

Though U.S.-Persian Gulf ties are deep-rooted when it comes to military contracts, the Russia-Ukraine conflict showed that Arab states in the region may leave America alone in some cases.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia appear to be sending a message to the U.S., says Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, a Middle East fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy. Talking to Al Jazeera last month, Ulrichsen says they are going to act upon their "interests" and not what the U.S. think their interests are.

Giorgio Cafiero, CEO of Gulf State Analytics, a Washington, DC-based geopolitical risk consultancy, also says, "(Syrian President) Al-Assad coming to the UAE, shortly after the (Persian) Gulf Arab country voted to abstain from a UN Security Council resolution condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine last month, tells us that the Emiratis are very serious about asserting their autonomy from the United States." ► Page 5

"Water, Wind, Dust, Bread" competes in ZagrebDox

TEHRAN – Acclaimed Iranian movie "Water, Wind, Dust, Bread" is competing in the 18th edition of ZagrebDox, an international documentary film festival underway in the Croatian capital.

Directed by Mehdi Zamanpur Kiasari, this short documentary has been chosen to be screened in the Teen Dox category.

In an oasis in the Iranian desert, 11-year-old Abolfazl picks dates, tends his family's cows, does his homework, and has fun with his best friend Setayesh. The camera quietly observes their friendship as they swing between the date palms or climb the windswept rocks around the oasis. Abolfazl's mother bakes fresh bread, and tourists come to her guesthouse for the serene atmosphere.

But life in the oasis is not entirely idyllic. Although Abolfazl lives with a physical disability, it is Setayesh who faces an even bigger hurdle. She is one of the 40,000 children in Iran who don't have a birth certificate, and as a result, she can't go to school. ► Page 8

President: Tehran supports Baghdad's unity, independence, security

TEHRAN— Speaking in a phone call with the Iraqi President Barham Salih on Sunday, Iranian President Ayatollah Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi congratulated the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan and wished divine blessings to the Iraqi people and all Muslims around the world.

Raisi also emphasized that Tehran supports Iraq's unity, independence, security. The president also praised the rising status of Iraq in the region and the wider world.

"We consider the slightest insecurity in Iraq to be to the detriment of the whole region, so we welcome the realization of the interests of the Iraqi people and the establishment of a strong government in this country," Raisi noted.

Emphasizing that Tehran and Baghdad are not just neighbors, but two nations that have brotherly and kinship relationship, the president said good steps have been taken to deepen relations between the two countries and Iran is determined to promote the level of relations and cooperation between the two countries in all fields to full capacity.

The president further emphasized the efforts to establish security and peace in the region without the interference of outsiders, stating, "The passage of time has proved the authenticity of the remarks by the Leader (of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei) that the United States is not sympathetic to the Muslim nations in the region, especially Iraq, and today, it has become clear to everyone that outsiders are only pursuing their own interests and domination."

Raisi went on to say that any country in the region that closes its eyes to the hegemonic goals of the United States and the Zionist



regime will sacrifice "the interests of its nation and will spur the anger of Muslim nations."

For his part, the Iraqi president congratulated the arrival of Ramadan and stressed the need for cooperation between the two countries to overcome regional challenges.

Salih said establishing stability and security in the region is very important and "we hope for the active role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in this regard."

The Iraqi president noted that Tehran and Baghdad have many common goals and objectives at the regional and international levels, and by strengthening the level of cooperation and coordination, Iraq can take useful and effective steps to ensure the interests of the two nations and the nations of the region.

Salih added, "The solution to the crises in the region is merely with the will of the countries themselves, and intra-regional solutions without the interference of outsiders."

Emphasizing the importance of developing trade and economic relations between the two countries, the Iraqi president noted, "The economic capacities of the two countries can serve the interests of the two nations."

Iran FM discusses Yemen ceasefire, Vienna talks with UN chief

TEHRAN — United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres spoke over the phone with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the Iranian Foreign Ministry announced on Sunday.

According to the Foreign Ministry readout of the conversation, the two sides mainly discussed the ceasefire in Yemen and the Vienna talks intended to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

At the beginning of the conversation, the UN secretary general congratulated the establishment of a ceasefire in Yemen and stated that this is a "common victory" that has been achieved as a result of the efforts of all parties.

Expressing satisfaction with the establishment of ceasefire in Yemen and thanking the UN chief for his role in this regard, the Iranian foreign minister stressed that now is the time to take fundamental steps towards building peace and stability in Yemen, especially a complete lifting of inhumane sanctions on the country.

Reiterating Iran's continued support for resolving the crisis in Yemen and the conclusion of the war in the country through dialogue, Amir Abdollahian stressed that Tehran hopes that the siege on the Yemeni people will fully lifted at the same time as the ceasefire is established.

Amir Abdollahian also stressed the importance of sending humanitarian aid to the Yemeni people.

He also welcomed the visit of Hans Grundberg, special envoy of the UN secretary general for Yemen to the region.

Amir Abdollahian also referred to the UN Security Council's agenda for issuing two separate statements on Yemen.

"We welcome that, but another statement that is unilateral, without considering the Saudi attacks on Yemen and condemning the National Salvation Government, is unconstructive," Amir Abdollahian told Guterres.

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

The truce marks a breakthrough in efforts to ease a conflict that has triggered a

humanitarian crisis in Yemen, the poorest Arab country.

The ball is in U.S. court

Elsewhere in the conversation, Iran's top diplomat and the UN chief discussed the ongoing talks in Vienna intended to remove the sanctions imposed on Iran.

"We are close to an agreement in the negotiations and we have conveyed our proposals on the remaining issues to the United States through the senior EU negotiator, Mr. Mora," Amir Abdollahian said.

He then went on to reiterate that the ball is now in America's court.

Meanwhile, Guterres stressed the importance of the ongoing talks in Vienna and expressed hope that the parties would reach an agreement as soon as possible.

Mora held talks with Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani and Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian in Tehran on March 27. Both Bagheri Kani and Amir Abdollahian told the European Union's coordinator that the revival of the nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA, is within reach if the United States shows pragmatism.

"If the American side be pragmatic, it is possible to reach agreement," Bagheri Kani said.

Mora also presented a report about his latest talks with other partners in the nuclear talks, which includes the European trio (France, Germany and Britain), Russia, China, and the United States.

Before his visit to Tehran, Mora said efforts should be made to try to close "the remaining gaps" in the Vienna talks. "We must conclude this negotiation. Much is at stake," Mora wrote on Twitter.

Guterres and Amir Abdollahian discuss Ukraine, Afghanistan

The Iranian foreign minister and Guterres as the world's chief diplomat also exchanged views on other thorny international issues, including Afghanistan and Ukraine.

In conclusion, the UN chief congratulated the holy month of Ramadan, saying that the UN is trying to start a program called "Ramadan Solidarity Initiative" with the aim of establishing peace and humanitarian actions.

Special envoy: Taliban agrees to honor Iran's water rights

TEHRAN — Talks with Kabul's delegation regarding the Iran-Afghanistan water rights agreement were positive, Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan has said, Tasnim reported on Sunday.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi was part of the Iranian delegation who visited China last week for a conference on Afghanistan.

The Iranian team, led by Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, held talks with the Afghan side on the sidelines of the conference.

Foreign ministers or representatives from Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia attended the conference hosted by the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in the city of Tunxi, East China's Anhui Province.

Kazemi Qomi said the Taliban officials had agreed to commit themselves to Iran's water rights in accordance with the existing agreement.

The Afghan delegation also stressed that Iran's water rights are part of the Afghan government's plans after returning to Kabul, Kazemi Qomi



said.

Naturally, given the volume of interactions between Iran and Afghanistan and the cooperation that exists between the two nations, an emphasis was also placed on the meeting of Afghanistan's neighbors, Kazemi Qomi said.

The special envoy stated that border security, stability of Afghanistan and not a threat against neighboring countries from the Afghan territory were among the topics discussed.

Referring to the development of cooperation, he continued, "One of the important issues, as emphasized at the regional

meeting of foreign ministers, is the formation of regional cooperation for the reconstruction and security of Afghanistan.

"Among the issues raised in the negotiations with the Kabul team was the emphasis on the issue of Iran's water rights," Kazemi Qomi said.

The Iranian representative quoted Kabul officials as saying, "They stressed that the water issue must be implemented as stated in the (1973) agreement. In our return to Kabul, we will seek to work within the framework of that agreement."

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said on February 10

that he was satisfied with good relations with Iran, adding that the Taliban administration is committed to Iran's water rights.

Mujahid said that there has been a drought in Afghanistan in recent years, so if there is enough water on the Afghan side, Iran will definitely benefit from this water according to the existing agreements.

One day later, the Taliban Ministry of Water and Energy said in a statement that the Taliban government is "fully committed" to the existing agreement on Iran's water rights.

The statement said, "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, in connection with the management of water in the Helmand Sea, fully agrees with the technical contents, legal basis and protocols on Helmand Sea water concluded in 1973 between the governments of Afghanistan and Iran."

The statement added, "We are ready to work with strong determination to implement this permanent agreement with our friendly, neighboring and Islamic country of Iran in an atmosphere of cooperation and trust."

Imran Khan dissolves parliament amid reports of U.S.-parliament collusion

From page 1 ► Opposition leader Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the son of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, accused the government of violating the Constitution and added that their lawyers were on their way to the Supreme Court.

A large crowd of Khan's supporters gathered outside the parliament, chanting, "Imran Khan will save Pakistan...Whoever is America's friend is a traitor."

Pakistan's Chief Justice Umer Ata Bandial has reached the Supreme Court to review petitions filed by opposition leaders against the dissolution of the country's National Assembly, television channel Dunya News reported.

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry on Sunday said the federal government had removed Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar from his post upon Khan's request, appointing Omer Sarfraz Cheema as his replacement, Dawn reported.

Unconfirmed reports on social media claim that Mohammad Sarwar was a part of the plot to topple Khan.

The opposition quickly threatened to fight the vote block placed by a member of the premier's political party, while Khan asked the country's president to dissolve parliament and call for early elections.

Imran Khan is the third Pakistani prime minister to face a no-confidence challenge from the opposition in parliament.

The Supreme Court of Pakistan reacted to the decision of the speaker of Parliament to use his powers to reject the no-confidence

motion against the prime minister and then the dissolution of Parliament by the president.

Pakistan's army said on Sunday it was not involved in politics.

"Army has nothing to do with the political process," Major General Babar Iftikhar, the head of the military's public relations wing, told Reuters in response to a question about the institution's involvement in Sunday's developments.

The Pakistani judiciary has instructed a special committee to look closely at how the deputy speaker rejected the vote of no confidence.

The story began on Friday when Khan said his administration delivered an official protest to the U.S. embassy in protest of what it called Washington's meddling in the country's affairs.

"We have now submitted a demarche to (the) American embassy," Khan said in an interview with local news channel ARY, alluding to a diplomatic note he described as a foreign conspiracy to depose him from power.

Khan stated in a nationally televised address on Thursday that a Western country was dissatisfied with his travel to Moscow. He made a passing reference to the United States before appreciatively correcting himself to "a foreign country." However, in an interview with the ARY TV on Friday, Khan mentioned the United States.

The White House denied that Washington was attempting to depose Khan from power.

The U.S. embassy in Islamabad did not respond to a request for comment right away.

On Friday, members of Pakistan's ruling

party organized a demonstration against the United States in the northern city of Peshawar.

Dozens of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) ruling party members, led by a provincial minister, marched in Peshawar's center, yelling "Down with America!"

"We have come out to support Imran Khan, who has opposed capitalist powers," Taimur Jhagra, the minister, said during the event.

"We will choose famine than submit to the U.S.," declared Fazal Elahi, another provincial politician at the protest.

Some anti-U.S. Shia activists reacted to Khan's statements by conducting a march in Islamabad and burning American flags.

Also, protesters headed by a governing party MP marched in Karachi, chanting anti-American slogans.

As of writing this article, this rapid chain of events in Pakistan is constantly being updated, but what is more important is that why would Washington want to collude with the parliamentarians to oust Khan?

Known for his prominent political positions against the United States, Khan approached Iran, Russia and China, the Bermuda triangle that could swallow up the U.S. in the Eurasian region. A U.S., which has lost influence in the region, could not withstand losing yet another opportunity, right after the embarrassing withdrawal from Afghanistan. So, what could the geniuses at the White House think of? Arrange a pseudo-coup d'etat.

The future of Imran Khan is now unclear, but the Pakistani MPs seem to have forgotten the fate of countries that relied on the U.S.

Raisi vows to support knowledge-based activities

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi, who had recently visited Khorasan Razavi province, said his government supports knowledge-based activities in accordance with the instructions of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei

"I personally support innovation in processes and facilitating the role-playing of knowledge-based companies in the field of economics and will not allow knowledge-based actors to be caught up in administrative and organizational complexities."

Speaking in a gathering of knowledge-based ecological actors in the province, the president added, "We believe that what the Leader of the Islamic Revolution declares as a slogan is a serious need of the country and in fact an agenda for all institutions."

"Solving the problem of

unemployment, achieving economic and political independence and national dignity depend on the prosperity of production," the president said, emphasizing the vital role of production in the country's economy.

"Last year, the focus of the year was that what hinders production should be removed and production should be supported with all facilities. This year, we are talking about the fact that job creation and solving the problem of unemployment depends on the prosperity of production," Raisi pointed out.

Economic stability and reducing the economy's vulnerability to external shocks, according to Raisi, are dependent on the development of knowledge-based and sustainable production. "Our national economy must be strong and stable so that

shocks do not cause economic actors to feel unstable."

Raisi also emphasized the importance of legal and administrative support for knowledge-based companies, saying, "Facilitating the issuance of licenses and allocating suitable space to knowledge-based companies is a proper demand that should not become an obstacle to knowledge-based activities."

The president underlined that knowledge-based manufacturing enterprises can both generate employment and contribute significantly to the country's economic independence.

He added, "The transfer of projects by government agencies to knowledge-based companies is a right demand."

Referring to his frequent provincial visits during his seven-month presidency, Raisi said attempts should be

made to tap the potential of creative individuals across the country. "I have experienced that we have many elites in the provinces."

The president underscored that if knowledge-based firms are to emerge, the procedures must first be reformed.

The Leader has insisted on knowledge-based companies in the new Iranian calendar year 1401 that began on March 21.

"In the 1401 budget, we laid the foundation for justice. Accordingly, we have made spatial management the focus of our work" Raisi said.

The president added, "In some provinces, such as Khorasan Razavi, there are several science and technology parks that there should be a center in this field to create a mechanism in the type of management and facilities can be attracted and distributed fairly."

Lack of American political decision has brought Vienna talks to a halt

TEHRAN – Talks in Vienna over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal have come to a standstill due to the Biden administration's inability to make tough political decisions.

After a week of diplomatic blame-game between Russia and the West over who's throwing a wrench into the Vienna talks, prospects for the imminent conclusion of the talks have become bleak due to Biden dithering over the last remaining issues.

After the war in Ukraine broke out, the European negotiators in Vienna accused Russia of preventing the conclusion of the talks for fears that the possible resumption of Iran's oil exports would make it easy to drive Russian oil and gas out of European markets.

Russia categorically rejected the accusation and, together with Iran, pointed the finger of the blame on Washington for refraining from making political decisions required for concluding the talks.

Iran says it has made all the tough decisions that are necessary for advancing the talks. Over the course of the talks, Iran provided innovative solutions to a number of thorny issues such as guarantees and verification measures. But the U.S. kept refusing the proposals all while refraining from coming up with innovative solutions.

In a phone conversation with United Nations Secretary



General Antonio Guterres, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian addressed the latest developments concerning the negotiations in Vienna. He told the world's top diplomat that the U.S. needs to take action to help conclude the talks.

While Iran says a deal in Vienna is imminent, the U.S. keeps dampening hopes for a deal. Amir Abdollahian told Guterres that the negotiations are about to result in a deal. "We are close to an agreement in the negotiations and we have conveyed our proposals on the remaining issues through the European Union's top negotiator to the U.S. side, and the ball is now in the U.S. court," he said.

Guterres also described the important negotiations in Vienna as significant and expressed hope that the parties to the talks will reach an agreement as soon as

possible.

The U.S., however, has a different assessment of the current state of play in Vienna. U.S. special envoy for Iran Robert Malley told CNN's Becky Anderson in Doha last week that a nuclear deal "is not around the corner and is not inevitable" due to outstanding issues that "matter deeply" to parties involved in the talks, one of which is Tehran's demands regarding the elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Iran has demanded that the U.S. remove the IRGC from its so-called Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) because, many in Iran and beyond, believe that the Trump administration's decision to designate the IRGC as an FTO was mainly driven by a political motive to make it harder, if not impossible, for any future administration to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as

the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The FTO designation has taken a center stage at the talks because of a number of reasons. First, many believe that the designation is politically motivated and is designed to prevent Iran from fully benefitting from any relief from sanctions. Second, it could be used by the U.S. to escalate military tensions in the region.

Mohammad Marandi, a professor at the University of Tehran, said the designation matters because it gives the U.S. a pretext to militarily target the group, according to CNN.

"When the United States and Iran both have a presence [in the Persian Gulf] and the two sides consider the other navy to be a terrorist organization, then are no lines for communication, and that could create major problems," he said.

The designation also signifies the internal weakness of the Biden administration which fears the political fallout of removing the IRGC from the FTO list. But this has nothing to do with Iran. It is Biden's problem, not Iran's.

Iran has done its part and is ready to conclude the talks if the U.S. shows seriousness. The Biden administration has been accused of trying to link the Vienna talks to developments in the region, a move that would almost certainly complicate the talks and further postpone their conclusion.

SPORTS

Jahanbakhsh: Iran ready to cause surprise

TEHRAN - Iran national football team captain Alireza Jahanbakhsh says England were the "last team" he wanted to be paired with at the 2022 World Cup but has vowed his nation will be ready to cause a surprise in Qatar.



Jahanbakhsh, who spent three seasons at Brighton before leaving for Feyenoord last summer, admits the group will be "difficult" but says Iran will arrive at the tournament prepared.

When asked whether he wanted to be paired with Gareth Southgate's side, he told Sky Sports News: "Not really, to be honest! England were the last team I would have picked, but it happened!"

"England could easily have three top teams in the World Cup right now, they're really well organised with the manager. They've worked together for a long time now and they know their strategy.

"Obviously the US are a strong side, they have a good generation now and most of their players are playing in Europe. And we still have to wait for the third team but we need to respect Scotland, Wales and Ukraine a lot. I don't know a lot about Ukraine but the other two teams have made a lot of steps.

"It's going to be very difficult to be honest but we're going to be ready for it, prepared for it and we're going to make our nation proud."

Iran, who have never before faced England, are ranked 21st in the world having topped the Asian qualification groups for the last two World Cup events.

And Jahanbakhsh says those participants who are used to warm winter weather will be better suited to the conditions in Qatar.

"On one side it will be a very unique World Cup," he added. "It will be in the winter, for the first time it will be in the west Asia. A lot of people will come together from different countries, cold countries and going to Qatar will make a big difference.

Iran can beat England, Skocic says

TEHRAN – Iran football team head coach Dragan Skocic has warned Gareth Southgate: "I know we can beat you."

And the Croatian, who will take inspiration from his homeland's World Cup semi-final win over England in 2018, has told his players they will NOT be in the squad for Qatar if they do not believe it, too.

Skocic insists: "There is no reason we should not think we can beat England. Why not?"

"Remember, I am Croatian, so I know we can beat England. People might look at the game and say Iran beating England would be one of the greatest shocks in the history of the World Cup. OK. They can think that. But football is unpredictable.

"We are not playing 15 games, we are playing one game. And anything can happen in one game."

Iran are ranked 21st by FIFA, 16 places below England, and their squad includes ex-Brighton man Alireza Jahanbakhsh and Porto's Mehdi Taremi.

Skocic added: "Maybe we'd have preferred not to play England in the first game but it is what it is. We are ready to play any time, any team. Of course they believe they can beat England and qualify.

"They must believe it. Because I believe it and I have already transferred this to the players. So, they must believe it. And if they don't believe it, they are not for this level of the sport."

Foolad and Sepahan leave Iran for 2022 ACL

TEHRAN – Foolad and Sepahan football teams from Iran departed for Saudi Arabia.

Foolad have been drawn in Group C along with Qatar's Al-Gharafa, Ahal from Turkmenistan and Emirati football club Shabab Al-Ahli.

Foolad will start the campaign on Thursday with a match against Al-Gharafa at the Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Stadium.

Sepahan have been also drawn with Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor, Al-Duhail of Qatar and Al-Taawoun from Saudi Arabia.

Sepahan will open the competition on Thursday with a match against Pakhtakor.

Portuguese defender Tiago Ferreira linked with Tractor

TEHRAN – Iranian football club Tractor are going to hire Portuguese defender Tiago Ferreira.

The 28-year-old player has traveled to Tabriz to undergo medical exam.

Ferreira started his playing career in Porto B in 2012 and has also played in Belgian team Waregem and Romanian club Universitatea Craiova.

Ferreira has most recently played at Hungarian side MTK.

Tractor, headed by Ertugrul Saglam, sit 13th in the Iran Professional League 16-team table.

Iranian basketball center Geramipour joins Taichung Wagon Suns

TEHRAN – British-Iranian professional basketball center Aaron Geramipour joined Taiwanese basketball team Taichung Wagon Suns.

The 29-year-old player has most recently played for Argentinian team San Lorenzo de Almagro.

Born and raised in Stockport, Manchester, Geramipour was a member of Iran basketball team in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Geramipour started his playing career in Spanish team Gran Canaria and also played in Ourense, Soles de Mexicali, Cibona and Iranian club Azad University.

The Suns became one of the six teams of the inaugural T1 League season. It's a Taiwanese men's professional basketball league founded in 2021. T1 League is the third professional basketball league in Taiwan after the Chinese Basketball Alliance (CBA) and the P. League+ (PLG).

Bosnia beats Iran to host 2022 Sitting Volleyball World C'ships

TEHRAN – The World ParaVolley Board selected the city of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina as the replacement host for the 2022 Sitting Volleyball World Championships for men and women.

The competition will be held from May 17 to 23.

The competition was originally scheduled to be held in China but was canceled due to COVID-19.

Iran, Egypt and Finland had also shown interest in hosting the event.

Iran Foreign Ministry spokesman wraps up visit to Africa

TEHRAN – Saeed Khatibzadeh, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, has returned from a tour of West African countries where he met with a number of foreign officials.

Khatibzadeh, who is also the head of the Center for the Public Diplomacy at the Foreign Ministry, visited Senegal, Ghana and Sierra Leone in the West African region.

During the trip, Khatibzadeh first visited Senegal where he held talks with the country's high-ranking officials, according to the ministry.

During Khatibzadeh's meeting with Senegal's Minister of Culture and Communications, Abdullah Diyop, the two officials referred to the cultural and religious commonalities and underlined the importance of expanding and deepening cultural ties and cooperation. Khatibzadeh also referred to the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Iran and Senegal. He proposed that the two sides mark a cultural week, which was welcomed by the Senegalese side. The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman and Senegal's minister of culture and communications further put forth the exchange of cultural, artistic and media delegations. They discussed ways of implementing such cooperation and reached an agreement over the matter.

Iran says Senegal has an important place in the Muslim world

In a meeting with Mr. Angom, Senegal's Minister of State for Diplomatic Affairs, Khatibzadeh extended the congratulatory message of President Ebrahim Raisi to his Senegalese counterpart Mr. Macky Sall on his appointment as the rotating president of the African Union.

In the meeting, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman described Senegal's place in the Muslim world as important and referred to the country's effective role in the African Union and in the West African region. In the meeting, the Senegalese side declared the country's readiness to host the 5th session of the Iran-Senegal joint commission and the two sides agreed on holding the meeting in late May. In a meeting with Mr. Kabeh, the head of Senegal's parliamentary friendship group, the Iranian and Senegalese sides underlined the need to strengthen parliamentary cooperation and use its capacities to help develop and deepen bilateral relations.

Another part of Khatibzadeh's visit to Dakar was holding a press conference with the



presence of more than 10 radio and television channels of Senegal. At the news conference, Khatibzadeh outlined the goals and programs of his visit to Senegal and took questions from journalists regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy about international developments.

On two other legs of his West Africa tour, the head of the Center for the Public Diplomacy visited Ghana and Sierra Leone.

On the second leg of his regional tour, Khatibzadeh visited Accra, the capital of Ghana, and held talks with the country's officials.

In a meeting between the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman and Ghana's Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Ibrahim Mohammed Awal, the two sides underlined the importance of deepening cultural ties and the significance of increasing popular relations between the two countries. Khatibzadeh outlined Iran's medical capabilities and proposed that Iran and Ghana cooperate in the fields of health and tourism, which was welcomed by the Ghanaian side.

Meanwhile, given that the FIFA World Cup in Qatar is approaching and proper infrastructure and facilities have been envisioned on Iran's Kish and Qeshm islands and also the similarity between the climate of the islands and that of Qatar, Khatibzadeh proposed that Ghana's national football team and their fans reside in the Iranian territory. The two sides agreed to be in touch with each other over the matter.

Among other issues, Khatibzadeh and Ghana's minister for tourism, arts and culture agreed on holding cultural weeks. In the meeting, the issue of exchanges between the cultural, artistic and media delegations of the two countries was discussed. Meanwhile, during the meeting between the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman and Ghana's deputy foreign minister, the latest developments in bilateral ties and cooperation between the two nations were discussed and necessary planning was made for the seventh meeting of the Iran-

Ghana joint cooperation commission in Tehran. Khatibzadeh also attended a gathering of the Islamic University professors in Ghana and gave an interview to the Pan African Television of the country.

Sierra Leone says Iran is an important partner

On the last leg of his West Africa tour, Khatibzadeh met with Sierra Leone's Foreign Minister David Francis in the town of Freetown. In the meeting, the top diplomat of Sierra Leone described exchanging diplomatic delegations between the two countries as important and effective. David Francis also thanked his Iranian counterpart for inviting him to visit Tehran and expressed hope that the trip will result in expanding and deepening cooperation between the two countries. He underlined that the Islamic Republic of Iran is an important partner of Sierra Leone.

The spokesman of the Iranian Foreign Ministry also referred to 60 years of diplomatic relations between Iran and Sierra Leone and underlined the need to maintain expansion of cooperation and exchange of experiences in political, cultural and educational fields. Khatibzadeh stressed the necessity of making an effort to increase bilateral trade and proposed the formation of a joint commission for bilateral cooperation, which was welcomed by the Sierra Leonean side.

In addition, during Khatibzadeh's meeting with Mr. Mohammad Rahman Savareh, Sierra Leone's Minister of Information and Communications, cultural and media cooperation between the two countries were discussed. The Sierra Leonean official referred to the role of Iranian institutions in his country's cultural and educational development programs and called for exchange of experience between the two countries and also for Sierra Leone's access to Iranian media and art products. The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman also underscored Iran's readiness to develop and deepen cultural and media cooperation with Sierra Leone. Khatibzadeh proposed that the two countries hold cultural weeks in Tehran and Freetown, which was welcomed by the Sierra Leonean official.

During his stay in Sierra Leone, Khatibzadeh also visited the Red Crescent healthcare center and the Tehran-Kabul International Studies Center there and gave another television interview.

Border Patrol officers at Toronto Airport in Canada prevented him from traveling.

U.S. Border guards took down Alireza Ghorbani after he passed the visa approval stage and boarded the plane, and after four hours of interrogation, his visa was revoked, according to IRNA.

U.S. shows once again it is enemy of Iranian people: government

TEHRAN – Ali Bahadori Jahromi, spokesman for the Iranian government, has reacted to the U.S. move to bar a renowned Iranian singer from entering the U.S. despite having a valid visa from an American consulate.

He said the move, coupled with the recent American sanctions imposed on Iran, showed that the

U.S. is pursuing hostile policies toward the Iranian people in all circumstances.

"The US government, which has a clear record of breaches of international law and human rights standards, simultaneously with the claim of goodness; by imposing new sanctions and preventing an

Iranian singer from entering under false pretenses, it has once again shown that it is hostile to the 'people' of Iran in all circumstances," the spokesman said on Twitter.

Iranian singer Alireza Ghorbani was going to Irvine, a suburb of Los Angeles, USA, to perform at the city's Nowruz concert. But U.S.

Iran registers highest production growth among world's top steelmakers: WSA



From page 1 ► During the mentioned period, China's production declined by 10 percent, Brazil experienced negative growth of 5.8 percent, Turkey's output declined by 5.7 percent, South Korea registered a negative 2.6 percent growth and Japan a negative 2.4 percent rise in steel production.

China, the world's largest steel producer, produced 158 million tons of steel in the

first two months of 2022, while the U.S. steel production reached 13.4 million tons, and Japan produced 15.1 million tons, India 20.9 million tons, South Korea 11.2 million tons, Germany 6.5 million tons, Turkey 6.1 million tons, Brazil 5.6 million tons and Russia produced 12.4 million tons of crude steel.

According to the World Steel Association, similar to the past two years, Iran has maintained its 10th place among the world's top steel producers, after countries like China, India, Japan, and Russia.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by external factors like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

TSE's index expected to follow an upward trend this year

TEHRAN – TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), is expected to follow a mild upward trend in the current Iranian calendar year 1401 (started on March 21), a market analyst told IRNA on Sunday.

"The capital market index experienced a significant decline in [the Iranian calendar year] 1399 (ended on March 21, 2021) and the transactions at this market also undergone some correction in the previous year. Therefore, it seems that given the relative stability of macroeconomic variables, we will see a slight growth in the market index during the current year," Ali Teymouri said.

According to Teymouri, the main risks

threatening the capital market in the current year are budget-related issues, as well as government and central bank exchange rate policies following a possible nuclear agreement.

Transparency in the economic policies of the new government, as well as the resolution of issues related to the nuclear deal, can create stable conditions for the country's economy, which can in return ensure a good outlook for the capital market, the analyst added.

In the last few months of last year, the capital market experienced some turbulence due to the ambiguities about the outcomes of the Vienna talks.

Average daily gasoline consumption rises 27% during new year holidays

TEHRAN – The average daily gasoline consumption in Iran increased 27 percent during the Iranian new year holidays (March 16-April 1) as pandemic-related restrictions eased and traffic rose, the head of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) stated.

According to Keramat Veis-Karami, average daily gasoline consumption in the country reached 112 million liters during the mentioned 17 days, while the figure stood at 88 million liters in the previous year's same period, Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday.

The official noted that despite the significant increase in consumption, gasoline supply was carried out smooth and



uninterrupted.

In late March, Veis-Karami had put the average daily gasoline consumption in the country at 113 million liters.

Having a production capacity of nearly 120 million liters per day of gasoline, Iran currently has also the capacity to store three billion liters of the strategic fuel.

Although the Islamic Republic is currently self-sufficient in gasoline production,

fluctuations in consumption at different periods through the year have led to the creation of storage facilities across the country to manage the sustainable supply and distribution of gasoline.

These tanks will help the country's refineries continue operating at full capacity if on certain days of the year (such as the Nowruz holidays) gasoline consumption rises significantly, and also prevent any interruption in the supply of the fuel if consumption increases drastically.

In this regard, the capacity of the country's gasoline storage facilities has increased in recent years, so much so that according to the National Iranian Oil Products

Loading, unloading of goods in ports up 17% in a year

TEHRAN – Loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran rose 17 percent during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year.

Based on the data released by the Iranian Transport and Urban Development Ministry, loading and unloading of goods in the country's ports reached 152.91 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, while the figure stood at 130.69 million tons in the preceding year.

During the said year, loading

and unloading operations in the container sector reached 2.1 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) with a weight of 24.57 million tons, which was 13.5 percent more than the 1.85 million TEUs in the Iranian calendar year 1399, the report said.

The loading and unloading of goods during the previous year also grew by 12.8 percent in the dry bulk sector, while in the liquid bulk sector the figure increased by 12.6 percent, in the general cargo sector rose by 13.1 percent, and in the petroleum sector grew by 22.5 percent.



While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play a significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition, to facilitate loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities,

there.

It is worth mentioning that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in a course of five years.

According to Ports and Maritime Organization, the capacity of the country's ports has increased from 180 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 250 million tons in 1399 (ended in March 2021).

NITC plays significant role in boosting Iran's oil export

TEHRAN – Managing Director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has praised the significant role of the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) in boosting the country's oil exports during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Praising the performance of the NITC fleet for increasing the country's exports of oil and oil products, Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr said: "This success (increased sales of oil and gas condensate) came at a time when the sanction conditions have become even stricter."

"Oil export is the result of a long chain of activities in various sectors including exploration, development, production, and transportation and our dear colleagues at the National Iranian Oil Company have contributed greatly to realizing this goal," Khojasteh-Mehr said.



The performance of the National Iranian Tanker Company and the round-the-clock efforts of the sailors of the company's fleet in transporting oil and oil products have been at the center of attention of the country's authorities over the past few months, as it has also been appreciated by the Oil Minister Javad Oji and other members of the cabinet.

Back in March, Oji praised the performance of National Iranian Tanker Company Head Hossein Shiva in a cabinet meeting.

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

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

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

'Annual growth of 12.5% in industry, 10% in mining, trade targeted'

TEHRAN- Iran's industry, mining and trade minister said, "According to the plan, we are looking to achieve 12.5 percent growth in the industry sector and 10 percent growth in mining and trade sectors in the current Iranian calendar year 1401 (began on March 21)."

All directors of Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry in any part of the country are responsible for their field of work in matters related to business and must actively and consistently seek to remove barriers to production and trade, Reza Fatemi-Amin further reiterated.

In providing infrastructure related to industry, mining and trade, all possible capacities must be activated and it is necessary to continuously monitor the status of industrial units, he added.

In late March, the minister had announced that the regional planning for the industry and trade sectors of the country is prepared by his ministry in accordance with the capacities of

each province and to prevent the concentration of industrial units in one region.

Since the concentration of different industries in some provinces of the country has become problematic, so the regional planning for industry and trade has been developed by this ministry to create and launch industrial units in accordance with the needs of each region and province, he reiterated.

According to this planning, the industrial and commercial capacities of each province are identified and in accordance with those capacities, industrial units are created in that region, so that in addition to job creation, the concentration of industrial and commercial units not related to the mentioned region is prevented, the minister added.

By identifying the capacities of each province in the industry and trade sector, investors appropriate to that industry are encouraged to invest in that region and province, Fatemi-Amin noted.

Export from Bushehr province increases 67%

TEHRAN- The value of export from Bushehr province, in the southwest of Iran, rose 67 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), from its preceding year, a provincial official announced.

Behrouz Qarehbeygi, the director-general of the province's customs department, put the value of export from the province at \$10.136 billion in the past year.

He put the weight of exported commodities, including gas condensate, at 25.78 million tons, with six percent growth year on year.

The official further announced that 25.506 million tons of non-oil goods, excluding gas condensate, worth \$9.9 billion were exported from Bushehr province in the previous year, showing 73 percent and six percent annual rise in terms of value and weight, respectively.

He named petrochemical products, gas condensate, minerals, fisheries, and vegetables as the main exported items, and China, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), India, Pakistan, Turkey, South

Africa, Nigeria, Brazil, Mozambique and Qatar as the major export destinations of the province's products 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.

TEDPIX climbs nearly 30,000 points on Sunday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 29,859 points to 1.461 million on Sunday.

As reported, over 10.829 billion securities worth 57.245 trillion rials (about \$220 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 28,021 points, and the second market's index climbed 41,119 points.

TEDPIX rose 87,119 points (6.48 percent) to 1.432 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) plans to collaborate with the country's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) to launch money market mutual funds in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), the bank's governor announced on March 15.

"One of the plans of the central bank and the securities and exchange organization for this year is to launch money market funds that [currently]



exist in the world but not in Iran, so we hope to create them in the current year," Ali Saleh-Abadi stated.

Saleh-Abadi made the remarks at the unveiling ceremony of SEO's new capital market assessment and monitoring system in Tehran.

"Due to the development of the capital market, the increase in the volume of stock transactions, and the emergence of new instruments, this market also needs more monitoring and observation," the

official said, underlining the significant role of the mentioned system.

Emphasizing that such instruments will help develop and create a healthy business environment in the capital market, Saleh-Abadi said: "Article 2 of the securities market law states that creating a transparent, fair and efficient market is one of the major duties of the Securities and Exchange Organization, so this type of oversight and monitoring can help ensure fairness, transparency of transactions and appropriate access to market information."

The CBI governor also referred to the plans for establishing interactions between parallel markets and added: "The joint committee of Securities and Exchange Organization and Central Bank of Iran has been formed and several meetings have also been held, these meetings will be aimed at establishing the necessary coordination between the two markets (money and capital markets)."

Saudi Arabia, UAE view Biden admin as unreliable partner: professor

“The Arab states do not want to jeopardize their increasing closeness with Russia”

From page1▶ Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, felt they lost a close friend in the White House after Donald Trump was defeated in the 2020 elections.

“Clearly, the Saudi and Emirati leaderships do not have the same kind of relationship with Biden that they had with Trump, and they feel slighted,” Kamrava notes.

“Also, given the very close relationship between both Saudi Arabia and the UAE with Russia, neither wants to risk alienating President Putin,” adds professor from Georgetown University.

Following is the text of the interview:

Do you think the Ukraine war would expand to other countries?

Since the war is currently on-going, it is difficult to guess whether or not it will expand and if it will usher in a new order in the region.

Are we going to witness a new order in the region?

Clearly, we see the emergence of diverging trends, however, and the gap between the EU and the U.S. on the one side and Russia and a number of other countries, like China and Iran, on the another.

Saudi and UAE leaders declined calls with Biden amid the Ukraine conflict. What are the implications of such a reaction?



Clearly, the Saudi and Emirati leaderships do not have the same kind of relationship with Biden that they had with Trump, and they feel slighted as a result. They feel that under Biden the United States has not been a reliable partner, especially since the close, personal relationship that existed with the Trump White House is gone and since the U.S. is indirectly talking to Iran in Vienna. Also, given the very close relationship between both Saudi Arabia and the UAE with Russia, neither wants to risk alienating President Putin.

Why do the Arab states prefer not to be engaged in the U.S.-Russia conflict while they are allied with Washington?

The Arab states do not want to jeopardize their increasing closeness with Russia. For them, Russia is an important actor with whom they can

hedge their bets with the United States, and as a result, they are reluctant to take positions that are overtly antagonistic toward Russia.

China and the many Arab states avoided condemning Russia for launching war on Ukraine. Do you think the Ukraine crisis will turn into a new form of confrontation between the West and the East?

That might indeed be the case, but, again, it is too early to tell. Clearly, we are seeing tectonic shifts occurring in regional alignments. But how these shifts will turn out is hard to tell. There are new and emerging powers in the “East,” the most notable being China and South Korea, and, at least in relation to South Korea, it would be difficult to say that it is not part of the Western or

American orbit. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Russia is seen in the U.S. and in the EU as a “disruptive actor” and China is perceived as a major technological competitor.

Do you see a kind of hesitation in Persian Gulf Arab state’s betting on America in the defense system? Do they think that America left them alone, especially in the Yemen war?

I think the U.S. will remain to be an outside security provider for the southern states of the Persian Gulf in the near future. The personal relationship between Persian Gulf rulers and U.S. presidents may change, but there are deeper structural factors that for the time being tie the two sides together. Some of the more important of these include deep military and security ties, with the Persian Gulf states continuing to prefer American weaponry and equipment; massive and growing economic and commercial ties between the two sides, with the U.S. having emerged as a favorite destination of money and investments going from the Persian Gulf; and continued political and economic ties. In addition to all this, there is also heavy psychological reliance on the U.S. as a security provider. Therefore, there is no indication that the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf region will be lessened at all in the near future.

Yemen truce goes into effect

From page1▶ “The aim of this truce is to give Yemenis a necessary break from violence, relief from the humanitarian suffering, and most importantly hope that an end to this conflict is possible,” Grundberg added.

The UN secretary-general, Antonio Guterres, says he hoped the truce would pave the way toward peace but noted “we know that these agreements are always fragile.”

“You must take that momentum in order to make sure that this truce is fully respected and that it is renewed and... that a true political process is launched,” he said.

“This demonstrates that even when things look impossible when there is the will to compromise, peace becomes possible,” the UN chief added.

UN spokesperson Farhan Haq says the “warring sides” agreed to halt all offensive military, air, ground, and maritime operations inside Yemen and across its borders.

Neighboring countries have also welcomed the ceasefire which comes with the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Iran welcomed the UN-brokered truce and called for a negotiated solution to the seven-year conflict.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Saeed Khatibzadeh expressed hope that the move could be a prelude to a complete lifting of a blockade and a permanent establishment of a ceasefire in order to find a political solution to the Yemen crisis.

Iraq welcomed the truce saying a political solution is the only way to end the war in the country, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The United Arab Emirates has also welcomed the UN announcement.

The truce will allow for shipments of vital fuel supplies to arrive in Yemen’s key port city of Hodeida and for the partial resumption of passenger flights to operate from Sana’a international airport.

Under the terms, eighteen fuel ships will be allowed into Hodeida and two commercial flights a week can resume in and out of the capital Sana’a; both had been key demands of the Yemeni negotiating delegation before they entered the peace talks.

Yemen declared its full readiness for what Sana’a says it expects to be a humanitarian and military truce, and their commitment to a comprehensive cessation of military operations as long as the other party adhered to this also.

The head of the national negotiating delegation, Muhammad Abd al-Salam, welcomed the announcement by the UN envoy to Yemen of a ceasefire under the auspices of the United Nations for a period of two months.

He says Yemen will halt military operations and Sana’a International Airport would be opened for a number of flights, as well as the opening of the port of Hodeida to oil derivatives for a number of ships during the two months of the truce.

Last week, Yemeni forces offered Riyadh their own unilateral initiative, which included a three-day suspension of cross-border retaliatory attacks on Saudi Arabia and fighting inside Yemen.

The Yemeni offer came shortly after the country’s armed forces conducted a series of wide-scale retaliatory attacks targeting key Saudi oil facilities deep inside the Kingdom in a bid to break Saudi Arabia’s siege on Yemen.

Sana’a did warn Riyadh to accept the offer or face dire consequences of wider retaliatory operations.



The question that remains to be seen is whether the Saudis will observe the truce and allow vital commodities such as fuel and food to enter the key port city of Hodeida. The last UN-brokered truce in Sweden in 2018 to halt fighting in Hodeida was violated several times by the Saudi-led coalition.

This truce, announced by the UN, maybe the first to be greeted with more optimism both locally and internationally. The United States of America and Saudi Arabia are seeking calm to confront the repercussions of the conflict in Ukraine and the ensuing international energy crisis, which may explain why Riyadh had included for the first time in 6 years, the opening of Sana’a international airport, albeit in a limited way.

Also, Riyadh is alleviating the fuel crisis afflicting Yemen as a result of the Saudi-led American-backed coalition’s closure of the port of Hodeida, which will also be opened under the terms of the armistice to 18 oil ships, eight of which have been held off Jizan for periods of more than 4 months.

According to multiple UN agencies, the all-out Saudi blockade has left Yemenis subject to a suffocating humanitarian crisis. Millions, including children, are on the brink of malnutrition and dependent on food assistance to survive. The war on Yemen plunged what was already the Arab world’s poorest country into years of crisis, with failing infrastructure and services and 80 percent of the 30 million population dependent on aid.

Despite this, the Yemeni forces have shown unprecedented steadfastness, resilience, and willpower to confront Saudi Arabia which enjoyed the backing of advanced western military arms to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars.

A truce for two months may constitute hope for the Yemenis to move towards lasting peace and the lifting of the siege. The siege has been the most lethal silent killer and the greatest pain Yemenis have had to endure for more than seven years.

Taking a closer look at the truce terms could explain what may have prevented the Saudi-led coalition from lifting the siege completely. There seems to be hesitance and fear by Riyadh of highlighting a clear victory for Yemen after the equations were recently reversed with Saudi and Emirati cities being bombed with indigenously made Yemeni missiles and drones in the lead up to the truce.

The war on Yemen has killed hundreds of thousands of Yemenis many of them women and children. Rights groups and Yemeni officials have accused NATO and in particular the U.S. and the UK of complicity in war crimes.

Washington provided intelligence to Saudi warplanes on which targets to strike. However, most of the Saudi airstrikes have indiscriminately targeted residential neighborhoods with hospitals, schools, wedding halls, and the country’s vital infrastructure all being struck.

Protests in Sri Lanka as economic crisis bites

Social media platforms blocked in Sri Lanka amid curfew

Sri Lankan soldiers with assault rifles and police manned checkpoints in Colombo on Sunday as the government blocked social media platforms after imposing a curfew to contain public unrest triggered by the country’s economic crisis.

The latest restrictions come after the government on Saturday implemented a countrywide curfew as protests against the government’s handling of the economic crisis turned violent. The curfew will run till 6 a.m. (0030 GMT) on Monday.

“The social media block is temporary and imposed due to special instructions given by the Defense Ministry. It was imposed in the interests of the country and people to maintain calm,” Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Chairman Jayantha de Silva told Reuters.

Internet monitoring organization NetBlocks said real-time network data showed that Sri Lanka had imposed a nationwide social media blackout, restricting access to platforms including Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram as a state of emergency was declared amid widespread protests.

The country’s Minister for Youth and Sports Namal Rajapaksa who is also the nephew of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said in a tweet he would “never condone the blocking of social media”.

“The availability of VPN, just like I’m using now, makes such bans completely useless. I urge the authorities to think more progressively and reconsider this decision.”

President Rajapaksa declared a state of emergency on Friday, raising fears of a crackdown on protests as the country grapples



Sri Lankan soldiers walk past a bus burned by demonstrators at the top of the road of President Rajapaksa’s residence in Colombo.

with rising prices, shortages of essentials and rolling power cuts.

Emergency powers in the past have allowed the military to arrest and detain suspects without warrants, but the terms of the current powers are not yet clear.

It has also marked a sharp turnaround in political support for President Rajapaksa, who swept to power in 2019 promising stability.

Around two dozen opposition leaders stopped at police barricades on the way to Independence Square, some shouting “Gota (Gotabaya) Go Home”.

“This is unacceptable,” said opposition leader Eran Wickramaratne leaning over the barricades. “This is a democracy.”

Nihal Thalduma, a senior superintendent of police, said 664 people who broke curfew rules were arrested by the police in the Western Province, the country’s most populous administrative division which includes Colombo.

Critics say the roots of the crisis, the

worst in several decades, lie in economic mismanagement by successive governments that created and sustained a twin deficit – a budget shortfall alongside a current account deficit.

But the current crisis was accelerated by deep tax cuts promised by Rajapaksa during a 2019 election campaign that were enacted months before the COVID-19 pandemic, which wiped out parts of Sri Lanka’s economy.

At Colombo’s Pettah government bus stand, Issuru Saparamadu, a painter, said he was desperately looking for a way to go home to Chilaw, around 70 km away.

With public transport stalled since the curfew, Saparamadu said he spent the night sleeping on the street after working the entire week in Colombo.

“Now I cannot go back. I’m stuck,” he said. “I’m very frustrated.”

Western and Asian diplomats based in Sri Lanka said they were monitoring the situation and expected the government to allow citizens to hold peaceful demonstrations.

According to Al-Jazeera, the nation of 22 million is facing severe shortages of essentials, sharp price rises and crippling power cuts in its most painful downturn since independence from Britain in 1948.

The island nation has seen massive anti-government protests in recent weeks.

“A number of protests were organized by opposition parties, but unlike before, ordinary Sri Lankans with no political affiliations have taken to the streets. And that is something is concerning the president,” the Al Jazeera correspondent said.

Taliban chief orders ban on poppy cultivation in Afghanistan

The Taliban’s supreme leader on Sunday ordered a ban on poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, warning that the government would crack down on farmers planting the crop.

Afghanistan is the world’s biggest producer of poppies, the source of sap that is refined into heroin, and in recent years its production and exports have only boomed.

“All Afghans are informed that from now on cultivation of poppy has been strictly prohibited across the country,” said a decree issued by Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, AFP reported.

The decree was read out by government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid at a gathering of reporters, foreign diplomats and Taliban officials.

“If anyone violates the decree the crop will be destroyed immediately and the violator will be treated according to the sharia law,” it added.

It is not the first time the fundamentalist group has vowed to outlaw the trade. Production was banned in 2000, just before the group was overthrown by U.S.-led forces in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

During their 20-year insurgency against foreign forces, the Taliban heavily taxed farmers cultivating the crop in areas under their control.



It became a key resource for the group to generate funds.

The United States and NATO forces tried to curb poppy cultivation during their two decades in Afghanistan by paying farmers to grow alternative crops such as wheat or saffron.

But their attempts were thwarted by the Taliban who controlled the main poppy-growing regions and derived hundreds of millions of dollars from the trade, experts say.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi rejected claims the Taliban helped fuel poppy cultivation during their insurgency.

“How come it was exported all over the world when they (U.S.-led forces) had full control over Afghanistan,” Hanafi said Sunday.

Afghan media reports say production has increased in two

southern provinces, Kandahar and Helmand, since the Taliban seized power in August, although data is not available.

Afghanistan has a near monopoly on opium and heroin, accounting for 80 to 90 percent of global output, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The amount of land planted with poppies hit a record high in 2017 and has averaged around 250,000 hectares in recent years, roughly four times the level of the mid-1990s, UN figures show.

1.4 million visits to Fars attractions registered



TEHRAN – Various historical sites and museums across the southern Fars province attracted over 1.4 million visitors during the Noruz holidays from March 18 to April 2.

Of the figure compiled by the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, 419,727 people visited Hafezieh, 285,292 toured Persepolis, 248,802 people visited Sadi mausoleum, 138,643 people visited Pasargadae, and 147,659 people visited Karim Khan Citadel, Mehr reported on Sunday.

Traditionally, by mid-March Noruz travels begin in Iran, and roads across the country are packed with passengers who are racing against time to make the best use of the two-week holiday.

On March 12, President Ebrahim Raisi said Iranians who have received the second dose of COVID vaccine were allowed to travel

National Museum of Iran visited by hundreds of the differently-abled

TEHRAN – Hundreds of disabled people from across Iran toured the National Museum of Iran during the Persian new year holidays.

For instance, a total of 1,806 people, a significant number of whom were physically-challenged, visited the prestigious museum on March 31, CHTN reported.

Chock-full of priceless objects showcasing the juicy history of the nation, the National Museum is somehow accessible for people with disabilities.

It showcases ceramics, pottery, stone figures, and carvings, mostly taken from excavations at Persepolis, Ismail Abad (near Qazvin), Shush, Rey, and Turang Tappeh to name a few.

Its main building, designed by French architect André Godard and completed in 1928, is one of the more attractive modern buildings in Tehran, blending Sassanian principles such as the grand iwan-style entrance with art deco-style brickwork.

Inside, among the finds from Shush, there's a stone capital of a winged lion,

Over 1.8m visits to Zayandehrud recorded in Noruz

TEHRAN – Some 1,830,000 people visited Isfahan's Zayandehrud, a once fast-flowing river that runs through the ancient Iranian city, during the two-week New Year (Noruz) holidays (March 21-April 2), the provincial tourism chief said on Monday.

Furthermore, 6.5 million tourists and travelers visited other historical sites and natural sights of Isfahan province, Alireza Izadi explained on Sunday.

"This year, after two years of slow growth in the tourism sector due to the outbreak of coronavirus, we witnessed crowds of Noruz trippers flocking to historic monuments and tourist attractions of the city," the official added.

Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. The ancient city is filled with many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and

across the country during the new year holidays.

"Noruz ceremonies and trips, if practiced under health protocols, could be beneficial for the revival of the tourism industry and handicrafts, which have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic in many provinces," he explained.

Last year, the number of domestic travels fell by 96 percent during the two-week holidays compared to two years earlier due to struct virus-related restrictions, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. Before the corona outbreak, tourism revenues of the Islamic Republic reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, nearing the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent

Available data suggest the country's tourism industry has suffered \$233m losses due to COVID restrictions over the past two years. "Iranian tourism facilities have incurred a loss of 69 trillion rials (\$233 million) due to the outbreak of the coronavirus over the past two years," an official with the tourism ministry said early in January.

Noruz is the longest, oldest, and most cherished festival in the Persian calendar. It is when all Iranians celebrate the Persian New Year and nature's resurrection from the long winter.

some delightful pitchers and vessels in animal shapes, and colorful glazed bricks decorated with double-winged mythical creatures. A copy of the diorite stele detailing the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, found at Shush in 1901, is also displayed – the original being in Paris.

Exhibits from Persepolis include a magnificent human-headed capital, a cuneiform inscription proclaiming the might and godly affinity of Xerxes, and a striking frieze of glazed tiles from the central hall of the Apadana Palace. Also on display are a famous trilingual inscription from the time of Darius I, a bull-headed capital and carved staircase, a statue of a sitting dog that looks like it was carved just weeks ago, and four foundation tablets inscribed in cuneiform.

One of the more startling exhibits is the Salt Man from Zanjan. He is estimated to have been a miner who died in the 3rd or 4th century CE, but whose white-bearded head, leg in a leather boot and tools were preserved by the salt in which he was buried.



meeting people.

The city has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to seeing the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its 'life-giving river', the Zayandehrud, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside.

Jameh Mosque of Ardestan: place of worship or museum of architectural styles

From page 1 ► The congregational mosque has a four-portico (iwan) courtyard surrounded by encircling arcades. However, it is part of larger premises that also include other mudbrick structures such as a cistern, a caravanserai, a marketplace, a bathhouse, and a madrasa.

According to Archnet, the earliest stucco fragments, found in the western corner of the courtyard, have been dated to the end of the 10th/4th c. AH. The interior of the dome chamber and iwan are extensively covered in plaster. The dome and zone of transition are articulated with simulated brickwork; the iwan vault is uniquely faced with a complex stucco design of interlacing arabesques. The mihrab exemplifies skilled stucco carving and may represent Mongol restoration.

The mosque stands on a site once occupied by a Sasanian structure, as evidenced by remains discovered in archaeological excavations. Its earlier structure was likely a hypostyle type, having a central courtyard surrounded by arcades. Remains of some of these arcades in the current mosque show that they were covered with barrel vaults. The mosque occupies an irregular



An aerial view of the Jameh Mosque of Ardestan in Isfahan province, central Iran.

space centered on a rectangular courtyard with four iwans, incorporating pieces of the earlier hypostyle structure.

The iwans on the southwest (qibla) and northeast sides of the courtyard are larger, rising to a greater height and being wider as well. Behind the southwest iwan is a square chamber surmounted by a dome resting on an octagonal transition zone formed by eight engaged arches.

Between the iwans are vaulted bays of irregular size and shape on two stories. Behind the vaulted bays in the southern quadrant of the mosque, a long corridor leads from two

entrances onto the vaulted bays on the southeastern side of the courtyard.

Furthermore, the exterior of the mosque is quite irregular while the facades of the courtyard are harmonious, with the iwans aligned and roughly the same size, not unlike the situation in the Great Mosque of Isfahan, which also evolved over centuries and went through a major renovation during the Seljuk period. Currently, the mosque has several entrances.

The earliest dated inscription on the building is from the 12th/6th c. AH, but evidence of an earlier mosque remains,

suggesting that its original foundation could date to the 10th-11th/4th-5th c. AH or earlier.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the earliest additions to the mosque that transformed its plan from the original hypostyle type were likely the southwest iwan and dome chamber behind it (dated by inscriptions to 1158/553 AH and 1160/555 AH respectively).

These were inserted into the existing hypostyle prayer hall on the southwestern side of the courtyard. Scholars debate the dates of the remaining three iwans, some believing that they were constructed in the twelfth/sixth century and others arguing for a later date, as an inscription in the northeast iwan dates to 1539/946 AH.

Last year, Iran compiled a dossier for a possible inscription of the mosque on the UNESCO World Heritage list as the "world's first" two-story mosque, Ardestan's tourism chief has said.

"Jameh Mosque of Ardestan is arguably one of the finest works of Islamic architecture in the whole country, and it should be preserved to the fullest extent possible," the official added.

The mosque was inscribed on the national heritage list in 1931.

Discover dazzling rock-carved legends at Tehran museum

TEHRAN – Tehran's Garden Museum of Inscriptions offers visitors a chance to see replicas of brilliant engravings selected from across Iran.

Situated in Nivaran Cultural Historical Complex, the museum exhibits 43 inscription models from the historical periods of the Medes in Urartian, Assyrian, and Aramaic languages belonging to the Ahar and Sarab regions as well as the Parthian and Sassanid eras in ancient Persian, Akkadian, Elamite, and Aramaic and Pahlavi languages.

The highlights of the museum are the inscriptions of Shapur and Ardeshir in the Naqsh-e Rostam and the bas-relief of Shapur I in the Naqsh-e Rujab.

The rocks with different designs, motifs of humans hunting with ropes, humans dancing, and inscriptions with beautiful and unique linear and superficial signs can be seen among the bas-reliefs and inscriptions of the museum.



The main motive for designing such a museum was to increase its usefulness to students and researchers who could gain a better understanding of historical lines and different issues.

Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex, covering an area of about eleven hectares, is composed of several landmark buildings, museums, and monuments constructed in the 19th and 20th centuries during the Pahlavi and

late Qajar eras.

The history of the palace complex stretches back to about 280 years ago when Fath-Ali Shah of the Qajar Dynasty ordered a summer residence to be built over the then countryside area of the capital. The two-story Ahmad Shahi Pavilion is one of the highlights of the complex.

The main palace of the complex was originally erected for royal ceremonies and gatherings. However, it later turned into the residence of the second king of Pahlavi king, Mohammad Reza Shah, and his family.

With an area of 9,000 square meters, the palace is entirely adorned with magnificent plasterwork, mirrorwork, and tilework. Its architecture boasts a blend of pre-and post-Islamic art.

Its beautifully decorated and fully furnished interior features loads of artworks such as precious paintings and sculptures by Iranian and foreign artists.

Study sheds new light on ancient cemetery in southeast Iran

TEHRAN – A study conducted by a team of Iranian archaeologists has revealed new clues on the ancient Damb-Kuh cemetery in the Makran region, southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Entitled "Architecture of burials in the 3rd century BC at Damb-Kuh, Sistan-Baluchestan", the research investigates bonds between the historical site and Indus Valley Civilization as well as the southern Persian Gulf states, ILNA quoted Iranian archaeologist and scholar Morteza Hesari as saying on Saturday.

There are many cultural similarities between these three areas, especially in the third millennium BC, one of which is the traditions of burying the dead, an indication of the cultural identity of the region, Hesari said.

Burials and the traditions and

customs associated with them have been part of human culture since ancient times, and there are many similarities between different cultures in this area, he explained.

Damb-Kuh is one of the vastest cemeteries discovered in southwest Iran, containing relics dating to the 3rd millennium BC to the Islamic era, he mentioned.

"According to research conducted in this cemetery, burials can be found from two distinct periods: the third millennium BC and the Parthian period, though a few burials from the second millennium and the Achaemenid period are also found."

Burials at this site are different in shape and size, and their size probably reflected the status of the deceased, with a higher social status, graves were made

bigger, he said.

As a result, Damb-Kuh is not an ordinary cemetery but a place where social pride, class differences, and architectural skills were displayed, he concluded.

Having nearly all kinds of historical tombs such as tomb towers, and rack-hewn tombs, Iran is heaven for cemetery enthusiasts and grave hunters; individuals who have a passion for and enjoyment of cemeteries, epitaphs, gravestone rubbing, photography, art, and history of famous deaths.

Over the past couple of decades, countless archaeological surveys have been yielding ancient tombs, cemeteries many of which bear fresh evidence of ancient burial rituals and entombed objects dedicated to the afterlife.

Millions of Iranians choose Mazandaran for Noruz vacations

TEHRAN – Domestic vacationers made almost 14 million overnight stays in the northern province of Mazandaran during the two-week Noruz holidays (started March 21), the provincial tourism chief has said.

A total of 13,943,937 Noruz trippers made overnight stays during the holidays at authorized accommodation centers such as hotels, motels, tourist complexes, guest houses, and eco-lodge unites, IRNA quoted Mehdi Izadi as saying on Sunday.

Some 3.9 million visitors also toured the

province's tourist attractions, historical sites, and natural sights during the mentioned period, the official added.

Sandwiched between the towering Alborz mountain range and the Caspian Sea, Mazandaran has a rich yet turbulent history. An early civilization flourished at the beginning of the first millennium BC in Mazandaran (Tabarestan).

Its insecure eastern and southeastern borders were crossed by Mongol invaders in the 13th and 14th centuries. Cossacks attacked

the region in 1668 but were repulsed. It was ceded to the Russian Empire by a treaty in 1723, but the Russians were never secure in their occupation. The area was restored to Iran under the Qajar dynasty.

The northern section of the region consists of lowland alongside the Caspian and upland along the northern slopes of the Alborz Mountains. Marshy backlands dominate the coastal plain, and extensive gravel fans fringe the mountains. The climate is permanently subtropical and humid, with very hot summers.

SOCIETY

APRIL 4, 2022

Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

New cases	1,275
New deaths	38
Total cases	7,167,646
Total deaths	140,315
New hospitalized patients	215
Patients in critical condition	1,667
Total recovered patients	6,886,942
Diagnostic tests conducted	49,598,193
Doses of vaccine injected	147,149,111

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APRIL 4, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

If you cannot get things as much as you desire than be contented with what you have.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times» Noon:13:07 Evening: 19:47 Dawn: 5:20 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:46 (tomorrow)

Abulqasem Ferdowsi: Life

Part 7

The praise of Mahmud must be considered an entirely calculated gesture, forced on the poet by his poverty. With Mahmud’s assumption of power in Khorasan, the Shia Ferdowsi had, at the least, until he had finished work on the Shahnameh, to include him in the poem.

This being the case he could not, according to the usual custom in Persian narrative poems, wait until the end of the poem and then write a single panegyric to be used in the preface, but was forced to compose separate passages of praise, or to place them at the head of a story that was then sent to Ghazna.

Other passages of praise may well have been placed at the beginning of sections of the seven-volume Shahnameh. But the closer he got to the end of the Shahnameh, with there still being no sign of Mahmud’s paying him any attention, the more pointed his sarcastic allusions to Mahmud became, until finally in the satire he took back virtually all his praise.

In the satire the poet frequently speaks “of this book” (az in nameh) and this led Nöldeke to conclude that the satire was composed as a supplement to the Shahnameh and that the poet’s intention was to take back his praise of Mahmud with this satire, that is, the Shahnameh was no longer dedicated to Mahmud, as the poet himself states in the satire. Nezami Aruzi, also makes the same statement.

Ferdowsi the poet and storyteller

The Shahnameh has not received its rightful attention in works written in Persian on the art of poetry, which works consider eloquence and poetic style largely as a matter of particular figures of speech.

So far there has been little serious work on Ferdowsi’s poetic artistry, and our discussion of this subject will not therefore go beyond general principles.

In discussing Ferdowsi’s achievement one must consider, on the one hand, the totality of the Shahnameh as a whole and, on the other, his artistry as a storyteller.

Throughout the entire Shahnameh, a balance is masterfully maintained between words and meaning, on the one hand, and passion and thought, on the other.

Ferdowsi’s poetic genius in creating a lofty, dynamic epic language that is brief but to the point and free from complexity greatly contributes to the strength of his style.

The most important figures of speech in the Shahnameh include: hyperbole, paronomasia, repetition, comparisons (similes and metaphors), representative images, proverbial expressions, parables, and moral advice.

Hyperbole, which is the most important principle of epic language, is present in order to increase the reader’s emotional response.

Some kinds of paronomasia are used to create a verbal rhythm, that is to increase linguistic tension by acoustic means. The most commonly used kinds of paronomasia include those that involve a complete identity of two words (be chang ar chang o may aghaz kon “Bring in your hand [chang] a harp [chang] and set out the wine”) and those that involve alliteration (shod az rakhsh rakhshan o az shah shad “He became rakhsh [rakhshan] because of Rakhsh [the name of Rustam’s horse] and happy [shad] because of the king [shah]”); kolah o kaman o kamand o kamar “Cap and bow and lariat and belt”).

This effect is sometimes achieved by the repetition of one word (bed-u goft narm ay javanmard, narm! “He said to him: Gently o

young man, gently!”; makon shahriara javani, makon! “Do not, o prince, do not act childishly!).

There are also comparisons used to render the language representational, that is, to construct an image visually. Among the kinds of comparison used in the Shahnameh, one must mention short comparisons which do not use words that indicate a comparison is being made (brief metaphors) and explicit comparisons.

Sometimes, Ferdowsi uses personification as an image (be bazigar-i manad in charkh-e mast “This drunken wheel [i.e., of the firmament] is like a juggler), sometimes, proverbial expressions (haman bar ke karid khod bedravid “As you sow so shall you reap!”), and sometimes parables, that is, the explanation of a situation by another exemplary situation.

In each of these three figures of speech, the image is constructed by reason. Another example of this is the elaboration of language as moral maxims (tavana bovad har ke dana bovad! “knowledge is power”).

On the other hand, Ferdowsi avoids those figures of speech which involve complex language or which take language far from the intended meaning.

For this reason complex metaphors, ambiguities of grammatical construction, riddles, and academic phraseology are rarely found in his work.

Metaphors such as “dragon” for a “sword”; “narcissus” and “magician” for “eyes”; “coral,” “garnet,” and “ruby” for “lips”; “tulip” for “a face”; “pearls” for “tears,” “teeth,” and “speech”; “cypress” for “stature”; and so on, that have since been parts of the conventional themes, motives, and images used in Persian poetry.

The most important descriptive passages of the Shahnameh are descriptions of war, the beauty of people, and the beauty of nature.

Although Ferdowsi himself had probably never taken part in a battle and the descriptions of scenes of warfare are in the main imaginary, as Nöldeke says, they are described so variously, with such liveliness and to so stirring an effect that, despite their brevity, the reader seems to see them pass before his eyes.

The story of Davazdah Rokh is particularly a case in point. Ferdowsi does not simply introduce his heroes, he lives with them and shares their sorrows and joys.

He grieves at the death of Iranian heroes, but he does not rejoice at the demise of Iran’s enemies; his sincerity conveys his own emotions to the reader.

When he describes the beauty of people, he is at his best when the subject is a woman. As a dehqan, Ferdowsi lived in close contact with nature; for this reason the descriptions of nature in his poetry have the lively coloring of nature itself, not the coloring of decorative effects as in the poetry of Nezami.

Of his descriptions of nature particularly noticeable are those concerned with the rising and setting of the sun and moon, placed at the opening of many sections of individual stories, and of the seasons of the year, in particular of spring, situated in the introductions to stories.

Ferdowsi’s poetic artistry go hand in hand with his skill as a storyteller. Major stories usually begin with a preamble (khotba) which includes moral advice, a description of nature, or an account of the poet himself.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

“Tawaf” by Mirali Parandak wins gold medal at Romanian photography exhibition

TEHRAN – “Tawaf” by Iranian photographer Mirali Parandak has won a Campina Gold Medal at the 6th Onyx International Exhibition of Photography in Romania.

The photo, which won the medal in the Color People category, shows Muslims during the ritual of circumambulating the Kaaba in Mecca.

Conforming to the rules of the Photographic Society of America (PSA), Global Photographic Union (GPU) and Image Colleague Society (ICS), the exhibition is organized by the Campina Photographic Exhibitions Society in the categories of Color Open, Color People, Monochrome Open, Travel (color or monochrome) and Nature (color or monochrome).

Chinese photographer Zongying Wang’s “Beautiful Pregnant Women” received another Campina Exhibitions Gold Medal of the Color People category, while Ovi D. Pop from Romania was awarded the PSA

“Tawaf” by Mirali Parandak won the Campina Gold Medal at the Onyx International Exhibition of Photography in Romania.

Gold Medal for “Remember 96 Years”, which depicts an old woman living a cold and lonely life.

Two Campina Exhibitions Silver Medals in this section were given to Arnaldo Paulo Che from

Hong Kong for “Under the Same Snow” and Tomasz Okoniewski from Poland for “Wolf Brother”.

In the Monochrome Open section, “Beautiful Eyes” by Mohammad Esteki from Iran won the ICS Certificate of

“Water, Wind, Dust, Bread” competes in ZagrebDox

From Page 1 ► The film won a special mention from the 2021 IDFA jury, which said “In the uplifting of its protagonist, its structural and visual poetry, and its sensitivity without sentimentality, the film avoided stereotypes.”

“Focusing on friendship overcoming hurdles created by adults, the work showed us the perspective of a young man with a disability without it ever defining him,” the jury noted.

This year’s Teen Dox jury consists of Antonio Jakus, Ana Kralj, Matea Ljubic, Karla Mladic, Mihaela Picak, Asja Puh, Fran Rubil,

Erik Tepic Debanic and Leonardo Vulic. They all are students from the Zabok School of Art, Design, Graphics and Clothing.

In international competition, twenty titles are competing for the official Big Stamp festival award in this year’s ZagrebDox, which opened on Sunday. The same award will go to the author of one of seventeen films competing in the regional competition.

During the eight days of the festival, the audience will have a chance to see a total of 86 film titles, and several local authors will present their films for the first time at the festival.

“Water, Wind, Dust, Bread” by Mehdi Zamanpur Kiasari.

“The Family of Pascual Duarte” comes to Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – “The Family of Pascual Duarte”, a 1942 novel written by Spanish Nobel laureate Camilo José Cela, has been published in Persian.

Mahi is the publisher of the novel translated into Persian by Farhad Ghabraei.

This novel is considered by many to be Cela’s masterpiece. It is the story of an ignorant Castillian peasant and multiple murderer, and it tells of the savage impulses behind his crimes and his redeeming characteristics.

The first-person narrator-protagonist Pascual Duarte, while awaiting execution in the condemned cell, tells the story of his family life and his homicidal past, culminating in matricide. He claims, amongst other things, that Fate is controlling his life and whatever he does nothing will ever change.

The book could be said to explore a Spanish version of

Front cover of the Persian edition of Camilo José Cela’s novel “The Family of Pascual Duarte”.

existentialism: as in Albert Camus’s “L’Étranger”, Pascual is seen by society as an outsider, unable or unwilling to follow its norms. His autobiographical tale shows some of the tremendously harsh peasant reality of rural Spain up to the beginning of Franco’s regime.

The first two editions created an uproar and in less than a year it was banned. A new Spanish

edition was revised in 1943 in December of that year.

This novel is fundamental to the generation of tremendismo (named from tremendo, “awful, tremendous”), which focuses on the treatment of its characters and is marked by extended and frequent violent scenes.

It is in fact considered the first novel of this style of writing, but

Honorable Mention.

The photo shows an Iranian man gazing into the camera.

Belgian photographer Sara Gabriels was honored with the PSA Gold Medal in this section for her photo “The Mysterious Man”.

Subrata Bysack from India won the PSA Gold Medal of the Travel section for “Namaz at Taj”, and his compatriot Ajit Huilgol was awarded the PSA Gold Medal in the Nature section for his photo “Cheetah Tug of War”.

In the Color Open section, Irish photographer Seamus Mulcahy’s “Desire” received the PSA Gold Medal, while Paul Reidy from Ireland “A Dolls Tears” won the ICS Gold Medal, and Cyril Boyd from Northern Ireland was given the GPU Gold Medal for his “Look to the Light”.

The Onyx International Exhibition of Photography will organize its public showcase on May 7 at the Campina House of Culture.

The longest Iranian novel “Road of War”

An interview with Mansur Anvari

The longest Iranian novel, “Road of War,” was finally completed last year, and its author, who has received numerous books of the year awards for this interesting work, declared that the series had come to an end with the twelfth volume.

Mansur Anvari, a well-known Khurasani author, was born in Neishabur, Khurasan Razavi province, in 1955. He began his career writing short stories in 1985 and is now best known for the 12-volume novel “Road of War,” which took him more than ten years to

complete.

* Please tell us about the storyline of this long novel.

This series of stories begins and ends in Khurasan, from the Russian invasion in August 1941 to Iraq’s imposed war on Iran.

* What inspired you to choose this title for the book?

During World War II, the Allies used Iran’s strategic location to transfer supplies and military equipment to the Russians via the Shahrud Road, so the road was actually the reason for Allied victory, and later, during the Islamic revolution, this road played a significant role. In fact, it is a metaphor and a symbol that war never ends.

* Many people say that the age of series books is over and readers no longer have the time to read such long books. What are your thoughts on the matter?

There will be readers if the book is interesting enough, and The point is that this

novel covers half a century of Iranian history; if there were fewer books, it may not have been read or all of the topics would not have been covered.

* What other factors, aside from warfare, led to the success of this book?

In this novel, I tried to write half a century of this country’s life in detail, from traditions, customs, folklore, historical and religious issues. Also, many forgotten customs and traditions of North Khurasan have been mentioned in “Road of War”.

* Were you influenced by other novels about the same subject when you were writing “Road of War”?

I examined the writing styles of books like “And Quiet Flows the Don,” “Gone with the Wind,” “Les Misérables,” and “War and Peace” when writing this book. These books are not just works of fiction; they represent the country’s cultural, social, and political developments at the time.