

Iran Riding High on Diplomacy

▶ Page 3

Report

Sanctions censured at BRICS Summit

At the 14th BRICS Summit which was hosted by Beijing, Chinese President Xi Jinping denounced the “abuse of sanctions” against other nations, saying “we must abandon Cold War mentality and block confrontation and oppose unilateral sanctions and the abuse of sanctions,” Xi said.

“The global economic recovery remains a tortuous process while peace and security become more salient problems.”

Speaking at the conference, held via video link, Xi Jinping calling on the other BRICS members to rise to their responsibilities in the world warning that “our meeting today comes at a crucial moment of choice for the future of humanity: as key emerging markets and developing countries, BRICS countries must rise to our responsibility,”

BRICS is an emerging economic market group comprising of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, who pledged to remain committed to multilateralism and agreed actively advance the BRICS membership expansion process.

The combined group of BRICS countries possess a total of \$27.5 trillion in economic power.

Experts say the group can lay the foundation on how to counter the United States’ hegemonic ambitions and sinister economic policies that bring instability and destruction across the world, including Washington’s use of its dollar to try and dominate global economic affairs. ▶ Page 5

Opinion

Promising future ahead of Iran volleyball team

By Masoud Hosseini

TEHRAN – Iran volleyball team registered the U.S. side’s first defeat Thursday night in Pool 4 of the 2022 Volleyball Nations League, courtesy of excellent performance of their young players.

Young players namely, Amin Esmailnezhad, Amirhossein Esfandiari, Mahdi Jelveh, Amirreza Sarlak, Amirhossein Toukhteh and Morteza Sharifi have a bright future ahead and have shown that they are ready to fill vacancy of stars Saeid Marouf, Mohammad Mousavai, Amir Ghafour, Shahram Mahmoudi and Farhad Ghaemi and.

Iran volleyball team have more other stars including Javad Karimi, Meysam Salehi, Poria Yali and Aliasghar Mojarad, who have not been invited to the national team due to the injury, could be added to the team.

Iran coach Behrouz Ataei was under huge pressure after losing to the Netherlands, Japan and Bulgaria but he made a splash by sweeping powerhouses the U.S. in the competition.

Iran volleyball federation’s long term is to win a medal in the world championship and Olympic Games and has invested heavily in young generation.

Iran volleyball team will likely suffer more defeats in the upcoming competitions but the federation has chosen the right path.

There is a promising future ahead of Iran volleyball.

Iran ranks 22nd among world’s top shipping fleets: UNCTAD

TEHRAN – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in its latest maritime report dubbed “Review of Maritime Transport 2021”, has put Iran in 22nd place among the countries with the largest shipping fleet based on deadweight tonnage.

Based on the mentioned report, Iran’s ranking has not changed in 2021 compared to the previous year. The capacity of Iran’s shipping fleet is more than many industrialized countries such as France, Italy, Canada, and the Netherlands.

Iran urges Turkey to raise voice against Israeli ridiculous allegations

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Friday rebuffed accusations made by the Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid against Iran.

Khatibzadeh ridiculed the baseless accusations and allegations made by Lapid in Ankara at a joint press conference with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu as part of a “ridiculous fabricated scenario” to destroy relations between the two Muslim countries of Iran and Turkey.

The spokesman labeled this counterfeit scenario as a conspiracy by Tel Aviv to divert the public opinion in Turkey and other regional countries from the Palestinian cause and the terrorist acts of this child-killing regime.

The diplomat added, “Unfortunately, about a week ago, a psychological operation was launched to engage the media in fictitious scenarios using incorrect and biased information to prepare the ground for the Israeli foreign minister’s propagated scenario.”

Khatibzadeh noted that Iran’s neighbor Turkey is well aware of the baseless allegations made by the lying Israeli terrorist regime and is not expected to remain silent in the face of these divisive allegations. ▶ Page 2

Winners of 5 International Photo Award announced with tribute to Abbas Kiarostami

TEHRAN – Winners of the 3rd edition of the 5 International Photo Award were announced Wednesday evening with a tribute to world-renowned Iranian filmmaker and photographer Abbas Kiarostami.

The award was established by the Amordad Pishro Parsian Cultural and Art Institute in the categories of photography and video art.

Maryam Raufimanesh and Sajjad Dadpur received the award in the photography and video art categories respectively in a special ceremony held at the Film Museum of Iran.

IRGC names new intelligence chief

TEHRAN – The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) on Thursday appointed a new intelligence chief, replacing Hossein Ta’eb.

The new chief of the IRGC intelligence body is General Mohammad Kazemi.

Kazemi took over the post upon a decree by IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami, IRGC spokesman Ramezan Sharif said in a statement.

“The Guards’ chief Major General Hossein

Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Sweden, Vietnam, Oman, Malaysia, Qatar, and Nigeria also have smaller shipping fleets than Iran.

The Islamic Republic currently has 246 vessels carrying the national flag and eight foreign flag vessels with a total capacity of 19,251,146 tons. The total capacity of the Iranian shipping fleet has increased by 5.5 percent in 2021, according to the said report.

The data indicates that the Iranian shipping fleet accounts for 0.91 percent of the world’s

total shipping capacity.

UNCTAD has put the total number of the world’s commercial ships, including tankers, container ships, and bulk carriers at the end of 2021 at 99,800.

The total capacity of the mentioned ships is estimated at 2,134,640,000 tons in 2021, which has increased by three percent over the previous year. In 2020, the cargo capacity of the world’s shipping fleet was estimated at 2,071,638,000 tons. ▶ Page 4

Iranian cave an art studio for prehistorical humans, archaeologist says

TEHRAN – Iranian spelunkers and archaeologists have discovered several modest artworks within the dark chambers of Ali Sadr, a gigantic water-filled cavern widely believed to date from the Jurassic era.

“A number of paintings have been identified on the rock walls of Ali Sadr cave. Bearing different spectrums and patterns, the paintings probably belong to prehistoric times,” Mehr quoted Iranian archaeologist Esmail Hemmati-Azandaryani as saying on Wednesday.

“The paintings were initially found in a place closed to travelers last year when we were conducting three-dimensional photographs of the cave,” the archaeologist said.

Spelunkers and archaeologists have discovered about 25 to 30 motifs in different color spectrums of green, orange, yellow, and black, he said.

“These paintings are of high significance. They depict archers hunting deer, deer, beasts of prey, as well as human beings riding on horse-like animals.”

Preliminary studies show other flowers, some plants, or the blood of animals have been used as the pigments to draw. However, more studies are needed to obtain more complete results and pigment analysis, Hemmati-Azandaryani said.

Moreover, the archaeologist said there are many similar examples abroad, such as the ones in Lascaux caves in France and Altamira

in Spain.

The gigantic cave embraces a huge matrix of sunless channels, ponds, grottoes, and water passages which are stretched along with imposing rock formations and stalactite-covered tops in a span of several kilometers.

Sightseeing there is connected with traversing well-lit labyrinths of waterways via paddle boats, walking on subterranean islets, as well as observing rock carvings of hunting scenes, artifacts, paintings, and vessels that are associated with prehistoric troglodytes.

Ali Sadr can be reached after some one hour of riding from Hamadan through the countryside. There are usually shuttles and taxis as well. The most recommended time to pay a visit is early in the morning, particularly on Fridays or holidays when it’s likely to be more crowded.

Iran is geologically a part of the Alpine-Himalayan organic belt. The country features a variety of mountain ranges and hundreds of caves with Ali Sadr, Karaftu, Katalah Khor, and Quri Qaleh amongst the most notables.



Iran FM: We hope Vienna nuclear talks would be resumed soon

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Thursday that Iran hopes that the talks for reviving the 2015 nuclear deal would be resumed in Vienna soon.

Amir Abdollahian made the remarks in a joint press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who visited Tehran late on Wednesday. ▶ Page 2

From Inside

- Raisi addresses BRICS summit **P2**
- Putin will surely visit Iran, but exact date not yet known: Kremlin **P2**
- Iran FM voices sympathy with Afghans over deadly quake **P3**
- Iran, Oman foreign ministers hold phone talks **P3**
- Shipping of oil, petroleum products doubled in 7 months **P4**
- Iran-Kazakhstan annual trade rises 29% **P4**
- Over 95% of irrigation parts, equipment domestically produced **P4**
- Ancient festival of Tirgan held in central Iran **P6**
- Iran eyes UNESCO tag for Bastam historical complex **P6**
- Tehran asks Kabul to be committed to water treaty **P7**
- \$156m allocated to patients with rare diseases **P7**
- Iranian Artists Forum to hold retrospective of actress Meryl Streep **P8**
- “Death of Camus” comes to Iranian bookstores **P8**

Report

How desertification control affects rural migration?

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Ignoring desertification, in addition to rising sand and dust storms, causes unfavorable climatic conditions for living and leads to the migration of villagers.

If farms in these areas are not protected, agriculture will not be possible due to the influx of dust and dust storms, Mojtaba Akhavan, advisor to the head of the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization said.

Conditions must be provided for the locals’ living, their agricultural and livestock lands must be preserved, and reverse migration must take place. Of course, reverse migration is not just a matter of education and income, but the provision of the people’s basic needs such as air and water.

When a dust storm in the capital disrupts people’s lives, people in some areas in the country such as southern Kerman, and Sistan-Baluchestan, spend half their lives in these difficult conditions with respiratory problems, when life turns into a “disaster”, he lamented.

The main approach of the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization is conservation and rehabilitation, and the Office of Desert Affairs has been defining projects such as planting projects or managing runoff for years and implementing programs in this regard, he explained.

In gardens, windbreaks are constructed around the fields. In this way, we provide seedlings free of charge to farmers in areas such as south of Kerman, south of Yazd, Sistan-Baluchestan, etc. to cover their farms by planting seedlings, he noted. ▶ Page 7



Iran FM: We hope Vienna nuclear talks would be resumed soon

From page 1 ▶ “Plans are on the agenda of the Foreign Ministry, and we hope that through realism by the American side we can reach the final phase for finalizing the deal,” Amir Abdollahian said, according to ISNA.

Amir Abdollahian added, “Here once again I am willing to insist that the Islamic Republic of Iran is serious to reaching a good, strong and durable deal, and we will continue the path of diplomacy, which is a correct path.”

Iran’s foreign minister also said Lavrov backed Tehran’s position in the Vienna talks and insisted on Russia’s position for full restoration of the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The Vienna talks to restore the nuclear deal have been on hold since March. However, Iran and its negotiating partners have been exchanging messages through European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and his deputy Enrique Mora.

Amir Abdollahian added, “We are pursuing the full restoration of the deal with no concession on our position.”

Lavrov also said, “All illegal sanctions imposed against Iran, which contravene the JCPOA, must be removed. We hope the United States would make a logical decision, though we are not very confident in this regard.”

Iran insists on political solution to Ukraine crisis

On the Ukraine crisis, the Iranian foreign minister also said Tehran shuns “double standard policy” and it does not see the war as a solution to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

“We welcome political dialogue for resolving the Ukraine crisis,” Amir Abdollahian insisted.

“Within this framework so far I have been carrying message of Ukraine’s foreign minister to my Russian counterpart for two times and we hope that the sides return to the negotiating table and this crisis is resolved through dialogue,” Amir Abdollahian stated.

Rendering sanctions ineffective

Iran and Russia are subject to severe sanctions by the United States.

“We have had important agreements in recent months on rendering the sanctions ineffective, but they must be acted on and there is no need to express them in front of the media,” Amir Abdollahian said when asked about Tehran-Moscow moves in countering U.S. sanctions.

Iran blames Washington’s indecisiveness as the chief reason behind the prolongation of

the Vienna talks, as its refuses to remove all post-JCPOA sanctions on Iran and avoids to give guarantees it will not abandon the deal again.

Working on great deal initiative

Lavrov also said Iran and Russia are working on an initiative proposed by the Iranian president for “a great deal”.

He also said Moscow and Tehran are firm to deepen their ties. Lavrov added that despite sanctions pressure by the United States value of trade ties between the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran has reached to 4 billion dollars.

The Russian foreign minister went on to say that the economic and trade relation between Iran and Russia increased by 80 percent during the last year.

Russia ready to foster “cooperation dialogue” between Iran and Persian Gulf states

Lavrov also said Russia sees it as its duty to stabilize the Persian Gulf region and “we are ready to establish cooperation dialogue between Iran and Persian Gulf Arab states.”

Lavrov thanks Iran for correct understanding of Ukraine crisis

The Russian chief diplomat went on to say that in his meeting with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi he had elaborated on the conflict with Ukraine and “thank Iran for correct understanding of the roots of this problem.”

The Westerners under the leadership of the U.S. are seeking to use Ukraine as a threat to Russian territory and thereby contain Russia, Lavrov opined.

Iran has blamed NATO expansion to the East for the current Ukraine crisis. However, officials in Tehran have been insisting on resolving the bloody conflict between Russia and Ukraine through dialogue.

Russia started to a “special military operation” against Ukraine on February 24 to what it called “de-Nazify” the country.

Extraterritorial sanctions are illegitimate

After his talks with Lavrov, Amir Abdollahian tweeted, “Substantial talks with FM Lavrov to further enhance Iran-Russia cooperation. Also discussed regional and int’l developments.”

Iran’s chief diplomat also wrote he and Lavrov “stressed that arbitrary and extraterritorial sanctions are illegitimate.”

In his tweet, Amir Abdollahian also said, “We agreed to intensify joint efforts to expedite full implementation of our agreements.”

exact dates are yet to be determined,” the spokesman said, when asked to comment on the possibility of Putin visiting Iran and participating in an Astana format summit.

On Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in a joint press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed hope that the Iran-Russia-Turkey summit would eventually convene in Tehran.

Plans to hold such a meeting were announced even before the novel coronavirus pandemic, but the event had to be postponed many times since.

parties seem to have a show of support based on fleeting expediency, in reality they know what a dangerous regime they are facing,” Khatibzadeh pointed out.

On Thursday, Lapid thanked Turkey for foiling an Iranian plot to harm Israelis in Istanbul and claimed the effort was still under way.

Turkish authorities arrested five Iranians suspected of planning attacks on Israelis ahead of Lapid’s visit, Turkish media claimed earlier in the day.

EU’s Borrell in Tehran for JCPOA talks

TEHRAN – European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell arrived in Tehran on Friday night for talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and other Iranian officials dealing with the Vienna talks intended to revive the 2015 nuclear deal

The talks to restore the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), began in April 2021. However, the talks have been on hold since March. The negotiating partners say most technical issues have been resolved and it

is time for Iran and the U.S. to take political decisions.

“I am travelling to Tehran, as coordinator of the JCPOA, to meet my counterpart Amir Abdollahian and other relevant Iranian authorities,” Borrell tweeted on Friday.

Borrell and his deputy Enrique Mora have been acting as intermediary between Iran and the United States to restore the nuclear deal.

Iran has been insisting that the U.S. should lift all sanctions that have been imposed since former



U.S. president Donald Trump abandoned the JCPOA in May 2018, delist the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) from foreign terrorist organizations and give assurances that it will not quit the agreement again.

Borrell said, “Diplomacy is the only way to go back to full implementation of the deal and to reverse current tensions.”

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh also issued a short statement on Friday saying the visit by Borrell takes place within the framework of current talks between Iran and

the EU, the status of negotiations for lifting sanctions on Iran as well exchange views on certain regional and international issues.

The news of Borrell’s visit to Tehran came a day after the Iranian foreign minister expressed hope that the Vienna talks would resume soon.

Amir Abdollahian and Borrell, whose official title is High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, have been holding regular phone conversations on the JCPOA.

Iranian diplomat says release of Afghan assets shouldn’t be politicized

TEHRAN – Iran’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has said the Afghan assets frozen by the U.S. belong to the Afghan people and that their release must not be “politicized”.

Speaking to the United Nations Security Council on Thursday about the “Situation in Afghanistan,” Majid Takht Ravanchi also said, “The sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council on specific individuals and entities in Afghanistan must not impede humanitarian, economic, or developmental cooperation with Afghanistan.”

The text of Takht Ravanchi’s remarks is as follows:

“I would like to begin by expressing our heartfelt condolences to the people of Afghanistan and families of victims of the recent earthquake in Khost, Afghanistan. We stand with the people of Afghanistan at this difficult time and have already dispatched two airplane shipments of humanitarian aid to the earthquake-affected areas.

I thank the briefers for their briefings.

We take note of the Secretary-General’s recent report on the situation in Afghanistan.

According to the report, in early 2022, humanitarian needs continued to rise, with 24.4 million people, or 59 percent of the population were in need of assistance, up from 18.4 million at the start of 2021.

As a neighbor to Afghanistan, Iran has used its capacities and resources to help the people of Afghanistan overcome the challenges they have faced. We have been hosting millions of refugees who have unfortunately received minimal international assistance in the last 40 years. The latest example of our assistance to Afghan refugees has been the extensive vaccination against Covid-19 of Afghans living in Iran. Neighbors of Afghanistan, including Iran, should not feel all the burdens associated with receiving Afghan refugees. Other countries should welcome the refugees as well.

We support the United Nations’

efforts to meet Afghanistan’s expanding humanitarian needs including the system-wide Transitional Engagement Framework to provide basic human needs.

We emphasize the importance of the international community’s continued engagement with Afghanistan, particularly in supporting the people’s humanitarian and development needs, and we urge the international community, particularly donor countries, to continue to provide all possible and necessary assistance to the Afghan people. For our part, in the course of last months, Iran has provided more than 30 consignments of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

As we have repeatedly stated, Afghanistan’s frozen assets belong to the Afghan people, and their release, which is crucial for helping the Afghan economy and saving lives, should not be politicized or conditional in any way. We highlight the need for taking relevant actions, such as reopening channels of financial and in-kind support and resources to the Afghan people, as well as exploring real alternatives for unfreezing Afghanistan’s financial assets and improving access to lawful banking services. Similarly, sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council on specific individuals and entities in Afghanistan must not impede humanitarian, economic, or developmental cooperation with Afghanistan.

Attacks claimed or attributed to Daesh or its affiliated groups have recently increased and spread in Afghanistan. We are deeply concerned about such terrorist activities. This trend underlines the international community’s continued demand that Taliban must commit to fighting terrorism and ensure that Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for terrorist groups like Daesh and Al-Qaida that have been responsible for heinous acts of terror, not only in Afghanistan, but throughout the region and beyond.

Equally critical, efforts to combat drugs trafficking must be a priority. Every year, Iran is directly affected by this menace

and pays a high price for it. We welcome Taliban’s decision to outlaw all drugs. However, given the fact that Taliban has not taken the necessary precautionary measures to confront this year’s harvest, as well as the unavailability of information on the seizure of drugs and arrest of drug traffickers, concerns about the impact of the illegal drug trade remain strong.

The absolute need for the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan, representing the country’s multi-ethnic society, is crystal clear. The people of Afghanistan from different religious and ethnic backgrounds, especially the younger generation who will lead Afghanistan in the future, must be assured that they have a say in the affairs of their country. This would not be possible unless an inclusive government is established and sufficient attention is paid to Afghanistan’s political and social structures that can involve people from all walks of life including ethnicities, men, women, and youth.

Despite repeated international calls, however, Taliban has failed to make significant efforts to ensure the government’s true ethnic and political inclusiveness. Formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan is a prerequisite and a critical component for the international recognition.

The SG’s report indicates that many of Taliban’s decisions have weakened fundamental human rights, particularly those of women and girls. Taliban should protect all human rights, particularly the rights of women and minorities as well as the right to education.

We continue to consult with Afghanistan’s neighbors, as well as regional and international partners, including the United Nations, in order to assist Afghanistan in achieving long-term peace, security, and stability.

Finally, we support UNAMA’s efforts to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan in accordance with its mandate.”

President makes speech at BRICS summit

TEHRAN — At the invitation of his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Friday virtually addressed BRICS plus summit, emphasizing the importance of the bloc in global development.

Below are excerpts from Raisi’s speech:

I would like to congratulate His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China, on his “successful presidency and positive holding of the BRICS Summit.

The current intertwined world faces new and diverse challenges that affect the progress of world friendship and peace. Emerging crises such as the coronavirus pandemic, climate change, as well as



regional and international conflicts have made interaction between countries doubly necessary.

Conflicting global trends, unilateralism, nationalistic partialities, and challenges such as sanctions and coercive economic action underscore the importance of creating and strengthening new institutions alongside the United Nations,

while respecting the sovereignty and national interests of nations, in order to take important steps towards the realization of a ‘society with a common future.’

As a leading institution consisting of large emerging economies, the BRICS has been able to shape new trends in the world by providing appropriate models and initiatives.

With complementary economies and cultural diversity, BRICS members can meet mutual needs and share their national and indigenous development experiences to enhance global prosperity and peace.

The plans and policies of BRICS reflected in its statements and documents show that it is able

to address a wide range of issues related to the concerns of developing societies.

The Islamic Republic of Iran firmly believes in global justice and considers the transformation of this transcendent ideal into a comprehensive discourse on the world stage an undeniable necessity.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a country with a rich history of active presence in international institutions and initiatives, with vast economic, human and natural capacities and also inspired by indigenous models, has been able, with the help of a culture of independence and rights, in the path of national development.

Putin will surely visit Iran, but exact date not yet known: Kremlin



TEHRAN – Russian President Vladimir Putin will certainly visit Iran at some point, but the exact date of this visit is yet unknown, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has told TASS.

“He will certainly [go there] over time, but

Iran urges Turkey to raise voice against Israeli ridiculous allegations

From page 1 ▶ “This regime has repeatedly shown how unreliable it is,” the diplomat reminded Turkey.

The spokesman restated that Tehran’s response to the Israeli assassinations and acts of sabotage will always remain firm, authoritative and without threatening the security of ordinary citizens and the security of other countries.

“The theatrics of this terrorist regime are not believed by anyone, and even if some

Iran riding high on diplomacy

TEHRAN – Last week, Iranian diplomacy made great strides in diversifying the country's foreign relations. several important calls were made between Iran's chief diplomat and foreign counterparts at a time when Tehran was hosting Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Lavrov arrived in Iran late on Wednesday for talks over a range of issues, most notably the enhancement of economic cooperation. Lavrov met with President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian. In his meeting with Lavrov, Raisi said that the ongoing meetings and talks between the presidents and officials of Iran and Russia show the serious will of the two countries to form a new era of strategic cooperation for the two nations, including in economic fields.

Lavrov's visit to Tehran was another indication of Iran's willingness to boost ties with neighboring countries in line with what came to be known as “neighborhood policy,” a foreign policy agenda articulated by the Raisi administration that aims to upgrade Iran's relations with neighboring countries and non-Western countries. To this end, the Raisi administration succeeded in ironing out Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which was made possible due to backing from Russia in the early weeks of Raisi's presidency.



Iran seems to have its eyes on BRICS. The issue of Iran cementing ties with the group of emerging economies featured high in Iran's recent diplomatic interactions with China and Russia, the two pillars of BRICS.

In the meeting with Raisi, the Russian foreign minister appeared to be hinting at boosting Iran's relations with BRICS. Referring to the importance of the membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Lavrov stressed his country's support for the expansion of Iran's role-playing in regional and international organizations. In his meeting with Amir Abdollahian, Lavrov made it clear that Russia supports Iran's cooperation with BRICS.

“Amir Abdollahian and Lavrov also held talks over boosting Iran's cooperation with regional and international organizations and forums, including the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, and BRICS. The Russian foreign minister stressed his country's support in this regard,” the Iranian foreign ministry said in a statement.

China invited President Raisi to address the BRICS summit. Amir Abdollahian spoke over the phone with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi to thank him for this invitation, among other things. The call was part of diplomatic efforts undertaken over the last few days.

“Amir Abdollahian thanked China for inviting Iran's president to attend the upcoming summit of the BRICS grouping. He welcomed China's initiative for global development and security,” said the Iranian foreign ministry, adding, “The Iranian foreign minister expressed hope that during Beijing's presidency at BRICS, multilateral cooperation will expand.”

Chinese Foreign Minister and

State Councilor Wang Yi, for his part, welcomed the participation of President Ebrahim Raisi in the BRICS summit, saying the talks are aimed at shifting attention to emerging markets and economic solidarity among developing countries.

The Iranian foreign minister's last week agenda also included another phone call with Omani Foreign Minister Badr Al Busaidi in which the two top diplomats exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international issues. In this call, the Iranian foreign minister said that Iran puts emphasis on regional dialog and cooperation and it believes that regional nations must decide the future of the region.

Iran has played host to a flurry of diplomatic visits over the last few weeks. Pakistan's foreign minister, Turkmen President Serdar Berdimuhamedow, and the speaker of the Armenian parliament paid separate visits to Iran. And on Friday night, the European Union foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, will arrive in Tehran for talks on the stalled Vienna talks over reviving a 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“I am travelling to Tehran, as coordinator of the #JCPOA, to meet my counterpart @Amirabdollahian and other relevant Iranian authorities. Diplomacy is the only way to go back to full implementation of the deal and to reverse current tensions,” Borrell said on Twitter.

Azmoun, Taremi among Top 10 Asian players

TEHRAN – Iranian strikers Mehdi Taremi and Sardar Azmoun are among the top 10 Asian players, Four Four Two reported.

With a World Cup taking place in Asia for the first time in 20 years later this year – and with five Asian countries competing – it's worth boning up on who it's worth keeping an eye out for.

Sardar Azmoun (Bayer Leverkusen)

Probably spent too long in Russia, though starred for Zenit St.Petersburg, moving to Bayer Leverkusen only in January.

The 27 year-old, who averages almost a goal every 1.5 games for Iran, has been slow to settle in Germany but his undoubted class will surely shine soon. A striker's striker who is clinical in the area, Azmoun is approaching his peak and will relish the chance to face England, the US and Wales.

Mehdi Taremi (FC Porto)

When the striker joined Iran's biggest club Persepolis in 2014, he had established himself as a hard-working forward but there was little sign that he was on his way to becoming one of Asia's top forwards.

After joining Rio Ave in 2019, he scored 18 goals to earn a move to FC Porto where he has continued to score on a regular basis. Ready to lead Iran at the World Cup and enhance a burgeoning reputation.

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers win medals at Matteo Pellicone

TEHRAN – Iran's Mohammad Hosseinvand and Mohammad Rezaei won two medals at the Matteo Pellicone Greco-Roman competition.

In the 50kg weight class, Hosseinvand picked up the gold medal with his 11-7 come-from-behind win over Florin Tita from Romania.

Rezaei also defeated Niklas OEHLÉN from Sweden 7-2 in the 67kg.

The Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event is taking place in Rome, Italy from June 22-25.

Iran remain top in FIFA ranking

TEHRAN – Iran remained top spot in the latest FIFA Men's World Ranking released on Thursday. Dragan Skocic's team dropped two spots to 23rd but remained Asia's highest side.

Japan dropped one spot to 24th to remain second while Korea Republic moved up one rung to 28th.

A total of 280 international fixtures took place during this period with significant ramifications in the Ranking: of the 211 countries listed in the global standings, 177 experienced movement.

Next FIFA world ranking will be published on Aug. 25.

Brazil remained unchanged in the ranking, followed by Belgium, Argentina and France.

Making progress among the Top 10 are Spain (6th, plus 1), the Netherlands (8th, plus 2) and Denmark (10th, plus 1), while Italy (7th, minus 1) and Portugal (9th, minus 1) head in the opposite direction. For their part, Mexico (12th, minus 3) drop out of the Top 10 completely.

With a surge of 11 places, Kazakhstan (114th, plus 11) made the most progress in this edition. Cuba (167th, plus 10), Greece (48th, plus 7), and Malaysia (147th, plus 7) also made notable gains. Kosovo (106th, plus 1) and Comoros (126th, plus 2) continue their ascents to once again achieve all-time Ranking highs.

Tunisia beat Iran at IHF Women's Junior Handball World C'ship

TEHRAN – Iran were defeated by Tunisia 29-24 in Group B of the IHF Women's Junior Handball World Championship on Thursday.

Iran started the campaign with a 19-19 draw against Guinea.

The team will play Sweden on Saturday.

The 32 teams are divided into eight group of four teams.

The top two sides in each group will qualify for the main round, with pairings of two joining each other in the alphabetical order from the preliminary round groups (i.e., the Group A teams will face the Group B teams, Group C will play Group D, etc). Subsequently, the top two teams in each main round group will progress to the quarter-finals, as the other two sides will play the placement matches.

The Championship take place in three Slovenian cities Celje, Laško and Velenje from June 22 to July 3.

Jose Morais named Sepahan coach: IPL

TEHRAN – Jose Morais was appointed as new head coach of Sepahan football team on Thursday. The Portuguese coach has penned a three-year deal with the Isfahan based football club for an undisclosed fee.

Morais is the second Portuguese coach in the 2022/23 Iran Professional League season.

Morais's countryman Ricardo Sa Pinto was named as Esteghlal coach on Tuesday.

Morais replaced Moharram Navidkia, who left Sepahan at the of the Season.

Morais was assistant of Jose Mourinho at Inter Milan, Chelsea and Real Madrid.

Saket Elmahi new head coach of Havadar

TEHRAN – Saket Elhami was appointed as new head coach of Havadar football team on Thursday.

The 51-year-old coach was sacked as Nassaji coach in May after inspiring the team to win the title in Iran's Hazfi Cup in late April.

He replaced Reza Enayati in Tehran based club.

Havadar finished in 11th place in the 16-team league last season.

Iran FM voices sympathy with Afghans over deadly quake

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has expressed sympathy with the Afghan people over a deadly earthquake that claimed the lives of hundreds of Afghans.

“In the tradition of neighborliness and brotherliness, we stand by the honorable and patient people of Afghanistan in these tough times,” Amir Abdollahian wrote on Twitter.

He added, “I offer condolences to the families of the earthquake's victims and pray for divine mercy for the deceased and speedy recovery for those wounded. The Islamic Republic of Iran's consignments of humanitarian supplies will swiftly

be delivered to Afghanistan.”

Also, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi offered condolences over the earthquake in Afghanistan. In a message on Thursday, he said years of American occupation of Afghanistan prevented it from developing its urban and rural infrastructure and this issue has made rescue efforts even more difficult. He also said that he has instructed the Iranian Red Crescent Society to use everything in their power to help the quake-stricken people of Afghanistan.

Iranian Foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh also sent a message of sympathy to the people of Afghanistan over the deadly quake

in the country.

Khatibzadeh expressed the deep regret and sorrow of the government and people of Iran to the friendly and brotherly nation of Afghanistan, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The spokesman prayed for God's mercy for those who lost their lives in the tragic natural disaster and expressed sympathy with the bereaved families while also praying that the injured recover their health.

Khatibzadeh also expressed the readiness of Iran to provide any kind of needed assistance to the quake-hit people.

Raisi visits North Khorasan province

TEHRAN – In continuation of his weekend provincial visits, President Ebrahim Raisi traveled to North Khorasan province on Thursday morning to mark the 26th provincial tour of his administration.

Upon his arrival in Bojnourd, the capital of North Khorasan province, Raisi was received by the representative of the Leader in the province and the Friday prayer of Bojnourd, the governor-general and a group of local officials.

“North Khorasan has a very warm-hearted and hard-working people who really excelled in various fields,” Raisi said at the airport, according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

Referring to the infancy of North Khorasan province, the president said, “Although many years have passed

since the formation of the province, it still does not have the conditions that a province should have due to some deprivations.”

He added, “This is one of the points that our colleagues have examined before the visit that they had and met with the representative of the Supreme Leader in the province, the governor-general, esteemed representatives and managers, officials and experts.”

Stating that some problems, such as the large number of semi-finished projects in different provinces, including this province, are the concerns of the people, he said, “In this government, we are not looking for starting a new project, rather we are looking for the semi-finished projects that are making the people concerned”.

He called North Khorasan one of the

agricultural hubs of the country and specified, “Special attention should be paid to the agriculture of the province. Also, due to the border of the province, border markets are a good ground for trade and commerce with the neighboring country.”

During his trip, Raisi met with local people and officials and visited cultural and economic places.

He also delivered a speech before a group of North Khorasan's people.

“The people of this province excelled in the victory of the Islamic Revolution, during the Holy Defense..., and they are diligent people in production, which is very important in the country today,” he said.

Raisi also referred to the order of the Leader of the Revolution, who has said

the latest state of the talks intended to remove sanctions on Iran.

This is the second telephone conversations between the foreign ministers of Iran and Oman in less than a week.

In their previous conversation held on June 17, the two foreign ministers exchanged views over the most important bilateral issues as well as some matters of mutual interest at the regional and international levels, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

In the call, Amir Abdollahian referred to the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Oman and described it as a new turning point in ties between Tehran and Muscat.

He also spoke about the importance of expanding ties more than ever before from the viewpoint of the heads of the two governments. Amir Abdollahian then underlined the necessity of pursuing and implementing agreements reached by Iran and Oman during the visit.

While welcoming a visit by a delegation from Oman's government to Tehran for pursuing those deals, the Iranian foreign minister underscored the strong determination of both sides to press ahead with their cooperation.

Amir Abdollahian then described Oman's role in regional developments as important and

appreciated Muscat's efforts to establish peace and stability in the region.

The top Iranian diplomat also pointed to U.S. President Joe Biden's upcoming visit to the region, noting that officials in West Asia shouldn't let extra-regional countries to influence cooperation and stability here. “We emphasize dialog and cooperation in the region and believe that West Asian nations should decide its future themselves”, the Iranian foreign minister stressed.

Busaidi, for his part, underlined the need to implement bilateral agreements reached between Iran and Oman during Raisi's successful visit to Muscat. He said Oman trusts the new Iranian administration's approach which is based on the expansion of ties with the regional countries.

The Omani foreign minister also announced the formation of a working group inside his country's government to pursue the agreements with Iran reached during the Iranian president's visit to Masqat.

The two sides also welcomed the continuation of truce in Yemen. Amir Abdollahian underscored the need for complete removal of the siege on Yemeni people.

The Iranian foreign minister also informed his Omani counterpart on the latest developments in the talks intended to lift sanctions on Iran.

Iran ranks 22nd among world's top shipping fleets: UNCTAD

From page 1 ► According to UNCTAD, Greece has the largest shipping fleet in the world in terms of cargo capacity. The total cargo capacity of the Greek fleet is 373,417,000 tons. The total number of Greek ships is estimated at 4,705.

IRISL records the highest annual revenue generation

As Iran's flag carrier, the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) has recorded its highest annual income in the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20) despite the pandemic and the U.S. sanctions, earning \$1.5 billion.

According to IRISL Managing Director Mohammadreza Modares Khiabani, although the Iranian shipping fleet has been facing serious restrictions for accessing major ports around the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic and also the U.S. sanctions over the



past two years, great achievements have been made in this area.

Emphasizing the important role of the IRISL in maintaining and prosperity of the country's economy, Modares Khiabani said: "In spite of all issues and problems, the IRISL will continue its great work relying on the redoubled efforts and empathy of the group's employees at sea and on land."

Shipping of oil, petroleum products doubled in 7 months



TEHRAN – Head of National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) has said the amount of oil and petroleum products transported by the company's fleet has doubled over the past seven months, Mehr News Agency reported.

Presenting a report on NITC's performance in the new management period, Hossein Shiva underlined resolving human resource challenges, development and modernization of the fleet, focusing on the use of domestic products and equipment, and increasing the transportation of oil and petroleum products as some of the major achievements of the company under his

ICOFC to add 10 mcm/d to Iran's natural gas production capacity

TEHRAN – Managing director of Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC) has said the company is tasked to implement a force major development project on central fields in order to add 10 million cubic meters (mcm) per day to the country's natural gas production capacity.

As reported by the ICOFC portal, Mehdi Heidari said the necessary planning has been made in this regard and over 70 percent of the mentioned capacity will be provided by developing Aghaz and Dalan fields.

Heidari mentioned some of the important development measures that are going to be taken by his company in Aghaz and Dalan region, saying: "We are going to drill three

new wells in Aghaz field and three other new wells in Dey field to increase the production by a total of seven million cubic meters per day."

Aghaz and Dalan fields are gas fields located in Qir and Karzin County in central Fars Province.

Iranian Central Oil Fields Company is one of the five oil and gas producing companies and the second producer of gas in Iran.

The company is developing offshore fields in Lorestan, Kordestan, Kermanshah, Markazi, Qom, Ilam, Khorasan, East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Fars, Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province

TEHRAN– The value of trade between Iran and Kazakhstan rose 29 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Ruhollah Latifi put the annual trade between the two countries at 729,000 tons valued at \$265.2 million, with 71 percent growth in terms of weight.

Iran's export to Kazakhstan stood at 512,000 tons worth \$187.2 million, with 11 percent and 51 percent rise in value and weight, respectively, and Kazakhstan's export to Iran stood at 217,000 tons value at \$78 million, with 108 percent and 141 percent growth in value and weight, respectively, in the past year, the IRICA spokesman further stated.

He named agricultural, livestock and food products, construction materials, home appliances, oil products, electronic appliances, industrial machinery, bags, shoes and clothing, minerals and agricultural machinery as the major products Iran exported to Kazakhstan and basic goods, road tractors, and industrial machinery as the major items Iran imported from that country in the previous year.

Active economic diplomacy, trade development, strengthening of shipping lines and benefitting from railway capacities along with transit benefits can lead to the development of economic and political relations between the two countries, the official noted.

On Tuesday, Rahmatollah Khormali, the director-general of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s office of Central Asia, Caucasus, and Russia, had said that Iran and Kazakhstan aim to reach the bilateral trade of \$3 billion by the next three years.

Iran-Kazakhstan annual trade rises 29%



He made the remarks referring to the recent trip of the president of Kazakhstan to Iran in which nine cooperation MOUs were signed by the two sides.

"According to the goal set by the officials of Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Committee in late February, the value of trade between the two countries will increase to \$3 billion in the next three years, and the export of technical and engineering services is seen in this goal. There is also scope for cooperation in the field of oil", the official further stated.

Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev met Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran on Sunday, and nine MOUs were signed in the presence of the two presidents to expand cooperation in different areas between the two countries.

In the same day, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) hosted an Iran-Kazakhstan business forum.

The forum was attended by

ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie and Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Integration Bakhyt Sultanov.

Addressing the gathering, the ICCIMA head referring to the importance of Kazakhstan as a Central Asian country in Iran's foreign policy, said: "Given the resources and capabilities of the two countries in areas such as oil and gas, shipping in the Caspian Sea, petrochemicals, agriculture, metals and minerals, chemicals, animal husbandry, construction materials, pharmacy, technical and engineering services, development of relations with the Republic of Kazakhstan has a special significance for Iran.

Kazakhstan's active participation in world trade and membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has already enhanced the potential for trade relations between the two countries, Shafeie noted while complaining that unfortunately,

despite these potentials, the trade relations between the two countries is still low.

He then called for operational steps, including visa facilitation, to increase trade between the two sides.

Kazakhstan's deputy prime minister, for his part, emphasizing that Iran is a very important trade partner for Kazakhstan, said: "The peak of trade relations between the two countries was reached in 2016, when the worth of trade reached one billion dollars. But in 2020, due to some events, including the coronavirus outbreak, trade between the two countries fell by a quarter to about \$238 million."

"Last year we saw an 85-percent increase in trade between Iran and Kazakhstan, as trade between the two countries reached \$440 million. It should be noted that 99 percent of Kazakhstan's exports to Iran are grains, of which \$150 million is wheat export", Sultanov further stated.

Saying that in the first quarter of this year, the trade between the two countries grew by 43 percent, and 70 percent of Kazakh companies export their products to Iran, the official added: "We can expand our relations and reach \$3 billion value of bilateral trade."

"Given the Ukraine-Russia war, we are ready to increase the exports of grain, including wheat, to Iran," the Kazakh minister said and reiterated: "We can export at least \$1 billion of agricultural products and grains to Iran."

Shafeie and Sultanov had also met at the place of ICCIMA on May 23 to discuss mutual economic opportunities and challenges.

In that meeting, the two sides explored ways to increase the level of economic cooperation between the two countries.

Over 95% of irrigation parts, equipment domestically produced

TEHRAN– Over 95 percent of irrigation systems parts and equipment are produced inside the country, an official with Iran's Agriculture Ministry announced.

Making the remarks in a meeting to review the process of documenting the plan of modern irrigation systems development, Fariborz Abbasi, the acting head of Water and Soil Department of the ministry, said that capable manufacturers of irrigation equipment in the country, using new technologies, produce high quality and standard products.

The official also said that export permits will be issued for those manufacturers of irrigation parts and equipment whose products are competitive in global markets.

According to Abbasi, who is also the project manager of the Agriculture Ministry's smart irrigation systems development program, so far 2.6 million hectares of the country's farmlands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems.

He has said that completing semi-finished agriculture projects is the priority of his ministry in the current Iranian calendar year, and expanding the modern irrigation network across the country is of significant importance in this regard.

The deputy agriculture minister noted that the project for implementing irrigation networks in the west and northwest of the country is about 70 percent completed and the ministry is pursuing to get the necessary funding for the remaining 30 percent.

The official expressed hope that considering the budget allocation for the provinces at the beginning of the current Iranian year, the ministry would be able to develop the project in terms of both quantity and quality.

The purpose of implementing the plan of modern irrigation systems is to increase the productivity and sustainability of water and soil resources in the country to ensure the sustainable production of agricultural products.

"Over the past three years, each year, an average of 150,000 hectares of farmlands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems, and we have witnessed a 300 percent jump", the official said.

Agriculture Ministry is also taking the necessary measures for supporting the domestic manufacturing of equipment used in these systems, he added.

Back in September 2021, Abbasi had said that 95 percent of the equipment used in such systems is manufactured inside the country.

The official said the ministry has comprehensive plans for indigenizing the knowledge for the production of the other five percent as well.

He pointed to the filters and drippers in modern irrigation systems as the equipment whose domestic production is on the agenda and predicted: "In a two- or three-year plan, part of the imported equipment and supplies will be produced by domestic manufacturers."



Abbasi mentioned the quality improvement of modern irrigation systems as one of the main strategies of Agriculture Ministry and said: "We believe that along with the quantitative development of new irrigation systems, quality improvement should also take place to improve productivity and ensure food security by increasing water efficiency in the best possible way."

He further underlined educating farmers, officials, and managers of companies active in the field of production and implementation of new irrigation systems as one of the programs that his ministry is pursuing in order to improve the quality and optimal use of these systems.

Referring to the activity of 2,400 private companies in the development of new irrigation systems in the agricultural sector, Abbasi said: "The private sector in this field includes 350 consulting companies, 1,600 contractors, 400 manufacturers and suppliers of equipment, and a number of monitoring firms."

China continues to import Iranian oil, shipping in new 2m-barrel cargo



TEHRAN – Iran has delivered a new shipment of nearly two million barrels of crude oil to China's southern Zhanjiang port over the past week, Reuters reported, citing shipment tracking sources.

According to shipping tracking specialist Vortexa Analytics, the 260,000-ton cargo,

carried by vessel Dorena which is owned by the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) is said to be destined for state reserves.

The arrival of the new shipment indicates that Iranian crude oil exports to China have been continuing in large volumes despite claims that increased Russian supply of crude to China has affected Iranian shipments.

The said cargo would be the fourth such shipment designated for state reserves since last December.

While China has been making sporadic official imports of Iranian oil, its private refineries over the past two years have also been buying large amounts of Iranian oil despite the United States' sanctions on the country's oil exports.

Inflation rate up 0.7%



The Statistical Center of Iran has put the average inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on March 20, which marks the end of the past Iranian calendar year 1400, at 40.2 percent.

The center put the country's point-to-point inflation rate at 34.7 percent in the last month of the past year, which means families have paid an average of 34.7 percent more for

purchasing the same package of commodities and services in that month, compared to the same month in the preceding year.

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

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

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

TEHRAN – The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) has put the average inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on June 21, which marks the end of the third Iranian calendar month Khordad, at 39.4 percent, rising 0.7 percent from the figure for the twelve-month ended to the second month.

The center put the country's point-to-point inflation rate at 52.5 percent in the third month, which means families have paid an average of 52.5 percent more for purchasing the same package of commodities and services in that month, compared to the same month in the preceding year.

The inflation rate was 51.4 percent for the urban households, rising 12.2 percent from the previous month, and 58.2 percent for the rural households, increasing 18.1 percent from the previous month.

From page 1 ► Analysts also say inflation in the West along with other global economic models such as BRICS has played a major role in failing to isolate countries such as Russia from Western sanctions which has backfired on the West amid rising energy and grain prices. Critics of the U.S. sanctions regime says it has not taken BRICS into account, none of the BRICS' members have criticized Russia over its military operation or imposed sanctions on Moscow.

President Xi said "right now, our world is facing drastic changes" and that "various security challenges keep emerging."

"Where is the world headed: Peace or war? Progress or regression? Openness or isolation? Cooperation or confrontation?" he asked; saying that "these are choices of the times that we are confronted with."

The Chinese President added "our shared desire to meet challenges together through cooperation will remain as strong as ever. We should stand high and not allow ourselves to be distracted by fleeting clouds, and we should have a keen appreciation of the law governing the advance of history. We should refuse to be led astray by any turn of events or intimidated by any risk."

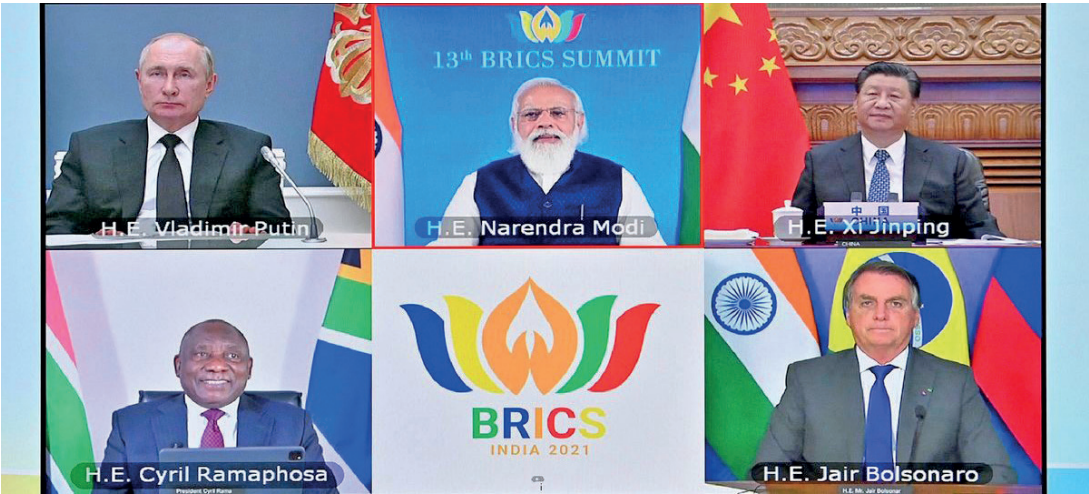
Xi said "we should rise to challenge and forge ahead with resolve toward the goal of building a community with a shared future for mankind."

He called on the BRICS countries to "embrace solidarity and coordination and jointly maintain world peace and stability."

Xi warned about how humanity has gone through the scourge of two world wars and the dark shadow of the Cold War saying "the tragedies of the past tell us that hegemony, group politics and bloc confrontation bring no peace or security; they only lead to wars and conflicts."

"The Ukraine crisis," he said "is another wake-up call for all in the world. It reminds us that blind faith in the so-called 'position of strength' and attempts to expand military alliances and seek one's own security at the expense of others will only land oneself in a security dilemma."

The Chinese leader spoke about the importance of upholding peace and never forgetting what he



described as the painful lessons of previous wars, noting that only then can there be hope for peace.

He also called on all countries to "stay true to the pledge of the UN Charter and fulfill the mission of maintaining peace."

He added that "we in the international community should reject zero-sum games and jointly oppose hegemonism and power politics. We should build a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation."

He pointed out that the "BRICS mechanism is an important cooperation platform for emerging markets and developing countries."

Russian President Vladimir Putin told the meeting that Moscow is ready to further develop multilateral cooperation with Brazil, India, China and South Africa; and promote the global role of the BRICS countries.

Putin said the BRICS countries can cooperate in the face of "selfish actions" by the West saying "only on the basis of honest and mutually beneficial cooperation can we look for ways out of this crisis situation, which developed in the global economy because of the ill-conceived, selfish actions of certain states,"

Putin warned "we have repeatedly said that challenges like conflict settlement, the fight against terrorism and organized crime, including the criminal use of new technologies, climate change, and the spread of dangerous infections, can only be addressed through joint efforts."

He added that "only on the basis of honest and mutually beneficial

cooperation that we can look for ways out of the critical situation that has emerged in the world economy because of the ill-conceived and selfish actions of certain states, which, by using financial mechanisms, are actually shifting their own macroeconomic policy mistakes onto the rest of the world."

The Russian President emphasized "we are confident that today, as never before, the world needs the BRICS countries' leadership in defining a unifying and positive course for forming a truly multipolar system of interstate relations based on the universal norms of international law and the key principles of the UN Charter."

He told the meeting that "in this context, we can count on support from many states... seeking to pursue an independent policy," while expressing confidence that "the present BRICS Summit... will hold a frank and detailed exchange of views on all the most important global and regional issues and various aspects of strategic partnership, including in the extended dialogue format of BRICS+."

He stressed that "Russia is ready to continue promoting close and versatile interaction with all BRICS partners and contributing to the group's greater role in international affairs."

Putin has previously said the West wants to destroy Russia, that the economic sanctions are akin to a declaration of economic war and that Russia will build ties with other powers.

Russia sent troops into Ukraine in February after the Washington and NATO ignored Moscow's demands for security guarantees over the

Western military alliance's eastward expansion into Ukraine.

Ukraine says it will never surrender its territory to Russia.

Following the BRICS summit, a joint declaration was issued, which touched among a variety of topics including the crisis in Eastern Europe.

The statement pointed out "our national positions as expressed at the appropriate fora, namely the UN [Security Council] and UN [General Assembly]. We support talks between Russia and Ukraine. We have also discussed our concerns over the humanitarian situation in and around Ukraine"

The declaration said "we strongly support a peaceful, secure and stable Afghanistan while emphasizing the respect for its sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, national unity and non-interference in its internal affairs."

It added that "we reiterate the need to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue through peaceful and diplomatic means in accordance with the international law, and stress the importance of preserving the JCPOA and the UNSCR 2231 to international non-proliferation as well as wider peace and stability and hope for success of diplomatic efforts towards the resumption of the JCPOA."

The BRICS declaration also expressed "strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed," while also strongly denouncing and rejecting "double standards in countering terrorism and extremism conducive to terrorism."

Diversionsary war: Turkey’s actions against Greece are a growing threat to NATO

Turkish obstructionism against Swedish and Finnish NATO membership, its limited offensive in Iraq, and its prospective offensive in Syria have grabbed international attention. But more significant is Turkey's growing diplomatic tension with Greece, an ever-festering lesion that threatens to burst.

Considering Turkey's domestic situation and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the United States must be wary. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan could capitalize on international distraction and wage a diversionsary war to boost his popularity, a conflict that would disrupt NATO's cohesion and threaten the alliance.

Washington should act now to resolve the current incarnation of this long-standing Mediterranean dispute.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan has dominated Turkish politics since 2001, when his AKP party first won a two-thirds parliamentary majority. Although Erdogan was banned from Turkish politics for anti-secular incitement, his prime ministerial — and, later, presidential — predecessor, Abdullah Gül, until the mid-2010s at least, was functionally a stand-in for him. Erdogan may have restricted his Islamist proclivities and international assertiveness until he consolidated power in 2014-2016. However, Turkey's break with the United States over the latter's invasion of Iraq, and Turkey's growing hostility towards Israel, indicated a deeper rift between Washington and Ankara. Erdogan consistently sought a greater regional role; through diplomatic pressure against Israel culminating with the Gaza Flotilla — a bald-faced attempt to prompt a confrontation with Israel — Erdogan hoped to position himself as the spiritual leader of the Islamic world.

The Arab Spring, however, transformed the regional balance. No power could pretend that the "Palestine Question" still defined regional politics. The Libyan and Syrian civil wars, and the subsequent rise of ISIS, thrust Islamism to the fore once again, while Iranian influence in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon demonstrated the relevance of traditional coalition competition, rather than religious rivalry.

Turkey's response has been to sharpen its shift away from the United States by alternating between Russophilic and Russophobic policies.

The Levantine maelstrom that began in Syria and exploded in Iraq stoked Turkish fears of Kurdish revanchism. Even before that, Russian presence in Syria prompted Turkey to pursue a more aggressive policy, supporting Islamist elements in the Syrian opposition and destroying a Russian Su-24 that briefly violated Turkish airspace. Two years later, Turkey agreed to purchase S-400 anti-air systems from Russia that, in 2019, prompted its ejection from the West's F-35 fighter-jet program and U.S. sanctions.

More generally, Turkey asserted itself militarily since 2016, intervening directly in Syria and Libya. In the latter conflict, Turkey aligned with the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord, opposing the Tobruk-based French-, Russian-, Emirati- and Egyptian-supported House of Representatives. Although fighting there has subsided, tensions may again explode — and by striking a territorial deal in Libya, Turkey can lay claims to the Eastern Mediterranean's natural gas deposits, threatening Israel, Egypt and Greece.

Turkish actions during the Ukraine war have indicated Ankara's desire to return to the Western fold. Initially, Turkey refrained from engaging, likely seeking to determine if Ukraine would collapse within days. However, three days into the war, when it became apparent Ukraine would resist, Turkey closed the Bosphorus Straits to Russia; Russian Black Sea Fleet warships in the Levantine Basin can still return to their home port in Sevastopol, but their inability to sortie from Sevastopol into the Mediterranean will disrupt Russian outer naval defenses in the long-term.

Turkey also attempted to position itself as a mediator between Kyiv and Moscow, and it spearheaded a half-hearted attempt (albeit with great public fanfare) to ensure grain exports from Ukraine.

Yet, Turkey's resistance to Swedish and Finnish NATO memberships is a ploy to extract concessions from Washington: If the Biden administration reinstates Turkey in the F-35 program and approves F-16 sales, Erdogan likely will relent.

Buying Turkish acquiescence is no way to ensure a long-term strategic partnership, however. Indeed, Erdogan is laying the groundwork for another Greco-Turkish confrontation.

The focal point, once again, is Cyprus. Greece and Cyprus are linked by ethno-linguistic ties,

political history and strategic interest. If Crete "caps" the Aegean, Cyprus provides Greece a pressure point against any Anatolian or Near Eastern power that would threaten it. Greece maintains a small military force in Cyprus, is a supplier to Cyprus' small National Guard, and is a crucial Cypriot trading partner. However, in 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus, capturing a third of the island and collapsing the Greek military junta that had organized a coup in Cyprus earlier that year. Turkey has not annexed Cyprus outright, instead establishing a satellite state on the island's north that only Ankara recognizes. The current situation is tenable, although Turkey has used Northern Cyprus to tacitly extend its presence in the Levantine Basin.

Turkey's agreement with Libya solidified its claims to the Eastern Mediterranean's petrochemicals. With the Libyan civil war's apparent conclusion, and Turkey's desire to return to the Western camp, Erdogan might be expected to refrain from spoiling Greco-Turkish relations with moves in Cyprus or elsewhere — but he has done the opposite. Turkey has struck a major economic deal with Northern Cyprus that would increase Ankara's direct leverage over the statelet; it would list Ercan airport, Northern Cyprus's international aerial hub, as a domestic destination on Turkish flights. Cypriot authorities fear this is the first step towards outright annexation, which would shatter a UN-brokered ceasefire and undoubtedly prompt a Greek military response. Erdogan has also leveled threats over Greece's alleged militarization of Aegean islands, despite Greece's long-standing military presence in the Aegean.

In turn, an escalating economic crisis is ravaging Turkey. Food and energy supply disruptions have sharpened inflationary pressures with which Turkey has grappled since 2017. Erdogan's refusal to increase interest rates and tighten the money supply is an advanced form of macro-economic foolishness; in 2021, the Turkish lira's value was slashed by half. Yet inflation remains at 60-plus percent and is likely to climb.

Erdogan's AKP lost ground in nearly all major cities in the 2019 local elections. As the 2023 parliamentary and presidential elections approach, Erdogan may seek to distract domestic attention with a major foreign policy crisis, such as a confrontation with Greece.

The United States should ensure that this crisis does not stress NATO. Russia will employ every tool at its disposal to force a confrontation between Greece and Turkey, including hybrid provocations, diplomatic overtures, naval exercises and perhaps even false flags.

Preventing a crisis requires three steps, one military, two diplomatic.

First, the United States ought to increase its naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Ideally, it would sustain a consistent carrier deployment to the Levantine Basin, as it did during the Cold War and has done since Russian designs against Ukraine neared their boiling point. The very presence of a U.S. carrier, with the combat power it provides, may be sufficient to deter Turkish escalation and demonstrate to Ankara that a diversionsary crisis will only trigger more stresses for Erdogan's regime.

Second, the United States should convene a series of bilateral Turkish-Greek summits, similar to the "shuttle diplomacy" it practiced in the 1970s between Israel and its Arab adversaries, to coordinate policy with Northern Cyprus and the Cypriot Republic. At minimum, pinning Turkey in substantive dialogue will slow an escalation cycle. At best, the U.S., through skillful balancing, can address Turkish diplomatic demands and settle issues more generally.

Third, the United States should prioritize reintegrating Turkey into NATO. This should involve both the sale of F-35s and F-16s with the caveat that Turkey must support U.S. activity in the Black Sea. Turkey should receive a reward for good behavior. But it should also offer something in return — for example, decreasing tensions on Cyprus or allowing Western ships to enter the Black Sea to clear Russian mines and escort merchant ships carrying Ukrainian grain to global ports.

As the Ukraine War drags on, the greatest threat to Western objectives will not be Russian military capabilities but divisions within NATO. A Greco-Turkish confrontation would threaten to upend the Atlantic Alliance at precisely the wrong time. It must be prevented.

(Source: The Hill)

UN: Israelis fired shots that killed journalist Shireen Abu Akleh

Veteran Al Jazeera journalist was killed on May 11 while covering Israeli army raids in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin.

The United Nations has said that information it had gathered showed that the bullets that killed Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on May 11 were fired by Israeli forces.

"All information we have gathered ... is consistent with the finding that the shots that killed Abu Akleh and injured her colleague Ali Sammoudi came from Israeli forces and not from indiscriminate firing by armed Palestinians," UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani told reporters in Geneva on Friday.

Shamdasani added that the information the OHCHR had gathered had revealed no "activity by armed Palestinians in the immediate vicinity of the journalists".

Abu Akleh was killed by Israeli forces while she was covering an army raid on Jenin, in the northern occupied West Bank.

Her killing led to outrage from Palestinians and around the world, with thousands attending her funeral in occupied East Jerusalem. Israeli police attacked the pallbearers at the funeral, almost causing Abu Akleh's coffin to fall to the ground.

Multiple witnesses said that Israeli forces killed the veteran reporter. Investigations conducted by several media organisations have also come to the same conclusion.

Shamdasani said that the OHCHR's investigation had shown that Abu Akleh and her fellow journalists had made a concerted effort to be visible as members of the press to Israeli soldiers positioned further down the street.

"The journalists said they chose a side street for their approach to avoid the location of armed Palestinians inside the camp and that



they proceeded slowly in order to make their presence visible to the Israeli forces deployed down the street," Shamdasani said. "Our findings indicate that no warnings were issued and no shooting was taking place at that time and at that location."

"Several single, seemingly well-aimed bullets were fired towards them [the journalists] from the direction of the Israeli security forces."

Shamdasani added that bullets continued to be fired at an unarmed man who tried to come to Abu Akleh's aid, as well as a journalist who

was sheltering behind a tree.

The OHCHR head Michelle Bachelet continued to urge Israeli authorities to open a criminal investigation into Abu Akleh's killing, according to Shamdasani.

In a statement responding to Shamdasani's briefing, the IDF insisted there had been an exchange of fire between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters.

"Ever since the incident, the IDF has been investigating and reviewing the circumstances of Ms Abu Akleh's death," the statement said.

"The IDF investigation clearly concludes that Ms Abu Akleh was not intentionally shot by an IDF soldier and that it is not possible to determine whether she was killed by a Palestinian gunman shooting indiscriminately in her area or inadvertently by an IDF soldier."

Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, initially tried to argue that Palestinian gunmen could have killed Abu Akleh.

However, Israel later backtracked and said it could not rule out the possibility that an Israeli soldier had fired the shot.

Israel has not yet concluded whether anyone will face criminal charges over the killing, and has not released findings that have emerged from an internal investigation.

Al Jazeera Media Network announced on May 26 that it had assigned a legal team to refer the killing to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.

Lawyers working on a case filed to the ICC over the targeting of Palestinian journalists by Israeli forces have also said they will add Abu Akleh's killing to the case.

5,000-year-old Assyrian city of Ashur at risk of sinking



TEHRAN – A number of Iraqi researchers have warned that the ancient city of Ashur could be slowly sinking into the ground as a result of dam construction.

Iraq, which is facing a threat to its water supply as a result of the ongoing climate crisis, considers the possibility of breaching a new dam that could flood the 5,000-year-old Assyrian city of Ashur that just reopened to the public earlier in April, IRNA reported.

The Makhoul dam is situated roughly 25 miles from Ashur, which, according to some experts, would not only flood it, along with more than 200 other heritage sites but would also displace up to 250,000 people currently living in the area.

Ashur was built on the banks of the Tigris River—in what is now Iraq—more than 5,000 years ago. It was once the power base of the Assyrian empire, encompassing Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and some of what is now Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Today, Ashur's temple still stands, a crumbling ziggurat rising 85ft above the Tigris. It was once more than twice the height, covered in iron and lead and studded with crystals.

“The impact of the dam's construction has not been sufficiently studied, and to date there have been no social or environmental impact surveys carried out,” Khalil Aljibory, an academic researcher at Tikrit University, said in a statement released by the Iraq NGO Liwan, Art News reported on June 20.

Heritage professionals are currently negotiating with the Iraqi government to preserve the monuments as well as the

homes of those who live nearby, the report said.

Moreover, the ancient city has faced destruction twice: by Babylonian forces some 600 years before the birth of Jesus Christ and in 2015, at the hands of Isis.

During its heyday, the inner core of Ashur was protected by encircling walls nearly 4 km long. On the eastern side Ashur was washed by the Tigris, along which massive quays were first erected by Adad-nirari I (reigned c. 1295–c. 1264). On the north side an arm of the river and a high escarpment afforded natural defenses, which were augmented by a system of buttressed walls and by a powerful sally port called the mushlalu—a semicircular tower of rusticated stone masonry, built by Sennacherib and probably the earliest known example of this type of architecture. The southern and western sides were protected by a strong fortification system.

According to Britannica, a catalog of Ashur's buildings inscribed during the reign of Sennacherib (704–681) lists 34 temples, although fewer than one-third of them have been found, including those of Ashur-Enlil, Anu-Adad, Sin-Shamash, and Ishtar and Nabu. Historically the most interesting temples are those devoted to the cult of the goddess Ishtar, or Inanna, as she was known to the Sumerians.

In addition to the temples, three palaces were identified. The oldest of these was ascribed to Shamshi-Adad I (c. 1813–c. 1781) and was later used as a burial ground. Many of the private houses found in the northwestern quarter of the site were spaciouly laid out and had family vaults beneath their floors, where dozens of archives and libraries were uncovered in the course of the German excavations. The irregular planning of the town indicates strict respect for property rights and land tenure. Other aspects of Assyrian law, particularly those relating to women, are known from a series of tablets compiled between 1450 and 1250.

Ashur was made a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2003.

Ancient festival of Tirgan held in central Iran

TEHRAN – on Wednesday, the ancient festivity of Tirgan (also known as Jashn-e Tirgan) was held in Farahan county of Markazi province, CHTN reported.

Every year in this region, the Tirgan festival, one of the most important festivals of the ancient Iranians, is held on the first day of summer as a symbol of miracles, blessings of agriculture, and water protection, the provincial tourism chief Mostafa Marzban said.

A selection of top farmers from the region was honored during the ceremony, the official added.

Tirgan is a time-honored Iranian festival usually observed as a rain festival. Tiragan, along with Noruz, Yalda Night and Mehregan are amongst feasts widely celebrated in the ancient

land.

Currently, the summer festival is mainly celebrated by Iranian Zoroastrians. The celebration is widely attested by historians such as Abu Saeid Gardezi, Biruni, and Al-Masudi, as well as European travelers to Iran during the Safavid era.

The Tirgan festivity refers to the archangel, 'Tir' (meaning arrow) or 'Tishtar' (lightening), referring to thunderstorms that bring much-needed rain that boost harvest and avert drought.

The ancient legend of the Tir (arrow) refers to “Arash of the swift arrow” or ‘Arash the archer’ (Arash-e Kamangir).

According to the Zoroastrian calendar, every thirty days of the month carries a name. The thirteenth day of the month of



Tir on the Persian calendar (June 22 - July 22) is named after the respective month, Tir.

Legend has it that Arash was the best archer in the Persian army. He was selected to settle a land dispute between Persia and Turan (present-day Central Asia).

When the kings of the two lands – Manouchehr and Afrasiyab – decided to settle their dispute and set a permanent boundary between Persia and Turan, they arrived at a mutual understanding that Arash should climb to the tall Mount Damavand's peak, and from there shoot an arrow toward the east. Wherever his arrow landed, they agreed, would determine the boundary between the two kingdoms.

Arash shot his arrow (Tir) on the 13th day of the Persian month of

Tir, which fell on the banks of the Jeyhun (the Oxus) River. Thus, the borders of the two countries were marked.

Legend has it that as soon as the border dispute was settled, rain began pouring down on both lands, which had been suffering from an eight-year drought.

Thus this day, the 13th of Tir (July 4th) is celebrated as the Festival of Rain.

It is customary for Zoroastrians to tie rainbow-colored ribbons around their wrists for ten consecutive days and toss the ribbons into a stream on the day of the festival.

The Festival of Rain is celebrated by people dancing, singing, reciting poetry, and serving delicacies such as spinach soup and ‘sholeh zard’ (saffron-flavored rice pudding).

Iran eyes UNESCO tag for Bastam historical complex



TEHRAN – Iran is preparing to put forward the Bastam historical complex as a candidate for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The ancient complex is situated in Bastam, which is located near Shahroud in the north-central province of Semnan.

It has long been one of the most important and special requests of the region's people to register the complex globally, Semnan's governor said on Wednesday.

It is estimated that the global registration

of the Bastam historical complex will require 300 billion rials (one million dollars) of budge, Seyyed Mohammadreza Hashemi said.

However, several special working groups should be formed to expedite the process, he mentioned.

Bastam historical complex includes the holy shrine of Mohammad Ibn Jafar Sadegh (AS), Bayazid Bastami tomb, Bayazid Monastery, Bayazid Mosque, Eljaito Iwan, Ghazan Dome, Jame Mosque, Kashaneh Tower, and Shahrokhieh School, which were built in different eras from Seljuk era (1037–1194) to Qajar period (1789–1925).

The prominent Persian mystic Bayazid Bastami lived in the historical city of Bastam, which is located six kilometers north of Shahroud. The monastery was a simple place where he studied and prayed.

Ghazan Khan, the 13th-century ruler of Ilkhanate in Iran, is buried in the Ghazan Dome,

which is a square building of 7.5 height and a dome covered with turquoise tiles.

Jame Mosque is another building from the complex with a beautiful plastered altar that was restored during the Qajar period.

Kashaneh Tower is a tower connected to the Jame Mosque. It has a cellar that is connected to the top of the tower through a staircase that runs through the interior wall of the tower. The outer covering of the building has collapsed but the lower covering (the current dome) is untouched.

Shahrokhieh School has been built for the use of seminary students with 28 rooms on two floors.

The school also has a very interesting plan and about 28 rooms on two floors, which have been built for the use of students of religious sciences.

The school has a mosque, an iwan, and a zurkhaneh, a special traditional place where men practice heroic sport.

Iranian, Turkish experts exchange views on tourism

TEHRAN – Iranian and Turkish experts have recently discussed ideas to help expand tourism between the two neighbors.

In a meeting on Wednesday, as part of an effort to boost tourism between the two nations, Iranian and Turkish officials proposed holding a car rally between the Turkish city of Batman and the Iranian capital, CHTN reported on Thursday.

The director of the Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammad Hossein Soufi, and a delegation of Turkish tourism officials and representatives from Batman city attended the meeting, which was held in Tehran,

Ways to strengthen ties, develop interaction, and hold joint events including family and cultural rallies were discussed during the meeting, the report added.



For his part, Soufi said that in order to boost tourism ties between the two countries, investments in tourism in Batman and some Iranian cities, tourist exchanges, recreational, tourism, and family rallies, as well as rallies of artists and athletes, could be implemented.

A number of other topics were discussed in the meeting, such as organizing tourism exhibitions, implementing car and motor

tourism tours, holding cultural weeks, and using radio and television to introduce the tourism capacities of the two countries.

Earlier in May, Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ezatollah Zarghami called for further efforts to deepen cooperation with Turkey in a meeting with Ali Yildirim, the president of Turkey's Alevi community.

Identifying common grounds and investing in tourism facilities to expand relations are on the agenda, the Iranian minister said.

He also said his ministry seeks to remove barriers and facilitate the issuance of investment permits in Iran.

Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

ages of 15 and 24 is 1.1 billion; youth constitute 18 percent of the global population. Youth and children together, including all those aged 24 years and younger, account for nearly 40 percent of the world's population. Iran's population consists of about one-quarter of children under 14 and nearly half of those less than 40 years old, which makes tourism an appealing prospect for their future, both in terms of development and economic prosperity.

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



Pololikashvili has said.

Italian Tourism Minister Massimo Garavaglia has expressed hope the summit would recommend governments new insights into the sector.

“We are confident that ideas and proposals will emerge that can advise governments on how to improve the global tourism offer and make it closer to the needs of new tourists,” Garavaglia said.

According to available data, the number of youth between the

Tourism and the National Tourism Agency (ENIT), the summit will feature a number of masterclasses, evening talks, as well as a simulation of the UNWTO General Assembly.

Furthermore, the summit will focus on some of the key challenges and opportunities facing global tourism right now, with an emphasis on the sector's role in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“The Global Youth Tourism will celebrate and empower the next generation of tourism leaders. It will help build a lasting legacy by providing young people with the skills and knowledge they need to transform tourism not only in their communities but everywhere,” UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab

UNWTO sets stage for first global youth tourism summit

TEHRAN – The United Nations World Tourism Organization is to hold the first UNWTO Global Youth Tourism Summit, which will bring tens of young people from 60 countries to Sorrento, Italy.

According to organizers, the event is aimed to offer more than 130 international teenagers an opportunity to play a leading role in the future of the sector, ISNA reported on Thursday.

Due to take place from 27 June to 3 July, the event seeks to unite youth with leaders from across the sector, including politicians and key figures from the worlds of sport, gastronomy, entertainment, and innovation, the report said.

Organized by the UN body in collaboration with Italy's Ministry of

Sassanid era citadel to undergo restoration



TEHRAN –Sassanid era (224–651) Qurtan Citadel in Varzaneh, the central province of Isfahan, will undergo some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has said.

In Varzaneh county, there is the historical village of Qurtan, whose citadel is one of the largest in Iran, Alireza Izadi explained on Thursday.

In the near future, work will begin to restore the southern fence of this huge and historic citadel, which measures 160 meters long, the official added.

Creating tourism infrastructure along the ancient path of Zayandehrood and the eastern historical core of Isfahan can be effective in achieving sustainable tourism development in this region, particularly in the face of drought, he explained.

From ancient to modern times, defensive walls have often been necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest.

Fortresses were designed primarily to defend territories in warfare and were also used to solidify rule in a region during peacetime.

Many of the fortifications of the ancient world were built with mud brick, often leaving them no more than mounds of dirt

for today's archaeologists.

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

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

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

The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning “Image of the World”), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning. Built in the early 17th century, the UNESCO-registered square is punctuated with the most interesting sights in Isfahan. Modern Isfahan is now home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts, however, its inner core wants to be preserved as a priceless gem.

Tehran asks Kabul to be committed to water treaty

TEHRAN – Iran has asked Afghanistan to be committed to the 1973 Helmand River Water Treaty, according to which Iran should receive 820 million cubic meters of water from the Helmand River.

The Iranian deputy energy minister for water affairs Mohammad Javanbakht insisted the Taliban-led government in Kabul do more to implement the terms of the agreement.

Javanbakht said on Thursday that Iran had received only 4 million cubic meters (mcm) from an annual water right of 820 mcm under the Helmand River Water Treaty since the start of the current water year in October, Press TV reported.

Javanbakht said an Afghan delegation attending the 25th meeting of Helmand River Water Com-missars in Tehran on June 15-17 had been briefed about Iran's concerns on water rights issues.

"We hope the Afghan delegation will convey Iran's clear message to their rulers about the need to commit to the 1973 treaty between the two countries," he was quoted as saying by the IRNA news agency.

Since taking control of Kabul in August, the Taliban government has vowed to implement the terms of the water agreement with Iran and reverse a trend set by a previous U.S.-backed admin-



istration that had failed to commit to the treaty.

However, Taliban ministers have blamed drought and technical issues for the low supply of water from Iran in the past months.

Javanbakht said Afghanistan has yet to allow a visit by Iranian experts to investigate facilities upstream of its Kajakai Dam to verify claims made by the Afghan side about the drought.

He reiterated Iran's previous criticism of Afghanistan's move last year to complete the Kamal Khan Dam on the Helmand River, which is known as Hirmand in Iran, saying the dam has deprived Iran of its water rights under the 1973 treaty while causing a major environmental crisis in the region.

In May, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Iran was pursuing its water rights from the Helmand River through legal entities.

"We are following up on the issue of preserving Iran's water rights from the Helmand River through legal approaches so that the interim Afghanistan governing body would provide Iran with the desired water rights from this river," Khatibzadeh said.

Meanwhile, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in February that he was satisfied with good relations with Iran, adding that the Taliban administration is committed to Iran's water rights.

Mujahid said that there has been a drought in Afghanistan in recent years, so if there is enough water on the Afghan side, Iran

will definitely benefit from this water according to the existing agreements.

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

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

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

Taliban ministers have blamed drought and technical issues for the low supply of water from Iran in the past months.

\$156m allocated to patients with rare diseases

TEHRAN – The Majlis (Iranian Parliament) has approved a total of 50 trillion rials (about \$156m) for the treatment of patients with rare diseases, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has stated.

In addition to the budget allocated to these patients, all the treatment services are covered by this fund, and even medical items will be sent to their place of residence for easy access to medicine, he noted, IRNA reported on Thursday.

According to the statistics published in 2019, the number of rare diseases identified in Iran has reached 332 types of diseases and about 4,750 people are covered by the Rare Diseases Foundation of Iran.

Out of a thousand population, 2 people get a rare disease, while the prevalence can be curbed by changing people's culture, screening, identifying, preventing the births, and raising awareness.

According to WHO, rare diseases are often serious, chronic, and life-threatening. The European Union (EU) definition of a rare disease is one that affects fewer than 5 in 10,000 people. At present, more than 6000 rare diseases are known; around 80 percent of them are genetic disorders and half of them occur during childhood.

Grouped together, rare diseases affect 6–8 percent (or about 30 million people) out of the 508 million population of EU countries. This roughly equals the estimated prevalence of diabetes in the World Health Organization European Region, which in 2013 was 6.8 percent of 658.7 million adults in the 20 to 79-year age group.

Rare diseases are associated with a high psychological burden for the patient but they can also have a major impact on a patient's family. In addition to the health burden on patients, few of these diseases have effective drug treatment available.

The National Document on Rare Diseases has been approved in December 2020, with the aim of preventing the birth of infants with rare diseases, and medical and therapeutic problems.

Patients with rare diseases launched and signed a petition calling for drawing up a national document on rare diseases on the occasion of Rare Disease Day, February 28, 2019.

The main vision of this document is to prevent the birth of infants with rare diseases and to solve the medical and therapeutic problems of rare patients in the country.

Birds In Iran

Part 8

1974 White stork inquiry

In 1974, the Department conducted a nationwide census of breeding white storks *Ciconia ciconia* as part of an international census of storks in Europe and the Middle East.

The census revealed an Iranian population of some 3,300 pairs, two-thirds of which were nesting in Azarbaijan province (Fotoohi and Scott).

Greater flamingo studies

Since its discovery in the mid-1960s the breeding colony of some 20,000 to 25,000 pairs of greater flamingos *Phoenicopterus ruber* on islands in Lake Urmia, Azarbaijan, has been the subject of continuous study by ornithologists from the department.

The entire lake and its islands, an area of 483,000 ha, were given reserve status in 1967 and the flamingo declared a fully protected bird. Banding studies have revealed that immediately after fledging young birds undertake a wide dispersal out of the Iranian region, with recoveries coming from as far afield as Libya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Pakistan, and India.

The adults, however, winter mainly within Iran, in the Bakhtagan Protected Region in central Fars, and along the coasts of the Persian Gulf and Baluchistan (Scott, 1975).

The wetlands and their wildfowl

The wetlands of Iran constitute one of the main wintering areas for wildfowl belonging to the West Siberian-Caspian-Nile flyway population.

The millions of ducks, geese, and coots in this flyway have long supported an annual harvest in the south Caspian region (Schuz, 1957; Savage, 1963; Firouz, 1968) and are increasingly attracting

the attention of sport hunters.

In an attempt to conserve and manage this valuable natural resource the Department of the Environment has introduced realistic game laws and regulations, created a number of protected regions and wildlife refuges, and drawn up a detailed inventory of the nation's wetlands.

Nationwide mid-winter wildfowl censuses have been conducted annually since 1966, and these have provided valuable information on population size and trends.

A booklet entitled *The Wetlands and Waterfowl of Iran*, published by the Department of the Environment in 1971 (Firouz, 1971b), gives a general account of the situation in Iran, while a paper by Ferguson looks at the south Caspian region in some detail.

Iran has played a prominent role in international efforts to conserve wetlands and waterfowl. In 1971 it hosted the International Conference on the Conservation of Wetlands and Waterfowl, at which the final text of a convention—the so-called Ramsar Convention—on the conservation of wetlands especially as habitat for waterfowl was adopted (Carp, 1972).

Iran has since ratified this convention and designated eighteen major wetlands for inclusion in the list of wetlands of international importance under the terms of the convention (Scott, 1976a; Carp, 1980).

Caucasian black grouse studies

A small population of the rare Caucasian black grouse *Lyrurus mlokosiewiczii* was discovered in the upper deciduous forest zone of the Kaleybar mountains in northern Azarbaijan in 1971.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

How desertification control affects rural migration?



From page 1 ► This organization works in desert areas and sand dunes by implementing various projects such as planting trees, mulching, etc. in order to create suitable living conditions for the villagers and prevent them from migrating from these areas, he highlighted.

Based on the funds available to the country's Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization, we have been successful; But with the very high rate of desertification, the drying up of wetlands, and the increase of sand and dust storms, we need more funding for better performance, he emphasized.

He further called on the government officials and politicians to think carefully, because dust management requires continuous and long-term planning abroad and in cooperation with other countries.

Most recently, plans to combat desertification are being implemented on 300,000 hectares of land annually, according to Vahid Jafarian, the director of the desert office of the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization.

sources and Watershed Management Organization.

Desertification control plans include planting seedlings, managing runoff waters, and constructing windbreaks around farms and sand dunes, Jafarian said.

Implementation of innovative projects such as checkerboard windbreaks in sand dunes, and the use of gravel mulch has started for the first time in Semnan province, and we are trying to develop these projects in other parts of the country, he added.

70-year history of dealing with desertification

Iran has a 70-year history of dealing with desertification and dust control, with about 5 million hectares of planted forests in sand and dust storm hotspots, especially in areas with less than 50 mm of rainfall, Ali Mohammad Tahmasebi, head of the national working group for mitigating SDSs, has said.

Studies by international organizations show that the Islamic Republic has recorded the highest number of reforested desert areas after China, he added.

Parviz Garshasbi, deputy head of the Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization (FRWMO), has said that according to the Sixth National Development Plan, desert greening measures were to be carried out in 1,140,000 hectares of the country's deserts, but so far, the operations have been conducted in only 350,000 hectares of deserts.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iranian zoos to be monitored online

The Department of Environment (DOE) will launch an online monitoring system in zoos across the country, the Department of Environment's director general for hunting and fishing has said.

"Putting in place the necessary infrastructure for this plan is underway; newly constructed zoos are supposed to have an online monitoring system, and the old ones must launch the system as soon as possible," IRNA quoted Ali Teymouri as saying on Saturday.

Teymouri stated that all provincial departments of environment must supervise the zoo online systems to register all animal species entering or leaving the zoo, casualties and causes.

The necessary infrastructure has been prepared to some extent in two zoos, and the rest of the zoos will launch the in the near future gradually, he added.

باغ وحش های کشور آنلاین پایش می شوند

مدیرکل حفاظت و مدیریت شکار و صید سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: پایش آنلاین باغ وحش های کشور جزو برنامه های سازمان است و در حال تهیه زیر ساخت برای اجرای آن هستیم. علی تیموری روز شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار علمی ایرنا افزود: باغ وحش هایی که جدید احداث می شوند باید حتما سیستم پایش آنلاین داشته باشند، مجموعه های قدیمی نیز باید هر چه سریعتر این سیستم را راه اندازی کنند.

وی اظهار داشت: باید تمام ادارات کل استان ها آدرس سیستم آنلاین باغ وحش ها را دریافت کنند تا ورود و خروج گونه ها از باغ وحش، ورود گونه های جدید، تلفات و دلایل آن را ثبت و به صورت آنلاین در جریان قرار گیرند.

تیموری گفت: زیر ساخت های این کار تا حدودی آغاز شده و دو مجموعه کار زیر ساخت را شروع کرده اند و بقیه باغ وحش ها هم به مرور انجام خواهند داد.

