

# Regional NATO Will be Dead on Arrival

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## Report

### UN finds “well-aimed” Israeli bullets killed veteran journalist Abu Aqleh

The United Nations has said its investigation has found that the bullets which killed veteran Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh on May 11 were fired by the Israeli regime forces and were “well-aimed bullets”.

The UN inquiry backs up a Palestinian investigation and similar probes conducted by over half a dozen news networks, the latest being the New York Times.

Earlier, similar investigations by the Associated Press, CNN, the Washington Post, and Al-Jazeera, for whom Abu Aqleh spent 25 years reporting in the occupied territories found similar results, yet the regime continues to refuse responsibility for the murder.

The Palestinian-American journalist, who was wearing a vest and helmet marked “press”, was killed while covering an Israeli military raid in the city of Jenin, in the northern occupied West Bank.

“We find that the shots that killed Abu Aqleh came from Israeli [regime] forces,” the UN human rights office spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani said in Geneva. “It is deeply disturbing that Israeli authorities have not conducted a criminal investigation.”

She said: “We at the UN human rights office have concluded our independent monitoring into the incident. The shots that killed Abu Aqleh and injured her colleague Ali Samodi came from Israeli [regime] forces and not from indiscriminate firing by armed Palestinians, as initially claimed by Israeli authorities.”

Shamdasani added that the information came from the Israeli military and the Palestinian attorney general saying “We have found no information suggesting that there was activity by armed Palestinians in the immediate vicinity of the journalists,” Shamdasani said.

The UN findings show that seven journalists arrived at the western entrance of the Jenin refugee camp soon after 06 am. At about 06.30 am, as four of the journalists turned into a particular street, “several single, seemingly well-aimed bullets were fired towards them from the direction of the Israeli [regime] forces. One single bullet injured Ali Samodi in the shoulder; another single bullet hit Abu Aqleh in the head and killed her instantly.” ▶ Page 5

### Iran too strong for Canada in 2022 VNL

TEHRAN – Iran eased past Canada in straight sets (25-21, 27-25, 25-18) in Week 2 of 2022 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) on Saturday.

Canada's Stephen Timothy Maar topscored the match with 18 points, while Amin Esmaeilnezhad scored 15 points for Iran.

Iran will play Poland, Italy, Slovenia and Serbia in Week 3.

The Persians are scheduled to face Poland on July 5 in Gdańsk, Poland in Pool 6 opener.

All matches count towards the general standings, which will determine the seven teams set to join hosts Italy at the Finals in Bologna from July 20 through 24.

In the 2022 tournament, the format of play was changed. The new format will see 16 men's teams competing in pools of 8 teams during the pool phase. Each team plays 12 matches during the pool stage. Eight teams will then move into the final knockout phase of the competition.



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TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian announced on Saturday that Iran is ready to resume nuclear talks to lift sanctions on Iran by reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Amir Abdollahian said the decision was made after detailed and in-depth talks with Josep Borrell, the EU foreign policy chief.

“The talks to remove the sanctions imposed on Iran will be resumed soon,” Amir Abdollahian said in a joint press conference with Borrell.

Amir Abdollahian added, “Today we had long and positive talks about cooperation between Iran and the European Union. We are seeking balanced relations in the area of foreign policy and in this relationship the European Union and European

### Daily gas production capacity exceeds 1,000 mcm

TEHRAN – The capacity of Iran's daily natural gas production exceeded 1,000 million cubic meters (mcm) in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), a report published by the Oil Ministry's Planning Directorate showed.

According to the ministry, the country's nat-

ural gas production capacity registered the mentioned record for the first time in the previous year when gas production from the South Pars gas field increased by more than four percent compared to the preceding year (1399).

As Shana reported, the development of the South Pars field, which Iran shares with

Qatar in the Persian Gulf, has been completed except for phase 11 whose development is underway.

According to the report, the physical progress of the South Pars Phase 11 development project at the end of 1400 was more than 34 percent. ▶ Page 4

### The valleys of Assassins, a drive back in time

TEHRAN – One of the most amazing parts of Iran's Qazvin province, the valleys of Assassins were once the spine of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070–1124) and his followers as remnants of their history are everywhere, hiding in the ancient sight.

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

Alamut is famed for a well-fortified castle nested on top of a hill, once sheltering the followers of Sabbah who was the spiritual leader of a heretical Ismaili sect, known as ‘Assassins’. Narratives say Sabbah led a bizarre, much-feared mercenary organization whose members were dispatched to murder or kidnap leading political and religious figures of the day.

Narratives say that the name Alamut, which means “eagle's nest”, is associated with a regional 8th-century king who spied an eagle landing amid its rugged lofty crags and was inspired to build an impregnable fortress. ▶ Page 6

### Amir Abdollahian talks to Taliban FM over Afghanistan quake

TEHRAN– In a phone conversation with acting Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Friday night, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian expressed condolences to the Afghan people and government over the recent earthquake that claimed many lives and resulted in significant material damage.

Amir Abdollahian told Muttaqi that two cargo planes have been used to provide a portion of Iran's aid to the earthquake victims.

The Iranian foreign minister added that two groups of rescue and relief teams from the Iranian Red Crescent Society had also been sent along with relief aid, highlighting the fact that the Iranian people are always ready to stand by the resilient and noble people of Afghanistan.

He said Iran will also send medical teams if required or requested.

The top Iranian diplomat also brought up Iran's share of the Helmand water, asking the Afghan government to take seriously its obligations under the bilateral agreements regarding Iran's water share. ▶ Page 2

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## Report

### Plans outlined to mark world narcotics week

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – The World Narcotics Day theme for 2022 is “Addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises” with the objective of responding to transnational challenges generated by crisis situations.

By resolution 42/112 of 7 December 1987, the General Assembly decided to observe June 26 as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.

This World Drug Day, UNODC addresses existing and emerging transnational drug challenges stemming from situations of crisis. UNODC continues to advocate to protect the right to health for the most vulnerable, including children and youth, people using drugs, people with drug use disorders, and people who need access to controlled medicines.

In Iran, this year's event entitled “Human Dignity - International Cooperation - No Addiction” is being held in the presence of officials of organizations active in the field of drug control, representatives of UN agencies, and the international community and organizations active in this field. ▶ Page 7

### Tehran museum hosts exhibition of minimalism, conceptual art

TEHRAN – Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMCA) is playing host to an exhibition of minimalism and conceptual art.

Thirty-eight rarely-seen artworks of these styles selected from the treasure trove of the museum are on view at the exhibition that opened last Tuesday.

Minimalism is chiefly an American movement in the visual arts and music originating in New York City in the late 1960s, and is characterized by extreme simplicity of form and a literal, objective approach.

Conceptual art, also called post-object art or art-as-idea, is artwork whose medium is an idea or a concept, usually manipulated by the tools of language and sometimes documented by photography. Its concerns are idea-based rather than formal.

“Those art movements that emerged in the mid-20th century had a serious attitude to art, didn't accept the standard definition of art and mostly regarded the philosophy of art and artistic ideas,” TMCA director Ebadreza Eslami said during the opening ceremony of the exhibition. ▶ Page 8

#### TENDER INVITATION No: 401-05 MS

Subject: call for eligible and experienced contractors for an EPC tender  
““Engineering, procurement and commissioning the new cast house” in Iran aluminum Company (IRALCO) -Arak, Iran  
Dear Sir/Madam

Hereby IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO), would like to invite eligible and experienced contractors for “Engineering, procurement and commissioning the new cast house” tender on the basis of tender condition. Interested companies may send their technical proposals until 3th July in sealed pocket to below mentioned address: Address: PO Box 31, opposite Bahonar Park, Natural Resources Boulevard, Arak- Iran; Postal code: 3818998116

Name of office: Secretariat of the Transaction Committee, Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO)

Tel: +98 86 32162014 +98 86 32162181

Attention: Mr. Omid - Mr. Nabuini;

Note:

1- If participants are not able to send sealed envelopes on the base of above instruction, they can mail their document to secretariat of the transaction Commission to this address in due time: [tenders@iralco.ir](mailto:tenders@iralco.ir)

2- Estimated cost of project: 15,000,000 \$

3- For having technical specification and tender instruction visit our website : [https:// www.iralco.ir](https://www.iralco.ir) then click on tender.

4- Interested bidders may obtain further commercial information by sending email to this address : [e.mohammadi@iralco.net](mailto:e.mohammadi@iralco.net)

In charge person for current tender: Mrs. Elahe Mohammadi Tel: +98 86 32162014 Cellphone – WhatsApp: 00989183610146 WeChat ID : wxid\_k22z6mfcraio22

Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company





## Amir Abdollahian talks to Taliban FM over Afghanistan quake

From page 1 ▶ By resolving this issue, the foreign minister said, Iran hopes to strengthen friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

Amir Abdollahian further voiced hope that the two nations' bilateral collaboration will result in combat against organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism.

Praising Iran's condolences and its prompt and urgent aid for the earthquake victims, Muttaqi stressed that the first priority under the current circumstances is to provide shelter for the victims.

Muttaqi commended Iran for providing a wide

range of services to the Afghan people under the present tough conditions, highlighting the importance that Kabul places on the need to deepen and widen bilateral ties and collaboration with Iran.

He also asked Amir Abdollahian to arrange for the visit of an Afghan agricultural delegation and an anti-narcotic drugs trafficking group to Iran.

Muttaqi, meanwhile, welcomed the continuation of the bilateral talks and the sending of a delegation from the Energy Ministry of Iran to investigate the matter of Iran's water rights from the Helmand River.

## China's Wang: US should admit responsibility and respond to Iran's reasonable demands to restore JCPOA

*Amir Abdollahian talks to Wang, calls IAEA resolution 'unconstructive'*

TEHRAN- Iran's foreign minister has denounced that the recent IAEA Board Governors' resolution against Iran, calling it politically motivated and unconstructive.

The comments were made by Hossein Amir Abdollahian during a phone conversation with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, on Thursday.

The IAEA's 35-nation Board of Governors endorsed the anti-Iran resolution on June 8 with 30 votes in favor, two against, and three abstentions, accusing Iran of not complying with the IAEA.

China and Russia voted against the resolution drafted by the U.S. and three European states of Britain, France and Germany.

For his part, Wang said China opposes the politicization of affairs of the IAEA, and supports the UN nuclear watchdog and Iran to resolve issues through dialogue and cooperation.

### Iran seeking lasting nuclear agreement with goodwill

Amir Abdollahian also briefed Wang on the latest issues surrounding the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), saying that the bullying actions of the United States is the major obstacle to revive the agreement.

Reiterating Iran's long-held policy, the top diplomat said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to achieve a lasting agreement with goodwill and seriousness while taking the interests of the Iranian nation into account."

He added that the Iranian side will unswervingly safeguard its national interests, and is firmly committed to resolving differences through negotiations, so as to achieve an agreement at an early date.

Amir Abdollahian also expressed gratitude to China for its constructive position toward the Iranian nuclear issue.

Wang said that China disapproves of any non-constructive measures that lead to the continuous escalation of the situation, and that all parties should continue to uphold the correct logic and work tirelessly to reach an agreement through diplomatic efforts.

China's foreign minister added the U.S. side should earnestly realize its own responsibility and actively respond to Iran's reasonable demands, adding that the Chinese side will continue to uphold justice, support the negotiation process, and is

willing to maintain close communication with the Iranian side, Xinhua reported.

Wang also said China highly values its relations with Iran and stands ready to work with the Iranian side to continue to firmly support each other on issues concerning their respective core interests and major concerns in the spirit of the comprehensive strategic partnership.

The telephone call between the Iranian and Chinese foreign ministers came one day before European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell visited Tehran for talks with Amir Abdollahian and other relevant Iranian officials in efforts to resume the Vienna talks intended to revive the JCPOA and lift sanctions on Iran.

### BRICS summit

Amir Abdollahian also expressed gratitude to his Chinese counterpart for inviting Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi to the BRICS summit and expressed hope that China's presidency of the bloc will facilitate the growth of multilateral cooperation among its members.

He also anticipated that progress in the two nations' ties, particularly in the areas of aviation and student exchanges, will be accelerated as quickly and easily as possible.

Wang, for his part, asserted that China disapproves of unilateralism in international affairs and noted that the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Iran will develop ties between the two nations.

Wang, likewise, welcomed the Iranian president's attendance at the BRICS Summit, saying it is important to focus on emerging markets and the economic cohesion of developing nations during such summits.

He also expressed support for continuation of the Vienna talks and expressed hope the diplomatic route will eventually result in a deal.

According to Xinhua, Wang said the BRICS Summit and the High-level Dialogue on Global Development hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping holds great significance for strengthening the construction of the BRICS mechanism, enhancing the unity and cooperation between emerging markets and developing countries, as well as facilitating global efforts in dealing with common challenges to development.

## Iranian citizen in Sweden jail objects to his detention conditions

A former Iranian official who has been incarcerated in Sweden since 2019 on false charges leveled against him by an anti-Iran terrorist organization has strongly objected to his detention conditions, 53 days after the end of his court hearings.

In a short phone call with his family, Hamid Nouri said despite a judicial order to lift restrictions on him, he is still being held in solitary confinement.

Iranian Judiciary's public relations department said on Friday that additional illegal restrictions have been imposed on Nouri after more than 50 days since his last trial session in Sweden. He is waiting for the announcement of a verdict.

Nouri was arrested upon arrival in Sweden at Stockholm Airport in November 2019 and was immediately imprisoned. He has been held in solitary confinement for over two years. Swedish prosecutors have requested the maximum penalty of life imprisonment for Nouri, accusing the former Iranian judiciary official of prisoner abuse in 1988.

The charges against Nouri stem from accusations leveled against him by members of the terrorist Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO). His accusers allege Nouri was involved in the execution and torture of MKO members in 1988. Nouri vehemently rejects the allegation.

# JCPOA revival talks to resume in coming days

*Borrell says negotiations will take place in a Persian Gulf country*

From page 1 ▶ countries have an important position. We are seeking to develop our relations with different countries on the European continent."

Amir Abdollahian also said Borrell in a phone call had asked him how the EU could follow up on the stalemate that became more complicated after the anti-Iran resolution submitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors.

The foreign minister then said Borrell sought to get his opinion on how to get out of this stalemate.

The chief diplomat said if Tehran's dividends from the nuclear deal are not guaranteed it will not be acceptable.

"What is important for the Islamic Republic of Iran is the full economic benefit of Iran from the agreement reached in 2015, and any issue that cannot guarantee our full economic benefit will not be acceptable to the government of Ayatollah Raisi and the Islamic Republic of Iran," Iran's top diplomat noted.

For his part, Borrell said, "My visit to Tehran has one main objective: give new momentum to the negotiations and bring the nuclear deal, JCPOA, back on track."

He added that as the coordinator of the talks to revive the JCPOA, he felt that a break in the negotiations was necessary.

"Since I paused the Vienna talks, three months have passed. We need to break the current dynamic of escalation and speed up our work. We need to close the deal now," the chief EU diplomat said, adding that the resumption of talks is a decision made by both Tehran and Washington.

Borrell said in the meeting with the Iranian foreign minister the two sides agreed on "resumption of negotiations between Iran and U.S. in the coming days, facilitated by my team, to solve the last outstanding issues."

He added, "Our bilateral relations have enormous potential but without a working JCPOA we cannot fully develop our relationship."

The EU foreign policy chief added that in such an environment the conclusion of this landmark agreement is more important than ever.

"The world needs security and stability. And the world will be a much secure place if we have a deal that can ensure for Iran full benefits, full economic benefits of the agreement, and at the same time to address the concerns of the international community about non-proliferation,



Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, shakes hands with Iran's Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani (Right).

global security and regional stability," Borrell noted.

Borrell went on to elaborate on the European Union's view of Iran.

**Borrell says he cannot conceive of "regional security without Iran".**

"It is our thinking and our new approach - of the European Union - with respect to the (Persian) Gulf region. We are offering to the countries in the region a new and much deeper relationship, based on a broad agenda that includes the global issues - green transition, digital transition, but also trade and regional security. And I cannot conceive such, as a regional approach, without you, without Iran. Nobody can talk about the stability in the Gulf region without taking into account Iran - the biggest country in the region and a great potential provider of energy. But for that, again, we need to go back to the full implementation of the JCPOA," Borrell noted.

### 'I appreciate the goodwill from the Iranian side'

Later in a press conference in Espinas Hotel attended by Western journalists, Borrell told reporters that "immediately after this meeting (in Tehran), the negotiations will restart."

However, he went to say that "I cannot tell you a precise date on what is happening next week. I have to test the temperature of the next meeting. We are pushing for it. I appreciate the goodwill from the Iranian side. There is also goodwill from the American side. They are happy I am here."

Borrell called preparation for talks a "cumulative process", saying, "First, the delegations had to go back to the capitals to receive guidelines. guidelines were delayed."

Borrell blamed the Ukraine war and resolution by the IAEA Board of Governors against Iran for a delay in resuming talks.

"The Ukraine war and the (IAEA) resolution prolonged the resumption of talks. I got in touch with my Iranian and American counterparts and told them if this continues, the game is over. I don't want the deal to be de-railed."

He also said, "The U.S. and Iran will talk - not directly - with a facilitation by me and my team as coordinator."

According to the EU's Borrell, the discussions between U.S., Iran and the E3 will not take place in Vienna. Rather, he said, the talks will take place "somewhere nearer to the Persian Gulf." To be specific, he added, in a Persian Gulf country.

Though he did not mention that name of the country, most probably Oman will host the negotiations. Qatar is also a likely host for the talks.

Both Oman and Qatar have been seeking to bring the nuclear talks to a conclusion.

Ali Bagheri Kani, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, and Enrique Mora, EU's coordinator were also present at the meeting.

### EU coordinator says negotiations will likely resume next week

In response to Tehran Times' request for a brief comment on the sidelines of the press conference, Mora turned down a request for comment; however, he told a correspondent that the negotiations will likely resume next week.

"Both Iran and the U.S. have accepted to restart talks, and the ne-

gotiations will only focus on the remaining differences between them," he added.

Meanwhile, Amir Abdollahian, in response to the same correspondent who asked him on the date of the resumption of talks, said, "In the coming days. The technical issues have to be coordinated."

When faced a question from the same correspondent on the format, the top Iranian diplomat noted, "Details need to be consulted."

The visit comes two days after Mora and Borrell had a working dinner with Robert Malley, United States' top negotiator in Vienna.

Ahead of the visit on early Friday, France's foreign ministry released a statement expressing its readiness to resume the talks on reviving the JCPOA.

Two officials, one Iranian and one European, told Reuters ahead of Borrell's trip that "two issues including

one on sanctions remained to be resolved."

These comments were not rejected or confirmed by the Iranian foreign ministry.

Later on Saturday, Borrell met Admiral Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC).

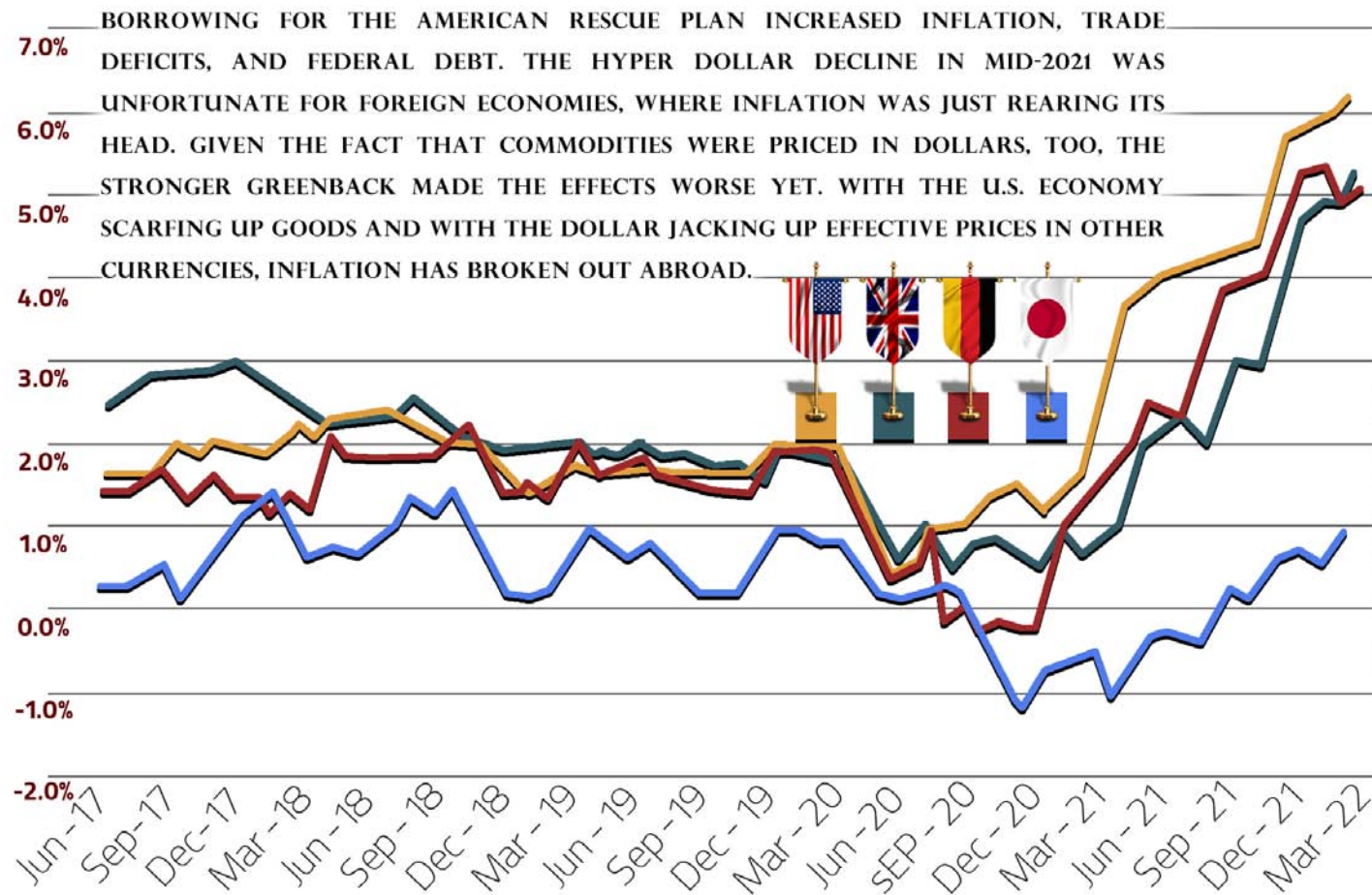
In the meeting, Iran's security chief said, "While fulfilling all our commitments

under the JCPOA, we have never left the negotiating table and are now seeking a strong, lasting and credible agreement."

Shamkhani also stressed that Iran's retaliatory nuclear measures are "merely a legal and rational response to U.S. unilateralism and European passivity, and will continue until the West's illegitimate behavior changes."

After his meeting with Shamkhani, Borrell tweeted, "Important meeting with the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of #Iran, Ali Shamkhani, on how to bring the #JCPOA back on track."

## U.S. economy Is the Wuhan of Global Inflation





# Regional NATO will be dead on arrival

TEHRAN – A number of Arab countries and Israel have increased their diplomatic interactions and contacts amid a tense atmosphere in the West Asia region ahead of a visit by U.S. President Joe Biden, which is expected to result in more military and security coordination in the region.

The visit will take place from July 13-16 but the region is already abuzz with rumors and speculation about its agenda. The U.S. has not officially spoken yet of any kind of military setting in the region that would be similar to NATO.

According to a White House statement, Biden will discuss during his visit alleged “threats from Iran” and Israel’s “increasing integration into the greater region,” among other issues. In Saudi Arabia, Biden will participate in a Persian Gulf Cooperation Council summit that will also be attended by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, Jordanian King Abdullah II, and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi.

Western and Israeli media outlets have raised speculations about the U.S. plan to set up a military alliance in the region. The Jordan king further exacerbated these speculations by voicing support for the alliance.

In remarks to CNBC, he said he would support the formation of a



Middle East military alliance similar to NATO, and that it can be done with countries that are like-minded.

“I’d like to see more countries in the area come into that mix,” he said.

“I would be one of the first people that would endorse a Middle East NATO,” Abdullah said.

He added, “The mission statement has to be very, very clear. Otherwise, it confuses everybody.”

The Jordanian king noted, “I’m hoping what you’re seeing in 2022 is this new vibe, I guess, in the region to say, ‘how can we connect with each other and work with each other.’”

Very few details have been made available about the so-called Middle East NATO. The London-based Raialyoum newspaper said it would be

less than the existing NATO.

Citing Jordanian sources familiar with the matter, the newspaper said, “The Pentagon is seeking to establish a state of joint coordination between its allies in the Middle East, through a special operations room and by unifying the radar systems in air defense so that they are linked to a military room or one operating room.”

The Jordanian king’s talk of the need to specify the mission of the new alliance, according to the newspaper, means that its preparations have been done and it will be announced during Biden’s visit.

So far, other Arab states, especially the Persian Gulf ones, have been silent about the new development. Their media also remained silent on

the issue. But Israeli media magnified the new U.S. initiative and sought to portray it as directed against Iran.

Zvi Bar’el, a senior analyst at Haaretz has said that there is no such thing as a ‘NATO regional defense coalition’ that Israel wants to join but there will be a balanced alliance between the Arab states and Israel to build a defensive wall against the “common threat” that is Iran, according to Fars News.

If true, this alliance could derail current diplomatic efforts to patch up relations between Iran and some neighboring Arab states. Since 2021, Iran has embarked on a new foreign policy agenda called neighborhood policy which rests on fostering cooperation with neighboring countries. Iranian and Arab officials have exchanged visits over the last few months and they continue to keep in close contact with each other. Hence, the Arab states are unlikely to subscribe to a regional alliance that is focused on hostile agenda against Iran.

On the other hand, Iran will almost certainly oppose this kind of coalition-building effort that integrates Israel and give the U.S., a foreign power, a new foothold in the region. Iran has pushed for a regional foreign policy built around rejecting foreign interference in the region.

## Persepolis complete signing of Saeid Sadeghi

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club completed the signing of Gol Gohar winger Saeid Sadeghi on Saturday.

Sadeghi, 28, has penned a one-year contract with Persepolis for an undisclosed fee.

Sadeghi had also caught the eye of Persepolis’s archrival Esteghlal.

He started his playing career in Saba in 2012 and has also played in Mes, Paykan and Shahr Khodro.

Persepolis have previously completed the signing of Alireza Beiranvand (goalkeeper), Morteza Pouraliganji (defender), Danial Esmaeilifar (right winger), Mehdi Ahmadi (left winger) and Giorgi Gvelesiani (defender).

## Iran’s Mes beaten by Al-Wakrah in Asian Club League Handball C’ship

TEHRAN – Qatari club Al-Wakrah defeated Mes Kerman of Iran 25-22 in the 2022 Asian Handball Men’s Club League on Saturday.

The Iranian team had lost to Bahrain’s Al-Najma 31-25 in the opening match.

Sanat Naft will play Kuwait’s Al-Kuwait Club on Monday in Group B.

The 24th Asian Men’s Club League Handball Championship takes place in Hyderabad, India from 22 to 30 June.

## Shahnaz Yari’s Iraq win WAFF Women’s Futsal Championship

TEHRAN – Iraq futsal team, headed by Iranian coach Shahnaz Yari, claimed the title of the 2022 West Asian Football Federation (WAFF) Women’s Futsal Championship.

Iraq defeated Saudi Arabia 4-2 at King Abdullah Sports City Hall in Jeddah on Friday night.

Bahrain beat Kuwait 2-0 to claim the third place in the six-team tournament.

Kuwait were another team headed by an Iranian coach Shahrzad Mozafar.

Iraqi men’s futsal team are also leading by former Iran coach Mohammad Nazemosharia.

## Iran defeat Jordan in 2022 FIBA U16 Women’s Asian Division B

TEHRAN – Iran defeated hosts Jordan 68-41 in the 2022 FIBA U16 Women’s Asian Championship Division B.

Jordan had built up a lead of as big as 10 points early in the second quarter, but would start struggling to find the bottom of the net from there. Since building up their biggest lead of 10 points, Jordan scored only 3 points until the halftime buzzer and only 12 points in the entire second half.

Rebounding was key for Iran and Hadiseh Ghesmati Almani put on a rebounding performance to remember with 23 in total while also scoring 8 points and getting 4 steals.

The 2022 FIBA U16 Women’s Asian Championship is an ongoing international under-16 basketball tournament that is being held from 24 to 30 June 2022 in Amman, Jordan.

The tournament was last held in 2017. The next edition was supposed to be held from April 5-10, 2020 in Canberra, Australia, which

was cancelled by FIBA due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The sixth edition of the biennial competition, this is also the qualifying tournament for FIBA Asia in the 2022 FIBA U17 Women’s Basketball World Cup in Hungary.

## Iran victorious over Argentina at IHF Beach Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Argentina 2-1 (26-14, 21-27, 10-8) in the 9-12th place semifinals of the 2022 International Handball Federation (IHF) Beach Handball Championship on Saturday.

The Iranian team had defeated Puerto Rico 2-0 (30-12, 24-13) Saturday morning.

Iran will play for the ninth place on Sunday.

The ninth edition of the 2022 Men’s Beach Handball World Championships is being held from 21 to 26 June 2022 at Crete, Greece under the aegis of International Handball Federation (IHF).

It is the first time in history that the championship is organized by Hellenic Handball Federation.

## Iran basketball beat KK FMP Belgrade in friendly

TEHRAN – Iran national basketball team defeated Serbian club KK FMP Belgrade 82-80 in a friendly match.

The match was held as part of preparation for the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 Asian Qualifiers.

Iran are scheduled to play Kazakhstan and Syria on July 1 and 4, respectively in Group D.

Iran are leading by newly-appointed coach Saeid Armaghani in the Serbian training camp.

Team Melli will play KK FMP Belgrade one more time.

## IFMA recognizes Javad Nasiri as Iran Muaythai president

TEHRAN – International Federation of Muaythai Associations (IFMA) general secretary Stephan Fox said that they just recognize Javad Nasiri as president of Iran Muaythai Federation.

The Iranian ministry has reportedly asked the Muaythai association, headed by Javad Nasiri, to work under the supervision of martial arts association but Fox said that Nasiri has full authority to organize and supervise all Muaythai activities in Iran.

“Mr. Nasiri has full authority to organize and supervise all Muaythai activities and has the exclusive right to use the logo, symbols, techniques, terms, resources and trademarks of the International Federation of Muaythai Associations. On behalf of IFMA, he has been given the legal protection of them,” Fox wrote in a letter sent to Iran’s Sports Ministry.

“We call on you to withdraw these arbitrary appointments, because any person except Mr. Nasiri in invalid in the position,” he added.

Fox had previously warned that the Iranian Sports Ministry should not intervene in the sport.

According to him, Iran’s Sports Ministry should not try to force Muaythai to be part of a martial art federation.

Muaythai sometimes referred to as Thai boxing, is a combat sport that uses stand-up striking along with various clinching techniques.

## Iran rejects ‘baseless allegations of the Arab League’

TEHRAN – Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi has sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to protest a resolution of the Arab League.

“I am writing to you with reference to resolution 8749 of the League of the Arab States dated 9 March 2022, which is annexed to the letter dated 28 April 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (A/76/826-S/2022/372),” he said in the letter dated June 21.

Takht Ravanchi said, “The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns and categorically rejects the aforementioned resolution in its entirety as well as the unjustified and baseless allegations against it contained in the aforementioned resolution. This is yet another desperate attempt made by certain member States of the Arab League to further their destructive and sinister ambitions through abusing the banner of regional or transregional organizations. As in the past, those states have resorted to lies, fabrications and false accusations against my country, which is nothing more than a reflection of their Iranophobic stances.”

Takht Ravanchi stated, “The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the resolution’s content to be an interference in its internal affairs, which is a gross violation of not only the UN Charter but also the principles of international law, in particular the principles of good neighborliness and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other sovereign States. It is extremely disappointing that a regional organization such as the Arab League, which should have focused its mandate on enhancing regional peace and security, has strayed from

its primary mandate in order to advance certain illegitimate objectives by spreading fabrications against other sovereign States. Iran is committed to its international obligations and has never engaged in any activity in the region that breaches its obligations.”

He continued, “Iran’s foreign policy is based on full respect for international law, mutual respect, good neighborliness, cooperation and dialogue as well as maintaining regional peace and security. We are determined to pursue this policy in good faith. Our recent constructive engagement with the UN to support the truce agreement in Yemen as well as its extension is a clear manifestation of this approach.”

The Iranian ambassador also underlined Iran’s sovereignty over the three Islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and the lesser Tunb, noting that this sovereignty is not up for negotiations.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran once again reiterates its sovereignty over the Iranian Islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and the lesser Tunb in the Persian Gulf and emphasizes that the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Iran over the said islands are non-negotiable. As a result, the resolution’s unsubstantiated allegations concerning the Iranian Islands are considered an interference in Iran’s domestic affairs, which violates international law and the UN Charter, particularly the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states enshrined in the UN Charter,” he said, adding, “Regarding the use of a fictitious name for the Persian Gulf in the aforesaid resolution, I would like to reiterate that the term ‘Persian Gulf’ is the only genuine and valid geographical designation for the body of water that lies between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, as it has been used since the beginning

of time. As all reputable cartography organizations’ institutional memory attests, this marine area has traditionally been recognized and referred to as the ‘Persian Gulf,’ which must be respected by all.”

The Iranian ambassador then addressed allegations against Iran’s nuclear activities.

Takht Ravanchi continued, “The Islamic Republic of Iran also rejects any allegation against its peaceful nuclear activities, which are entirely consistent with its rights and obligations under the NPT as well as the Agency’s safeguards agreement. As a responsible member of the NPT, the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to the principle of collaboration with the IAEA and has fulfilled all of its obligations under the NPT and Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.”

He added, “The Islamic Republic of Iran further categorically rejects the aforementioned resolution’s fabrications and allegations against it related to the alleged breach of Security Council Resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2231 (2015). It is obvious that certain states are attempting to divert attention away from their aggressive and destabilizing activities in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East as a whole by disseminating disinformation and crafting spurious claims against Iran.”

He concluded, “Finally, I must reiterate that the establishment of friendly relations and peaceful coexistence with neighboring countries has always been Iran’s top priority. We will continue to pursue our security, stability and prosperity within the framework of a strong region, which can be materialized only through a genuine dialogue as well as active and constructive engagement of all regional countries based on mutual respect, inclusivity and the basic principles of international law.”

## Iran reiterates commitment to preventing war crime, ethnic cleansing

TEHRAN – Zahra Ershadi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations, has underlined Tehran’s unwavering commitment to preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.

“I would like to reiterate my delegation’s unwavering commitment to the noble goal of the protection of civilians as well as the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and prosecution of their perpetrators,” Ershadi said in a statement to the UN General Assembly meeting titled “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”

She said, “Early warning initiatives along with preventive diplomacy, including resorting to the appropriate

peaceful settlement of disputes, serve as the cornerstones for these efforts in order to achieve this goal. We acknowledge the inevitable role of the youths in this process and emphasize the commitment of all countries to protect all their citizens especially children as well as youths during catastrophic humanitarian situations. In this regard, we take note of the recent report of the Secretary-General under this Agenda item.”

At the beginning of her remarks, Ershadi expressed her sympathy and deepest condolences to the people of Afghanistan for the deadly earthquake in the country that has left over 1500 dead and injured many more.

As regards the topic of the meeting, she said, “Bearing in mind that there is no consensus concerning the scope, definition and elements of

the concept of the Responsibility to Protect since the 2005 World Summit, in-depth legal as well as humanitarian discussions are required to overcome any divergences in order to advance consensus on this concept and its application. In this regard, the legitimate concerns surrounding this concept must be addressed thoroughly and exhaustively in detail while assurances and commitments by member states under the UN Charter with respect to sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of states as well as the non-use of force and threat to use of force must be reiterated.”

Ershadi added, “My delegation reiterates its longstanding position that the failure to effectively prevent atrocity crimes can be attributed more to the failures of the Security Council rather than due to the lack of a relevant normative framework. However, any

attempt to divert the responsibilities of the Security Council to another UN body due to the Security Council’s failure to meet its responsibilities, including by providing noble interpretations of the articles of the UN Charter as well as non-consensual practices, is unequivocally rejected. It is crucial that an objective body, both impartial and independent, is used to assess all situations without selectivity based on the agreed upon legal norms and criteria. Therein, they shall act decisively in order to take the appropriate non-military measures to prevent the occurrence of atrocity crimes as well as its deteriorations. However, should there be an absence of such a body, the Security Council should continue to implement its mandates according to the Charter of the United Nations while efforts on Security Council reforms should be redoubled in order to compensate for its deficiencies.”

elections, quit parliament over disagreement with other factions.

Iraq has recently cleared its gas debts to Iran after long talks with Iran over how to proceed with the move in light of U.S. sanctions on Iran.

pay a visit to Iran on Sunday.

No further details were available about al-Kadhimi’s visit. It comes amid political deadlock in Iraq over government formation after the Sadrist movement, which had won the recent parliamentary

## Iraqi PM due in Tehran on Sunday: report

TERHAN – Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi will arrive in Tehran in an undeclared visit, an Iraqi news website reported.

Iraqi Middle East News website cited an informed source as saying that the Iraqi prime minister will



## Daily gas production capacity exceeds 1,000 mcm



From page 1 ► The average production of gas from the South Pars gas field has been increasing significantly in recent years and last December the figure reached a record of 705 mcm per day.

As one of the world's biggest gas reserves, the South Pars gas field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square

kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran's territorial waters. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate. The field is divided into 24 standard phases.

South Pars is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. All of the phases except for phase 11 are fully operational at the moment.

Iran has reached complete self-sufficiency in all aspects of gas production from the South Pars field, including drilling, platform building, pipeline construction, and onshore refineries.

## Investment in Iran's textile industry rises over 44%

TEHRAN – The statistics of Iran's textile and clothing industry shows that investments made in this field grew by 44.8 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), the spokesman of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry said.

Omid Ghalibaf said the increase in investment in this industry is unprecedented since the overall rate of investment in the country is currently negative, IRNA reported.

"This jump in investment is due to the positive outlook for the future of this industry, and the export statistics of the textile and clothing industries, which showed a growth of 5.9 percent in the previous year," Ghalibaf said.

According to the official, the exports of clothing and textile products in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21) increased by 10 percent in terms of weight and the imports of such products also increased by 35 percent.

The textile industry in Iran has a long history

and is one of the most important sectors for employment.

This industry has a high employment potential, and the amount of foreign currency investment to create a job in the textile industry is very low compared to some industries such as automotive.

But this sector has faced problems in recent years and it is very important to remove them.

In a recent interview conducted by IRIB, a board member of Association of Iran Textile Industries announced the closure of 7,000 production units in the country's textile industry.

Abbas Sarsharzadeh said: "The main reason for the distance of the textile industry from the set goals should be sought in the lack of planning for this industry by governments of different periods and incorrect policies, which led to inappropriate investment, disproportionate industrial capacities created along the industry chain, machine wear, and improper tariff system."

## Export from Qom province increases 110% in 2 months on year

TEHRAN – Export from Qom province increased 110 percent in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Esfandiar Darikvandi, the director-general of Qom's Customs Department, said that 64,143 tons of products worth over \$50 million were exported from the province in the first two months of the present year.

As previously announced by the head of Foreign Trade Office of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, export from Qom province rose 92 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), from its previous year.

Mojtaba Farhadi said that commodities worth \$283 million were exported from the province in the past year.

He named metal products, rubber and plastic items, and foodstuffs as the main items exported from the province in the past year.

The data released by the Islamic Republic of



Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) show that the value of Iran's export of non-oil products increased 37 percent during the first two months of the current year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Iran exported 17,014 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$8.516 billion in the said two months, also registering a 1.6-percent rise in weight as compared to the first two months of the previous year, the data indicate.

Based on the IRICA data, Iran traded over 22,196 million tons of non-oil products worth \$16.631

He named Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Russia, Turkmenistan, India, China, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Azerbaijan as the main destinations of the products exported from the province in the previous year.

Neighboring countries, India and China imported 69 percent of the exported commodities, the official noted.

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# Iran-China 5-month trade rises 18% yr/yr

TEHRAN – The value of non-oil trade between Iran and China reached \$6.472 billion in the first five months of 2022 to register an 18-percent rise year on year, according to the data released by China's customs administration.

The value of trade between the two countries in January-May 2021 stood at \$5.481 billion, IRNA reported.

Based on the mentioned data, China's imports from Iran in the first five months of 2022 grew by 26 percent compared to the previous year and reached \$3.192 billion. China had imported \$2.535 billion worth of goods from Iran in the same period of 2021.

China's exports to Iran in January-May 2022 also increased by 11 percent to reach \$3.280 billion from \$2.946 billion in the previous year's same period.

According to the report, China imported \$703 million worth of goods from Iran in May and



exported \$744 million worth of goods to Iran. China's imports from Iran increased by 27 percent in the said month and its exports to Iran grew by 24 percent compared to May 2021.

Iran-China non-oil trade stood at \$14.8 billion in 2021, according to China's customs administration.

The value of trade between the

two countries during the previous year declined by less than one percent in comparison to 2020 in which the figure was reported to be \$14.9 billion.

China's imports from Iran in 2021 grew by more than one percent compared to the previous year and reached \$6.5 billion. China had imported \$6.4 billion worth of goods from Iran in 2020.

## Operation begins to construct over 3,800 National Housing Movement units in Isfahan

TEHRAN- The executive operation has been started for the construction of 3,816 units of National Housing Movement in Isfahan province.

Alireza Qari-Qoran, the director-general of the province's Transport and Urban Development Department, has stated that of the four million housing units of the National Housing Movement plan, 250,000 units is the share of Isfahan province, for which about 422,000 people have registered.

As announced in a meeting to review the strategies for organizing the housing market, the first series of National Housing Movement units will be delivered to the applicants in the second half of the present Iranian calendar year (September 23, 2022-March 20, 2023).

The mentioned meeting, held on June 15, was attended by Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi and Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohsen Rezaei.

On June 11, transport and urban development minister announced that 1.35 million units of National Housing Movement are currently under construction throughout the country

and the number is increasing every day.

"With the support of the parliament and the credit provided for the facilities of National Housing Movement, we will proceed according to the schedule", the minister underlined.

After National Housing Action Plan (started in 2018), National Housing Movement is the government's second major program to provide affordable housing units for the low-income classes.

The operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of National Housing Movement began in early February.

The ceremony to begin the mentioned operation and also to launch some development projects in the housing sector was attended by the transport and urban development minister.

National Housing Movement to construct four million housing units in four years is one of the major plans of the current government in the housing sector.

According to the plan, out of these four million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and 800,000 units in villages, some of these units are currently



being constructed after providing lands and preparing the necessary conditions.

Land supply was the first condition for the realization of the national movement plan and housing construction, in this regard, a series of measures were taken by the government and Ministry of Transport and Urban Development. According to the latest statistics, the lands of 2.8 million housing units of National Housing Movement have been provided by the ministry.

Although, studies show that the provision of land and financial resources are two serious obstacles to the construction of this number of residential units.

## TEDPIX loses 13,059 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 13,059 points on Saturday, IRIB reported.

As reported, the index closed at 1,520 million points.

About 11.487 billion securities worth 86.564 trillion rials (about \$317.39 million) were traded at the TSE on Saturday.

The first market's index lost 10,975 points, and the second market's index dropped 21,931 points.

TSE is on the four Iranian stock exchanges, the other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

## Moscow eyeing expansion of trade through Russia-Azerbaijan-Iran-Pakistan railway

TEHRAN – Chairman of the Russia-Iran Joint Trade Council has said Moscow is pursuing the development of trade and transit through the Russia-Azerbaijan-Iran-Pakistan railway route, the portal of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

Speaking in a meeting with ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie on Saturday, Vladimir Abedinov proposed to form a working group between the representatives of the chambers of commerce of Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Pakistan to explore various aspects of the trade through the mentioned route.

Expressing Russia's willingness to strengthen trade relations with Iran, the official pointed to the western sanctions against Russia and said: "These sanctions have changed the transit and logistics routes in the region. Since the impact of sanctions has caused Russia's trade relations to undergo significant changes. In this regard, we are looking for new transportation routes in the region."

"Completion of the Rasht-Astara route is of great importance for Russia's trade purposes. This [route] paves the way for Russia to access

Pakistan," Abedinov said.

He further noted that Russia can also access Pakistan and India by sending its cargoes to Iran's northern ports by vessel and then transit them through Iran to Pakistan and India.

"This is a complex route; therefore, Russia seeks to replace it with the railway through Azerbaijan to Iran, Pakistan, and India," he added.

Shafeie for his part pointed to the current conditions as special for the whole region and considered it necessary to make special decisions in accordance with these conditions.

According to the ICCIMA head, considering the current situation, the Iranian government has made the issue of transit a priority in its goals and plans, although there are infrastructural problems in the port area on both the Iranian and Russian sides.

He further mentioned some of the problems regarding rail transportation to Pakistan, saying: "The railway problems in Pakistan are not easily solved despite Iran's efforts. For example, a shipment was sent by rail from Iran to Lahore, Pakistan, which took 35 days to arrive to the destination."





From page 1 ► The United Nations's high commissioner for human rights, Michelle Bachelet, has called on Israel to open a criminal investigation into Abu Aqleh's killing as well as all the other murders by Israeli regime forces in the occupied West Bank and in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Yet, Israel has refused to do so and very rarely does, if ever, conduct any criminal investigation into the killing of Palestinians by its troops, emboldening the regime's occupation forces to continue murdering Palestinians carte blanche.

Abu Aqleh's murder was met with widespread international outrage, especially among western mainstream media. Yet the Palestinian-American veteran reporter, a household name in the Arab world, is just one of scores of Palestinian journalists the regime has gunned down (or silenced), who have received no media coverage in comparison to Abu Aqleh's murder.

Shamdasani says "more than six weeks after the killing of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and injury of her colleague Ali Sammoudi in Jenin on 11 May 2022, it is deeply disturbing that Israeli authorities have not conducted a criminal investigation."

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights says "since just the beginning of the year, our Office has verified that Israeli [regime] Forces have killed 58 Palestinians in the [occupied] West Bank, including 13 children."

The Palestinian death toll provided by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is widely believed to

be much higher. The UNHCR adds that "International human rights law requires prompt, thorough, transparent, independent and impartial investigation into all use of force resulting in death or serious injury. Perpetrators must be held to account."

The Palestinian Authority has refused to hand over the lethal bullet extracted from Abu Aqleh to Israel, saying it does not trust the regime.

"The results of the UN investigation confirm once again what we said from the start, that Israel is responsible for the killing of the journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and it must be held accountable for this crime," Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, told the media.

The PA has said its investigation showed that Abu Aqleh was shot by Israeli troops in a "deliberate murder". Its findings lent support to several witnesses, including Palestinian journalists, who said she was killed by Israeli fire.

The Palestinian attorney general said Abu Aqleh was hit with an armour-piercing bullet, saying the inquiry "proves that at the scene of the incident, armed Palestinians were not present and that Israeli forces were the only ones present".

According to the attorney general, the bullet that killed Abu Aqleh was a 5.56mm round with a steel component used by Nato forces, and the shot was fired by an Israeli soldier who stood about 170 meters away.

The UN Human Rights Office dismissed Israeli claims that the journalist may have died as a result

# UN finds “well-aimed” Israeli bullets killed veteran journalist Abu Aqleh

of “indiscriminate firing by armed Palestinians,” saying “we have found no information suggesting that there was activity by armed Palestinians in the immediate vicinity of the journalists.”The UN says its investigation was carried out “in accordance with our global human rights monitoring methodology, our Office inspected photo, video and audio material, visited the scene, consulted experts, reviewed official communications and interviewed witnesses.”

At the time and place of Abu Aqleh's murder, the UN report says “our findings indicate that no warnings were issued and no shooting was taking place at that time and at that location,” this is despite the slain journalist and six other journalists “wearing bulletproof helmets and flak jackets with “PRESS” markings,”

Shamdasani pointed out that “several further single bullets were fired as an unarmed man attempted to approach Abu Aqleh's body and another uninjured journalist sheltering behind a tree. Shots continued to be fired as this individual eventually managed to carry away Abu Aqleh's body.”Abu Aqleh case has been added to a legal complaint being taken to the international criminal court, arguing that Israeli regime forces have been systematically targeting Palestinian journalists in violation of international humanitarian law.

The legal case originally submitted in April had focused on four Palestinian journalists wearing press helmets and vests, two of whom were injured and two others who were shot dead.

Lawyers in London representing

the case say it is vital to add Abu Aqleh's murder as the repeated failure of the Israeli military to investigate such incidents.

One of the lawyers says “The ICC prosecutor must investigate our complaints and prosecute those responsible to send a clear message not just to the Israeli forces and [regime], but to all governments that targeting journalists is a crime and journalists are not fair game.”

The case is being supported by representatives from the International Federation of Journalists, the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, and the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians.

Critics say Israeli occupation troops have enjoyed a significant amount of impunity against accountability for their deadly use of force against Palestinians. Experts say the regime itself, with the backing of the United States, the United Kingdom, and others has gone to extreme lengths with the aim of silence the voice of Palestinians.

The reality of Palestinian suffering at the hands of Israeli forces and Israeli settlers has not been exposed in full. Those who attempt to cover these crimes are silenced by the regime which uses various methods.

These include the blacklisting of Palestinian civil groups providing vital information to the ICC investigating Israeli war crimes or the targeted killing of prominent Palestinian journalists covering these crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories and the besieged Gaza Strip.

## Iran, energy crisis reasons for Biden's visit to Riyadh: Turkish expert

Bilgehan Alagoz, director of the Center for Iranian Studies in Ankara, says the global energy crisis and ambiguity surrounding the Iran nuclear talks are key factors for Biden's upcoming visit to Saudi Arabia.

Riyadh-Washington relations soured after Biden entered the White House in January 2021. Biden had vowed to turn Saudi Arabia into a pariah state during his presidential campaign over the assassination of Jamal Khashoggi and its war on Yemen.

While Biden focused on Saudi human rights record at the beginning of his presidency, now political analysts expect other issues to take the center stage, including the high oil prices.

Now analysts say Washington's view of Riyadh has changed. The US president is seeking to strengthen ties with Saudis to

November 2022. Therefore, the primary reason for Biden's trip to Saudi Arabia is the pressing need to persuade Saudi Arabia to increase oil output and simultaneously mend their tense relationship.

Another motivation for this trip is the fact that the nuclear talks in Vienna did not terminate, necessitating greater [Persian] Gulf involvement in matters involving Iran, particularly those pertaining to Israel's security. Because of this, Saudi Arabia has once again emerged as a crucial nation for the US.

**Do you see any relation between Biden's regional trip and the possible failure of the JCPOA talks?**

The ambiguity surrounding the nuclear discussions, in my opinion, is a key factor in Biden's travel to Saudi Arabia. Because



achieve a number of specific goals during his upcoming visit to Saudi Arabia.

While the American media focus on human rights and see Biden's trip as contrary to his election promises, the media and analysts in the Arab world are paying attention to the goals Biden is seeking during his imminent trip.

To shed more light on the significance of the deal, Mehr News Agency reached out to Dr. Bilgehan Alagoz.

Following is the text of the interview:

**While the White House says its view has not changed about Saudi human rights records, many believe that the upcoming Biden's visit to the country means Biden's retreatment. What do you think?**

Joe Biden established a definite verbal attitude against Saudi Arabia before he was elected US president. For two key reasons, Biden used the language that he would treat Saudi Arabia as a pariah. One of them was that he accused Saudi Arabia of killing Jamal Khashoggi, and the other was that energy plans from the Trump administration were changed to reflect a totally different viewpoint. In accordance with the Green New Deal, the USA would put an end to the era of fossil fuels and concentrate on renewable energy, making the [Persian] Gulf nations, particularly Saudi Arabia, less significant for the USA. Progressives within the Democratic Party were particularly supportive of this policy, which formed as a philosophical stance. However, the USA can no longer sustain this approach given the current circumstances.

**Do you think that Biden's previous stance towards the Saudi Kingdom has been just a tactic to milk the Saudis more?**

The way Biden previously treated Saudi Arabia, in my opinion, was not done so strategically to gain more. If the conditions were the same as they were when he was elected president, he would continue to act in this manner. I think the tremendous shifts in global politics are wholly accountable for the United States' current shift toward Saudi Arabia. The United States' Saudi policy has changed as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the development of Iran's nuclear program.

**If you agree that the Biden administration has been forced to revise its earlier stance toward the kingdom, so what reasons have forced Biden to do so?**

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a worldwide energy crisis developed. The spike in gas prices in the USA is a glaring example of this. The Republicans sharply criticize this situation in a nation that will hold congressional midterm elections in

the USA is focused on the notion that Iran's nuclear activities pose a threat to Israel's security. In this context, a law that was put on the US agenda is crucial. On June 9, Democratic Senator Jacky Rosen and Republican Senator Joni Ernst stated that they were creating a bipartisan bill to forward the 2020 Abraham Accords. In order to develop an integrated air and missile defense system between the US, Israel, and Arab countries against Iran, DEFEND (Deterring Enemy Forces and Enabling National Defenses) Act has been announced. It is likely that Biden would try to persuade Saudi Arabia to join the joint air defense system that will be established by this law.

**Will Biden's visit to the region and the kingdom affect Tel Aviv and Riyadh's possible normalization?**

Saudi Arabia's participation in the Abraham Accords is something the US is quite eager to do. However, Saudi Arabia takes a careful approach to this issue. Saudi Arabia and Iran are competing for leadership of the Islamic world. In this sense, Saudi Arabia wants to increase its influence over Iran-dominant Arab countries like Syria and Iraq. Arab and Islamic identity depends heavily on anti-Israel feeling; hence Saudis don't want that emotion to shift against them. Because of this, I believe Saudi Arabia will continue to be wary of Israel.

**In the past, Saudi Arabia provided the US and Western countries with energy and instead “bought” security. But in recent years Riyadh has witnessed the US limits and disability to guarantee the kingdom's security, for example, see the failure of the Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan or their failure to protect the country and its Aramco against Yemeni attacks. Considering these facts, how do you see the future of the US and Saudi relations?**

Saudi Arabia is making numerous changes to its foreign policy. As a result of the USA's distancing itself from itself, relations with China and Russia, two other powers, are strengthening constantly. Saudi Arabia is likewise evaluating its ties to the nearby countries. The Qatari crisis was settled in the Al-Ula Agreement. Revisions are being made to the connections with Turkey. Last but not least, it's crucial to continue the talks with Iran. Saudi Arabia has not been able to conduct policy entirely under the direction of the USA, as it formerly was, as evidenced by the fact that these two bitter rivals are currently in talks to resolve the Yemeni crisis. In my opinion, Saudi Arabia will continue to pursue its current approach in the years to come, even though it occasionally runs against American interests.

## India plays BRICS to its interests

*New Delhi makes a fairly safe gamble by supporting the group—without putting itself at odds with the West.*

The BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) may seem like legacy software: a once-promising innovation now eclipsed by more effective alternatives. The group held its first summit in 2009—minus South Africa—and pioneered so-called minilateralism. But its members have struggled to implement their vision for trade and economic structures outside the U.S.-dominated financial system, in part because of their own economic challenges.

BRICS, which held its annual summit virtually on Thursday, retains relevance simply by virtue of its membership. The countries make up nearly one-quarter of global GDP. For India, which seeks a permanent seat at the global high table, BRICS still provides benefits. However, the presence of India's rival China—and the greater role it seeks to assert within the group—poses challenges. BRICS can still work for New Delhi, but it must perform a careful balancing act.

BRICS brings several advantages to India. Its aim to create economic alternatives for countries in the global south reflects a long-standing foreign-policy goal for New Delhi, harkening back to its leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement. Participation in a non-Western grouping balances India's growing partnerships with the West, a key aspect of its strategic autonomy policy. (BRICS, however, lacks the momentum and common purpose of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, made up of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States.)

Intra-BRICS trade, while modest, presents opportunities for India in key markets, including China, which remains an important commercial partner despite security tensions. India also supports the BRICS goal of shielding members from the economic fallout of Russia's war in Ukraine. And unlike within the Quad, the Ukraine issue does not create tension for India within BRICS.

Still, BRICS presents a few problems for India because China, which currently holds the group's rotating presidency, appears determined to scale up its clout. Ahead of the summit, Chinese state media trumpeted the BRICS's “China Year.”



Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa pose during a BRICS meeting at the G-20 summit in Osaka, Japan, on June 28, 2019. MIKHAIL KLIMENTYEV/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Beijing also hopes to expand membership, thus growing its influence. India works with China in other multilateral groups—such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization—but they are not battlegrounds for competition, whether because of their narrow focus or larger size.

Buoyed by its growing friendship with Russia and intensifying competition with the United States, China appears keen to position BRICS as a counterweight to U.S.-led institutions. It could use the group as a platform for anti-US propaganda framed around U.S. sanctions on Russia and broader U.S. hegemony. This would go against India's strategic autonomy policy; New Delhi also seeks to avoid being seen as part of an anti-U.S. bloc.

India should thus ensure that the group's public statements refrain from confrontational rhetoric against the United States, even while

quietly endorsing BRICS policies that won't go down well in the West, such as stepped-up economic cooperation with Russia. The summit produced a long joint statement that plays to India's interests, emphasizing combating COVID-19, cooperating on economic development, and curbing climate change. It featured no direct criticism of the United States.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in a G-7 summit in Germany just after the BRICS meeting, underscoring how India deftly manages its relationships. Going forward, India can make a fairly safe gamble: It can pledge support for BRICS activities to show its loyalty and welcome continued cooperation while banking on the likelihood that BRICS won't move quickly on implementing them—sparing New Delhi from putting itself at odds with the West.

(Source: Foreign Policy)



## Abadan Sacred Defense museum in need of investment, minister says



TEHRAN – There is a need for more investment in the Sacred Defense Museum Garden in the southwestern city of Abadan, the Iranian tourism minister has said.

“It is imperative for the museum to receive more funding to flourish,” Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami said on Thursday while visiting the museum.

While the museum is conveniently located, it lacks proper (public) amenities, the minister added.

For the museum to become a top tourist destination and attract more tourists, it requires additional investment in the tourism field, he added.

“Museums like this are part of our national heritage, so people can visit them to learn more about war,” he explained.

Younger generations must learn about the courage of the soldiers and martyrs of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, he noted.

There are such museums across the country including the Sacred Defense Museum and the Peace Museum in Tehran.

Back in May, the director of Tehran’s Sacred Defense Museum Ali-Asghar Jafari announced that Iran plans to inaugurate 14 museums dedicated to the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, known as the ‘sacred defense’ by 2025.

“23 sacred defense museums are currently operational in the country, and it is planned to increase the number to 37 by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starting March 2025),” he said.

## Italian flamingos glamour of birdwatching in southwest Iran, tourism minister says

TEHRAN – Iranian tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami has said the Italian flamingos lend glamour to the birdwatching opportunities in the wetlands of Abadan, southwest Iran.

“Birdwatching, and in particular, Italian flamingos, is a remarkable capacity for the development of tourism in Abadan,” Zarghami said on Thursday.

“Flamingos create very beautiful images the time when they migrate to this area.... This attraction can provide the ground for tourism development,”

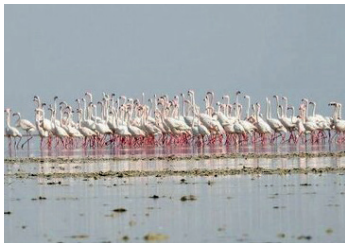
According to available data, some 550 bird species, including Dalmatian pelican, Siberian crane, lesser white-

fronted goose, and white-headed duck have been sighted and registered in Iran.

The country is decorated with a variety of impressive wetlands that hold a great share of aquatic and bird species and wildlife. Anzali wetland, Qeshm Island, Urmia Lake, and Miankaleh Peninsula are among the most important locations for bird watching in Iran.

Miankaleh International Wetland in Mazandaran, called the birdwatching paradise of Iran, stretches to a total area of 68,000 hectares, which is home to at least 130 species of migratory species with a population of 1.5 million.

Being an impressive bird-watching destination, the



wetland displays a variety of bird species such as otters, all kinds of fish-eating ducks (common goldeneye and Mergus), pelicans, flamingos, cormorants, common pheasants, partridges, mute swan, tundra swan, and coots. Ashuradeh was introduced and registered as one of the world’s first biosphere zones in 1975.

Gomishan wetland in Golestan province is home to over 20,000 water birds, and more than 20 species of birds,

which supports three IUCN Red List vulnerable species of waterbirds, i.e., Pelecanus Crispus, Aythya nyroca, and Vanellus gregarious, as well as the vulnerable mammal Phoca (Pusa) caspica; it is also an important staging area for the fish subspecies Rutilus rutilus caspicas.

Located at the foot of the Zagros mountains in north-western Iran, Zarivar is a freshwater wetland hosting over 74 bird species, which is designated as a Ramsar Site. The site provides a suitable breeding and resting place for birds and other wetland animals, and due to the relatively extensive reed beds, it is an important overwintering site for northern migratory birds.

Assassins believed their actions would transport them to paradise. Supposedly Sabbah cunningly cultivated such beliefs by getting his followers stoned on hashish (unbeknown to them) and then showing them beautiful secret gardens.

This notion, however, gave the sect its popular name ‘Hashish-iyun’, the root of the modern English term ‘assassin’. Or so the story goes. Peter Willey’s book, Eagle’s Nest, gives an altogether more sympathetic version, portraying Sabbah as a champion of the free-thinking, pro-science Islamic tradition and suggesting that the hashish tales were exaggerations designed to denigrate Ismaili Islam.

The castle was captured by Mongol ruler Hulagu Khan in 1256 using diplomatic trickery, having earlier forced the surrender of the Ismailis’ spiritual leader (Sabbah’s successor).

Sabbah’s rule from Alamut (which he renamed the City of Good Fortune) is shrouded in mystery and enigma. This is partly because most Ismaili records of the era were destroyed by the invading Mongols while the writings of their detractors survived.

# The valleys of Assassins, a drive back in time



The castle was almost forgotten and only returned to public consciousness with the publication of Stark’s 1930s travel diary Valleys of the Assassins. A copy of that recently reprinted volume makes a great companion for the trip.

Here is a selection of comments that visitors to the castle have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

‘Worth taking time to step up the stairs to the summit’

It is worth going there but should not be the only visit to Alamut! I met many tourists who just came there to visit the castle only, but it is a big mistake! Before the castle, I visited several places which were worth more!

I had a tour guide friend who gave me good tips and also he drove me to the places! His name is Farzad he has a page as Alamut eagle over here on trip

advisor! (Fabian h. from Aachen, Germany)

‘Magical place’

The Alamut Castle offers some great views across the Alamut Valley, they are renovating parts of the castle, but already a very worthwhile place to visit. (Bastiaan v. from Utrecht, the Netherlands)

‘Fantastic view’

It is definitely worth climbing up the 500 steps to this castle for the views. The walk was relatively easy though you can hire a donkey or a horse.

The castle itself is in ruins but the unfortunate feature is the scaffolding that has been put up to give access. There are also rusty tin roofs covering much of the structure making photography almost impossible. (Sus1952 from Palmerston North, New Zealand)

‘Alamut fortress and its amazing view on the summit’

It took one hour and a half

from Qazvin to Alamut. The road itself is beautiful with mountain scenery. It takes 20 minutes to step up the stairs and you are supposed to buy a ticket. The view of Ghazor Khan village and horizon from the summit is perfect.

You must know that it is not the only point in Alamut if you have a plan to go there. My guide took me to some amazing lesser-known places in Alamut. Not bad to contact him if you are going to have a trip to Alamut. He is helpful to travelers and speaks fluent English. (Robinbackpacker from Paris, France)

‘Great Tour with Vahid’

I did a day trip to Alamut valley including Alamut castle with Vahid [a local guide] and had a blast! The nature in the valley, the canyons and the views from the castle are absolutely stunning!

Vahid showed me all the good places, stopped whenever I wanted to take some photos and I was also served a very delicious home-cooked lunch at a family that runs a guesthouse and restaurant next to the castle.

Vahid also explained a lot about the history of the castle and the region as I didn’t have much time to do any research in advance. He’s a really funny and knowledgeable guide and he even helped me to plan my onward journey the next day and helped me catch the right bus from the highway to Tabriz, I highly recommend him!! (Enamena from Stuttgart, Germany)

‘Breathtaking views’

Breathtaking views from the top of the Hasan Sabah fortress ... 1300 steps up.

Make sure you have good hiking shoes as it can be very slippery ( we had lots of snow end of March) and the hike up and down is not as easy as it looks. The castle is not in very good shape and has scaffolding all around but it is still worth going up.

Across the castle is your best option for overnight: Alamut tourism guest house. It also offers lunch if you are only traveling thru. It is a basic but great location and a helpful host family.

## Nature lovers clean millennia-old cave in Iranian plateau

TEHRAN – A cleaning project has been recently completed on the millennia-old cave of Chal-Nakhjir and its surrounding area in the central province of Markazi, the provincial tourism chief has said.

“The project was carried out in collaboration with a group of environmental and tourism fans,” Mostafa Marzban explained on Saturday.

The project was aimed to promote a culture of respect for the environment and nature, the official added.

The Chal-Nakhjir Cave, which is estimated to date back to 70 million years ago, has been inscribed on the national heritage list.

Exploring a cave may not be on the “to-do list” of travelers in Iran. However, Karaftu, Ali-Sadr and Quri Qaleh, and Katala-Khor are among the most visited caves.

Iran is geologically a part of the Alpine-Himalayan organic belt. According to Britannica Encyclopedia, the enigmatic evidence of human presence on the Iranian plateau is as early as Lower Paleolithic times.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

Markazi province is considered the industrial capital of the country. It is rich in natural, historical, cultural, and religious attractions.

Hand-woven carpets and kilims, made in its cities including Farahan, Sarugh, Lilivan, Senejan, and Vafs are known internationally.

## Cultural elements in Kermanshah approved as national heritage

TEHRAN – A selection of ten new cultural elements, traditionally practiced in Kermanshah province, have been registered on the national intangible cultural heritage list.

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

The skill of baking Nantiri bread, the talent of making local food of Sukhti, and the skill of making Shekarlameh, a kind of traditional sweet, were among the items added to the prestigious list.



Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites including Taq-e Bostan and the UNESCO-registered Bisotun.

Inscribed into the base of a towering cliff, Taq-e Bostan comprises extraordinary

Sassanian bas-reliefs of ancient victorious kings divide opinions. Late afternoon is the best time to visit, as the cliff turns a brilliant orange in the setting sun, which then dies poetically on the far side of the duck pond.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting king Darius I and several other figures. UNESCO has it that Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values in the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

Kermanshah was founded in the 4th century CE by Bahram IV of the Sassanid dynasty. Conquered by the Arabs in 640, it was called Qirmasin (Qirmashin). Under the Seljuk rule in the 11th century, it was the chief town of Kordestan. The Safavids (ruled 1501–1736) fortified the town, and the Qajars repulsed an attack by the Turks during Fath Ali Shah’s rule (1797–1834). Occupied by the Turkish army in 1915 during World War I, it was evacuated in 1917. The construction of a road in the 1950s over the age-old Khorasan track added considerably to the importance of the city.

## 19th-century casern being restored

TEHRAN – Restoration work has commenced on a famed 19th-century casern in southeast Iran.

The former casern is part of the 19th-century Nasserli Castle, which is located in Iranshahr, Sistan-Balouchestan province.

A budget of 3.5 billion rials (about \$12,000) has been allocated to the project, Iranshahr’s tourism chief Rahman Rigi said on Saturday.

The project seeks to restore and revive the historical structure for use as a tourist attraction in the area, the official mentioned.

One of Iran’s largest brick monuments, Nasserli Castle is an important part of the history and identity of Iranshahr as well, the official noted.

Therefore, the monument needs constant

maintenance and restoration, he added.

The Qajar-era (1789-1925) Nasserli Castle, which is one of the main tourist attractions in Sistan-Baluchestan province, has been inscribed on the national heritage list.

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.



# Iran pioneer in helping Afghan earthquake victims

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran has been at the forefront of sending humanitarian aid to the earthquake victims in Afghanistan, so that the fourth shipment of humanitarian aid was dispatched to the country on Saturday.

This shipment included three tons of specialized medicine as well as over-the-counter (OTC) medicine, IRNA reported.

Earlier, Iran sent three shipments of first aid to the quake-hit areas of Afghanistan. The packages included medicine, food, clothing, tents, and other basic necessities for earthquake victims.

The Afghan Red Crescent Society has said although other countries claimed to send humanitarian aid, so far only Iranian aid had actually reached the victims.

A strong earthquake with a magnitude of 6.1 on the Richter scale hit the southeastern Afghan province of Paktika on June



22 at 02:24:36 AFT. The earthquake occurred at a depth of 10 kilometers.

At least 1,500 people died and over 2,000 people were injured throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan, making it the deadliest earthquake in 2022 and the deadliest earthquake in Afghan-

istan since 1998.

Following the devastating earthquake, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh extended the government and people of Iran's heartfelt regret and grief to Afghanistan, a friendly and brotherly nation.

The spokesman prayed for

God's mercy on those who died in the awful natural disaster and conveyed condolences to the grieving families and wished recovery for the injured.

Khatibzadeh further stated that Iran is ready to provide whatever support is required to the earthquake victims.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi, the special aide to the Iranian president on Afghanistan, also said Iran stands by its friend in this upsetting time.

The Afghan Red Crescent Society says although other countries claimed to send humanitarian aid, so far only Iranian aid has actually reached the victims.

## UNHCR holds World Refugee Day in Iran for first time since COVID-19

TEHRAN – UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, marked World Refugee Day on Wednesday with a series of events across the Islamic Republic of Iran, under the theme of “Whoever, Wherever, Whenever, everyone has the right to seek safety”.

For the first time in two years since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR and the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) of the Ministry of Interior, brought together refugees, host communities, government officials, members of the diplomatic community, and humanitarian and development partners to celebrate the courage, talent, and resilience of millions of Afghans exiled in the country.

In an event held in Tehran, UNHCR's Officer in Charge, Inna Gladkova, appreciated Iran for generously hosting Afghans for over four decades and stressed the need to mobilize even more international support for Iran, at a time when wars and conflicts are causing the highest levels of forced displacement ever recorded in history.

Rezadoust, the Director-General of BAFIA, Pirkoohi, Director-General of International Affairs, Environment and Sustainable Devel-

opment Department of the Ministry of Foreign affairs, and other government officials also attended.

Other events in Khorasan Razavi, Fars, Isfahan, and Kerman provinces included colorful refugee-focused events, photo exhibitions, theatre performances, refugee craft bazaars, and drawing competitions.

As one of the world's leading refugee-hosting countries, Iran has shown incredible generosity towards refugees by allowing them access to health, education, and livelihood opportunities – essential building blocks to becoming independent and self-sufficient. Despite the growing economic challenges, the Government of Iran has continued to invest in critical services for refugees and has maintained its inclusive policies.

UNHCR welcomes the ongoing headcount exercise by the Government of Iran to record all undocumented Afghans and newly arrived asylum-seekers in the country. This is a positive step to provide international protection, including documentation, to all those who may need it. A solid asylum system that can provide accurate data about persons of concern, will also allow for more international support for Iran.

A photography exhibition showcasing Iran's long history of hosting refugees, starting from the 16th century with Armenians to this date, was one of the main features of the event. A refugee handicraft bazaar also attracted large numbers of people to appreciate Afghan crafts, cuisine, and music at the landmark Milad Tower.

### Refugees in Iran

As the number one destination for Afghan refugees, Iran alone, more than any other European or Western country in times of crisis, has opened its arms to accept asylum seekers from its eastern neighbor.



The number of Afghan immigrants living in Iran has exceeded four million. After entering Iran, Afghan immigrants had the highest presence in the provinces of Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan, and Sistan-Baluchestan.

President Ebrahim Raisi has said despite the fact that the Europeans have made many claims about supporting the Afghans, but have not provided them with any assistance, contrary to their comments, today more than four million Afghans are guests of the Islamic Republic.

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

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

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

I will never forget the generosity of countries like Pakistan and Iran, which – for decades – have hosted millions of Afghans in need,” Guterres said in a statement released on January 26 to the Security Council on Afghanistan.

UNHCR's Officer in Charge, Inna Gladkova, appreciated Iran for generously hosting Afghans for over four decades and stressed the need to mobilize even more international support for the country.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## SDSs mitigation plan to take effect next year

Sand and dust storm (SDS) mitigation plan will be implemented in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan as of the next Iranian calendar year (beginning March 21), Department of Environment (DOE) chief has announced.

A total fund of \$150 million from the National Development Fund has been proposed to counter dust storms in Sistan-Baluchestan province, IRNA quoted Issa Kalantari as saying on Tuesday.

Referring to the SDSs hitting southeastern part of the country causing the residents severe health problems, he noted that the president is pursuing the issue and as long as the fund is provided the plan will go into effect.

## طرح مهار گرد و غبارهای سیستان از اول سال آینده اجرایی می شود

رئیس سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: طرح مهار گرد و غبارهای منطقه سیستان و بلوچستان از ابتدای سال آینده اجرایی می شود.

عیسی کلانتری روز سه شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: برای مبارزه با گرد و غبار این منطقه رئیس جمهوری تقاضای ۱۵۰ میلیون دلار اعتبار از صندوق توسعه ملی کرده است.

وی بیان کرد: توفان ها و گرد و غبار مساله جدی در منطقه سیستان است و مردم سالها با این مشکل مواجه و از آن رنج می برند و رئیس جمهوری به شدت پیگیر حل این مساله هستند. طرح مهار گرد و غبارهای منطقه سیستان به محض تایید منابع مورد نیاز اجرایی می شود..

## Plans outlined to mark world narcotics week

From page 1 ► The day is marked during a week, each day of the week has been assigned a special theme this year as follows:

Wednesday, June 22: Call for photos and drawings on the subject of addiction and drugs

Thursday, June 23: Presence at the tombs of counter-narcotics martyrs

Friday, June 24: Addiction prevention training on the sidelines of Friday prayers

Saturday, June 25: Celebration of salvation for those recovering from addiction in Tehran

Sunday, June 26: World anti-narcotics day conference

Monday, June 27: Specialized meeting with knowledge-based companies and innovation centers

Tuesday, June 28: Collaboration with donors, entrepreneurs, and non-governmental organizations

### World record of narcotics seizure

Iran holds the record for narcotics confiscation in the world, Eskandar Momeni, the director of anti-narcotics police headquarters said in December 2021.

However, great achievements in the field of countermeasures have been gained, and the United Nations has officially announced that 90 percent of opium, 70 percent of morphine, and 20 percent of world heroin have been discovered by Iran.

In the Iranian calendar year ended in March 2021, about 1,200 tons of drugs were discovered, which

was the highest rate of discovery in the world.

According to figures released by the United Nations in 2000, Afghanistan produced about 200 tons of narcotics, but in 2018, it has grown to 9,500 tons.

In other words, the production of narcotics has increased fifty times, which has doubled the need for prevention efforts, he highlighted.

Despite the conditions caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the imposition of harsh sanctions against the country, fortunately, with the efforts of anti-narcotics police in 2020, drug detection increased by 41 percent.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), 3,800 were martyred, and 12,000 were wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking.

The UNODC has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in drug-control campaigns.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.

## Birds In Iran

### Part 9

A special reserve, the Arasbaran Protected Region, was established to protect the dwindling habitat of this bird, and studies of the bird's ecology were initiated (Scott, 1976b).

### Pheasant research and management

The common pheasant Phasianus colchicus occurs widely in forested regions in northern Iran. Four subspecies have been described: colchicus in northern Azerbaijan, talischensis and persicus in the southwest and southeast Caspian regions respectively, and principalis in northeastern Khorasan.

Management of populations for sport hunting has centered on the south Caspian region, where special management areas have been set aside and stocks manipulated (Scott and Howell, 1976).

### Crane project

An estimated 2,000 to 3,000 common cranes Grus grus spend the winter in Iran, principally in the wetlands of Khuzestan, central Fars, and Sistan. In addition, some 10 to 15 of the very rare and endangered Siberian white crane Grus leucogeranus were rediscovered wintering in Mazandaran, in the southeast Caspian, in 1978 (Scott, 1980).

A cooperative project has been initiated between the Iranian Department of the Environment, Soviet biologists, and the International Crane Foundation (Baraboo, Wisconsin) to establish a new population of Siberian white

cranes using a cross-fostering technique as developed with whooping cranes Grus americana and sandhill cranes Grus canadensis in North America.

Thus, common cranes which breed in western Siberia and winter in southern Iran will be used as foster parents for Siberian white cranes.

### Bustard project

Aside from the work of the Department of the Environment, the greatest contribution to our knowledge of Iranian birds in recent years has been the work of Lindon Cornwallis, who spent five years studying the birds of Fars province in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

His work, plus all other recent unpublished material, is currently being written up for publication in a comprehensive work on the bird fauna of Iran by L. Cornwallis, H. Morawej Hamadani, and D. A. Scott.

Other recent published work on the birds of Iran includes the results of a three-month survey throughout Iran in 1967 (Erard and Etchécopar), surveys in the south Caspian region (Feeny, Arnold, and Bailey; Nielsen and Speyer; and Nielsen), a survey at Lake Urmia, Azarbaijan (Savage, 1964), a survey of mountain ranges in Kerman and Baluchestan provinces (Desfayes and Praz), a survey through the central deserts (Misonne, 1976), and a study of secondary contact zones of birds in northern Iran (Haffer).

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

Concluded

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON JUNE 25

New cases	136
New deaths	4
Total cases	7,236,064
Total deaths	141,383
New hospitalized patients	39
Patients in critical condition	221
Total recovered patients	7,061,516
Diagnostic tests conducted	52,562,820
Doses of vaccine injected	150,305,593



