

Neighborhood Policy Positively Affects Tehran-Baku Ties

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Report

State Department struggling to whitewash Israeli killing of Abu Akleh

TEHRAN— In an extremely outrageous statement that could serve as the white-washing of a horrendous crime, the U.S. State Department claimed that the bullet that killed Shireen Abu Akleh was “likely” shot from an Israeli gun, but “found no evidence that it was intentional.”

May 11 is an unforgettable date for the world, as it embarks on yet another Israeli crime against the press members.

Abu Akleh, an American-Palestinian veteran journalist in the occupied West Bank, was shot in the ear by an Israeli sniper on May 11 despite wearing a vest marked “press,” and a helmet.

However, in an effort to disprove the truth, the Israeli army announced that it had made a proposal to the Palestinian Authority to conduct a joint investigation into how Al Jazeera correspondent was shot dead.

Israeli army spokesman Ran Kochav said Tel Aviv had made the offer to the Palestinians to jointly investigate the details of the killing in the Jenin camp on the morning of May 11.

Kochav claimed that, contrary to what the Arab media reported, initial estimates indicated that the journalist had been shot dead by Palestinian gunmen in the Jenin camp.

The U.S. embassy in Quds on May 11 called for a comprehensive investigation into the killing. ▶ Page 2

Iran’s Kharrazi calls for “new arrangement” in Persian Gulf

TEHRAN— In an online speech on Monday at 10th World Peace Forum held in Beijing, Kamal Kharrazi, head of Iran’s Strategic Council on Foreign Relations (SCFR), discussed security and regional cooperation in the Persian Gulf.

The SCFR is a think tank and advisory body to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, which was established in June 2006.

In his speech to the forum that opened on Sunday and attended by more than 300 former senior officials, diplomatic envoys and scholars, Kharrazi spoke of a new arrangement which is much needed for the Persian Gulf.

The veteran politician, who served as Iran’s Foreign Minister from 1997 to 2005, noted that in Tehran’s principled view, “security” and “development” are intertwined.

Below is the full text of Kharrazi’s speech:

I am pleased to attend the 10th World Peace Forum and share my views on the security of the Persian Gulf region. I appreciate the Chinese People’s Institute of Foreign Affairs and Tsinghua University for their initiative in holding this event.

In 2019, the Islamic Republic of Iran introduced the Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE), a proposal to promote peace and security in the Persian Gulf region. That, of course, was not Iran’s first initiative; rather, in 1985 Iran requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to implement Paragraphs 5 and 8 of Security Council Resolution 598. The said paragraphs state: ▶ Page 2



Chicago Tribune

At least six people have been killed and dozens more injured after a gunman went on a shooting spree in Chicago, Illinois. The horror has sent shockwaves across the country and comes as a major setback for Congress which passed what was labeled as a “landmark” bipartisan gun re-

form bill, the biggest in “30 years.”

The shooter, who targeted a Fourth of July parade, in Highland Park, which is a suburban Chicago town, was on the run after eventually being detained. Police say they have identified the suspect as Robert E Crimo, a white male aged 22.

The man, who was identified as a person of interest hours after the shooting incident ended was described by police as possibly “armed and dangerous” but officers declined to provide details as to why they believe the detained individual was behind the attack. ▶ Page 5

Iran, EAEU continue negotiations on free trade agreement

TEHRAN – Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) representatives have gathered in Tehran for the fifth round of negotiations on upgrading the current preferential trade agreement between the two sides into a free trade agreement, the portal of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) reported.

The talks started on Monday with the presence of a Eurasian delegation comprised of representatives of the union’s member states and the Eurasian Economic Commission, as well as TPO Head Alireza Peyman-Pak and representatives of various Iranian ministries and agencies.

The negotiations on turning the preferential trade agreement into a free trade agreement began about 1.5 years ago and are expected to conclude before the end of the current year.

The purpose of these negotiations is to determine the commodity items that should be included in the agreement. ▶ Page 4

Iran ease past Kazakhstan in Asian Women’s U20 Volleyball Championship

TEHRAN –Iran defeated Kazakhstan in straight sets (25-20, 25-19, 25-21) in the 2022 Asian Women’s U20 Volleyball Championship on Tuesday.

Iran had lost to Thailand 3-0 in their opening match.

Iran will play South Korea on Saturday in Pool A. Pool B consists of Japan, China, India, Uzbekistan and Chinese Taipei.

The competition is being held at the Nazarbayev University Sport Complex in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan from July 4 to 11.

The champion and vice-champion teams shall earn direct berths as Asian representatives in the 2023 FIVB Volleyball Women’s U21 World Championship, with the host city to be announced at a later date.

Japan are the defending champions.



Mehr / Maryam Kamyab

Winners of Farabi intl. award honored

TEHRAN – The winners of the 13th Farabi International Award (FIA) on the Humanities and Islamic Studies were honored in both national and international sections on Tuesday. ▶ Page 7

Old hands honored for excellence in Iran cultural heritage

TEHRAN – On Monday evening, twelve veteran experts were honored by the tourism minister for their contributions to preserving Iran’s cultural heritage.

“Our cultural heritage belongs to the world and mankind... And it’s a big honor for me to appreciate the sincere contributions of cultural heritage experts,” Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami said.

Mohammadreza Owlia, Abdollah Jabal Amoli, Hamideh Chubak, Ali-Akbar Saeidi, Mohammad-Hassan Semsar, Mohammadrahim Sarraf, Faeq Tohidi, Rajabali Labbaf-Khaniki, Mehdi Mojabi, Mohammad-Hassan Mohebbi, and Mohammad Mirshokraei were honored during a ceremony held at the ministry headquarters in Tehran.

Furthermore, the late cultural heritage expert Bagher Ayatollahzadeh Shirazi was post-

humously honored for his remarkable achievements, the ministry said in a press release.

“My request to the veterans and great masters in the field of cultural heritage is to help strengthen the spirit of our heritage and make up for weaknesses in this regard,” the minister said.

“The presence of eminent experts and thinkers and their leadership can be important and effective in this regard.” ▶ Page 6

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Interview

Ankara following a balanced policy towards the Ukrainian war: Turkish researcher

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Gloria Shkurti Ozdemir, a Turkish researcher at SETA Foundation, tells the Tehran Times that Ankara “is trying to follow a balanced policy towards the Ukrainian war.”

She says in several cases Turkey has tried to mediate between Russia and Ukraine.

On June 29, Turkey agreed to support Sweden and Finland’s membership of NATO. It had initially opposed the Nordic countries’ bids to join. Turkey was angered by what it saw as willingness by Sweden and Finland to host Kurdish rebels. Sweden and Finland could not join the military alliance without Turkey’s support.

By agreeing to accept requests by these two Nordic states to join the alliance, Ozdemir says, NATO proved that it is “serious in protecting its borders and allies”.

She adds, “From NATO’s perspective, this open the way to a new enlargement of NATO which is totally contrary to what Russia was expecting.”

Following is the text of the interview:

Turkey agreed to lift opposition to Sweden and Finland joining NATO. How do you see such a move?

The meeting that took place last week and its results are of greatest importance, not only for Turkey but for the ▶ Page 5

Children’s Book Council of Iran announces shortlist for 2024 Hans Christian Andersen Award

TEHRAN – The Children’s Book Council of Iran announced its shortlist for the 2024 Hans Christian Andersen Award on Tuesday.

The Hans Christian Andersen Award, nicknamed the Nobel Prize for children’s literature, is the highest international distinction given to the creators of books for young people.

Given biennially by the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) in Basel, Switzerland, the Hans Christian Andersen Awards recognize lifelong achievement and are given to an author and an illustrator whose complete works have made a significant and lasting contribution to literature for young people.

The shortlist includes illustrators Hoda Haddadi, Rashn Kheirieh and Alireza Golduzian, one of whom will soon be picked by the council as the final nominee for the prize. ▶ Page 8

Iran's Kharrazi calls for “new arrangement” in Persian Gulf

‘Unfortunately, some governments, with a fatal miscalculation, are even moving towards forming an alliance with Israel’

From page 1 ► Paragraph 5 calls upon all other States to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from any act which may lead to further escalation and widening of the conflict, and thus to facilitate the implementation of the present resolution;

Paragraph 8 further requests the Secretary-General to examine, in consultation with Iran and Iraq and with other States of the region, measures to enhance the security and stability of the region;

Unfortunately, despite Iran's constant pursuit, the above paragraphs were not implemented, and our region has since witnessed numerous wars, widespread presence of foreign forces, accumulation of sophisticated weapons, power-mongering and hostility by various actors, and the nightmare of extremism and terrorism.

No question that the Persian Gulf countries are different in terms of their power structure, geographical size, natural and human resources, and of course, political system, but in spite of that, they are mature enough to overcome their differences, complement each other, and turn their historical rivalries into cooperation by setting up a regional security mechanism.

In this regard, Paragraph 8 of the UNSC Resolution 598 is still valid and would be a good vehicle for the establishment of a security mechanism in the region, and the promotion of peace and stability.

Distinguished Delegates,

The strategic policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on the principle that “security” and “development” are inseparable concepts. This policy emphasizes three basic principles:

First, the security of the regional countries is interconnected, and each country's security is directly related to the other;

Second, security is not a commodity to be purchased, rather it has to be developed through collective cooperation; and,

Third, the economic cooperation between the regional countries is an important factor in the promotion of regional security.

The opposition of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the presence of foreign forces in the region, and in particular the United States and Israel, is precisely in line with the security of the entire region. History has shown that the presence of foreign forces in this region has led to successive tensions and even wars. The role of trans-regional actors in West Asia and the Persian Gulf was is well documented. In fact, those foreign forces consider regional disputes and rivalries, as an opportunity to expand their military presence and of course, arms sell.

The United States has deployed tens of thousands of troops and more than 300 fighter jets at its various military bases in the Persian Gulf region. At least one U.S. aircraft carrier is continuously patrolling in the Persian Gulf waters. On the other hand, the volume of deadly weapons sold by the United States and its allies to the Persian Gulf states is hundreds of billions of dollars, which is almost a quarter of the global arms trade in recent years. But in fact, the strategy of buying arms has not helped the security of those countries and reduction of their concerns.

Iran has no intention to enter into a regional arms race. We rely on our own people and the cooperation with our neighbors. Money can buy the most advanced weapons, but never the security and stability! We need to start

with a comprehensive dialogue to establish the regional interconnected security network. Otherwise, insecurity in the region will continue.

Obviously, any new regional arrangement in the Persian Gulf region depends on the cooperation between the two main regional players of Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Islamic Republic of Iran, despite some serious differences between the two, believes that Iran and Saudi Arabia may complement each other's capacities in order to ensure peace, stability, and development in the region. We are fully prepared to talk with the Saudi government on all bilateral and

regional issues and are pleased that with the good offices of the Iraqi government, several rounds of talks have been so far held between the two governments.

We have the same approach towards other countries in the Persian Gulf, seeking good relations with all those countries. Unfortunately, some of those governments, with a fatal miscalculation, are trying to open the door to the war-mongering apartheid regime of Israel. They even go beyond the normalization of their relations and move towards forming an alliance with the Zionist regime of Israel. This is a big strategic mistake that will increase tensions and conflicts in the region at breakneck

speed. The Islamic Republic of Iran warns in advance about the consequences of Israel's presence in the Persian Gulf and holds those countries responsible for any dangerous consequences.

The Persian Gulf region is in need of a security mechanism that prevents the hegemony of any power, whether regional or global. Toward that goal, confidence-building measures have to be taken in areas such as water management, environmental protection, nuclear safety, energy security, tourism, economic cooperation, trade, investment, eradication of poverty, and empowerment of the people.

Our proposal for ensuring peace, stability, and prosperity in the region is based on the commitment of all coastal states of the Persian Gulf to the following:

Strengthening mutual understanding, friendly relations, and cooperation among all countries of the Persian Gulf region;

Ensuring territorial integrity and respect of the international borders of Persian Gulf countries;

Cooperation in eradicating terrorism, extremism, and sectarian tensions throughout the region;

Peaceful settlement of all regional tensions and disputes through dialogue;

Ensuring freedom of shipping and energy security for all.

To achieve these goals, it is essential that all governments in the region adhere to the principles of dialogue, equality, mutual respect, and refrain from the use of force, aggression, interference in each other's internal affairs, and participation in international coalitions against each other.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always stressed on dialogue as an effective means to clear up misunderstandings, settlement of disputes, and strengthen commonalities. I believe that moving towards a “regional dialogue forum” would help to solve the regional security problems.

In short, increasing fraternal, but frank and candid dialogue among the countries of the region, without the presence and interference of foreigners, is the key to solving problems. Thank you for your attention!”

State Department struggling to whitewash Israeli killing of Abu Akleh

From page 1 ► Nevertheless, on May 20, in a statement the Israeli military claimed since Abu Akleh was killed in an “active combat situation”, it will not launch a criminal investigation despite demands by the international community.

According to reports, the head of an Israeli Brigade, Meni Liberty, identified six occasions during the regime's military raid on the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied territories when Israeli soldiers opened fire near Abu Akleh and other journalists.

Now, the global community is more enraged than ever.

“After an extremely detailed forensic analysis, independent, third-party examiners, as part of a process overseen by the U.S. Security Coordinator (USSC), could not reach a definitive conclusion regarding the origin of the bullet that killed Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. Ballistic experts determined the bullet was badly damaged, which prevented a clear conclusion,” a statement issued by the U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price said.

“In addition to the forensic and ballistic analysis, the USSC was granted full access to both Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Palestinian Authority (PA) investigations over the last several weeks. By summarizing both investigations, the USSC

concluded that gunfire from IDF positions was likely responsible for the death of Shireen Abu Akleh. The USSC found no reason to believe that this was intentional but rather the result of tragic circumstances during an IDF-led military operation against factions of Palestinian Islamic Jihad on May 11, 2022, in Jenin, which followed a series of terrorist attacks in Israel,” the statement continued.

“The United States appreciates and continues to encourage cooperation between Israel and the PA in this important case. We will remain engaged with Israel and the PA on next steps and urge accountability. We again offer our deepest condolences to the Abu Akleh family,” it concluded.

The Palestinian foreign ministry refuted the claim made by the U.S. State Department, saying, “The State of Palestine rejects the United States' dismissal of the Israeli occupying forces' intentional targeting of and killing of Shireen Abu Akleh, as mere ‘tragic circumstances’ and not an intentional war crime.”

In its statement, the Palestinian foreign ministry added, “No amount of vagueness or politicization can exonerate the killers, whitewash the crime, or hide the truth. It will only further institutionalize Israel's impunity, continue to deny the Palestinian people any justice, and threaten the safety and lives of journalists.”



It also said that the Palestinian foreign ministry will take the case to the International Criminal Court to hold the Israeli regime accountable.

“In pursuit of justice for Shireen and all Palestinian victims, we will continue undeterred with our efforts at the international level, including the International Criminal Court,” the statement concluded.

Ironically, lobbyists for the press-killing regime of Israel have discovered who killed Abu Akleh. It's Iran, folks!

“Let's be clear: Iran-backed Palestinian Islamic Jihad is responsible for the death of Shireen Abu Akleh. Terrorists murdered 19 Israeli civilians and committed war crimes by using Palestinian civilians as human shields,” tweeted Mark Dubowitz, CEO of The Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), which claims to be “a non-partisan institution focusing on national security and foreign policy.”

The Western media cheered on for the result of the U.S. State Department investigation. It seemed like they had already prepared their headlines. “Bullet Too Damaged to Prove Who Killed Palestinian American Journalist, U.S. Says”. Don't be surprised. This is how the New York Times welcomes this “unbiased” probe.

On June 25, the United Nations

said its investigation has found that the bullets which killed Abu Akleh were fired by the Israeli regime forces and were “well-aimed bullets.”

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

“We find that the shots that killed Abu Akleh came from Israeli forces,” UN human rights office spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani said in Geneva on June 25. “It is deeply disturbing that Israeli authorities have not conducted a criminal investigation.”

She continued, “We at the UN human rights office have concluded our independent monitoring into the incident. The shots that killed Abu Akleh... came from Israeli forces and not from indiscriminate firing by armed Palestinians, as initially claimed by Israeli authorities.”

In one of her narrations, Abu Akleh herself once said, “The investigation may not reach desired results, but raising the voice over and again, continuing to pursue Israel in international forums shall lead to a day when the executioner won't be able to sleep after pulling the trigger to kill a Palestinian.”

Raisi calls anti-Iran IAEA resolution ‘irresponsible’

TEHRAN- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has once again lambasted the U.S. and the European trio (Britain, France and Germany) for supporting a resolution against Iran at the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, calling the move “irresponsible”.

Raisi made the remarks while receiving the credentials of Switzerland's new ambassador to Tehran Nadin Olivier Rey.

The U.S. and three European countries' attempts in drafting the resolution against during the course of negotiations to revive the 2015 nuclear deal were irresponsible, contravened the terms of the deal, and reflected their hypocritical behavior.

The U.S. and European governments' coercive tactics, according to President Raisi, have been futile. He urged them to adhere by the spirit and terms of the internationally-



endorsed agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA.

The Iranian president stressed that the U.S. must comply with the terms of talks and the JCPOA.

President Raisi also said Iran is willing to improve political, economic, and commercial ties with all nations, including Switzerland.

The president cited the Swiss embassy in

Tehran as an example of how the U.S. and other European nations had miscalculated Iran's capabilities.

“I hope that you will convey these facts to the government and other nations so they will understand that Iran has advanced despite hostilities and that their hegemonic strategies have failed,” the president added.

For her part, Nadin Olivier Rey noted that since diplomatic ties between Iran and Switzerland have well established for more than a century, the two countries have consistently engaged in constructive and positive interactions.

In reference to the roadmap for Tehran-Bern relations, the Swiss ambassador stated that her major goal as Switzerland's ambassador is to function to strengthen relationships with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran FM: Fertility of sanction-removal talks hinges on U.S. flexibility

TEHRAN- Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian stressed on Monday that talks for lifting sanctions would prove fruitful if the U.S. were to display commitment and adaptability.

Amir Abdollahian made the remarks during a phone call with his Omani counterpart Sayyid Badr Albusaidi late on Monday.

The senior Iranian diplomat

emphasized that his nation is committed to forging a solid and long-lasting accord about the revival of the 2015 nuclear agreement and the lifting of sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

On his part, the Omani foreign minister emphasized the need to reach a final deal and stated that his country backs Iran's legitimate demands.

Iran and the U.S. resumed indirect talks on June 28-29 in Doha, Qatar, after a four-months pause.

The JCPOA, or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which the U.S. withdrew from in May 2018, was the subject of debate throughout the negotiations.

Iran has repeatedly demanded that the sanctions should be

completely lifted in a verifiable way and that the U.S. provide assurances that it won't withdraw from the agreement again in the future.

Two days of meetings on how to lift sanctions on Iran ended last Wednesday in the capital of Qatar, with the two parties agreeing to stay in touch regarding the continuation of the path and the next stage of the talks.

Iran continues consultations with India

TEHRAN— Following up on the consultations between Iran and India, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani and Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra held a phone call on Tuesday.

Pointing to the cultural and civilizational commonalities and the long history of political and economic interactions coupled with frequent visits of high-ranking officials of the two countries, Bagheri Kani and Mohan Kwatra shared the view that the relations between the two countries is unique.

During the conversation, the two senior diplomats also discussed the ways to promote cooperation between the two

countries, including in the fields of trade, investment, port and transportation. The two also exchanged views on regional cooperation and helping the people of Afghanistan.

Stabilizing the region through fight against terrorism and drug trade as well as holding a joint economic commission and improving the level of relations in political spheres were also raised in the conversation.

Removing existing restrictions on trade exchanges and completing the Chabahar project as the transportation hub of the region by the Indian side, facilitating and helping the transfer of humanitarian aid from India to the people of Afghanistan through Iran, as well as cooperation between

the two countries in multilateral fields were among other topics discussed between the two senior diplomats.

Supporting each other's positions at international organizations including the United Nations, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS were among other notable topics in the talks.

Elsewhere in the conversation, Bagheri briefed his Indian counterpart about the latest measures and positive steps taken by Tehran in the process of talks to remove the cruel U.S. sanctions against Iran.

The parties also agreed to continue their consultations.

Paulo Santos
named Esteghlal
fitness coach

TEHRAN - Paulo Santos was named as fitness coach of Esteghlal football team.

The 28-year-old coach arrived in Tehran on Tuesday.

Paulo Santos has already worked in Saudi Arabian club Al Taawon and Portuguese coach Boavista.

The Portuguese coach will work with his countryman Ricardo Sa Pinto who was named as Esteghlal head coach in late June.

Iran runner-up
at U15 Freestyle
Asian Wrestling
Championship

TEHRAN – Iran’s freestyle team came second at the 2022 U15 Asian Wrestling Championship on Tuesday.

The Iranian wrestlers claimed two gold medals, four silvers and two bronzes.

Reza Aliakbar Afshar defeated Tajik wrestler Alirizo Bakhromov 6-4 in the final match of the 68kg.

Ramtin Mohammadali Ravanbakhsh also claimed a gold medal, beating Indian freestyler Badal Chauhary 5-2 in the final bout of 85kg.

Arian Mehralizadeh lost to India’s Ishwar Ishwar 12-1 in the final of 44kg weight class.

In the 48kg category final, Hossein Arian was defeated against BekassyI Assambek from Kazakhstan 3-0.

Mahan Yazdan Kavooosi lost to Indian wrestler Tanishq Pravin Kadam 5-4 in the final of 62kg.

And Amirmohammad Rahimi won Iran’s fourth silver in the competition after being defeated by India’s Vevik Vevik 10-3 in the final match of the 75kg.

Amirabbas Zolfali seized a bronze in 38kg after defeating Sadyr Kaiypbekov from Kyrgyzstan 5-4 and Amirhossein Moghadam claimed a bronze in the 41kg class by beating Mongolia’s wrestler Buyankhishig Uuganbayar 11-2.

India won the title with 184 points, followed by Iran (184) and Kazakhstan (147).

The competition was held in Bahrain, Manama.

Iran into FIBA
Basketball World
Cup 2023 Asian
Qualifiers second
round

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Syria 91-56 in Group E to book their spot in the second round at the end of Window 3 in the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 Asian Qualifiers.

Iran won on the road to end their first round campaign thanks to 14 points and 15 rebounds from Hamed Haddadi. Mohammad Jamshidi also did well with 16 points.

Nadim Issa had 13 points to lead Syria.

Iran are drawn in Group F along with Australia, Kazakhstan, China, Japan and Bahrain.

The top three teams will secure their place at the 2023 FIBA Basketball World Cup.

Iran’s women’s
team miss 3x3 Asia
Cup 2022 due to
visa issues

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s team will be absent in the FIBA 3x3 Asia Cup 2022.

The event is scheduled for July 6 to 10 in Singapore but the Iranian team missed the campaign after the team members failed to get a visa in time.

Neighborhood policy positively
affects Tehran-Baku ties

TEHRAN – In the wake of the visit of Azerbaijan’s chief diplomat to Iran, relations between Tehran and Baku appear to be getting back on the right track in line with a new Iranian foreign policy agenda that prioritizes relations with neighboring countries.

On Monday, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov arrived in Tehran for talks over how to deepen ties with Iran. Bayramov met with his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, and President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi.

After the visit, the Iranian foreign minister praised the bilateral talks, saying that Tehran-Baku relations are back on the right track. “My brother Jeyhun Bayramov and I had an important and friendly conversation. We discussed bilateral, regional, and international issues and underlined the need for peaceful settlement of the Karabakh dispute based on protecting the territorial integrity and respecting the sovereignty. The ties are on the right track. The visit of Azeri President Ilham Aliyev was put on the joint agenda,” AmirAbdollahian said on Twitter.

The visits come against a backdrop of diplomatic efforts to rein in misunderstandings that overshadowed relations between Tehran and Baku in recent months. After the 2020 Karabakh war, these relations faced some challenges



arising from border and trade issues. At some point, Azerbaijan detained some Iranian truck drivers in the newly-liberated Nagorno-Karabakh region in the wake of the 2020 war. Coupled with some controversial remarks by an Azerbaijani lawmaker and Azerbaijani media, the detention of truck drivers escalated tensions between Tehran and Baku. Iran was quick to resort to diplomacy to clear up misunderstandings while also showing its military muscle by holding the biggest military drill in years in its northwest provinces on the border with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

With the visit of Bayramov, Iran and Azerbaijan have moved past those tensions and are now in the process

of cementing ties in line with the Raisi administration’s neighborhood policy. During his meeting with Bayramov, President Raisi said there is no limit to deepening and strengthening relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan, according to a readout of the meeting put out by the Iranian presidency.

Underlining the need for creating a new momentum in Tehran-Baku relations, Raisi said, “Promoting good bilateral relations can lead to effective regional cooperation.”

Raisi also emphasized closer interactions between the people of the two countries, saying, “Strengthening people-to-people relations and

interactions will strengthen the friendship of the two nations.”

Ayatollah Raisi expressed hope that with the visit of the president of Azerbaijan to Tehran, there will be a leap in the relations between the two countries.

The Azerbaijani foreign minister, in turn, appeared to be addressing one of Iran’s key concerns regarding relations with Azerbaijan which is the foreign interference in the region. Iran has long said it opposes foreign interference in the region. It has also warned of Israeli presence in Azerbaijan.

Bayramov stated that his country is on the same page with Iran regarding foreign meddling.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan agree that regional issues should be resolved by the countries of the region themselves and without the interference of outsiders,” he said.

Iran and Azerbaijan seem to have succeeded in creating a common ground to further develop ties. Both countries have a desire to enhance ties. In his meeting with Amir Abdollahian, Bayramov referred to his country’s determination to expand ties with Iran. He expressed pleasure at the growing trend of bilateral ties and said Baku is resolved to complete and launch joint projects and also to design and launch new joint ventures.

Saudi Arabia denies visa for Leader’s Hajj envoy

TEHRAN – Saudi Arabia has refused to issue visa for a top Iranian Hajj official in charge of overseeing Hajj procedures for Iranian pilgrims.

The official is Hojjat al-Islam Abdul Fattah Navab who is the head of Iran’s Hajj delegation and the representative of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. Navab was denied a visa on the pretext that he didn’t meet the age requirement, according to Al Alam.

The Saudi authorities set requirements for the Hajj season this year, including that the pilgrim must be 65 years old or under, and this requirement was to be excluded from the heads of the Hajj missions and their staff. There have been contacts in this regard in recent days, but apparently they did not bear fruit.

Navab, 65, will not be able to participate in the Hajj season this year, and Hojjat al-Islam Rukn al-Dini will manage the affairs of the Iranian mission

on behalf of him.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian had spoken over the phone with the head of Iran’s Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization Seyyed Sadeq Hosseini in which he was informed about the latest situation of Iranian pilgrims.

In the conversation, the Hajj chief expressed satisfaction with the situation of pilgrims as well as the services provided to them.

“In the process of the arrival of Iranian pilgrims to Jeddah and Medina airports, as well as their accommodation and performance of Hajj rituals, the necessary cooperation with the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been made by the relevant executive agents of Hajj affairs in Saudi Arabia up to this moment,” he stated.

Sadeq Hosseini said that all the pilgrims from Iran are doing well and emphasized that none of the pilgrims has faced any problems so far, according to

the Iranian foreign ministry.

Amir Abdollahian also elaborated on his consultations with the Iraqi foreign minister to facilitate the journey of the “dear pilgrims of Islamic Iran to the Land of Revelation”. The foreign minister expressed hope that this year’s Hajj would be held successfully and lead to full satisfaction of pilgrims from Islamic countries, including Iran.

Thousands of Iranian Hajj pilgrims have arrived in Saudi Arabia for the religious season. Iran’s top Hajj official also traveled to Saudi Arabia to oversee the procedures for Iranian pilgrims.

Hosseini noted that the officials concerned with the executive procedures had made great efforts despite shortage of time to provide facilities, including housing, food and transportation, for pilgrims.

This year, 39,600 Iranian pilgrims will perform Hajj.

Amir Abdollahian says Iran-Azerbaijan ties ‘on right track’

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has praised the relations between Tehran and Baku after a meeting with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov.

“My brother Jeyhun Bayramov and I had an important and friendly conversation,” Amir Abdollahian said on Twitter on Monday.

He added, “We discussed bilateral, regional and international issues and underlined the need for peaceful settlement of the Karabakh dispute based on protecting the territorial integrity and respecting the sovereignty.”

The Iranian foreign minister also said that a visit by the Azerbaijani president to Iran has been discussed and put on the agenda. “The ties are on the right track. The visit of Azeri President Ilham Aliyev was put on the joint agenda.”

The tweet came after a meeting with Bayramov in Tehran, where the Azerbaijani foreign minister also met Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi.

In the meeting, the foreign ministers of Iran and Azerbaijan exchanged views over issues of mutual interest in different fields, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

The Iranian foreign minister expressed pleasure that the two countries have left behind misunderstandings and that a new chapter has opened in their relations. Amir Abdollahian said the meetings of the presidents of Iran and Azerbaijan Republic over the past 10 months and meetings and visits by officials of the two countries as well as the signing of numerous agreements in different fields indicate the depth and domain of ties between the two neighbors and in line with the interests of the two brotherly nations.

Amir Abdollahian also referred to the diverse economic possibilities of Iran and Azerbaijan and the determination of their presidents to expand cooperation. He then underlined the need to expand ties more than ever before and voiced hope that during the Azeri

president’s visit to Tehran in the near future, the two sides will take long steps to deepen their relations.

Iran’s top diplomat described transportation and energy as important areas of economic cooperation by Tehran and Baku and stressed the importance of completing joint dam construction projects and launching electricity power plants on the Aras River as well as increasing cooperation in joint fields in the Caspian Sea.

He further pointed to the historical ties between Iran and Azerbaijan and their cultural and religious bonds. Amir Abdollahian then underscored the necessity of reviving tourism cooperation in the post-Covid era and called for facilitating ties between nationals of the two countries. He stressed that the two nations must be able to tangibly and objectively see and feel the improvement of ties and expansion of cooperation through facilitating ties.

Amir Abdollahian also expressed pleasure at the process of settling the Karabakh dispute. He reaffirmed the Islamic Republic’s

normalize relations, come in this context, which prompted al-Kadhimi to play this role since the launch of the first unannounced talks between the two parties on April 9, 2021.”

He noted, “The success of the first round, despite the apparent difficulties in the beginning due to the accumulation of crises and the accompanying media and political charging, resulted in the holding of four other rounds of this dialogue, which was successful since its inception. That made the two sides continue to hold rounds of dialogue, which amounted to five rounds, until it

was announced through the media.”

Allawi pointed out that “these rounds of dialogue, which were mostly security-oriented, paved the way for a political dialogue that is expected to be successful, based on its introductions that are expressed through official statements in both countries.”

The advisor said the hosting of the talks has moved the course of Saudi-Iranian relations to a stage of understanding and exchanging views on many regional issues and setting paths for solutions and strategic initiatives, Al Alam reported.

Baghdad negotiations paved way for Iran-Saudi political talks: Iraqi advisor

TEHRAN – An advisor to the Iraqi prime minister has said that the talks that Baghdad hosted between Iran and Saudi Arabia have paved the way for the two countries to start political talks.

The advisor, Hussein Allawi, said that “Iraq’s endeavor, through the efforts made by Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, aims to bring the region to the stage of regional harmony, stability, cooperation and development.”

He added, “The good offices led by Iraq in restoring stability in the region through the Saudi-Iranian dialogue initiative to reduce escalation and

Iran were scheduled to meet South Korea and Indonesia in Pool C in the competition.

Also, the men’s team have not yet traveled to the east Asian country.

Iran’s women’s
football depart
for 2022 CAFA
Championship

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s football team departed Tehran for Tajikistan on Tuesday to participate at the 2022 CAFA Women’s Championship.

Team Melli will start the campaign on Friday with a match against Kyrgyzstan at the Republic Central Stadium in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

The tournament will bring Tajikistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan together in Dushanbe.

The 2022 CAFA Women’s Championship is the second edition of the CAFA Women’s Championship, an international women’s football tournament organized by the Central Asian Football Association (CAFA).

The round-robin tournament is scheduled to run from July 6 to 21, 2022.

Uzbekistan won the first edition.

Neneca, Losada
pen deal with
Persepolis

TEHRAN – Brazilian goalkeeping coach Neneca and fitness coach Jose Augusto Losada officially penned deal with Persepolis football club.

Welesley Antonio Simplicio, nicknamed Neneca, has most recently worked at Qatari football club Al Rayyan.

Persepolis had been also linked with Romanian coach Alin Dinca, who currently works in Tractor.

Neneca replaced Davoud Fanaei in Persepolis.

Spanish coach Losada has a long resume, which includes multiple sports science degrees in an ongoing PhD at the University of Cadiz. He also holds a UEFA “A” license which he earned through the Spanish Royal Football Federation.

Losada’s professional career started in Cadiz CF where he was the Fitness and Sports Rehab Coach starting with the youth teams which ultimately led to the first team that was participating in the Spanish Segunda B & A. Coach Pepe later had a stint in Hungary for two years before moving back to Spain to different Segunda B teams.

Persepolis failed to win Iran league title for the sixth successive season due to poor performance of their goalkeepers.

Match schedule
released for
new-look FIVB
Volleyball World
Championship

TEHRAN - The match schedule for the new-look FIVB Volleyball Men’s World Championship in Poland and Slovenia has been announced with a number of high-profile names in action on the first day’s play.

Among those nations headlining on the opening day on 26 August are reigning world champions and co-hosts Poland, who begin the defence of their title against Bulgaria at 20:30 CEST in Katowice.

Runners-up from 2018, Brazil, kick-off at 11:00 CEST against Cuba in Ljubljana, while tournament debutants Qatar play a historic first match against Japan at 14:00 CEST in the Slovenia capital.

USA, third three years ago, go head-to-head with Mexico at 17:30 CEST in Katowice, while Slovenia – making only their second appearance at the championships – start their campaign against Cameroon in Ljubljana at 20:30 CEST.

Plus, if that was not enough, Olympic champions from Tokyo, France, begin their quest for a first world title with a match against European rivals Germany at 17:30 CEST in Ljubljana.

Over 2,000 idle industrial units revived in a year



TEHRAN - Head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) said 2,067 idle industrial units were revived in the country's industrial parks and zones during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20).

According to Ali Rasoulain, with the reviving of the mentioned units new job opportunities were created for over 39,000 people, IRNA reported.

"ISIPO had put it on the agenda to revive 2,000 stagnant units inside and outside industrial parks and zones in the previous year and by the end of the year 2,067 idle units returned to the production cycle, which provided employment for more than 39,000 people," Rasoulain said.

The official noted that 1,433 small workshop units were also established in the mentioned year most of which were production and knowledge-based units with high technology.

Iran, Nicaragua confer on boosting economic ties

TEHRAN - Iranian Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Manouchehr Manteghi and Nicaragua's Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Oscar Mojica Obregón stressed the need for expanding economic cooperation between Tehran and Managua in a meeting on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the two sides called for a deepening of economic relationships and expansion of industrial cooperation in various fields including railway, steel, and cement, IRNA reported.

Mentioning Iran's important industrial capacities and the Nicaraguan Government's plans to develop railroads, Manteghi said that the Islamic Republic is ready to cooperate with Nicaragua in all stages of railway development including constructing railroads, procuring wagons and locomotives, controlling equipment, and improving the efficiency of railways.

He further voiced Iran's readiness to export cement and steel to the Latin American country.

Obregón, in his turn, praised Iran's progress in different areas despite international pressures and welcomed the expansion of trade relations between the two countries.

The necessary licenses were also obtained for establishing 26 new industrial parks and zones across the country in the previous year, he added.

In late February, the official said that 900 consultants from the private sector and knowledge-based companies were selected in the form of industry clinics across the country to recognize the weaknesses of industrial units with the aim of reactivating stagnant units or units that are operating below capacity.

He stressed that reviving idle production units is the main approach that the government is currently following in the industry sector.

The government is seriously pursuing its programs to resolve production units' problems in collaboration with the private sector; Very good planning has been done in this regard, Rasoulain said.

He mentioned providing infrastructure and supporting small businesses and enterprises as two major programs of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade in relation to industrial parks and said that 2,023 projects related to providing infrastructure for industrial parks, including water, electricity, and gas supply, with 60 trillion rials (about \$230.7 million) of credit is underway in different parts of the country.



Deputy Industry Minister Manouchehr Manteghi (R) and Nicaragua's Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Oscar Mojica Obregón

Earlier on Monday, in a meeting between Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari and the Nicaraguan minister, Safari said that Iran is quite ready to transfer advanced technologies, Nano and biotechnologies as well as vaccines and medical supplies to Managua.

Obregón and Safari agreed that bilateral economic relations and cooperation need to be comprehensively expanded.

The Nicaraguan Transportations and Infrastructure Minister is visiting Tehran to participate in Iran's Intelligent City Exhibition and pursue ways to expand bilateral ties, especially in the field of infrastructure and advanced technologies.

Quarterly export from Golestan province increases 58% yr/yr

TEHRAN - The value of export from Golestan province, in the northeast of Iran, rose 58 percent in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Ebrahim Hosseini, the director-general of the province's customs department, said that about 95,591 tons of commodities worth \$55.62 million were exported from the province in the first quarter of this year, indicating also 27 percent growth in terms of weight.

Polystyrene, cheese, various types of pipes, iodine, dates, compressed wood chipboard, copper wire, ceiling metal structure, aquatic feed and tomato paste were the main exported commodities during the first three months of this year, the official said, and named Turkmenistan, Iraq, Romania, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan,

Poland, Armenia, UAE, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan as the major export destinations.

He further announced that 3,006 tons of products worth \$6.454 million were imported to Golestan province in the first quarter of the present year, indicating 38 percent rise in worth and 10 percent growth in value year on year.

He named various types of cloth, and diesel generator as the main goods imported to Golestan during the first three months of this year and Turkmenistan, China, UAE, India, England, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Vietnam, Tajikistan, Italy, Uzbekistan and Germany as the sources of imports.

As previously announced by the official, the value of export from Golestan province rose 63 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), from its preceding year.



Hosseini said that over 402,000 tons of commodities worth \$183.6 million were exported from the province in the previous year, indicating also 51 percent growth in terms of weight.

He named polystyrene, dairy products, dates, pistachios, cement, ceramic and tiles, and tomato paste as the major exported products, and Kazakhstan, Iraq, Turkmenistan, Bulgaria, Afghanistan and Romania as the main export destinations.

Iran, EAEU continue negotiations on free trade agreement

From page 1 ► If the free trade agreement is implemented, 80 percent of the goods traded between the two sides will be exchanged with zero tariffs.

This round of negotiations will continue until Wednesday; Both sides hope to finalize the draft of the agreement and prepare the list of commodity items for signing.

Back in April, TPO dispatched a team of negotiators to Russia to hold talks with representatives of the five Eurasian Economic Union member states on the free trade agreement.

Mir-Hadi Seyed, TPO's advisor in international affairs, had said in late April that the draft of the agreement had been mainly finalized and there are few cases left that need



further consideration by both parties.

Seyed noted that negotiations between the two sides would continue in the coming months until the free trade agreement is signed between the two sides before the end of 2022.

Iran and EAEU reached a

preferential trade agreement in 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items are currently subject to preferential tariffs.

The agreement, which came into effect on October 27, 2019, will be in effect for three years, so it is going to expire in October this year.

The value of trade between

Iran and the EAEU members reached \$5.643 billion during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), registering a 66-percent rise compared to the figure for the preceding year.

According to Spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Ruhollah Latifi, the weight of Iran-EAEU trade in the mentioned year stood at over 13.127 million tons which was also 51 percent more than the previous year.

Iran exported 2.77 million tons of commodities worth over \$1.170 billion to the mentioned union to register a 3.5 percent increase in terms of weight and 12 percent growth in terms of value.

'SEO expanding collaborations with intl. entities'

TEHRAN - As announced by the advisor to the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), the organization has signed 20 cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with foreign stock exchanges and supervisory entities, IRNA reported.

According to Bahador Bijani, several foreign delegations have entered the country's capital market in the past few months which is a positive sign that the shadow of international problems has been removed from the market.

"Previously, the international transactions of companies active in the stock exchange were facing some problems and now these issues seem to have been resolved to some extent," Bijani said.

The official noted that the SEO has also become a permanent member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) and is expanding its international collaborations through this

organization.

Stating that IOSCO regulates and supervises more than 95 capital markets around the world in 105 executive areas, he said: "Iran can play a more important role in an organization that regulates and supervises more than 95 percent of the world's capital markets."

Iranian stock market has been struggling for months to get back on track, although various internal and external factors have been hindering this market from reaching its true potential.

However, Market Analyst Hassan Kazemzadeh believes that the market has the potential to grow despite the distrust created in the market as a result of some bad decisions.

"Of course, there are ups and downs, but no matter how much distrust there is, the changes of major economic factors will affect the market, but this effect takes place gradually and over time," Kazemzadeh said.

New dual-fuel taxi unveiled

TEHRAN - A new model of dual-fuel taxi was unveiled in a ceremony on Tuesday.

The unveiling of the Soren Plus dual-fuel taxi was held in line with the implementation of the contract for the manufacturing of 45,000 dual-fuel taxis and vans.

The Soren Plus dual-fuel taxi with safe design and convenience will be available to consumers from the beginning of the next Iranian calendar month Mordad (July 23) by replacing Samand taxis.

Holding nearly 18 percent of the global gas reserves, Iran is one of the most hydrocarbon-rich areas in the world, and the country's giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, is by far the world's largest natural gas field.

Despite having abundant natural gas resources, the Islamic

Republic is also one of the world's leading gasoline consumer countries, and a great part of the country's 100-million-liter gasoline output is used inside the country, while the exports of the mentioned fuel can be an excellent source of income for the country and less gasoline consumption would also mean less air pollution and a cleaner environment.

Tackling this issue, the Iranian government has been promoting the use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as a replacement for gasoline over the past few years and has declared the CNG the country's national fuel.

Following the above-mentioned declaration, in December 2019, the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) and Iran's state-owned Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) signed a



memorandum of understanding (MOU) to add new dual-fuel vehicles to the country's public transportation fleet.

The mentioned MOU was signed following a resolution by the Government Economic Council that targeted adding 1.46 million dual-fuel vehicles to the public transportation fleet.

Now, over two years after the beginning of the said program, about 200,000 vehicles have become dual-fuel and 350 million liters of gasoline are saved, according to a member

of the country's CNG Industry Abscission.

"In the last two years, conversion of about 200,000 vehicles to dual-fuel has resulted in a saving of 350 million liters in gasoline consumption, and it is expected that higher savings will be achieved with the full implementation of the Government Economic Council's resolution in this regard," Navid Khaseh-Baf said in a press conference in late May.

According to Khaseh-Baf, although the goal of the program was only to turn the public transportation fleet into dual-fuel vehicles, later the resolution was amended and other passenger cars and cars affiliated with online transportation services like Snap were also allowed to be included in this program.

TCCIMA board of representatives holds 35th meeting

TEHRAN - The 35th meeting of the Board of Representatives of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) was held on Tuesday in which the attendees addressed various economic issues and the problems of knowledge-based companies as well as the water shortage in the country.

The meeting was attended by TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari, members of the chamber's board, Deputy Minister of Science, Research and Technology Ali Kheiruddin, and the former

Acting Agriculture Minister Abbas Keshavarz, the TCCIMA portal reported.

Speaking at the meeting, Khansari addressed the issue of inflation growth in Iran and the world and said: "Currently, the main challenge of most countries is the rising inflation; The main factors causing the increase in inflation are the pandemic, the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the increase in energy prices in the world."

Fuhrer in the gathering, Keshavarz reviewed some of



the main causes of the current water crisis in the country, and Kheiruddin talked about his ministry's plans to help knowledge-based companies to realize the slogan of the year which is "Knowledge-Based Production and Job Creation".

TEDPIX gains 3,900 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 3,912 points to 1.511 million on Tuesday.

As reported, over 6.138 billion securities worth 43.52 trillion rials (about \$155.42 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 3,544 points, and the second market's index gained 5,771 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).

Ankara following a balanced policy towards the Ukrainian war: Turkish researcher

From page 1► Western block in general. At a time when the West is considered to be highly divided the memorandum that was signed showed that NATO is still unified. At the same time, Turkey showed that it is interested in solving the existing issues through dialogue, diplomacy, and peace.

Unlike some critical voices that Turkey is using the situation, I think that Ankara did what each country would do to protect its national interest. Turkey was not opposed to Sweden and Finland's NATO membership, Ankara only wanted these two states to stop their support of the terrorist groups that posed a threat to its security.

Within this framework, Turkey's move to allow these two states to be invited (the first step of membership) - not to become full members- in NATO is quite significant for the future of NATO and Turkey's security as well.

What are the implications of Ankara's decision to accept Sweden and Finland as new members of NATO?

Here it is important to state that Sweden and Finland are still not members of NATO. The invitation to discuss their inclusion in NATO is still only the first step. If we were to respond to the question from Turkey's perspective, it can be said that if Sweden and Finland proceed with what they signed on the memorandum, this is a great victory for Turkey. For such a long



time, Turkey has been arguing that PKK, its branches (YPG/PYD), and FETO pose a direct threat to its security (also to European security). However, the West has been ignoring these voices for a long time, leading to divergences with Turkey. This memorandum may be the first step toward a change in the Western stance toward these terrorist organizations. If this stands true, Turkey's relations with the west may improve in the future.

From NATO's perspective, this open the way to a new enlargement of NATO which is totally contrary to what Russia was expecting. For a long time, the unity or even the effectiveness of NATO had been questioned (especially after the Cold War), however, these developments once again brought to the fore the importance of NATO. If these two states are accepted by NATO, the latter will share a border with Russia which will show Russia

that NATO is indeed serious about protecting its borders and allies.

How do you see Turkey-Europe ties? Is Ankara still trying to be a member of the EU?

It would be quite complicated to analyze in general Turkey-Europe ties as there are several dynamics defining the relationship with each state separately. However, as Turkey's importance increases in regional dynamics, it can be said that these relationships will generally be impacted positively. The European states are well aware of Turkey's importance in the current political environment, and it would not serve well for either party to follow policies that would negatively impact the relations.

Whether Ankara is still trying to become a member of the EU, I can say that Turkey has never closed that door. It has always been one of the goals of the Turkish government and it still remains so.

What is the position of Turkey in the Ukraine war? Apparently, Turkey's drones are used by Ukraine's forces.

Turkey is trying to follow a balanced policy towards the Ukrainian war. In many cases, the government has stated that both states are Turkey's allies. Within this context, Ankara believes that through a balanced policy it is possible to find a solution to the crisis, therefore in several cases it has tried to mediate between both states. Turkey has indeed opposed the Russian invasion of Ukraine and since the beginning it has stated its support for the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian territorial integrity.

Isn't that a contradiction that an Islamic country like Turkey serve a Western alliance like NATO that can harm Islamic nations?

Not at all. First of all, rather than calling it an Islamic country, it would be better to state that Turkey is a Muslim majority country.

Secondly, NATO is not a threat to the Islamic states or the Muslim majority states. Several other Muslim majority states are members of NATO as well. It is important to remind here that NATO was created to counter the Soviet threat during the Cold War. Even currently, Russia remains one of the main threats to NATO (in the last strategic concept, China was added as a threat as well). So, to be frank, I do not see a contradiction there at all.



Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto, left, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, center, and Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs Anne Linde, right, give a press conference after the signing of the accession protocols of Finland and Sweden at the NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, on July 5. (Kenzo Tribouillard/AFP/Getty Images)

NATO formally begins process of ratifying membership of Sweden and Finland

NATO has formally begun the process of Sweden and Finland joining the alliance, its secretary general has said.

NATO members signed the protocols of accession on Tuesday, in what Jens Stoltenberg labeled an "historic moment."

It comes after the NATO summit in Madrid last week where allied leaders agreed to invite Finland and Sweden to join the alliance.

"This is truly an historic moment. For Finland, for Sweden, for NATO and for our shared security," CNN quoted Stoltenberg as saying.

"This is a good day for Finland and Sweden, and a good day for NATO. With 32 nations around the table, we will be even stronger and our people

will be even safer, as we face the biggest security crisis in decades," he added.

He said that NATO's door remains open to democracies in European that are "ready and willing to contribute to our shared security."

Finland and Sweden ended their decades of neutrality when they applied to join NATO following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which was met by some opposition from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who accused them of housing Kurdish "terrorist organizations."

Last week, Turkey dropped its opposition after a joint memorandum was signed between the three countries, underscoring their commitment to fully support each other against threats to their security.

Putin says generals have proposed "development of offensive operations"

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday that he received a proposal from the Russian army generals on the development of the "offensive operations" in Ukraine, CNN reported.

"Col. Gen. Alexander Pavlovich Lapin and Army Gen. Sergey Vladimirovich Surovikin also reported to me today on the progress in fulfilling the tasks assigned to them and their proposals for the development of offensive operations," Putin told Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu in a meeting at the Kremlin.

The Ministry of Defense "keeps in view" all the proposals of the commanders in the field, Putin added, saying that while military units that participated in the operation in the Luhansk People's

Republic (LPR) should rest, other formations, including the East and West groups, must proceed with tasks according to plans.

This comes as Putin congratulated Russian troops for "achieving victory" in Ukraine's Luhansk region.

Putin also congratulated Russian troops for "achieving victory" in Ukraine's Luhansk region.

In a meeting televised by Russian state media, Shoigu reported to Putin the Russian advances in the area.

"Starting June 19, [Russian] formations and military units ... in cooperation with units of the second corps of the people's militia of the [self-proclaimed] Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and with the support of the southern group of troops ...



successfully carried out an offensive operation to liberate the territory of the Luhansk People's Republic," Shoigu said.

Shoigu added that the "Gorsky cauldron" area, Lysychansk and Severodonetsk were surrounded within two weeks, and the Ukrainian

army allegedly lost 5,469 soldiers in the battles.

Putin told Shoigu that the military personnel who contributed to fighting in LPR, will be rewarded for their "bravery," and that they should now "rest."

"Other military units, including the East and West military groups, they have to fulfil their tasks, according to the previously suggested plan," Putin said. "I hope everything will be successful as it happened in the [Luhansk] area," he added.

Putin also praised the LPR's militia for showing "heroism." "My congratulations and my words of gratitude," Putin said. "I congratulate you all and wish you all the best."

price since early March in the days following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

There could be worse to come.

On Wednesday, Norwegian workers are due to strike again, which will result in the shutdown of three additional fields, Equinor said. Those fields produce the equivalent of about 330,000 barrels of oil a day, of which almost 80% is natural gas.

Another strike is planned for Saturday, which according to calculations by Reuters could shutter about a quarter of Norway's gas output and 15% of its oil output. Equinor said the impact of the third day of strikes "is not yet clear."

The country's gas exports will be slashed by 60% over the three days

of strikes, the Norwegian Oil and Gas Association said Tuesday.

"Norwegian deliveries account for a quarter of European energy supplies, and Europe is entirely dependent on Norway delivering as a nation at a time when Russian supply cuts have created a very tight market for natural gas," the association said in a statement.

The Norwegian government could, in theory, force union leaders and Equinor to the negotiating table if it believes the strike could threaten the "life and health" of the population, though intervention has been controversial in the past, according to Eurofound, an EU labor research agency.

U.S. "terror" as rooftop gunman opens fire on parade

From page 1► Officials say the attacker launched the assault while standing on the roof of a building and used what a police spokesman said was a "high-powered rifle" to aim and fire on hundreds of civilians down below attending the parade. The assault weapon has been recovered from the scene of the massacre.

Following the tragic loss of lives, the visible presence of military vehicles and security forces in military gear patrolling the streets of Highland Park depicted a scene similar to a war zone.

The shooting quickly triggered debate about gun control during a tense time in the U.S. regarding the issue and whether stricter measures can even prevent mass shootings from happening in the future.

There have been many reactions but critics say the "landmark gun reform" bill recently passed by the senate and house; described as the most sweeping legislation in nearly 30 years (designed to prevent precisely the nature of this latest gun attack) has clearly not worked in Highland Park.

The bipartisan passed legislation was celebrated as a major breakthrough with the Biden White House saying it was intended to keep dangerous individuals from obtaining weapons. Gun reform advocates say it doesn't go far enough as evidenced in Highland Park which will go down in the history books for the young white attacker's reported fascination with guns.

Could this have been prevented? How did the gunmen get hold of such a lethal weapon? Should he have had possession of it? It's the same debates and questions among Americans that U.S. leaders don't have the ability to address or tackle successfully.

Many Americans have been raised in a culture of violence and gun violence in particular. The gun culture comes in different forms, with experts pointing the finger at both domestic issues and foreign policies.

The country has been built on gun violence and the vast military adventurism around the globe. The fear is that over the decades, officials and politicians appear powerless to avoid the rising civilian fatalities from the firearms epidemic.

Observers have highlighted the younger generation carrying out more mass killings and argue they are surrounded by a gun violent society that dominates the news and more recently social media. Racism plays a role too as was evident in the Buffalo mass shooting in a black neighborhood. The country is also flooded with weapons. Research shows there are more firearms than citizens and that doesn't include guns on the black market.

Video capturing the moment of the Highland Park attack shows people fleeing for their lives as gunshots are heard nearby. One hospital said it was treating 26 victims while another said five had been transported to it's vicinity "the vast majority suffered gunshot wounds," a hospital spokesman said. Medics have reported minors among the injured. At least one child is said to be in critical condition.

Witness Amarani Garcia, who attended the parade with her young daughter, told local media how she heard gunfire, then a pause for what she suspected was the gunman reloading, followed by firing again. She also spoke of "people screaming and running. It was just really traumatizing, i was very terrified. I hid with my daughter actually in a little store. It just makes me feel like we're not safe anymore" Garcia said.

Other witnesses spoke of similar graphic scenes and how they initially thought the gunshots were part of the parade before seeing

people screaming with blood visible on their bodies.

The gun reform group, Mom's Demand, put out a statement reading "a white teen or young man had a rifle and was in a 'sniper position' on a rooftop as he picked off people below at the Highland Park parade. This isn't freedom; it's terrorism."

The gun-control advocacy organization Giffords Courage said "This is not normal. We should be able to live free of the fear of being shot."

Shortly before the latest massacre, the National Rifle Association, a powerful gun lobby group which advocates for Americans to carry weapons; shared a message on social media saying "the only reason you're celebrating Independence Day is because citizens were armed." But Americans are not "celebrating" a national holiday, instead, they are in mourning.

The mayor of Highland Park, Nancy Rotering, says "our community was terrorized by an act of violence that has shaken us to our core... on a day that we came together to celebrate community and freedom, we are instead mourning the tragic loss of life and struggling with the terror that was brought up on us."

This is the latest in a spate of mass murders that have recently included the heartbreaking shooting at an elementary school that killed 19 school kids and two teachers. That came shortly after a white supremacist conducted the racist massacre of Black shoppers at a super market in Buffalo, New York which killed ten people. Both of the deadly attacks occurred in May this year.

And this is the third major mass shooting since May. Here is a list of notable shootings in the U.S. during the months of May and June this year that made the headlines and offers a glimpse of the domestic safety and security issues facing Americans. Nowhere else in the world has there been so many shootings in the span of two months. Americans celebrate "Independence Day" but are they actually free? Are minority groups free?

Vestavia Hills, Alabama: At least two people killed and another hospitalized on 16 June after a shooting at a Church.

Duncanville, Texas: Police shot and killed a man who fired gunshots on 13 June at a Dallas-area gymnasium with at least 150 children inside.

Chattanooga, Tennessee: Three people killed and 14 people injured in a shooting on 5 June in front of a restaurant.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Three people killed, and eleven others injured on 4 June during a melee that was followed by gunfire.

Dayton, Ohio: An incarcerated person being treated at a hospital shot and killed a security guard on 1 June, pointed the weapon at others and killed himself.

Tulsa, Oklahoma: A gunman killed his surgeon and three other people at a medical office on 1 June. The gunman killed himself as police arrived.

Uvalde, Texas: an 18-year-old gunman killed 19 children and two adults at Robb elementary school on 24 May in the deadliest school shooting in nearly a decade. More than 15 other people were wounded.

Chicago, Illinois: A shooting killed two people and injured seven others on 19 May.

Laguna Woods, California: One person killed, and five injured on 15 May after a man opened fire on Taiwanese parishioners in southern California.

Buffalo, New York: A white gunman opened fire on 14 May at a supermarket in a predominantly Black neighborhood, killing ten people and injuring others.

Europe braces for another energy shock as Norwegian gas fields close

Europe's energy woes escalated Tuesday as Norwegian oil and gas workers went on strike, shutting three fields in the North Sea and causing a spike in natural gas prices.

Norway's state-owned energy company Equinor said it had shut the fields after some of its employees went on strike over a pay dispute.

The three fields produce the equivalent of about 89,000 barrels of oil a day, more than 30% of which is natural gas, Equinor said in a statement.

Norway was the second largest source of natural gas to Europe last year, after only Russia, according to Eurostat data. The disruption comes at a critical

moment for the region.

Europe is trying to reduce its reliance on Russia's exports, which are already being curtailed by Moscow. Any sustained drop in Norway's output could deal a big blow to efforts to replenish gas stocks ahead of the winter, as well as raise the risk of a catastrophic energy shortage.

Germany, the region's biggest economy, has already declared a "gas crisis" and warned it can't rule out introducing rationing to get through the winter.

News of the strike helped push European natural gas futures prices up 5% to hit 172 euros (\$177) per megawatt hour, data from the Intercontinental Exchange showed. That's the highest

Global Youth Tourism Summit elects Iran to its board of directors



TEHRAN – The first Global Youth Tourism Summit has elected Iran to its board of directors.

Organized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the event brought together tens of young people from 60 countries to Sorrento, Italy.

Tara Qahremani and Mohammad-Hossein Ruhandeh were Iran representatives at the event, which was held from 27 June to 3 July.

The professional performance of Iran representatives was a reason why the

Islamic Republic was selected for the board of directors, CHTN reported on Tuesday.

Chaired by UNWTO Secretary-General Zorab Pololikashvili, the board of directors has also members from the UAE, Morocco, and Uruguay.

Pololikashvili mentioned that “The Global Youth Tourism Summit is a hugely important first, for UNWTO and our sector, and that young talent from every region will be supported to give them a stage to voice their ideas about tourism’s future.”

Participants discussed perspectives in the framework of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations, the report said.

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

According to organizers, the summit concluded with the launch of the Sorrento Call to Action, a bold and ground-breaking vision for young people to be active participants in tourism’s restart and growth as a pillar of sustainable and inclusive development.

Congress to explore Iranian national identity from multiple perspectives

TEHRAN – A host of archaeologists, historians, and anthropologists will exchange views on the Iranian national identity in a two-day congress to be held on December 6 and 7.

Named “Congress on Archaeological Heritage and Rereading of Iranian National Identity” the event seeks to compare and contrast the Western perspective with the Iranian outlook over the history of Iran, according to organizers.

“Archaeological excavations as a ‘new’ knowledge have transformed the historiography of us and many countries. This transformation of historiography has made us face a new look toward the past, whether it has affected our identity or not,” the organizers said in a press release on Tuesday.

“In the past two hundred years, the confrontation between us and the West has intensified, and their view about us has been based on their own interests and knowledge, which has had benefits and disadvantages.”

Now, the congress seeks to discuss international archaeological studies and their importance in the new historiography of Iran.

A cradle of civilizations, Iran has played a significant role as a source of innovation, being a melting pot and cultural powerhouse connecting Africa, Asia, and Europe. Ancient Iran, also known as Persia, was a historic region of southwestern Asia that is only roughly coterminous with modern Iran. The term Persia was used for centuries, chiefly in the West, to designate those regions where Persian language and culture predominated, but it more correctly refers to a region of southern Iran formerly known as Persis, alternatively as Pars or Parsa, modern Fars.

In the time of the Achaemenian dynasty

Old trees, mineral spas in Ardabil made national heritage

TEHRAN – Four old trees and two mineral spas, which are located in Ardabil province, have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list of Iran.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has announced the inscriptions in separate letters to the governor-general of the province, CHTN reported on Tuesday.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well-known for having

lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

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

Old hands honored for excellence in Iran cultural heritage

From page 1 ► A cradle of civilizations, and a crossroads of cultures, Iran has played a leading role as a source of innovation, being a melting pot and cultural powerhouse connecting Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Highlights are the pre-Islamic empires of the Achaemenids and Sassanids, the formation of a Persian-Islamic culture, and the artistic masterpieces of the 9th to 13th centuries as well as the heyday of the Safavids to name a few. Iran hosts some of the world’s oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, and rich natural and rural landscapes, 26 of which are UNESCO World Heritage.

Ancient Iran, also known as Persia, was a historic region of southwestern Asia that is only roughly coterminous with modern Iran. The term Persia was used for centuries, chiefly in the West, to designate those regions where Persian language and culture predominated, but it more correctly refers to a region of southern Iran formerly known

as Persis, alternatively as Pars or Parsa, modern Fars.

During the rule of the Persian Achaemenian dynasty (559–330 BC), the ancient Greeks first encountered the inhabitants of Persis on the Iranian plateau, when the Achaemenids—natives of Persis—were expanding their political sphere. The Achaemenids were the dominant dynasty during Greek history until the time of Alexander the Great, and the use of the name Persia was gradually extended by the Greeks and other peoples to apply to the whole Iranian plateau. This tendency was reinforced with the rise of the Sasanian dynasty, also native to Persis, whose culture dominated the Iranian plateau until the 7th century CE. The people of this area have traditionally referred to the region as Iran, “Land of the Aryans,” and in 1935 the government of Iran requested that the name Iran be used instead of Persia. The two terms, however, are often used interchangeably when referring to periods preceding the 20th century.

In addition, the Iranian plateau



was roamed by the Neanderthals. A 2019 study published in the Journal of Human Evolution, suggests that Neanderthals were roaming over the Iranian Zagros mountain range between 40 to 70 thousand years ago.

Until the late 20th century, Neanderthals were regarded as genetically, morphologically, and behaviorally distinct from living humans. However, more recent discoveries about this well-preserved fossil Eurasian population have revealed an overlap between living and archaic humans.

Neanderthals lived before and during the last Ice Age of the Pleistocene in some of the most unforgiving environments ever inhabited by humans. They developed a successful culture, with a complex stone tool technology, that was based on hunting, some scavenging, and local plant collection. Their survival during tens of thousands of years of the last glaciation is a remarkable testament to human adaptation.

Zagros mountain range in southwestern Iran, extending

northwest-southeast from the border areas of eastern Turkey and northern Iraq to the Strait of Hormuz, is about 990 miles (1,600 km) long and more than 150 miles (240 km) wide. It forms the extreme western boundary of the Iranian plateau, though its foothills to the north and west extend into adjacent countries.

According to Britannica, the oldest rocks in the Zagros range date to Precambrian time (that is, before 541 million years ago), and the Paleozoic Era rocks date to between 541 million and 252 million years ago and are found at or near the highest peaks.

Most of the rocks in the mountain range, however, are limestone and shale from the Mesozoic Era (252 million to 66 million years ago) and the Paleogene Period (66 million to 23 million years ago). The range was primarily formed by orogenies (mountain-building episodes) driven by the movement of the Arabian Plate underneath the Eurasian Plate during the Miocene and Pliocene epochs (23 million to 2.6 million years ago).

Camper vans to stage rally between Tehran, Moscow

TEHRAN – Experts from Iran and Russia have discussed ways to organize further joint events such as staging a car rally between their capitals.

On Monday, the Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran (TACI) plays host to a delegation of Russian experts to exchange views on tourism cooperation, IRNA reported.

TACI Director Mohammad Hossein Soufi and Tatiana Sharshavitskaya, the deputy chairman of the Moscow Tourism Committee agreed to plan and implement the first rally of camper vans between the country’s capitals.

Holding Iran’s cultural nights in Moscow was among other events discussed in the meeting, the report said.

Soufi’s talk on a previously inked visa-free agreement for tourist groups hinted at a potential momentum for mutual tourism cooperation.

“We would be able to project a wide variety of joint events in case visa-free travels become operational,” Soufi said.

Sharshavitskaya for her part said, by contrasting experiences, joint projects can be implemented, for which this meeting is a beginning and the first step on the way to reaching a common point



of view.

Other participants in the meeting were Sergey Barotov, the deputy head of the international relations division of the Department for External Economic & International Relations of Moscow, Orkhan Rezaev, the projects manager of the Moscow Tourism Committee, and Peter Nikitenko, the cultural attaché of the Russian embassy in Iran.

In 2017, former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin inked a visa-free agreement for tourist groups.

Based on the agreement four groups of 5 to 50 people heading to [easternmost parts of] Russia from Iran or vice versa would be granted a visa-free stay of up

to 15 days.

According to Ebrahim Pourfaraj, who presides over the Iranian Tour Operators Association, the majority of potential Russian travelers are unaware of the vast tourist attractions that exist in every corner of Iran. “The fact is that Iran’s political and economic relations with Russia are considered as good, but this has nothing to do with attracting tourists because it is directly connected with the Russian people. It is the Russian people who must choose Iran as their destination,” he explained.

Experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after the coronavirus is contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Archaeologists in southwest Iran excavate forgotten fortress

TEHRAN – Amid the semi-arid plains of Dehdasht in southwest Iran, archaeologists are working to excavate the remnants of an ancient and long-forgotten fortress.

On the one hand, the archaeological project is aimed to shed light on the fortress’s towers and ramparts, and on the other hand, it seeks to uncover clues about the history of Dehdasht during the early Islamic eras, CHTN quoted archaeologist Hossein Sepidnameh as saying on Tuesday.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Sepidnameh expressed hope that the digs would collect further evidence needed for documentation of the site for an unlimite goal of being inscribed on the UNESCO list.

“Preventing the further destruction of the citadel, and studying its formation process



and architectural details, are other goals of the archaeological survey, which are necessary for possible registration of the fortress on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

An earlier excavation conducted in 2020 yielded relics such as pottery fragments, which paved the way for the discovery of some parts of the fortress, he explained.

“Furthermore, archaeological surveys suggest the fortress had been restored at least three times.”

Situated in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, the ancient city of Dehdasht (Belad

Shapur) was built upon the order of Shapur I, also known as Shapur the Great, (reigned 241 CE–272), who was the second king of the Sassanid Dynasty.

Under his leadership, the empire stretched from Sogdiana and Iberia (Georgia) in the north to the Mazun region of Arabia in the south; in the east, it extended to the Indus River, and in the west to the upper Tigris and Euphrates rivers valleys.

Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan which are amongst the highlights of the ensemble.

Crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the

East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

Rock-carved sculptures and bas-reliefs on abrupt limestone cliffs are widely deemed as characteristics and striking relics of Sassanian art, top examples of which can be traced at Bishapur, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rabbaj in southern Iran. In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled “Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region”-- to its World Heritage list.

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is known for its nomads and nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

License issued to inject fourth dose of coronavirus vaccine

TEHRAN – In a letter to the universities of medical sciences, the Ministry of Health emphasized the need to inject a booster dose of coronavirus vaccine, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Considering the return of Hajj and Arbaeen pilgrims and the reopening of schools and universities, it is necessary to pay special attention to the continued use of masks and compliance with the health guidelines, especially in high-risk groups, and to strengthen border health care and the cooperation of relevant agencies in timely detection of the arrival of new strains, deputy health minister Kamal Heydari wrote in the letter, emphasizing the recommendation to receive a booster dose for all age groups, more than six months have passed since their last vaccination.

COVID-19 infections significantly increase

It has been about a week that the number of outpatient cases has significantly increased again, and it seems that a new wave is happening in the country, Payam Tabarsi, member of the scientific committee of coronavirus control, has said.

It seems that outpatient cases increase will show its effect on death and hospitalization in two to three weeks. Currently, it is



strongly recommended to follow health protocols and inject vaccines by those who have not been vaccinated yet. Because the vaccine really reduces the severity of the disease, he suggested.

Masoud Younesian, secretary of the epidemiology and research committee of the national scientific committee to deal with coronavirus, has said that omicron BA4 and BA5 variants may soon dominate the country.

According to the official statistics, about 20 to 25 percent of eligible people in the society did not inject the coronavirus

vaccine at all, and between 30 to 35 percent only injected a dose of the vaccine, who is called the vulnerable population.

In the first week of the Iranian calendar month of Tir which began on June 25, COVID-19 hospitalizations and outpatients have tripled in the country.

Also, unfortunately, a total of 11 patients died last week. Based on this, the total number of deaths from this disease has reached 141,390 people.

So far, about 150 million doses of vaccine have been injected into the Iranian population and the

coverage of vaccination in the total population is about 75 percent, he highlighted.

The national scientific committee to deal with coronavirus has said that omicron BA4 and BA5 variants may soon dominate the country.

Iran ready to provide scientific, research experiences to Mali

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Science, Research, and Technology Mohammad-Ali Zolfigol in a meeting with his Malian counterpart Amadou Keita announced readiness to provide research and scientific experiences to the African country.

Keita, heading a delegation of five representatives, visits Iran to develop mutual cooperation.

"We are aware of Iran's scientific abilities and capacities, and based on this, scientific cooperation with Iran is important for us," Keita stated.

He further expressed hope to use Iran's experiences in all scientific fields, including the creation of universities and technology centers.

Iran's scientific and technological achievements are at a high level, and Mali has started investing in science and technology. So, familiarity with the process of acquiring these scientific achievements is very important, he highlighted.

He also requested granting 20 scholarships to Malian students to attend Iranian universities.

Zolfigol also for his part said that the strengthening of science diplomacy as a complement to public diplomacy is important to us, and it is planned to increase scientific and research cooperation with other

countries, especially interaction with countries that seek independence.

Iran has one percent of the world's population, but it owns more than 2 percent of the world's scientific productions and is ranked the world's top in many scientific fields such as nuclear science, defense industry, nanotechnology, biotechnology, chemistry, as well as achieving great progress in medicine and health, he explained.

"We are ready to help Mali in establishing universities, science and technology parks, and accelerators," he noted.

Science diplomacy at highest level

Data from the Scopus International Citation Database show that Iran's scientific diplomacy has reached more than 34 percent since the beginning of 2021, the highest level in the past 20 years.

Science diplomacy is the use of scientific collaborations among nations to address common problems and build constructive international partnerships. It is a

form of new diplomacy and has become an umbrella term to describe a number of formal or informal technical, research-based, academic, or engineering exchanges, within the general field of international relations.

Comparing the rate of 2020 with 2019,

"We are ready to help Mali in establishing universities, science and technology parks, and accelerators."



Iran with a growth of 12.5 percent and with a slight difference from India has gained second place in the world in terms of the growth of world science diplomacy, Mohammad Javad Dehghani, head of the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC), said.

In 2011, the share of Iranian articles with international participation was about 16.5 percent, which increased to 19.7 percent in 2016 and gradually in the following years, so that in 2020 and 2021, reached 30.5 and 34.2 percent, respectively, he added.

The share of Iranian articles with international participation has had significant growth of 209 percent during an eight-year period (2013-2020), becoming the Islamic world's leading country in science diplomacy, according to the Scopus International Citation Database.

ENGLISH IN USE

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"Noora" vaccine successfully passing first phase of clinical trial

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

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

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

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

تهران - رئیس دانشگاه علوم پزشکی بقیه الله گفت: تزریق دز اول واکسن نورا به تمام داوطلبان انجام شد و دز دوم هم به نیمه تزریق رسیده است.

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

Winners of Farabi intl. award honored

From page 1 ► The closing ceremony was held in Tehran with the presence of President Ebrahim Raisi and prominent professors and researchers.

According to the announcement of the secretariat of the Farabi International Festival, among the 207 works submitted for judging in this festival, 16 works were selected and worthy of recognition in 2 sections, youth, and adult.

A total of 32 scientists and experts were selected from Iran and 10 were foreign nationals selected as the top researchers in the international sector.

The Farabi International Award, the most prestigious award for humanities and Islamic studies in the Islamic world, is held annually by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the management of the Institute of Cultural and Social Studies of that Ministry.

The FIA aims to introduce and honor the best

research in the field of humanities and Islamic studies. Works that are both innovative and research-based, are accepted, reviewed, evaluated, selected, and honored in the award.

The event presents the awards in the following categories of "pioneers in the field of humanities and Islamic studies in Iran", "prominent scientific personalities in the field of humanities and Islamic studies in Iran who have passed away, top theorists", "books, research projects, articles, doctoral dissertations and master's theses in adult and young sections", "the top translator from Persian to the other languages and vice versa", "top scientific associations", "top research scientific Journals".

The Award receives, reviews, and chooses the selected works at the two young (under 35 years) and adult levels and, in terms of territory, covers both domestic and foreign areas. Where the domestic area is concerned, all the works produced by Iranians, regardless of their current location and profession, are considered.

The Award aims to introduce and honor the best research in the fields of humanities and Islamic studies.

Astrology and astronomy in Iran

Part 8

While its belief in astrological determination (see Widengren, Mani and Manichaeism, pp. 69-72) may be attributed to late Hellenistic and Roman culture, it combines astrology with features common to Zoroastrianism: (a) great emphasis on the formation of the universe as a result of the conflict of the Two Principles; (b) therefore concern with cosmic chronology and the fulfillment of the Three Times, already in Mani's own book, the Shabuhragan; (c) special reverence for the sun and moon; (d) a gnostic execration of the planets as demonic; (e) a "primitive" (i.e., mythological) approach in thinking about the heavens; thus the Manicheans were derided by Alexander of Lycopolis for not studying modern astronomy.

Even if Mani is not himself an indication of astrology's penetration of western Iran and of Zoroastrianism, his missionaries in Iran must have assisted such a penetration.

In the brief Middle Persian sketches of the transmission of Zoroastrian scriptures and other knowledge (Bailey, Zoroastrian Problems, pp. 79-86; Zaehner, Zurvan, pp. 7-9, 139), two major periods of scholarly activity are suggested: During the reigns of Ardashir I and Shapur I (A.D. 224-72) there began the compiling of the Avesta and much literature from foreign sources; under Khosrow I the process was completed (531-79) under strong Indian influence.

The astrologers whose works were translated from Greek have been cited above; see also the account of Ebn Nawbakht in the Fehrest (tr. Dodge, II, pp. 574-75; cf. pp. 639-45).

Perhaps already in the early phase various divination texts were translated, dealing with such topics as auguries from birds and dream interpretation (see Fehrest, tr., II, pp. 736-42).

Thus the Kar-namag need not be anach-

ronistic when it refers to Pabak's dream-interpreter (xwamn-wizar; ed. Antia, 1.12) or to Ardawan's augur ("bird-gazer," murwnish in 3.4-7); for there must have been a foundation already laid for the early Sasanian intellectual labors.

As the systems of ephemerides (Mid. Pers. zaych, Persian/Arabic zij used by the court astrologers were revised and combined, there must have occurred considerable debate and rivalry among these professionals.

E.g., Manuchihr (writing in the ninth century) refers to the problem of reconciling three systems: the Zaych of the Sovereigns, the Indian Zaych, and the Zaych of Ptolemy (The Epistles of Manushchihar, ed. B. N. Dhabhar, Bombay, 1912, II.2.9-11, not correctly understood by E. W. West).

These systems all date to the Sasanian period. Perhaps the intensive labor on them in the reign of Khosrow I was motivated, not only by the desire for more accurate predictive tools, but by the approach of the last century of Zardosht's millennium. In this period various astral portents might be expected.

An astrological work of special interest is the Mid. Pers. Wizidag (selection[s]), mentioned in the Fehrest. This was a commentary, dating from Khosrow I's reign, on Vettius Valens' Anthologiae; it was perhaps added to during the last decades of Sasanian rule and after (cf. Taqizadeh, "Some Chronological Data," p. 137).

Part of the book was transmitted through Muslim astrologers, including Ebn Hebenta; and it is known to have included a horoscope of the world agreeing with the one in the Mid. Pers. Bundahishn. The Wizidag is attributed to a Bozorgmehr, and presumably the semi-legendary vizier of Khosrow I is intended.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

COVID-19 UPDATES ON JULY 5

New cases	1,084
New deaths	4
Total cases	7,241,648
Total deaths	141,408
New hospitalized patients	150
Patients in critical condition	258
Total recovered patients	7,063,652
Diagnostic tests conducted	52,664,115
Doses of vaccine injected	150,455,658

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JULY 6, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Value of a man depends upon his courage; his veracity depends upon his self-respect and his chastity depends upon his sense of honor.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:13:09 Evening: 20:45 Dawn: 4:10 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:55 (tomorrow)

Jamshid in Persian literature

Part 16

Thus, Yima provided two elements necessary for the eschatological renewal of immortality: the population that was to repopulate the world in the period of Ushedar and the xwedudah, which would lead to the Renovation.

Yima's was the first of three attempts at immortality, the second being Paradise, to which Zarathustra opened access, and the third the earth itself after the Renovation.

Shaul Shaked drew the balance of previous studies in an article in 1987. Yima may have been regarded as first mortal and the originator of humanity and civilization. If he was also the first human at some early stage, this was changed in Zoroastrianism when Gaya Maretan became first man and for various other reasons, but, in the extant sources, he is not.

Gaya Maretan/Gayumard was a new concept introduced by Zoroastrianism, as strongly indicated by the binomial form of his name (like Ahura Mazda, etc.). His original place in the mythical chronology is not clear, as opposed to his function as founder of civilization and first king, which are clear, perhaps also that of first sinner.

Shaked speculates that “dualism may be inherent in the bright luminosity of the divinity itself,” which might explain Yima's ambiguity. The pervasive ambiguities in the popular versions of the myths suggest a syncretism by which the different levels influenced one another and the ancient layers filtered up through the more recent ones, while the effects of a cultural syncretism is seen in the attempts at synchronizing Iranian, Biblical, and, later, Islamic characters.

In the later tradition, the figures of Yima and Gayumard are fairly complementary, both being solar figures who received messages from God, but they belong to two different symbolic fields.

In the priestly tradition, Yima is a semi-divine presence, active and heroic, while Gayumard represents “humanity as a passive instrument in the cosmic battle.” In the popular tradition, they both became mythical first kings.

The name Jamshid often alternates in Persian poetry with the short form Jam in response to metrical requirements. It is also interpreted as such in some Islamic sources.

Sources all agree that he reigned for several hundred years, but they differ on the exact length of his rule. Ebn Qotayba reports it to be 960 years, while, according to Menhaj-e Seraj, he ruled for 400 years as a godly king and 400 years more after he was deceived by Satan.

The authors of the Persian translation of Tabari's Quran commentary assign him 1000 years, Pseudo-Khayyam 800 years, but Ebn al-Balkhi, Mojmal al-tawarikh, and Fakhr-e Modabber 716 years.

According to Abu Ali Mohammad Bal'ami, Jamshid ruled for either 400 or 700 years; the latter figure is mentioned also in a number of other sources. Abu Rayhan Biruni gives Jam's rule as 716 years according to one report and as 616 according to another, and Abu Mansur Taalebi reports 500 years.

Two narrative strands are discernable in Jamshid's biography: the secular epic strand, in which he is the son of king Tahmuras, and the priestly or religious strand, according to which he is Tahmuras's brother.

A number of other texts do not specify the relationship of Jamshid to Tahmuras

at all. The secular tradition, found in the Shahnameh and related texts, in time overwhelmed the religious story and is also supported by Iranian oral tradition.

Jamshid's epic life-story may be divided into the period of his kingship and the period after he was deposed. Jamshid's most coherent epic biography is found in the Shahnameh, according to which he was Tahmuras's son, succeeded his father to the throne, and proclaimed himself to be both king and priest.

He invented a series of important implements and institutions in the following order. He spent fifty years in inventing various weapons and armor, fifty in inventing weaving and tailoring, fifty more in ordering his subjects into separate professions, and finally fifty more years in instituting social casts according to the functionalities that he had assigned to each group.

Although arranging his subjects into different professions is a different task from instituting social casts, these functionalities are often conflated in scholarship on Jamshid.

He spends the next fifty years in instructing the demons, whom his father Tahmuras had already subdued, to make bricks and buildings such as palaces and bath-houses.

It should be noted that, contrary to some readings of these lines, demons did not teach Jamshid how to build anything. It was rather Jamshid who, having taught them brick making, employed them in his building projects.

Some demons appear to have been outside his dominion. For instance, the demon Puladvand claims to have caused much trouble for Jamshid and a number of other kings.

Jamshid goes on to mine precious stones, establish the use of aromatics, and teach the art of medicine. He then builds ships and crosses the waters that separate the seven realms. All of these activities took another fifty years to complete.

Following all this, Jamshid builds himself a magnificent bejeweled throne, which he ascends and orders his demons to carry in the air on the first day of the vernal equinox.

He thus institutes the festival of the New Year (Noruz). This period of creative activity lasts 250 years. During the next three hundred years Jamshid rules peacefully and his subjects neither fall sick nor die.

At the end of this 550 years, Jamshid grows arrogant, claims divinity, and alienates everyone. He loses his royal gory, and his realm falls into chaos. His subjects go over to the land of the Arabs, and ask Zahhak, a new and powerful Arab ruler, to come to Iran and take over Jamshid's throne.

Zahhak attacks Jamshid's capital at the head of a large army comprised of Arabs and Persians, and Jamshid, unable to resist Zahhak's forces, escapes and disappears for one hundred years.

However, at the end of this period he is captured by Zahhak, who orders him to be sawed in half.

The longitudinal sawing of Jam's body is suggestive of a “castration” motif. Bal'ami (d. 974), who must have had access to Ferdowsi's prose archetype, corroborates Ferdowsi by reporting that the “saw was put on Jamshid's head and he was sawed down to his legs”.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Children’s Book Council of Iran announces shortlist for 2024 Hans Christian Andersen Award

From Page 1 ▶ Haddadi has been chosen for creating a womanly world with special regard for nature in her works, her respect for peace and efforts for making affectionate characters as well as her style inspired by Persian painting – Iranian miniature.

Haddadi has illustrated dozens of books, some of which have won her international acclaim.

She won the gold medal for best illustrator at the 2017 Moonbeam Children's Book Awards in Traverse City, in the U.S. state of Michigan.

She received the award for her illustrations for “Drummer Girl”, a book written by Pakistani author Hiba Masood.

Kheirieh has been picked for her skill in the creation of attractive characters with various actions

A combination photo shows books illustrated by Hoda Haddadi, Rashn Kheirieh and Alireza Golduzian.

and new language for expressing literary elements, and her ability for making minimal atmospheres, which take their inspiration from Persian painting.

Kheirieh's works have been showcased at numerous international events. She has received several acknowledgments and prizes, including the Medal of

Encouragement from Noma, Japan in 2002 and 2008, New Horizons from the International Book Festival Bologna, Italy in 2009, International Festival of Illustrators, Katha, India in 2005 and the Golden Apple of the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB) in 2011.

Golduzian has been selected for his personal and diverse views in each of his works, and his skill for illustrating and designing a vast variety of forms, places and characters inspired by Iranian and the world's illustration arts.

Golduzian won a silver prize at the 9th edition of the Flying Turtle Awards for his illustrations for a Persian translation of Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish's “Think of Others” by Hossein Mottaqi.

Iranian bookstores offer “The Divine Guide in Early Shi’ism”

TEHRAN – A Persian translation of France-based Iranian Islamologist Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi's book “The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam” has come to Iranian bookstores.

Naamak is the publisher of the book rendered into Persian by Nureddin Allahdini.

The Imam, the Divine Guide, is the central point around which the Shia religion revolves. The power of Shiism comes from the actions of the Imam.

This title is reserved exclusively for the successors of the prophets in their mission. The author shows that from the beginning of Shia Islam until the tenth century, the Imam was primarily a master of knowledge with supernatural powers, not a jurist theologian.

The Imam is the threshold through which God and the creatures communicate. He is thus a cosmic necessity, the key and the center of the

universal economy of the sacred.

The author presents Shiism as a religion founded on double dimensions where the role of the leader remains constantly central: perpetual initiation into divine secrets and continued confrontation with anti-initiation forces.

Without esotericism, exotericism loses its meaning. Early Imamism is an esoteric doctrine. Historically, then, at the beginning of esotericism in Islam, we find an initiatory, mystical and occultist doctrine.

This is the first book to systematically explore the immense literature attributed to the Imams themselves in order to recover the authentic original vision. It restores an essential source of esotericism in the world of Islam.

An English translation of the book by David Straight has previously been published.

Amir-Moezzi is a professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études of the Sorbonne.

Front cover of the Persian translation of Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi's book “The Divine Guide in Early Shi’ism”.

“Middle Eastern Stories” named best at River Film Festival

TEHRAN – Iranian short drama “Middle Eastern Stories: Father” was selected as best film in the International Horizons section of the 16th River Film Festival in Padova, Italy.

Directed by Reza Daqaq, the film is the heartbreaking story of a group of refugees inside a truck trying to start a new life.

“In the small narrative space, it's almost a theatrical spectacle,” the jury said in its statement published on Sunday.

The jury also praised the film for its “clever sound design” in its statement.

Another Iranian drama namely “Plaything” by Nima Rahimpur won the special jury mention in this section.

The film follows Nima who doesn't like his new doll. He craves his mother's love and attention.

The audience award was

A scene from “Middle Eastern Stories: Father” by Iranian director Reza Daqaq.

given to two Russian films: “Nevesomost” by Ivan Sosnin and “Ordinary Wedding” by Irina Khodyush.

Serbian director Aglaja Filipovic's “Alone Together” won the award for best film in the Film Schools category.

The jury called it “a mesmerizing black-and-white film” and praised the film for its writing and editing.

The film is about two strangers who must share a hotel room

for one night under strange circumstances.

“Terra Dei Padri” by Francesco Di Gioia from Italy received the audience award in this section.

The award for best animation went to “Love, Dad” by Diana Cam Van Nguyen from the Czech Republic.

“Few may not be moved by this compelling autobiographical story based on the relationship between a daughter and an

absent father,” the jury said.

The audience award of this category was given to “New Eyes” by Valeria Degli Agostini from Italy.

“Golpe de Vida” by Luis and Andres Rodriguez from Venezuela was picked as best documentary.

“From the first minute, the judges were fascinated by the extraordinary black and white photography,” the jury said.

“Boxing as a metaphor for life is presented through a series of portraits, and the ring becomes a free zone for empowerment beyond genders, ages and abilities,” the jury added.

“Podlasie Border of the World” by Polish filmmaker Katarzyna Lazzeri won the special mention in this category, while the audience award went to “I Don't Want to Be a Human Anymore” by Martina Selva from Italy.

Sylvia Engdahl’s “Bolshevik Revolution” published in Persian

Front cover of the Persian edition of Sylvia Engdahl's book “The Bolshevik Revolution”.

TEHRAN – “The Bolshevik Revolution” by American writer Sylvia Engdahl has been published in Persian by Qoqnus in Tehran.

Shahrbanu Saremi is the translator of the book originally published in 2013.

The book is from the series “Perspectives on Modern World History”, which provides multiple views of momentous events in recent history.

Each book helps readers develop critical thinking skills, increase global awareness, and enhance their understanding of international perspectives about historic events.

This title explores the events of the Bolshevik Revolution, issues surrounding Bolshevik support or oppression of the working class, and the impact of Bolshevism on Russia and the world.

Personal narratives from people who experienced the revolution are included. Using primary and secondary sources, each volume provides background information on a significant event in modern world history, presents the controversies surrounding the event, and offers first-person narratives from people.

Narratives include the words of none-other-than Nikolai Podvoisky, a key leader of the Bolshevik revolutionaries, where he describes their takeover of the Winter Palace.

In another compelling personal essay, an American-born Russian princess describes her escape from Bolshevik violence.

Engdahl is the author of eleven science fiction novels, six of which, including the Newbery Honor book “Enchantress from the Stars”, are YA books also enjoyed by many adults.

Although she is best known as an author for young adults, her most recent novels, the Hidden Flame duology (“Stewards of the Flame” and “Promise of the Flame”) and the Rising Flame trilogy (“Defender of the Flame”, “Herald of the Flame” and “Envoy of the Flame”), are adult science fiction and are not appropriate for readers below high school age.

She has also written a nonfiction book, “The Planet-Girded Suns: The long History of Belief in Exoplanets”, updated and expanded paperback and ebook editions of which were published in 2012, and three collections of her essays.

Most of the nonfiction books listed under her name were edited, rather than written, by her as a freelance editor of anthologies for high schools.