

STAY UPDATED #ViennaTalks

Biden Internal Weakness Impedes JCPOA Revival

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Report UK rationing cooking oil amid supply crisis

Supermarkets in the United Kingdom have started rationing how much cooking oil each customer is allowed to purchase amid shortages that have been made worse by the conflict in Ukraine.

On some supermarket shelves, signs have appeared informing shoppers they are limited to one or two bottles of cooking oil that they could purchase at one time.

The UK relies heavily on Ukraine for its supplies of sunflower and olive oil, but stocks are running low as the war continues to drag on and prices are said to have spiked dramatically.

The conflict has already severely impacted fuel supplies that have resulted in skyrocketing prices.

With sunflower oil running out, shoppers have turned to buy other more expensive alternatives as replacements.

That in turn has led to unprecedented demand, forcing a number of Britain's major food retailers to impose limits on purchases both online and in-store.

Now the UK faces heavy disruption to food deliveries and more misery to shoppers.

Supermarket giant Tesco says it is allowing three cooking oil items per customer, while other chains have placed limits of just two or one bottle for each customer.

In a statement, Tesco said: "To make sure all of our customers can continue to get what they need, we've introduced a [►](#) **Page 5**

Opinion Knowledge-based approach, main priority of oil industry this year

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- The current Iranian calendar year 1401 (began on March 21) is named "Production: Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating" by Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

In a recent meeting with some officials of the country, the Leader referred to the motto of this year and called the oil-free economy a long-term goal, saying that at least two governments in eight-year responsibilities must work to solve this problem (reliance on oil income).

Unfortunately, raw materials are exported cheaply and the final products are imported at high prices, while with the knowledge-based production, this process must be corrected and the final product must be produced and exported, he further emphasized.

Referring to the countries that have economic growth without oil, the Leader said: "Oil has been causing severe addiction in the country for about a hundred years, which must be cured."

Elsewhere in his remarks, while explaining the different dimensions of the slogan of the year, he emphasized that in the current condition of country, while there are many closed or semi-closed units in the downstream sectors, through the knowledge-based production in these sectors, job opportunities will be also multiplied. [►](#) **Page 4**

Iranian president cautions about spread of threats against Afghans, neighbors

TEHRAN— Following a series of criminal terrorist explosions in schools and mosques across Afghanistan, which have killed and injured a large number of Afghans, Ebrahim Raisi, Iran's President and chief of Supreme National Security Council, issued a message warning about the spread of threats against the Afghan people and nations in the region.

While strongly denouncing the recent terrorist acts in Afghanistan, Raisi emphasized the importance of ensuring the safety of all Afghans, particularly at schools, mosques, and religious centers.

The SNSC chief also emphasized the Afghan rulers' responsibility in identifying and punishing the terrorists responsible for the

recent attacks, and stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to cooperate and use all available means to counter the threat of Takfiri terrorism and prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Raisi further stated that Iran is prepared to provide medical assistance to the victims of the terrorist assaults.

On Thursday, 30 people were killed and 80 others were injured in a terrorist attack on the Seh Dokan mosque in Mazar-e-Sharif, the capital of Balkh province in northern Afghanistan. The attack on Mazar-e-Sharif took place just two days after at least 6 students at a boys' high school in a Shia-dominated region in west of Kabul were brutalized in bomb

explosions.

The Seh Dokan mosque in Mazar-e-Sharif is the largest Shia mosque in a heavily populated area.

Six deadly bombings occurred in Afghanistan in a matter of three days: one in west of Kabul on Tuesday, one in Mazar-e-Sharif on Thursday, and four in Kabul, Balkh, Kunduz, and Nangarhar provinces on Friday.

Following the devastating terrorist attacks on Shias in Kabul and Balkh, a group of Kabul residents marched on Friday, asking that the interim Taliban governing body ensure protection for Afghan Shias. [►](#) **Page 2**

One of pioneers in the use of clean energy, Iran eyes World Heritage tag for its windmills

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – Five years after being added to UNESCO's tentative list of World Heritage properties, Iran's collection of ancient windmills is still not prepared for a final assessment.

Experts say the lack of an agreed budget for proper maintenance as well as unfinished efforts to determine their (legal) properties are among the reasons for the suspension.

UNESCO says such a mill, locally known as an Asbad, uses a smart technique to grind grains, a technique that goes back to ancient times when the people living in the eastern parts of Iran invent it in an attempt to adapt themselves to nature and transform environmental obstacles into opportunities. Experts believe such primitive yet significant machines bear testimony to the human being's adaption with nature by transforming environmental obstacles into opportunities.

According to the latest official data, a total of 374 Asbads have been identified so far mostly in the eastern wing of the country, but not all of them in faultless conditions.

"About 374 Asbad devices have been identified so far, but not all of them are in good condition," ILNA quoted an official in charge of protecting the windmills as saying on April 20.

"Because 80% of the works (properties and cultural elements) nominated for a UNESCO recognition must be protected in a permeant way, we, in

Iranian films line up for Hungary Mediawave Gathering

TEHRAN – Eight films by Iranian directors will be competing in the Mediawave Gathering, an international film and music festival which will take place in Gyor, Hungary, from May 4 to 7.

"Grape Season" by Behruz Khorram will be screened in the short fiction competition.

The film is about a couple who decide to act like everything is fine and normal, but something is missing!

"Where the Winds Die" will compete in the animation section.

In this movie, director Pejman Alipur shows

a city attacked by a Zombie. Several people are hiding in a garage when a Zombie enters there.

The lineup also features the short documentaries "Water, Wind, Dust, Bread" by Mehdi Zamanpur Kiasari, "Nomad Girl" by Ruhollah Akbari, "I Want to Study!" by Ramtin Kuchaki and "Zarafshoon" by Mehdi Rajabian.

"Water, Wind, Dust, Bread" tells the story of 11-year-old Abolfazl who lives with his family in an oasis in the Iranian desert. He picks dates, tends to his family's cows, does his homework, and has fun with his best friend Setayesh. [►](#) **Page 8**

Iran freestyle team crowned Asian champions

TEHRAN – Iran freestyle team claimed the title of the 2022 Asian Wrestling Championships on Sunday.

Pejman Dorostkar's team won six gold medals, one silver and one bronze medal.

On Sunday, Yones Emami beat Kazakhstan's Nurkozha Kaipanov 5-2 in the final bout of 74kg and won a gold medal.

Amirhossein Firouzpour defeated Mongolian wrestler Orgilokh Dagvadorj 11-0 in the final match of the 92kg.

Yadollah Mohebi seized a gold in 125kg weight class after beating Kazakhstan's Alisher Yergali 3-1 in the final.

Dariush Hazratgholizadeh took a silver after losing to Japanese wrestler Rei Higuchi 10-0 in the final match of the 61kg. [►](#) **Page 3**

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Interview 

Youth and middle class still support Imran Khan: researcher

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – A research associate at the India Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) says that the recent gathering by PTI in Karachi and Lahore reflected the youth and middle class still support Imran Khan.

"The recent massive power show of PTI in Karachi and Lahore is a lucid manifestation that the youth and middle class still support him," Dost Muhammad Barrech tells the Tehran Times.

"Ostensibly, he has geared up the preparation of the next election and appears to be exploiting the victim card of the U.S. involvement behind ousting his government," the Pakistani researcher adds.

"The Anti-Americanism narrative sells in the country in no time. Galvanization of youth, diaspora and the middle class as far as the next election is concerned once again remains to be the last resort of Khan to re-capture power."

Barrech is of the opinion that Khan needs to be appreciated for absorbing the youth into politics over the last decade. "PTI steals a march over the other political parties in the mobilization of youth, diaspora and accurate utilization of the digital media."

The following is the text of the interview:

What are the main reasons that Imran Khan failed to get the confidence of the Pakistani parliament? Critics say his economic policies were unsuccessful. Please explain.

Imran Khan came to the government with some popular but unrealistic slogans. He promised to end corruption [►](#) **Page 5**



Qadr Night observed in Tehran

Communal praying and recitations of the Holy Quran were held at Tehran's Sharif University on Qadr Night - the 21st day of the holy month of Ramadan, which fell on April 23 this year. The last 10 days of Ramadan are especially important because the Quran was revealed in this month on Laylat al-Qadr (Qadr Night).

The 21st of Ramadan marks the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali (AS), the first Shia Imam.

Leader’s message of sympathy relayed to families of Afghan martyrs

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday sent a message of sympathy to the Afghan families who have lost loved ones in the recent terrorist attacks in Afghanistan.

The message was relayed by Iran’s deputy ambassador to Kabul Hassan Mortazavi.

The deputy ambassador and his accompanying delegation met with the families of the martyrs to declare the sympathy of the Leader and the Islamic Republic to them.

A series of deadly attacks has led to the deaths of dozens of people across Afghanistan. An explosion tore through a mosque near the northern Afghan city of Kunduz on Friday killing at least 33 people and wounding dozens of others. The attack happened a day after blasts at a Shia mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Earlier Thursday, a roadside bomb exploded near a boys’ school in the capital



Kabul, injuring two children in the city’s predominately Shia neighborhood of Dasht-e-Barchi. A third bomb in Kunduz wounded 11 mechanics working for the country’s Taliban rulers, according to Al Jazeera.

Also on Tuesday, two bomb blasts at a boys’ school in Kabul killed at least six people and wounded more than 20. The blasts happened at the Abdul Rahim Shahid high school in the Shia-dominated west of the city. The number of dead is likely to rise. A nearby tuition center was also targeted in a grenade attack.

Terrorist attacks in Afghanistan intended to sow division, foster Islamophobia: Islamic awakening body

TEHRAN- The World Assembly of Islamic Awakening has denounced the recent despicable terrorist attacks against Muslims in Afghanistan, saying such acts are intended to inflame tensions among Afghan ethnic and religious groups and foster Islamophobia.

“Certainly, such actions are planned to create tension and wage ethnic and religious wars, launch massacre and killings of Muslims, and as a result, portray an unrealistic image [of Islam] and [spread] Islamophobia,” the assembly said in a statement released on Saturday.

It went on to say that the acting Taliban governing body in Afghanistan is responsible for ensuring the safety of all Muslims doing religious activities and should be held accountable.

The recent terrorist assaults in Afghanistan on mosques are a desecration of the holy month of Ramadan and a continuation of the slaughter of innocent people carried out by U.S.-backed criminals and terrorists with the goal of inciting a regional crisis, according to the organization.

“The recent terrorist act in Mazar-e-Sharif in fact completes ... a conspiracy and plan that seek to create division among the Muslim Ummah... and shows that such crimes know no

boundaries,” the statement mentioned.

It highlighted that the Afghan Muslim people will soon respond appropriately to such atrocities, and it urged all Muslim governments, nations, groups, and parties, as well as international freedom fighters, to preserve unity, coherence, and solidarity in the face of the enemies’ machinations.

Since the Taliban took control of the country in August last year multiple assaults have been recorded, some of which have been claimed by Daesh.

Taliban’s rule has yet to be recognized by governments. The former Taliban government was solely recognized by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

At least 33 Afghans, including children, were killed and 43 others were injured as an explosion ripped through a mosque in the northern city of Kunduz on Friday, the latest in a string of horrific strikes in the war-torn country.

It happened only a day after a blast at a mosque in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan’s northernmost city, which left dozens dead and wounded in the country’s second significant attack on the Shia Hazara population in a week.

Report that Russia using Iranian arms in Ukraine is ‘false’: Russian embassy

TEHRAN - The Russian embassy in Tehran has dismissed media allegations that Iranian weapons are being sent to Russia to be used in the Ukraine war as “false”.

“The information that circulated in the media about the delivery of Iranian weaponry to Russia is false and does not match with reality,” the embassy tweeted on Sunday.

The Guardian reported earlier this month that Russia was using weaponry smuggled from Iraq by Iran against Ukraine.

The Iranian embassy in London had earlier dismissed the report as “unprofessional and unfounded”.

The Guardian report said, “Russia is receiving munitions and military hardware sourced from Iraq for its war effort in Ukraine with the help of Iranian weapons smuggling networks, according to members of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias and regional intelligence services with knowledge of the process”!

It even went on to say that RPGs and anti-tank missiles as well as Brazilian-designed

Iranian president cautions about spread of threats against Afghans, neighbors

From page 1 ► Protesters screamed chants such as “Being Hazara Is Not a Crime, Ensure Our Security,” “We Want Justice,” and so on during the march.

The terrorist assaults in Afghanistan elicited international condemnation, with high-ranking officials from a variety of countries condemning them.

According to the Bakhtar news agency, the Taliban stated on Friday that the mastermind of the terrorist attack on the Shia mosque in Mazar-e-Sharif had been apprehended.

According to Bakhtar, the mastermind of the attack on the Shia mosque in Balkh province was Abdul Hamid Sangaryar, the governor that Daesh designated for Balkh province.

Details of Tehran-Riyadh talks revealed

TEHRAN — An Iraqi source has revealed new details about the fifth round of talks conducted between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Baghdad.

The source, who spoke to the Russia Today Arabic network revealed that the meeting was attended by Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi; Saeed Iravani, Iran’s Deputy Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council; and Khalid bin Ali Al Humaidan, head of the Saudi intelligence service.

The source added that the two sides agreed at the meeting to put an end to the meetings held at the security level and move on to diplomatic talks, which will be conducted by the two

countries’ foreign ministries.

The source stressed that the sixth round of talks is also expected to take place in Iraq, much like the previous rounds.

The Iraqi source also reiterated that the atmosphere of the meeting was positive and the two sides agreed on some points to create a cool atmosphere between Tehran and Riyadh.

He also said that the meeting between the Iranian-Saudi officials lasted several hours and that the Iranian delegation also made a pilgrimage to the holy shrines in Iraq, but the Saudi delegation left Baghdad later.

In a tweet posted on Saturday, Nour news, a



media outlet close to Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said, “The fifth round of talks between the high representatives of #Iran and #SaudiArabia was held in Baghdad. The positive atmosphere of the recent meeting has raised hopes for the two countries to take a step towards resumption of relations.”

It continued, “It is expected that a joint meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries will be held in the near future.”

This is the first time that a media outlet close to Iran’s SNSC labels the atmosphere of Tehran-Riyadh talks as “positive.”

Meanwhile, a well-informed

diplomatic source confirmed the report while speaking to Russia’s Sputnik news agency.

The source confirmed that the fifth round of talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Baghdad on Thursday was held in a very positive atmosphere.

In response to a question about the cases raised in the meeting, the source said, “The two delegations talked about most of the issues in the region, as well as the case of bilateral relations and security in the Persian Gulf region.”

The fifth round of Iran-Saudi talks was scheduled to take place in March, but was delayed following Saudi Arabia’s mass execution of 81 citizens, about half of them Shias.

Ex-diplomat says threat of Daesh in Afghanistan is serious

TEHRAN — A former diplomat believes that Afghanistan’s neighbors must take the threat of Daesh in Afghanistan seriously.

In an interview with ISNA published on April 24, Mohsen Pakaein, the former head of the Afghanistan Headquarters at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, said, “The efforts of neighboring countries to stabilize Afghanistan have so far failed due to the Taliban’s one-sided approach, and we hope that the Taliban will pay attention to this important issue and form an inclusive government.”

Regarding the developments in Afghanistan, particularly the occurrence of deadly explosions in recent weeks, the former diplomat noted that it was clear that one of the serious dangers and harms for the future of Afghanistan is the presence of the Takfiri terrorist groups, such as Daesh in this country.

“In fact, after the defeat of Daesh in Syria and Iraq, the United States brought the rest of them to Afghanistan with the green light of the then government and stationed them in the northern regions and indirectly supported them. The main goal of the United States was to create some kind of instability in Afghanistan so that it could achieve its goals,” he added.

The former Iranian ambassador to Azerbaijan also stated that the series of explosions that have taken place in Afghanistan in recent weeks proves that Daesh is active in Afghanistan.

He said the terrorist acts are a modus



operandi of Daesh.

“Whether the explosions for whom Daesh is responsible or about the events that the terrorist group is silent about, proves the existence of Daesh in Afghanistan. The type of execution, methods and actions indicate that they are being done by this terrorist group,” the expert asserted.

Unfortunately, Pakaein underscored, the current interim governing body in Afghanistan known as the Taliban has been indifferent to this issue and has not taken it seriously.

Even from the very beginning, the Taliban leaders stated that Daesh is not a serious threat to Afghanistan and it is exaggerated, he lamented.

“Today we see that the terrorist group’s attacks in various provinces indicate that Daesh is active, and is consolidating its position and may soon make demands of the government. This will cause serious damage to Afghanistan,” the former

diplomat underlined.

He noted that Daesh’s goal is to divide Afghanistan’s ethnicities and religions and create a kind of instability.

“This could be in a way that Daesh may claim in the future that in order to help Afghanistan, the Taliban must make concessions to Daesh so that they can stop their actions,” Pakaein warned.

The former diplomat also stated that the totalitarian government of the Taliban continues its policies in a stubborn manner, regardless of other ethnicities, religions and influential groups, and seeks to strengthen its government and still refuses to form an inclusive government, while terrorist acts and the issue of refugees also haunt the economic and security problems of neighboring countries.

“This is all because the Taliban do not seek to establish an inclusive and stable government in Afghanistan, and is not yet recognized by the neighbors and the international community,” the expert on international affairs noted.

In the end, he said, “Neighboring countries’ efforts to help Afghanistan and stabilize it due to the Taliban’s one-sided approach have not been successful and we hope that the Taliban will pay serious attention to this damage and see stability in the region and this country.”

ICESCO denounces terrorist attack on Afghan school



extremism and eclecticism to pump Islamophobia in the world this time showed their fear of knowledge and education, and by killing Afghan pupils and teenagers, the biggest target of their explosions were schools as a base of wisdom against ignorance and adolescents as the founders of the future.

The enemies of unity should know that each tulip grows from every martyr to the awakening of nations. Their terrorist acts multiply the people’s hatred of their American and Salafi and reactionary masters.

The ICESCO National Commission under the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran condemns the terrorist act in Kabul

schools and the martyrdom of a number of oppressed Afghan Sunni and Shiite pupils during Ramadan and see it as another conspiracy for promoting Islamophobia, sowing division and causing backwardness by the countries of the region and creating a wave of migration of Hazaras and their migration and departure from Afghanistan.”

Ramiz Alakbarov, UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Afghanistan, issued a statement strongly condemning the “horrific” attacks.

“Violence in or around schools is never acceptable. For the people of Afghanistan, already beleaguered by forty years of war, schools should be safe havens, and places where children can learn and flourish,” he said.

Alakbarov underlined that attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools, are strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law.

U N S e c r e t a r y - General António Guterres has also denounced the bombings.

“Attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools, are strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law,” UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told journalists in New York.

In expressing her condemnation, the head of the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Catherine Russell, noted that the number of casualties is expected to rise.

She also appealed in the strongest terms to all parties to protect boys and girls at all times.

“Attacks on children and education facilities constitute grave rights violations,” said Ms. Russell. “Schools are more than places of learning; they should be havens of protection and peace.”

Terrorists carried out a series of barbaric blasts on schools and mosques in several provinces, including Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Kunduz, martyring or injuring tens of Shiite and Sunni Muslims, including youngsters, just in a matter of three days: April 19, April 21, and April 22.

Biden internal weakness impedes JCPOA revival

TEHRAN – Despite some European efforts to get the stalled talks in Vienna restarted, chances of resuming the talks remain low due to never-ending political bickering in the United States.

The talks over reviving a 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), came to a standstill in early March after all technical issues were addressed. Enrique Mora, the EU coordinator of the talks, said at the time that there would be no expert-level and formal meeting and that it was time to make political decisions to conclude the talks.

Since then, the U.S. has neither made political decisions nor has it set any date for resuming the talks. Instead, it continued stonewalling while demanding that Iran back down from its demands.

Iran made it clear that it wants a good deal and it's ready for that. Tehran also said it made all the political decisions needed to push the talks forward. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has recently said that the Iranian government is determined to reach a good and strong agreement.

Speaking on the phone with EU foreign policy chief Joseph Borrell on Friday evening, Amir Abdollahian pointed out that there is no doubt about the



determination of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to reach a “good, strong, and lasting agreement”.

He also signaled that the U.S. is still pursuing demands that are unacceptable to Iran. “The White House must put aside excessive demands and hesitation and take a step towards realism and solutions,” the Iranian foreign minister said, according to an Iranian foreign ministry statement.

Amir Abdollahian also dispelled rumors that other parties other than the U.S. may be hindering the conclusion of the talks. “Three European countries [France, Germany, and the UK], Russia and China, are now ready to finalize the agreement,” Amir Abdollahian asserted, adding that “the current U.S. administration must have

the courage to correct the White House's past wrong policies.”

Borrell, in turn, appeared to be blaming Iran for the delay in the JCPOA talks. The EU foreign policy chief said the prolongation of the break in the talks is not constructive and suggested that talks between the EU envoy and Iran's chief negotiator be resumed closely.

Referring to the war in Ukraine, Borrell described it as a global crisis that could have negative consequences.

This assessment of the status quo seems to contrast the assessment of an expert closely following the Vienna talks. Seyed Mohammad Marandi, a professor of American studies at the University of Tehran who accompanied the Iranian

negotiating team during the last few rounds, said U.S. President Joe Biden's internal problems are standing in the way of reviving the JCPOA.

Talking to the official news agency IRNA, he said, “According to the Americans, Iran has been able to gain significant concessions in Vienna, so during the talks, some members of the American delegation resigned and left the team in protest.”

Marandi referred to the negative reactions in Congress after U.S. Envoy for Iran Rob Malley briefed the congressmen on the Vienna talks. “When Mr. Malley went to Congress and reported on the negotiation process, the reactions were negative. That is, members of Congress protested, believing that the American team had retreated too much,” he said.

He added, “In the last days of the negotiations, things were moving fast, but on various issues, including verification, lifting of sanctions, guarantees, as well as the IRGC, the Americans stopped working at once.”

Marandi noted, “The failure to reach an agreement is due to U.S. internal problems, and the growing problems of the Ukraine war for the U.S. are a push for Biden to accept the need for an agreement.”

U.S. internal disputes hindered conclusion of Vienna talks: expert

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian expert has said that the United States is yet to make a decision on the talks in Vienna due to internal disputes.

The expert, Seyed Mohammad Marandi, said the internal disputes of the U.S. are the main obstacle to concluding the talks in Vienna over reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“According to the Americans, Iran has been able to gain significant concessions in Vienna, so during the talks, some members of the American delegation resigned and left the team in protest,” Marandi, a professor at the University of Tehran, told official news agency IRNA.

“On the other hand, when Mr. Malley went to Congress and reported on the negotiation process, the reactions were negative. That is, members of Congress protested, believing that the American team had retreated too much,” he adding, referring to the U.S. envoy for Iran Rob Malley who came under fire in Washington for allegedly going soft on Iran during the Vienna talks.

Marandi said the American negotiators lost their appetite for a final deal in the last days of the negotiations.

“In the last days of the negotiations, things were moving fast, but on various issues, including verification, lifting of sanctions, guarantees, as well as the IRGC, the Americans stopped working at once.”

Underlining that the problem is from within the United States, Marandi noted, “The failure to reach an agreement is due to U.S. internal problems, and the growing problems of the Ukraine war for the U.S. are a push for Biden to accept the need for an agreement.”

He said that all other parties have no problem with finalizing the deal. So “it remains to be seen what Biden will do to go on,” he said.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian spoke on the phone with EU foreign policy chief Joseph Borrell on Friday evening about the latest status of talks on lifting sanctions, as well as some important regional and international issues.

In the telephone conversation, the Iranian minister of foreign affairs referred to the continuation of consultations to lift the sanctions. He stated that there is no doubt about the determination of the

government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to reach a “good, strong and lasting agreement”.

He added that the White House must put aside excessive demands and hesitation and take a step towards realism and propose solutions.

Referring to the long efforts of all parties in Vienna, the Iranian foreign minister said that the three European countries, Russia and China, are now ready to finalize the agreement. He said the current U.S. administration must have the courage to correct the White House's past wrong policies.

Amir Abdollahian appreciated the tireless efforts of Borrell and his deputy Enrique Mora, emphasizing that now diplomacy is working properly and well.

Referring to the positive will of the Iranian side in the Vienna talks, Borrell also said, “We believe that Iran wants an agreement and that there have been various initiatives which still exist and continue.”

The EU foreign policy chief said the prolongation of the break in the talks is not constructive and suggested that talks between the EU envoy and Iran's chief negotiator be resumed closely.

Borrell also referred to the war in Ukraine, describing it as a global crisis that could have negative consequences.

especially fuel smuggling, is one of the important priorities of the IRGC Navy which is being pursued in order to support national production and the dynamism of the country's economy,” he said.

Colonel Hosseini warned that the waters of the Persian Gulf will not be secure for smugglers.

of the Second Field of the IRGC Navy, told Fars News that the IRGC forces have seized a foreign vessel carrying 200,000 liters of contraband fuel in the north of the Persian Gulf.

The colonel said eight crew members of the vessel were handed over to judicial officials in Bushehr.

“The fight against smuggling,

IRGC Navy seizes vessels carrying contraband fuel

TEHRAN – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy has detained a number of vessels in the southeast and south of Iran carrying smuggled fuel.

The commander of the IRGC Navy's Imam Ali Base in Chabahar said his forces have seized three hauls of smuggled fuel that amounted to

150,000 liters, Tasnim reported.

Captain Mohammad Nozari said the vessels were planned to smuggle the fuel into a neighboring country, noting that all people involved in the act, including Iranian and foreign nationals, have been arrested.

Meanwhile, Colonel Gholamhossein Hosseini, head of the Media Office

commander said that calm prevails along the common border with Afghanistan.

Commenting about reports of a dispute between Iranian and Afghan border guards and the temporary closure of a border crossing, Commander of Taybad Border Regiment Colonel Mohammad Cheragh said the Taliban border forces had “faced ambiguities” because of unfamiliarity with the border laws and regulations, Tasnim reported.

Following the negotiations between the border guards of Iran and Afghanistan, it was agreed that the experts on border issues from the two sides would address the case in order to clarify matters and resolve the ambiguities, the commander said.

“Calm prevails at the common border between Iran and Afghanistan with the prospect for peace and friendship,” he stated.

The colonel also underlined that the Iranian border forces are fully prepared to ensure security along the boundaries.

Iran has been paying more attention to developments in Afghanistan over the last few days particularly after a wave of explosions hit the war-torn country.

On Saturday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi issued a message warning about the spread of violence in Afghanistan.

IRAN IN FOCUS

APRIL 25, 2022

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

Iran freestyle team crowned Asian champions

From Page 1 ► Mohsen Mostafavi claimed a bronze medal by defeating Korean Gwanuk Kim 4-0 in the 86kg.



On Saturday, Rahman Amouzad Khalili in the 65kg, Ali Savadkouhi in the 79kg and Mohammadhossein Askari Mohammadian in the 97kg had won three gold medals.

Iran claimed the title with 179 points, followed by India (151) and Kazakhstan (149) points.

Iran's Greco-Roman wrestling team had become runners-up in the competitions which were held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia from April 19 to 24.

Hadi Rezaei named Honorary Life Member of World Paravolley

TEHRAN – Iran's legendary sitting volleyball player and coach Hadi Rezaei has been named as an Honorary Life Member of World Paravolley.

Rezaei has been awarded the Honorary Life Membership due to his significant contribution to the organization over the years.

“I have long been an admirer of your amazing contribution to Paravolley, particularly in the fields of international coaching and coach education and your selfless willingness to offer your expertise and knowledge to other coaches. Your record as a coach is unequalled in World Paravolley history and you should be immensely proud of your achievements. I am also aware of your involvement and contribution as a Paralympic athlete and in the field of governance at both the zone and World levels. You are truly worthy of receiving this recognition,” Barry Couzner, World ParaVolley President, said.

As a player, Rezaei won three gold medals in 1988, 1992 and 1996 Paralympic Games.

He also inspired Iran to win four gold medals in 2000, 2008, 2016 and 2020 Paralympic Games and two silver medals in 2004 and 2012 Paralympic Games.

Under his leadership, the Iranian sitting volleyball team have also won three gold medals, one silver and two bronzes in the World Championships. Hadi Rezaei has also claimed four gold medals in the World Championships as a player.

Shahab Zahedi nets brace against MOL Fehervar

TEHRAN – Iranian forward of Puskas Academy Shahab Zahedi scored two goals against MOL Fehervar in the 29th round of the Hungarian OTP Bank League.

The home team were led by the occasional representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina Kenan Kodro with a goal in the third minute of the match.

Zahedi scored once again in the 53rd minute.

Puskas Academy player Baluta received a second yellow card in the injury time and was forced to leave the field.

In the fifth minute of extra time, Stopiro scored the late equalizer for the home side and collected a point for his team.

Puskas Academy sit third in the table, 10 points behind leaders Ferencvaros.

Alipour scores as Maritimo draw against Santa Clara

TEHRAN – Maritimo forward Ali Alipour scored a goal against Santa Clara as the match finished in 2-2 draw in the 31st round of Primeira Liga.

Japan's Kayosuke Tagawa was on target for Santa Clara in the fifth minute and completes his brace in the 33rd minute.

Alipour pulled a goal back in the 64th minute and Claudio Wink leveled the score with five minutes remaining.

Maritimo sit seventh in the table, while Santa Clara is ninth.

Barij Essence start Asian Women's Club Volleyball C'ship on high

TEHRAN – Iranian volleyball club Barij Essence swept past Kyrgyzstan VC in straight sets (25-14, 25-14, 25-7) in the opening match of the 2022 Asian Women's Club Volleyball Championship on Sunday.

Barij Essence are scheduled to play Uzbekistan's Jizzakh State Pedagogical Institute on Monday.

The tournament is being held in Semey, Kazakhstan, from April 24 to 30.

Kazakhstan's Altay and Kuanysh, Barij Essence of Iran, Thailand's Diamond Food-Fine Chef Sport Club, Uzbekistan's Jizzakh State Pedagogical Institute and Kyrgyzstan compete against one another in the single round-robin competition.

Japanese volleyball team JT Marvelous withdrew from the competition due to the COVID-19 infection among their team members and Kazakhstan's Kuanysh replaced the team.

Sardar Azmoun scores first goal for Leverkusen

TEHRAN – Iranian international forward Sardar Azmoun scored his first goal for Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday.

Leverkusen defeated Greuther Fürth 4-1 at Stadion am Laubenweg.

Leverkusen moved up to third with victory at Greuther Fürth, whose relegation back to Bundesliga 2 was confirmed.

Jetro Willems was on target for Leverkusen just five minutes into the match before Patrik Schick canceled out his goal three minutes later.

Azmoun doubled the score in the 18th minute. It was his first goal in the team.

Paulinho made the scoreboard 3-1 and Exequiel Palacios scored the fourth goal in the 84th minute.

Iran to dispatch three judokas to Russian competitions

TEHRAN – Iranian judokas are participating in an international tournament hosted by Russia after nearly a year of being away from international competitions.

The last time that Iranian judokas competed in an international competition was in the 2021 Asia-Oceania Judo Championships which were held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from April 6 to April 9, 2021.

Now for the first time in a year, the Iranian judo practitioners are invited to the Russian Judo Grand Slam in Khabarovsk on May 6-8, MNA reported.

According to the decision of the National Teams Organization and the technical staff of the national adult judo team, the judo fighters Vahid Jedi in -73 kg, Mehdi Fathipour in -81 kg and Qassem Baghchaghi in -90 kg led by their coach Mohsen Zakaria will participate in the Russian competitions.

Annual exports from Iran to Iraq rises 20%



TEHRAN – The value of Iran's exports to Iraq rose 20 percent during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) as compared to the preceding year, Tasnim news agency reported citing official data.

As reported, Iran exported \$8.916 billion worth of commodities to its neighbor in the mentioned year, making Iraq the Islamic Republic's second-biggest trade partner.

Exports to Iraq accounted for 18.3 percent of the country's total non-oil shipments in the previous year.

As stated by the chairman of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce, Iran is planning to boost its annual trade with neighboring Iraq to \$20 billion.

Speaking in a business forum between Iran and Iraq's Kirkuk province last December, Yahya Al-e Eshagh said the Iranian and Iraqi governments

are determined to develop regional cooperation in all areas.

"Despite all events that are happening in the region, the relationship between the two countries of Iran and Iraq are on the upward trajectory," the official said.

The current administration of Iran under President Raisi has shown great interest in broadening and enhancing trade and economic ties with neighboring states, he emphasized.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the chairman of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce pointed to the country's planning for a \$20 billion trade with Iraq and put the current trade volume exchange between the two countries at about \$13-\$14 billion.

Iran and Iraq signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on economic cooperation back in January 2021, at the end of the fourth meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee.

During the committee meeting, technical committees were formed in various business fields to discuss technical and engineering services and other topics of interest. The meeting also proposed and supported the establishment of a joint investment fund between the two countries and hopes to continue its path.

Good agreements were also reached to review establishing a shipping corridor and increasing the number of Iraqi aircrafts passing over Iran.

Iran stays world's 10th biggest steel producer in Q1 2022: WSA

TEHRAN – Iran has maintained its place as the world's 10th biggest steel producer during January-March 2022, according to the latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA).

Production of crude steel in Iran reached 6.9 million tons during the mentioned three months, registering a 4.4 percent decline year on year, the report said.

The WSA's report put the crude steel output by the world's top 64 producers at about 456.6 million tons in the mentioned time span, 6.8 percent less than the figure for the previous year's first quarter.

Iran's monthly crude steel output stood at 2.3 million tons in March, falling 6.1 percent compared to the figure for March 2021. The world's producers managed to produce 161 million tons of steel in the said month to register a 5.8-percent drop year on year.

Producing 243.4 million and 31.9 million tons of steel, China and India stood in first and second places in the said period, respectively, while Japan occupied third place producing 23 million tons of the mentioned product.

The U.S., Russia, South Korea, Germany, Turkey, and Brazil took fourth to ninth places, respectively.

During the first quarter of the current year, China's production declined by 10.5 percent, Japan's production fell 2.9 percent, Brazil



experienced negative growth of 2.2 percent, Turkey's output declined by 4.7 percent, and South Korea registered a negative 3.8 percent growth.

African nations produced 1.2 million tons of the commodity in March 2022, down 17.1 percent from the figure for March 2021, while Asia and Oceania countries produced 118.6 million tons, down five percent, year on year, according to the mentioned report.

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

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

TPO dispatches 23 SMEs to Germany

TEHRAN – Iranian Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has made the preparations to send managers of 23 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to Germany to pave the way for the exports of Iranian-made products to the European country.

"The Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, in cooperation with the International Trade Center has sent the managers of 23 small and medium-sized export companies to Germany

with the aim of supporting them to enter the German market," Alireza Peyman-Pak said on Sunday.

As reported by the TPO portal, the managers of the mentioned companies will visit Cologne and Hamburg from April 24 to May 14, and during this period, they will try to provide the necessary grounds for exporting their products to Germany by attending B2B meetings with German companies.

the second market's index dropped 5,082 points.

TEDPIX gained 58,000 points (four percent) to 1,512 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported, the indices of Tehran Oil Refining Company (TORC), Iran Khodro Investment Development Company (IKIDO), Social Security Investment Company (SSIC), Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), Saipa Company, and Isfahan Oil Refinery were the mostly followed ones during the past week.

TEDPIX drops 7,000 points on Sunday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 7,487 points to 1,504 million on Sunday.

As reported, over 8.66 billion securities worth 52.32 trillion rials (about \$190.2 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 8,717 points, while

Knowledge-based approach, main priority of oil industry this year

From page 1 ► **"Knowledge-based" to increase oil output**

In line with materializing the motto of the year, Oil Ministry and all of its subsidiaries have announced strong determination and prepared plans to this end.

Oil Minister Javad Oji has said, "We will increase oil production and reduce the import needs of the oil industry by relying on the power of knowledge-based production".

"At the Ministry of Oil, we called in five areas so that we could use the potential of knowledge-based companies to increase production. Low-efficiency wells and optimization of fuel consumption in collecting gases, import needs of the ministry, and the chain of petrochemical complementary industries are among these areas", the minister said last week.

"More than 200 capable companies participated and our colleagues are evaluating these companies. We hope to be able to make our production knowledge-based in these areas to reduce costs and increase productivity", he added.

"During the short time that this government has been established various exhibitions of knowledge-based companies have been held, which I believe that they have a very good potential in both the upstream and downstream sectors", Oji further reiterated.



"According to the order of the Leader, the industry should become knowledge-based; it is possible, and we have started the work in this due", the oil minister noted.

"Also, with our call, very good and capable companies came forward, and the new formats of contracts we have designed will motivate these companies for cooperation", he added.

'Knowledge-based production, oil industry's priority'

The managing director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), the main subsidiary of Oil Ministry, has also said that the main priority of the oil industry in the present year is increasing oil production relying on the knowledge-based approach.

"With the planning that

has been done by using new technologies in the oil industry, we will strengthen the economic front in the oil industry more than before", Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr has stressed.

Emphasizing that knowledge-based production will be at the forefront of the industry's plans, the official said: "Creating sustainable job opportunities while increasing production will definitely be a basic necessity and strategy that must be considered."

NIGC plays essential role in materializing motto of year

National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), the other major subsidiary of Oil Ministry, also plays an important part in materialization of the motto of the year.

As Majid Chegeni, the managing director of the company, has said, the activity of the gas industry

is directly related to the issues of production and employment; because almost all industries in the country are dependent on gas energy, so the role of the NIGC personnel is highlighted in this due.

'Petchem sector completely familiar with knowledge-based concept'

National Petrochemical Company (NPC), another main subsidiary of Oil Ministry, is completely familiar with the knowledge-based concept, and plays a significant management and development role in moving in the way of progress through a new and technological view, as stated by the managing director of the company.

In a recent meeting with the NPC directors and experts on materializing the slogan of the year, Morteza Shahmirzaei said the concept of knowledge-bases is familiar to the whole large family of petrochemical industry and the units have had very good activities in this field due to their area of responsibility.

"Many equipment and catalysts of the petrochemical industry are being fully domestically-produced relying on the internal technical know-how, and we should eliminate the need to import them due to the existing capacities in the country and relying on our domestic capability", the official stressed.

'Iranian private sector ready to expand trade ties with Kyrgyzstan'

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie has expressed the Iranian private sector's readiness for expanding trade relations with Kyrgyz counterparts, the ICCIMA portal reported on Sunday.

Speaking in a meeting with Kyrgyzstan's Ambassador to Tehran Turdakun Sydykov, Shafeie said: "Development of economic and trade relations with neighbors and the countries in the region is a priority for the Iranian government and the private sector, and in this regard, Kyrgyzstan has a special place."

Shafeie underlined the free economy laws and regulations as the most important feature of Kyrgyzstan's economy, saying: "These laws are well established in this country and are a strong point for the economy and a valuable capacity to attract investment."

He further mentioned Iran's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as factors that could open new windows for

the development of the Islamic Republic's economic relations with Kyrgyzstan, and said: "The Iranian private sector is eager to develop economic interactions with Kyrgyzstan, and Iran chamber of commerce is ready to cooperate in this regard."

"In recent years, Iranian businessmen and investors have invested in Kyrgyzstan and set up production units, and it is expected that with the new conditions created, we will see the continuation of this type of collaboration and economic interaction with Kyrgyzstan," the official added.

He also emphasized the diverse common fields for mutual cooperation between Iran and Kyrgyzstan and noted that the current volume of trade between the two countries is considerable and in sectors such as mining, agriculture, and industry, there are significant opportunities for the expansion of cooperation between the two sides.

Sydykov for his part, referred to the 30-year diplomatic relationship between Iran and his country, saying: "We have a lot in common with Iran and we hope to hold trade meetings



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (R) and Kyrgyz Ambassador to Iran Turdakun Sydykov attend a meeting with representatives of Mashhad Chamber of Commerce in Khorasan Razavi province

and exhibitions in the near future on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries."

"Kyrgyzstan's economy is now dynamic and growing, with investors from all over the world, especially from our friend and neighbor Iran. We are ready for expanding joint economic cooperation with Iran," the ambassador stressed.

Commodities worth \$1.2b imported to free trade, special economic zones in a year

TEHRAN- The secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council said that commodities worth about \$1.2 billion were imported to the country's free trade zones (FTZs) and special economic zones during the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20).

Saeed Mohammad said that of the mentioned goods, 40 percent were raw materials, 30 percent were basic goods and 30 percent were passenger cargo.

The official had also previously stated that 40-45 percent of Iran's export is from the country's free trade zones and special economic zones.

The establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote the non-oil exports.



The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern

Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azerbaijan Province, and Maku in West-Azerbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

While near three decades have passed since the start of free trade zones activity in Iran, their planned objectives have not been fully achieved and their development is still facing some impediments.

Lack of proportion between the facilities and the objectives, lack of a national definition for free trade zones' performance, limited resources for establishment and completion of infrastructures, no comprehensive management between the zones, and not complete implementation of zones management law are some of the barriers in the way of free trade zones' activity and development in the country.

should be considered separately."

He underlined investment as the first factor affecting production units in the country and said: "We must accept that the rate of investment in the whole country is very low and even close to zero, such a statistic indicates that investment planning has not been made at the macro level and no alternative has also been provided for this issue; Therefore, the existence of such margins has prevented the country from moving towards the development and productivity."

or the capital market, but in Iran, it [growing liquidity] is considered as an issue," Karbasian said.

Pointing to the important role of the capital market in removing barriers to production and creating the necessary conditions for the realization of the slogan of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) which is named "Production: Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating" the official added: "There are several factors affecting the production process in the country, each of which

"All around the world, investor liquidity is a major source of capital for production units which is mostly provided by the banking system

Youth and middle class still support Imran Khan: researcher

From page 1 ► within ninety days; providing ten million jobs and constructing five million houses for homeless people. Given the prevailing conditions of Pakistan in 2018, including an ailing economy, poor governance and widespread unemployment and poverty in the country, the popular slogans of Imran Khan became like melodious music to the ears of people. During his almost 4 years of rule the country's economy slipped from bad to worse, already poor governance lost steam, unemployment steeply rose, and inflation skyrocketed. Khan's government not only politically victimized all opposition parties under the guise of the so-called anti-corruption drive but also never listened to their voices in the parliament. He antagonized the country's most powerful military establishment over the appointment of DG ISI in the last quarter of 2021. Multiplying the aforementioned factors paved the way for escalating civil-military relations, which culminated in the removal of Khan through the vote of no-confidence.

Imran Khan accused Washington of being involved in a conspiracy against his government, while the White House rejects such a claim. Do you think foreign meddling in Pakistan is possible?

Accusing the U.S. of toppling his government to me is unjustifiable. In 75 years of the history of Pakistan, no prime minister so far completed full five-year tenure. On 18 occasions, prime ministers of the country have been removed under different circumstances. The question remains: was Washington too involved in ousting the other 17 prime ministers of Pakistan. The answer to me is simply no. In his recent interview, the former information minister Fawad Chaudhry confessed that the PTI government would continue to have been in power if relations with the establishment had not been strained. Khan's incendiary claim was also debunked by the Inter-Services Public Relations



(ISPR) affirmed that there was no foreign conspiracy behind Khan's ouster. To bear in mind, Washington remains the largest export market of Islamabad. I think, externalizing internal problems will exacerbate Pakistan's already strained relations with the U.S...

However, the U.S. Cold War history is a tangible testimony that it was involved in meddling in the internal affairs of the states. Unlike the Cold War era, the U.S. currently, somewhat eschews meddling in the internal affairs of other states.

How do you see the future of Pakistan after removing Imran Khan? Is Pakistan going towards instability?

The removal of Imran Khan, to me, is not the real problem, the biggest conundrum of the country rather is an economic meltdown, rising inflation, unemployment and growing religious radicalization. The construction of an anti-West narrative by the previous government is likely to create political polarization and will further radicalize the apolitical youth against the West which invariably will augment diplomatic crisis. To be fair, the above-mentioned so-

cio-political and economic crisis multiplied in the Khan's regime. He along with his inexperienced team remained utterly failed in addressing the economic and political crisis. Presently, holding a fresh election is desperately needed. The current government

is unstable and is at loggerhead with the opposition parties. As stated earlier in the last 74 years none of the prime ministers has completed the five years tenure showcasing the roots of democracy are still weak and shakable. Toppling elected government replacing it with the so-called exchange of power is illusory salvation. Setting such a precedent, by and large, tarnishes the soft image and will head the country towards political instability.

What are Imran Khan's options to confront his political rivals and foes?

Given the complex and mercurial nature of Pakistani politics, it is nearly impossible to predict the future trajectory of politics in the country with precision. Interestingly, on the heels of the collapse of his government, former PM Imran Khan has started a

series of power shows to compel the Shehbaz-led coalition government to conduct elections as soon as possible. But many independent observers are of the view that Khan no more enjoys broad-based mass support as the miserable failure of its government to deliver services eroded his popularity in the country. Khan no more enjoys a good relationship with the military establishment. Given the overwhelming political role of non-democratic forces in the country, it is very difficult for a political party to come to the corridor of powers without the support of the military establishment.

Who are the main supporters of Imran Khan inside Pakistan? Can Imran Khan count on his social base while the army is reluctant to support him?

I reckon, to some extent, Khan needs to be appreciated for galvanizing the youth in politics over the last decade. PTI steals a march over the other political parties in the mobilization of youth, diaspora and accurate utilization of the digital media. Khan is among the most-followed politicians on Twitter across the world, amasses 14 million followers on Twitter, and has 10 million followers on Facebook and 5 million on Instagram. The populist politics of Khan has a great deal of impact on apolitical youth. The recent massive power show of PTI in Karachi and Lahore is a lucid manifestation that the youth and middle class still support him. Ostensibly, he has geared up the preparation for the next election and appears to be exploiting the victim card of the U.S. involvement in ousting his government. The anti-West narrative sells in the country in no time. Galvanization of youth, diaspora and the middle class as far as the next election is concerned once again remains to be the last resort of Khan to recapture power. In my perspective, the support of the army to any political party depends on the evolving political environment in the country.

UK rationing cooking oil amid supply crisis

From page 1 ► temporary buying limit of three items per customer on products from our cooking oil range."

Another supermarket chain Waitrose said it was "closely monitoring the situation and working with our suppliers to ensure customers continue to have a choice of cooking oils."

Social media footage shows another supermarket chain Iceland limiting sales of two-liter and five-liter bottles of sunflower oil at its stores to just one per customer.

Richard Walker, The managing director of Iceland supermarkets confirmed the company was rationing sunflower oil sales to one bottle per customer.

"It is not as frenzied as the toilet roll panic buying from a couple of years ago, and we are managing to maintain an offer," he told British media.

"But yes, we are limiting purchases and we've moved into smaller packs to allow existing stocks in the market to service more customers."

Walker says "If you look at commodity prices, sunflower oil has gone up 1,000 percent in terms of the commodity cost in the market, palm oil (up) 400 percent, and then there is things like wheat, 50 percent, fertilizer 350 percent,"

"These are all unintended consequences of the war in Ukraine that is affecting supermarkets," he added.

A spokesman for the supermarket brand Sainsbury's says: "We are working closely with our suppliers to make sure customers continue to have cooking oils to choose from, including olive oil, vegetable oil, and rapeseed oil."

Another British brand Waitrose has said it was "closely monitoring the situation and working with our suppliers to ensure customers continue to have a choice of cooking oils."

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) claims the measure is a temporary move "to ensure availability for everyone."

Speaking to British media, a spokesperson for the trade association for all retailers says "the war in Ukraine has disrupted supplies of sunflower oil to the UK. Some retailers have introduced limits on the number of bottles customers can buy as a temporary measure to ensure availability for everyone."

The spokesperson added, "retailers are working with suppliers to ramp up production of alternative cooking oils, to minimize the impact on consumers."

For the richer class of British society, food is a relatively small part of household spending but for the growing poorer class in the UK, it's a massive portion of their household expenditure.

Experts say the worse is still to come in terms of food inflation with Tesco chairman John Allan warning that his stores are being impacted by rising energy prices as well as the supermarket's suppliers being impacted by the same problem.

Analysts have painted a bleak future picture of poorer households having to choose between buying food or heating their houses.

The prices for cooking have risen sharply over the last month, burning more holes in British shoppers' pockets.

Just two weeks ago, the Office for National Statistics said that the price of cooking oils and fats went up seven percent and is nearly a quarter more expensive than a year ago.

Further analysis by research firm Assosia suggests a higher rate of inflation for the most sought-after products.

According to their data, a one-liter bottle of own-brand sunflower oil has gone up by an average of 12 pence to £1.26 since January 2022, an increase of more than 10 percent.

The British consumer price index (CPI), which is the official mechanism used to measure the rise of inflation in the UK, shows the cost of food and drink has gone up 5.9 percent year on year as of March 2022.

However, economists and research show increases across many key categories have exceeded this hike.

Pasta products for example, a key base for UK meals, saw their prices go up 10.1 percent year-on-year having already jumped 14.9 percent in January 2022 as a result of poor wheat harvests in 2021.

Meat has gone up in price across the board, with lamb (16.9 percent up), beef (8.6 percent), and poultry (7.3 percent) all-seeing large increases.

Milk, cheese, and eggs (8.6 percent) and butter (9.6 percent) have also seen hikes.

Analysts say these rises are a result of farmers facing increases in their production costs, with fertilizer prices increasing since last summer and more recently fuel prices rising very sharply as a result of the crisis in Ukraine.

BRC CEO Helen Dickinson has warned that "consumer confidence has fallen significantly in recent months, as worries around personal finances rise. Households face a plethora of rising costs, with higher inflation to come as the increase in the energy price cap pushes up April's figures."

She noted that "retailers are not exempt from these pressures, as the costs of transport, energy, raw materials, and staff wages all continue to rise."

Major questions are being raised as to how secure the UK's food system is? While there is concern among British consumers over the possible wider use of food rationing in the future.

The war in Ukraine is threatening the food supply and livelihoods of people in Europe as well as Africa and Asia who depend on the fertile farmlands of the Black Sea region.

Russia and Ukraine grow around 14 percent of the world's wheat and account for almost one-third of global wheat exports. The global price shocks as a result of the war in Ukraine are likely to continue pushing bills higher.

Critics of Prime Minister Boris Johnson argue he is prolonging the war by sending enough weaponry to ensure an impasse on the ground (instead of backing the peace process) to deflect pressure over his low popularity ratings in the polls and among colleagues from his own ruling party ahead of next month's local elections.

Reports suggest Johnson has been informed that public anger over his lockdown-breaking Downing Street party scandals will result in the ruling Conservative party suffering substantial losses at local elections, with the possibility that the Prime Minister may receive further police fines ahead of polling day.

Voters in Scotland, Wales, and parts of England will vote in local elections early next month.

The Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the crisis concerning the cost of living are all expected to play a major role over which party voters choose to elect.

Why India can buy Russian oil, and still be friends with the U.S.

What a difference a few weeks make. Just last month India was taking flak from the West for its relationship with Russia, CNN said in a commentary.

Not only was the South Asian country refusing to condemn Moscow's brutal assault on Ukraine, but its purchases of discounted Russian oil -- said critics -- were flying in the face of sanctions aimed at crippling the Kremlin's finances.

And the White House was making its displeasure clear, calling New Delhi "somewhat shaky" and speaking of its "disappointment"

Then all of a sudden, the West's tune changed. When Biden met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi this month, it was all diplomatic backslapping and soundbites about "a deep connection between our people" and "shared values." Then on Friday British leader Boris Johnson flew into Delhi to talk up trade ties and pose for costumed photo ops, all while glossing over "differences" regarding Russia.

Yet India's stance on Ukraine remains largely the same. It is still buying cheap Russian oil -- in fact, it has bought nearly as much in the first months of 2022 as it did in whole of 2021, according to Reuters -- and it remains quiet on Moscow's invasion. As recently as April 7 it abstained from a UN vote suspending Russia from the Human Rights Council.

India, analysts say, just taught the West a masterclass in international diplomacy.

With India vital to U.S. efforts to counter the rise of China -- seen by the U.S. as potentially an even bigger threat to world peace than Russia -- the West needed to bite its tongue.

Or as Harsh V. Pant, a professor in international relations at King's College London, put it, the United States realized it needed to treat India as a "new partner that needs to be wooed."

Why is India vital to the U.S.?

Both New Delhi and Washington are becoming increasingly uneasy over China's growing military might, its aggressive territorial claims on land and at sea, and its growing economic influence over its smaller neighbors.

Under President Xi Jinping, China's military -- the People's Liberation Army -- has grown to field the world's largest navy, technologically advanced stealth fighter jets and a growing arsenal of nuclear weapons.

Part of Washington's plan to counter this rests with India's inclusion -- alongside the U.S., Japan and Australia -- in the increasingly active security grouping known as the Quad, said Pant, who is also head of the Strategic Studies Program at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi.

Meanwhile, India has its own concerns with China. The two countries have been engaged in a military standoff along their shared Himalayan border that has claimed dozens of lives in the past couple of years. And, in an irony that won't have been lost on Washington, India relies heavily on Russian arms to equip its military -- including in the Himalayas.

Shared concerns over Chinese aggression were made clear after the Biden-Modi meeting, when U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned China was seeking to "refashion the region and the international system" and said the U.S. and India had "identified new opportunities to extend the operational reach of our militaries."

It was a sign that -- whatever their differences over Ukraine -- the two countries had a deep "understanding of each other's positions," said Manoj Kewalramani, a fellow of China studies at the Takshashila Institution in India.

Vocal on China, silent on India

These concerns help explain why Washington continues to criticize China's silence on Russia's actions in Ukraine, even as it turns quiet on India's.

Superficially, at least, India and China appear to have similar positions on the Ukraine war. Both have positioned themselves as neutral onlookers -- rather than vocal opponents -- both have called for peace and both have refused to condemn the invasion outright.

And both have strategic relationships with Russia that they are keen not to jeopardize.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian leader Vladimir Putin declared in February their relationship had "no limits," while on some estimates India gets more than 50% of its military equipment from Russia.

But these similarities are only superficial. In fact, there are "vast differences," according to Kewalramani.

China has decried Western sanctions and repeatedly blamed the U.S. and NATO for the conflict, parroting Russia's view that NATO precipitated the crisis by expanding eastwards,



Russian President Vladimir Putin meets Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, on December 6, 2021.

Kewalramani said. Its state-run media has also amplified Russian talking points and disinformation.

India on the other hand has steered clear of criticizing NATO and appears keen to downplay its differences with the U.S. There have also been subtle shifts in India's position as the war has progressed.

Modi had talked to Ukrainian President President Volodymyr Zelensky, while China's leaders hadn't, pointed out Li Mingjiang, associate professor in international relations at Nanyang Technological University's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. India had also been harsher in its criticism of alleged Russian war crimes, Li said.

This month, India's ambassador to the United Nations called the killings of civilians in Bucha "deeply disturbing," condemning them and calling for an open investigation.

Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jun on the other hand said the deaths were "deeply disturbing," but stopped short of attributing blame and urged "all sides" to "avoid unfounded accusations."

Significantly, after the Biden-Modi talks, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken noted India's condemnation of "killing of civilians in Ukraine" and its provision of "humanitarian assistance to the people of Ukraine."

A complicated relationship

The U.S. may also be recognizing that India's relationship with Russia has historically followed a very different course to that of the West. Blinken noted that India's ties with Russia had "developed over decades, at a time when the United States was not able to be a partner to India."

That appeared to be a reference to the Cold War between the U.S. and the USSR -- during which India was officially nonaligned. However, India began to lean towards the USSR in the 1970s when the U.S. began providing military and financial assistance to its neighbor, Pakistan.

This was when Russia started providing arms to India, and India remains heavily reliant on Russia for military equipment to this day.

In 2018 India inked a \$5 billion weapons deal with Russia for an air defense missile system, despite the deal potentially putting it in the crosshairs of Washington's Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, a federal law passed in 2017 which imposed new sanctions on Iran, Russia and North Korea.

India's dependence on Russian arms limits its ability to denounce Moscow's actions in Ukraine. When Putin visited Delhi last December, Modi even called Putin a "dear friend."

'Wooed by all sides'

All this has led to a position in which India is being "wooed by all sides," Pant said.

Moscow remains onside, and remains keen to sell India discounted oil. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov even met his counterpart in Delhi this month and praised India for not looking at the Ukraine war "in a one-sided way."

And onside too is the West, ties with which have been growing ever closer since Modi's election in 2014. Annual India-U.S. trade is more than \$110 billion, compared to India's trade with Russia, which amounts to about \$8 billion. In recent years, India has also become a major customer for U.S. military equipment.

Even so, at Biden's meeting with Modi there remained a hint of unease. The U.S. President urged his Indian counterpart not to step up his country's use of Russian oil, instead offering to help him acquire oil from elsewhere. India, which imports 80% of its oil needs, gets no more than 3% from Russia.

So it appears India has managed to pull off an impressive balancing act.

"India actually comes out very strong from this crisis," Pant said. "And that's quite a feat actually."

Personal belongings of mysterious saltmen named national heritage



TEHRAN – A total of nine objects belonging to the ancient saltmen being kept in the Zolfaqari Archaeological Museum have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Sunday in a letter to the governor-general of the northwestern province, CHTN reported.

Pieces of woolen fabric, a broom, and an earthenware bowl were among the properties added to the prestigious list.

In 1993, miners in the Douzklakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages in Zanjan province, accidentally came across a mysterious mummified head, dated to 300 CE. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot, according to the Ancient History Encyclopedia.

However, in 2004, the miners discovered yet another “saltman,” which was followed

by further excavation and unearthing of remains of a human body along with a large number of artifacts made of wood, metal tools, clothing, and pottery.

In 2005, a systematic excavation began, three more mummies were excavated, and a sixth remained in situ due to a lack of funds for its storage. The context of the remains suggested that a collapse in the mine had caused the death of the miners in question.

The first mummy dubbed the “saltman,” is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive.

This particular “saltman” was originally dated based on the archaeological material found with him. Later, the mummy was carbon dated, which placed him in 500 CE (1750 BP, that is, “before present” or 1750 years ago), the Sasanian Empire’s height. The second “Saltman” was carbon-dated to 1554 BP, which placed him in the same era as the first “saltman,” the Sasanian era.

The third, fourth, and fifth “saltmen” were also carbon dated. The third body was dated and placed in 2337 BP, the fourth body in 2301 BP, and the fifth mummy was dated to 2286 BP, placing them all in the Achaemenid period.

Saltman No. 5 had tapeworm eggs from the Taenia sp. genus in his system. These were identified during the study of his remains. The find indicates the consumption of raw or undercooked meat, and this is the first case of this parasite in ancient Iran and the earliest evidence of ancient intestinal parasites in the area.

Rosewater festival to make debut in Khomein



TEHRAN – For the first time, a rosewater distillation festival, commonly known as “Golab-giri”, is scheduled to take place in Khomein county, central Iran, Khomein’s tourism chief has said.

The festival will be held in the village of Shahabieh by the end of the current Iranian month of Ordibehest (May 21), Ali Mashhadi explained on Sunday.

It is aimed to develop the local tourism industry along with promoting entrepreneurship and rose flower cultivation, the official added.

Golab or rosewater is obtained from a particular kind of Rose, known as Mohammadi roses in Iran. Harvesting flowers seems to be the most important part of the process. They should be picked from dawn through morning very carefully. The petals are put into massive copper pots and boiled, and then the extracted water is kept in special bottles. The longest the distillation is, the better will be the quality of the rosewater.

Golab is used nationwide in diverse traditional dishes to flavor them or

consumed as a religious perfume as well. The holy month of Ramadan is one of the bestselling months for the product.

The distillation of flowers and herbs has a deep history in Iran. Many believe traditionally distilled rosewater is of higher quality than that produced in factories probably due to shorter time intervals between the harvest and distillation practices.

Harvesting damask rose flowers is somewhat intensive work. It is mostly performed from dawn through the morning. Delay in harvesting or transport to distillery results in decreased essential oil quantity and quality.

To extract the rosewater people first amass their petals to put them into the massive copper pots. Then the pots are put on traditional ovens made from bricks, stones, and mud.

Almost every 30 Kg of rose petals plus 80 liters of water is poured into each pot that is connected to metal pipes for the steam moving through to obtain the hydrosol. The waste of distillation is used for feeding livestock or composting.

some rehabilitation works, Na’in’s tourism chief has said.

Having been abandoned and unused for several decades, this cistern with a unique architectural style and two reservoirs, is now being restored and revived by a team of restorers, Mahmoud Madanian explained on Sunday.

This cistern is one of the most important water reserves in the area that can supply water to local residents in time of need, the official added.

Because the cisterns in this city have

One of pioneers in the use of clean energy, Iran eyes World Heritage tag for its windmills

From page 1 ► continuous 120-day winds, which annually sweep through the east and southeast of the Iranian plateau from late May to late September. In fact, wood, mud, and brick were the main construction materials for the two-story windmills.

Britannica says the earliest known references to windmills are to a Persian millwright in 644 CE and windmills in Seistan

[Sistan], Iran, in 915 CE.

According to the UN cultural body, Robert Forbes, a technology historian, stresses the point that the Islamic era windmill was the invention of Iranian. He writes: “this invention which was initially an exclusive device for Iran and Afghanistan, turned into an important source of energy all over the Islamic territories in the 12th century, and not only



it was used for the grinding of grains and operation of water pumps, but also the chopping of sugarcanes and other purposes.

Moreover, the UNESCO website says that such vertical-axis windmills were taken to China during the Mongol reign.

Furthermore, the know-how of windmills was taken to other Islamic territories and was used in Egypt as the main

source for the chopping and grinding of sugarcanes. In the 11th century, windmills reached Spain, the Islands of the Aegean Sea, and Portugal.

Technically speaking, unlike European windmills, the Iranian design is powered by blades arrayed on a vertical axis in which the wind power is directly translated down without the need for any gears found on the horizontal-axis mills.

U.S. exhibit offers visitors time travel to Achaemenid capital

TEHRAN – A magnificent exhibition of ancient Iranian arts, which is currently at the Getty Villa Museum in Los Angeles, offers visitors a time travel to the former Achaemenid capital of Persepolis by the means of special music and digital art.

The exhibition includes an immersive digital experience of the palace of Persepolis where visitors can revert back in time and walk through the capital’s palace in its original, sustained form, further complementing the decorative artifacts, according to organizers.

Furthermore, online visitors have the opportunity to explore a 3D re-creation of Persepolis to feel the palaces, terraces, audience halls, and chambers of the massive UNESCO World Heritage located in southern Iran.

The exhibition titled “Persia: Ancient Iran and the Classical World”, examines the connections between ancient Persia and its rival powers of Greece and Rome. The event is organized in close collaboration with a cultural partner, the Farhang Foundation, and an academic partner, UCLA’s Pourdavoud Center for the Study of the Iranian World.

It displays artifacts sourced from various museums including the British Museum and the Louvre Museum. Moreover, it focuses on cultural and artistic connections between these ruling powers, said Jeffrey Spier, senior curator of antiques.

“The Getty Villa has mostly Greek, Roman, and Etruscan classical art, but we feel we really need to involve the other cultures that



Made of limestone, the “Relief with a Lion and Bull in Combat” is on display at the Getty Villa as part of the exhibition “Persia: Ancient Iran and the Classical World.” (Photo: Michael Tropea)

Greece and Rome interacted with because the ancient world is a very interconnected place,” Spier said. “The first one (exhibition) a few years ago was Egypt. ... Persia is the other great culture.”

Running until August 8, the exhibition is split into three distinct galleries representing the different ruling eras – the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian empires – all evoking their period’s exceptional character within their designated galleries, Spier said.

To embody the historical themes of royalty and power, the Getty Villa incorporated cultural objects that exemplify Persia’s contemporary influence, including luxury silver and gold vessels and golden swords that were royal gifts of status as well as stone reliefs from the palace of Persepolis, he said.

One of the highlights is an immersive

Building Lenj boats recognized as handicrafts field

TEHRAN – The traditional skills of building Lenj boats has been recognized as an independent handicrafts field, a local official said on Sunday.

As of now, all people engaged in crafting Lenj boats benefit from all services and facilities provided for other craftspeople, Leila Rahimi said.

Iranian Lenj vessels are traditionally hand-built and are used by inhabitants of the northern coast of the Persian Gulf for sea journeys, trading, fishing, and pearl diving. The traditional knowledge surrounding Lenjs includes oral literature, performing arts, and festivals, in addition to the sailing and navigation techniques and terminology, weather forecasting that is closely associated with sailing, and the skills of wooden boat-building itself.



The navigational knowledge used to sail Lenjes was traditionally passed on from father to son.

Experts believe that specific music and rhythms also constituted inseparable parts of sailing in the Persian Gulf, with sailors singing particular songs while working. Nowadays, the community of practitioners is small and

mainly comprises older people. Wooden Lenjes are being replaced by cheaper fiberglass substitutes, and wooden Lenj construction workshops are being transformed into repair shops for older Lenjes. The philosophy, ritualistic background, culture, and traditional knowledge of sailing in the Persian Gulf are gradually fading, although

some of the associated ceremonies continue to be practiced in a few places.

Lenjes were initially used for long routes, for instance to China and Africa, but now, locals usually embark on shorter journeys in the Persian Gulf. Nowadays, many goods such as electronics and home appliances, textiles and foodstuff are transported between Iranian ports, Dubai and Oman.

It is said that a Lenj takes some two years to build, depending on its size that reveals portions of its hardship, care and detail of the craftsmanship. Moreover, different kinds of wood are needed for the various components that are mainly imported from India and Africa as there are no forests in southern Iran.

Twin Ab-Anbar undergoes restoration

TEHRAN – A twin historical Ab-Anbar (cistern) in the city of Na’in, the central province of Isfahan, has undergone



been the main source of drinking water storage throughout history, especially

in the last few years, as a result of low rainfall and water shortage, their restoration has always been a priority, he mentioned.

The historical structure has been inscribed on the national heritage list.

The term Ab-Anbar is common throughout Iran as a designation for roofed underground water cisterns. It associates with water management systems in arid areas that are reliant on permanent springs or seasonal rainwater.

Such underground reservoirs or Ab-Anbars are parts of the iconic qanat systems, which rely on snow-fed streams flowing down from surrounding mountains.

Qanats, according to UNESCO, provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.

The history of Na’in dates back to nearly 2000 years, which makes it one of the oldest continuously settled towns on the Iranian plateau.

Iranian researchers register patent for anti-coronavirus intranasal mask

TEHRAN – A team of Iranian researchers has managed to register a worldwide patent for an anti-coronavirus intranasal mask.

The pattern published by the World Intellectual Property on April 7, has been designed and developed by Meisam Akhlaghdoust, Alireza Zali, Atousa Hashemi, Neusha Arang, Fatemehzahra Hashemi, Ilia Mehrizi, and Poorya Davoodi.

Coronaviruses can be transmitted to others through droplets that are spread by coughing or exhaling from the mouth and nose of a Covid-19 infected person.

The most effective way to protect yourself and others is to wear a mask.

Studies show that prolonged wearing of face masks can result in some airway and skin allergies. Regular use of face masks in low-density populated areas or hot environments can be frustrating and the cause of dyspnea.



Lack of recognition in identity, face, and even a smile or various facial expressions can lead to future psychological problems.

Wearing face masks is impossible and difficult in the environments such as hair salons and

restaurants where a person has to remove his mask which makes the person more exposed to the virus.

This invention has 5 layers of inhalation and exhalation air filtration which is inserted into the nasal cavities by two spiral cones.

It is interesting to note that the invention has won the silver prize at the First International Invention and Innovation Competition which was held online in Geneva, Switzerland in July 2021.

Free insurance coverage for nomads on agenda

TEHRAN – A total budget of 30 trillion rials (nearly \$115.3 million) has been proposed to provide nomads with free insurance in the next year's budget bill (March 2023-March 2024), Abbas Papizadeh, head of the Nomads Affairs Organization, has said.

Also, up to 150 billion rials (around \$576,000) will be allocated to nomadic women to run small businesses and more solar panels will be distributed in nomadic areas than in previous years, he stated, IRIB reported on Sunday.

There are over 1.5 million nomads in Iran today. Nomads generally are on the move in search of pasture and water for cattle, set up tents, and nurture livestock. Solar panels generate enough power to help families meet their needs like charging emergency lights and cell phones and using the TV in the deserts and plains.

Iranian nomads live in Fars, Chaharma-

hal-Bakhtiari, Khuzestan, Isfahan, and some other provinces. They usually change between their winter quarters in steppes (Qishlaq or warmer areas) and summer quarters in green mountainous regions (Yeylaq or cooler countryside).

For instance, Qashqai tribe that is a combination of Turk, Kurd, Lori, and Arab ethnic groups mostly settle in Fars, Khuzestan, and Isfahan provinces and speak both Persian and Qashqai languages. They are famed for their attractive, colorful clothing, circular group dances, feasts, and celebrations.

Each year, they make an epic journey of about 480km from the pastures in the north of Shiraz to the south of the country, near the Persian Gulf, where it is warmer for the winter.

Massive Bakhtiari tribes mostly live in Khuzestan, Lorestan, Isfahan, and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari provinces. They have been mi-



grating over the Zagros Mountain range for hundreds of years.

Shahsavans, Azari-Turkish pastoralists who are moving between the Mughan steppe of Azarbaijan and the Sabalan Mountains, are famed for their genuine lifestyle and ceremonies.

No foreign Covid vaccines purchased since Nov. 2021



TEHRAN – The Ministry of Health has not purchased any foreign coronavirus vaccines since November 2021, deputy health minister Mohammad Mehdi Gooya, has said.

All the contracts that the Ministry of Health for the purchase of vaccines is signed with domestic companies, and purchases are done based on the contracts, he stated.

So far, Iran imported more than 161,933,728 doses of vaccine to combat the pandemic.

Four types of vaccines have

been imported to Iran, the largest amount of which is related to Sinopharm with 133.4 million doses, accounting for 82.3 percent of the total imported vaccines.

AstraZeneca vaccine is the second vaccine imported the most, amounting to 23.3 million, holding 14 percent share of the total vaccines imported to the country.

Moreover, 4.9 million doses of Sputnik-V have been imported to Iran, which holds a 2.5 percent share of the imported vaccines. In addition to 125,000 doses of the In-

dian vaccine of Bharat.

Domestically-made vaccines

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

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

A total of 21 knowledge-based companies are operating to produce 50 million doses of vaccine monthly and 600 million doses annually, IRNA quoted Bahram Daraei as saying on March 9.

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

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

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

Moreover, the Iranian-Australian Spikogen vaccine and Pastu Covac, are other vaccines, which have received the emergency use license and are being used in mass vaccination.

Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has said the country is currently exporting domestically-made vaccines for coronavirus to ten African countries.

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

Two forest parks to be created to help fight SDSs

From page 1 ► factors are involved in the occurrence and severity of this phenomenon which is mainly caused by excessive consumption of water and drying up reservoirs.

The internal dust sources are estimated at 34.6 million hectares, generating an average amount of 4.22 million tons of dust per year, about 1.460 million hectares are dried wetlands.

Some 4.23 million tons of dust are raised per year, which means the loss of soil fertility will hit the agricultural sector.

Moreover, 300 million hectares in the neighboring countries are giving rise to SDSs, which transport dust into Iran. The total dust density is estimated at about 150 million tons.

In fact, the dust is raised from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in the



northeast as well as Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan in the south, southwest, and west.

In the past four years, about €370 million has been spent by the National Development Fund to combat SDSs, which had good results, but it seems that the annual credit is declining as conditions improve, Tahmasebi said.

Water in Muslim Iranian culture

Part 1

Water constitutes an essential element in Islamic ritual, as a means of purification, and serves as a common theme in folklore.

The holy Quran, in describing the creation of life, indicates that water is its basis: "And of water We have made everything living" (21:30); and "Allah has created every animal of water; some of them go upon their bellies, some upon two feet, and some upon four" (24:45).

Tabari discusses the Quranic verse "And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and His throne was upon the water" (11:7). On the authority of many early commentators, he states that God first created water and from water created the heavens and the earth.

A folktale tells how, when God willed the universe into being, he first created a substance which, when he looked upon it, became water, from which the heavens and the earth emerged.

According to tradition (hadith), the Prophet was asked about the beginning of the creation, whereupon he replied: "God existed and there was nothing before him, his throne being on the water. He then created the heavens and the earth".

Water, the source of life, is indispensable for the growth of crops, and prayer for rain is well known in Islam. A tradition states that when the people complained to the Prophet of the lack of rain, he took them out to the place of prayer and prayed for rain.

The bounties of rain are repeatedly stressed in the Quran: "The water Allah has sent down from the heaven whereby he has revived the earth after its death" (2:164). "[He] has sent down water from the heaven, and thereby produced fruits as a provision for you" (2:22).

Water is used for ritual purification in Islam: "He might purify you" (8:11). Purification is required before prayer, and a hadith states that being purified is half of faith. In another, the Prophet is reported as saying, "When a believer washes his face during ablution, every sin he contemplated with his eyes will come forth from his face

along with the water; when he washes his hands, every sin they wrought will come forth from his hands with the water; when he washes his feet, every sin toward which his feet have walked will come out with the water, with the result that he will come forth pure from offenses".

According to its suitability for use in ritual purification, water is of two kinds. Ma-e motlaq ("absolute" water) is suitable, while ma-e mozaf ("solute" water, to which something has been added, such as rose water) is not. Ma-e motlaq can be either running or standing. Running water is considered pure for ritual purposes unless its color, taste, or smell indicates the presence of impurities.

Standing water in ponds or reservoirs whose capacity exceeds a certain limit (one korr, or about 350 liters) is the equivalent of running water. Water in a vessel or container is polluted by admixtures. Well water, a kind of standing water, is considered pure unless obviously polluted.

Detailed rules are prescribed for removing various kinds of impurities. Rights regarding water and related matters are discussed elaborately in Islamic jurisprudence.

Revelation (tanzil) is likened to "water sent down from the heaven by God". Both are considered lifegiving. As water is indispensable for the preservation and growth of life, knowledge is vital for the soul.

As water washes away the material pollution from the body, knowledge purifies the soul from spiritual impurities. On the verse "He sendeth down Water from the sky, so that valleys flow according to their measure" (13:17), Ghazali states, in comment on the text, that water is gnosis and the valleys are hearts. On the verse "If they trod the right path, We should have given them to drink of water in abundance" (72:16), Majlesi states in comment that water is knowledge. Several verses of the Quran and traditions of the Prophet are similarly interpreted by Majlesi.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

COVID-19 UPDATES ON APRIL 24

New cases	528
New deaths	13
Total cases	7,216,040
Total deaths	140,975
New hospitalized patients	136
Patients in critical condition	1,046
Total recovered patients	6,966,954
Diagnostic tests conducted	50,811,054
Doses of vaccine injected	148,631,915

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

“Noora” vaccine successfully passing first phase of clinical trial

“Noora” coronavirus vaccine, domestically made by Baqi-yatallah University of Medical Sciences affiliated to the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), is successfully passing the first phase of the clinical trial.

The vaccine is well undergoing the first phase of human testing, he noted, adding, the first phase of human testing lasts 2 months, so far more than a month has passed, IRNA reported on Saturday.

He stressed the need to integrate the human testing phase of the Noora vaccine and said that “this must be done to make the vaccine available for the mass vaccination; while many vaccine producing countries have done the same.”

واکسن نورا مرحله پایانی فاز اول تست انسانی را طی می کند

تهران - رئیس دانشگاه علوم پزشکی بقیه الله گفت: تزریق دز اول واکسن نورا به تمام داوطلبان انجام شد و دز دوم هم به نیمه تزریق رسیده است. دکتر حسن ابوالقاسمی روز شنبه در گفت و گو با ایرنا، روند فعالیت کارآزمایی بالینی واکسن نورا را مطلوب ارزیابی کرد و افزود: این واکسن به نحو مطلوبی در حال طی کردن فاز اول تست انسانی است. وی با یادآوری اینکه طبق برنامه ریزی انجام شده طول دوره مرحله اول تست انسانی ۲ ماه است، ادامه داد: تاکنون بیش از یک ماه از این دوره سپری شده است. وی بر لزوم ادغام مراحل تست انسانی واکسن نورا تاکید کرد و گفت: این کار باید صورت گیرد و بسیاری از کشورهای تولید کننده واکسن هم از این ظرفیت بهره بردند.

He has won major Japanese awards for his books, almost twenty of which have been turned into films and TV series.