



# Counter-Sanctions Against Europe

▶ Page 3

## Interview

*Iran is the major game changer in West Asia*



By Somayeh Ebrahim Khalili

TEHRAN – A Brazilian professor of Arab descent says Iran is a game changer in West Asia and the larger region.

“Iran is the balance and the game changer for West Asia,” Bruno Beaklini tells the Tehran Times.

Beaklini, who holds PhD in political science, believes that without Iran, the Zionist regime “would have destroyed the totality of most Muslim countries in the entire region.” ▶ Page 2

## Report

### China has a peace plan for Ukraine, what is the U.S. afraid of?

By Ali Karbalaie

As Friday marks the first anniversary of the Ukraine war, Beijing's peace initiative has been met with suspicious Western skepticism.

China has now warned western countries against “adding fuel to the fire” in Ukraine, saying the time has come to take a different approach for the sake of international peace and stability.

Last year, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the Global Security Initiative (GSI), which he said is aimed to create a new path to security that features dialogue over confrontation.

Beijing says the initiative will provide a new approach to addressing the root causes of international conflicts and solve security challenges facing humanity.

The GSI will be the theme of China's peace plan to end the Ukraine war. ▶ Page 5

### FIFA Forward 3.0 launched to help football's improvement

TEHRAN – FIFA has launched FIFA FORWARD 3.0 programme for supporting its development projects across the world.

Two successful iterations of the programme have been completed since its inception in 2016 with over 2.8 billion USD committed to a diverse array of plans that provide locally-relevant backing to the needs of the six confederations and 211 member associations.

FIFA has never been in a better position in terms of transparency, financial strength and governance. The World Cup 2022 was to it FIFA was able to invest a record-breaking figure in football development across the world.

FIFA Forward 3.0 will bring unprecedented levels of investment into football into Asia football.

The new programme will increase the funds earmarked under Forward 2.0 by a substantial 29%, representing an almost sevenfold increase in football development to 2016. ▶ Page 3



### Abdollahian thanks Iraq for seeking to repair ties between Iran, S. Arabia, Egypt

TEHRAN- Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the Foreign Minister of Iran, visited Baghdad on Tuesday night to hold meetings with senior Iraqi officials on a number of bilateral and regional issues on Wednesday.

Heading a diplomatic delegation, he visited Baghdad at the request of his Iraqi counter-

part, Fuad Hussein.

During a joint news conference with Hussein, Amir Abdollahian thanked Iraq for trying to advance dialogue and cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia as well as Iran and Egypt.

During his tour, Abdollahian held talks with Foreign Minister Hussein, President Abdul Latif Rashid, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, Parliament Speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi, the head of the Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq, and the chairman of Iraqi National Security Council. ▶ Page 2

### 2,300 production units put into operation in Iran since last March

TEHRAN- Head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) Ali Rasoulouian said that 2,300 production units have been put into operation across the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2022), IRNA reported.

Rasoulouian underlined the need for complet-

ing the value chain of industrial products in the country, saying that the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade should pave the way for investment in this sector.

The official further emphasized the necessity of technological development in the industry sector and stated: “In this regard, the entry of

knowledge-based companies into the field of production can be effective.”

In line with the current Iranian year's motto, which is “Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating Production”, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has been implementing new programs to support productive units across the country. ▶ Page 4

### Health system covers some 170,000 refugees

TEHRAN – About 120,000 refugees are benefiting from health insurance using international aid and about 50,000 are using internal resources for insurance services.

The health insurance helps to reduce medical expenses by supporting vulnerable refugees, ISNA quoted Jamshid Shayanfar, an official with the Health Insurance Organization of Iran, as saying.

The first cooperation agreement between the Health Insurance Organization of Iran and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was signed in October 2015.

It was aimed to provide access to universal basic health insurance including outpatient, inpatient, and temporary hospitalization services for refugees in the country.

All refugees, including those suffering from special diseases (hemophilia, thalassemia, dialysis patients, kidney transplant, MS) and also hard-to-treat diseases, benefited from the insurance services, Shayanfar said. ▶ Page 7



### St. Petersburg VivaMuse Ensemble performs at Fajr Music Festival

TEHRAN – VivaMuse Ensemble from St. Petersburg performed a concert at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Tuesday during the 38th Fajr Music Festival.

In the first part of its concert, the ensemble featuring Evgeniya Klevtsova and Nataliya Grinuk on violin, Alexei Andreev on viola, Natalia Neskoromnaya on cello and Ilya Chirskov on piano gave a performance of Italian composer Arcangelo Corelli's Concerto Grosso Op. 6, No. 2, in F major. ▶ Page 8

### Iran's hospitality culture spread by tourist guides, deputy minister says

TEHRAN – Tourist guides are the ones who spread the culture of Iranian hospitality, the deputy tourism minister has said.

The mission of tourist guides is to interpret the history and culture of Iranian hospitality for tourists, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian explained on Tuesday.

He made the remarks on the occasion of the International Tourist Guide Day, which

was celebrated worldwide on February 21.

As interpreters of Iranian history, tourist guides possess a wide range of outstanding human and professional qualities, he noted.

Developing tourism throughout the country requires the professional activity of tour guides who know and understand their role and responsibility, the official added.

## From Inside

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## Tehran Papers

*In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in Yesterday's Iranian newspapers.*

### Munich carnival!

Etelaat writes: This year, the German government turned the Munich Security Conference into a propaganda-political carnival.

At the Munich carnival, three Iranian oppositionists were invited. ▶ Page 2

### Certain Europeans unqualified to comment on international law: Iran

TEHRAN- The spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry has condemned a recent comment made by EU foreign policy Josep Borrell, asserting that certain European nations who have disregarded international rules lack the authority to counsel others to do the same.

Nasser Kanaani made the comments on Tuesday after the EU Council slapped sanctions on 32 Iranian people and two firms for what it referred to as Tehran's crackdown on the recent unrest in the country.

The European governments that have issued such guidance do not follow international law standards and are actively violating international obligations and human rights, Kanaani maintained. ▶ Page 2

### ISIS violence tempered with love story comes to Iranian homes in series “Habib”

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) is screening a TV series entitled “Habib”, in which true stories on the realities of ISIS cruelties have been mitigated somewhat with a love tale.

The co-production from Iran, Syria and Lebanon is being aired on IRIB Channel 2 every night.

The series has been filmed on location in Iran and Syria by Syrian director Joud Saeed and Iranian filmmaker Ahmad Kavari with a cast of actors from Iran, Syria and Lebanon.

Amin Zendegani and Sogol Tahmasbi are the Iranian members of the cast.

“Shia and Sunni youth from Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Azerbaijan united to demolish the ISIS sovereignty,” producer Farzad Hushyar-Parsian told the Persian service of ISNA on Wednesday. ▶ Page 8



## TEHRAN PAPERS

## Etela'at: Munich carnival!

*In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in Yesterday's Iranian newspapers.*

from page 1 ► The German government publicly put anti-Iran policies on its agenda under the pretext of protecting human rights. While Berlin still hasn't given a clear answer to selling chemical weapons to Saddam Hussein during Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s.

The German government has so far refrained from issuing even a diplomatic statement condemning the crimes of the United States in Afghanistan, therefore it is a partner in the crimes of the United States in Afghanistan.

Now the U.S., along with Germany, France, and England, has created the Ukrainian swamp.

Now the political and reasonable relations between Germany and Iran have become tense, and the Munich carnival has intensified the confusion with the hullabaloo of defending "human rights".

In Germany, isn't there a wise and knowledgeable politician on Iran-Germany relations to raise his voice of protest, even to protect the country's national interests!?

**Eemad: Diplomatic lessons Iran can learn from India**

Etemad writes: The basis of relations between the United States and India in the new era is based on two strategies: Turning towards Asia and balancing from a distance, alliance against China, and continuation of strategic relations with Russia.

The Ukraine crisis has highlighted the two-sided strategy and made the "Chosen Partners" more prominent to describe their relationship.

Although India has so far been neutral towards the Ukraine crisis, in practice it has supported Russia and opposed the anti-Russian measures or at least it has not been with the anti-Russia coalition.

India's balanced relations with the U.S. and Russia have many lessons for Iran:

- Iran can raise some of its demands from India through Russia.

- The Islamic Republic can join India and Russia (as well as China) to de-dollarize its commercial transactions and reduce its reliance on the West by establishing regional commercial and economic institutions.

**Arman-e- Melli: New agreement instead of JCPOA**

Arman-e- Melli writes: It seems that the JCPOA is nearing its end and the West is talking about a "political and diplomatic solution". Now, what is the diplomatic solution and what changes it will have compared to the past, they should be discussed in the negotiations.

Considering that in June, 8 years of the JCPOA will end, the agreement should be considered finished and another deal should be made.

But the JCPOA is not the only challenge between Iran, Europe, the U.S., and the

Arab countries of the Middle East. The war in Ukraine and the accusation of sending Iranian weapons and drones to Russia, the recent unrest in Iran, which are linked to human rights issues, are among the other topics that the West has challenges with Iran.

Therefore, it seems that the opportunity that Iran had to reach a mere nuclear agreement has been lost, and if there is a new agreement, it will not be only nuclear; other issues and topics will also be discussed.

**Javan: Strategy of looking to the East is purposeful and intelligent**

Javan writes: With the signing of a 25-year cooperation agreement between Tehran and Beijing, a lot of questions and doubts about its nature, consequences, and prospects were shaped in the minds of the public.

Critics talk about the "new colonization" and the colonization of Iran, while the Parliament and the Supreme National Security Council are also monitoring the cooperation agreement and its nature and content, and even the Leader termed the agreement as completely correct and wise.

Even the recent visit of the Iranian president to Beijing did not reduce the propaganda and smearing campaign against Iran-China relations.

In such an environment, the preliminary step of implementing the agreement is to create clarity about its nature, benefits, and advantages at strategic levels in different dimensions.

If a document distorts the freedom and independence of Iran or is against the security and development of the country, the monitoring and control mechanism in Iran is so strong that it does not allow its approval.

**Khorasan: Grossi gambling on IAEA dignity**

It seems that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has turned into a tool in the hands of its pro-Western director general, Rafael Grossi, rather than being a professional peace-making body, Khorasan writes.

In fact, he implements what the Zionist regime and the United States dictate.

The IAEA and its director general leak confidential information that can cause tension.

At the same time, Grossi has requested to travel to Tehran, although he has not yet received Iran's green light to visit.

The important issue is that although Grossi's desire to travel to Iran can have some benefits for him, it is useless and non-tempting for our country.

But the only result that his visit can have for Iran is that Iran's nuclear file is closed and the IAEA drops all the alleges against Iran.

## Certain Europeans unqualified to comment on international law: Iran



from page 1 ► The spokesman said that the countries in question had arbitrarily imprisoned a sizable number of Iranian individuals, jailed them for lengthy periods of time, or demanded their extradition for "vain justifications and spurious allegations" based on "self-made and illegitimate criteria."

He said, "These governments have substituted the international rules and conventions with their own tribunals' political and non-legal rulings."

"The Islamic Republic is aware of and committed to its international obligations and takes its actions in line with its domestic laws and regulations and its international commitments," he concluded.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian called Borrell on Sunday complaining that the bloc was continuing Donald Trump's "ineffective" campaign of sanctions on Tehran.

"The European Union's latest behavior is a repetition of Trump's failed Iran policy which demonstrates the persistence of contradictory and unachievable standards, as well as the abuse of human rights principles," he added.

# Abdollahian thanks Iraq for seeking to repair ties between Iran, S. Arabia and Egypt

from page 1 ► During his tour, Abdollahian held talks with Foreign Minister Hussein, President Abdul Latif Rashid, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, Parliament Speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi, the head of the Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq, and the chairman of Iraqi National Security Council.

The Iranian foreign minister and his entourage visited a memorial monument installed in honor of Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force of the IRGC outside Baghdad airport on Tuesday night upon his arrival in Iraq.

**Abdollahian addresses border security and Iraq's debts to Iran**

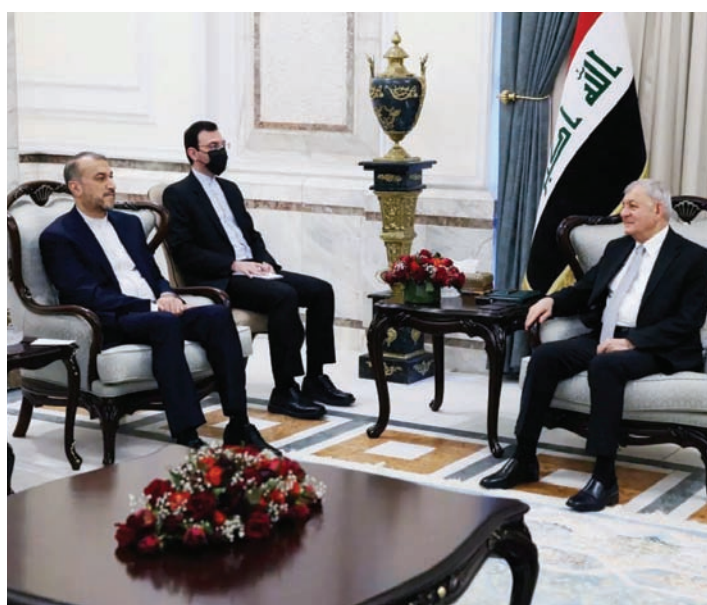
Amir Abdollahian called for improvement of ties between Iran and Iraq at the meeting with President Rashid, a native of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Other concerns were also addressed, such as border security and Iraq's debt to Iran.

The Iraqi president characterized the ties between his country and Iran as substantial and deep.

Rashid also reaffirmed his nation's commitment to forging ties with the Iranian side.

During the meeting with Prime Minister al-Sudani, Amir Abdollahian emphasized the necessity for Iraq to pay its debts to Iran, main-



FM Abdollahian meets President Abdul Latif Rashid (R)

tain control over the shared border, and refrain from provocation and threatening measures against its eastern neighbor.

He also urged the completion of the document on Iran-Iraq comprehensive cooperation.

Sudani, for his part, praised Iran's consistent support for Iraq and stated that his country was prepared to uphold prior agreements.

Also, he promised that despite regional changes, Iraq will keep

working to maintain peace in the region and deepen dialogue.

**Iraq vows to deepen ties with Iran**

Iraq's foreign minister stated that his country is eager to increase commerce with Iran in light of recent discussions he had with Washington over Baghdad's exemption from American sanctions against Tehran.

During their meeting on Wednesday in Baghdad, Hussein and Amir Abdollahian discussed a

## Quds Force chief says Iran brought U.S. plots in West Asia to failure

TEHRAN - Commander of the IRGC Quds Force has emphasized the impact of the Islamic Revolution on the region and the larger world by asserting that the resistance front thwarted a major American effort to alter the equations in West Asia.

Esmail Qaani made the remarks while addressing the Assembly of Experts on Wednesday.

Despite the hostilities displayed by the enemy, particularly the U.S. and the Zionist regime, the Islamic Revolution is moving forward vigorously and has established itself as a source of influence in the region and the wider globe, Brigadier General Qaani said.

U.S. president admitted that Washington lost at least 7,000 troops while spending 7 trillion

dollars in Afghanistan and Iraq to argue that the Islamic Republic and the culture of the Islamic Revolution were to blame for the Americans' dreadful failure, he pointed out.

The general went on to say that the U.S. changed its strategy in collaboration with a number of regional nations and formed the Daesh terrorist group as a fake replica and a distorted model of the resistance front with the intention of altering the regional landscape in its favor.

General Qaani added efforts by martyr Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani and his loyal comrades thwarted all American plots envisioned for West Asia.

The assassination of General Soleimani by the Americans, according to Qaani, marked the



start of a new phase of hostile actions against the Islamic Revolution encompassing a hybrid war that included economic and media warfare.

He asserted that the culture of resistance is now a widespread phenomenon that has disturbed the hegemonic society.

## Iran is the major game changer in West Asia: professor

from page 1 ► Here is the full text of the interview:

1) How do you see the political state of West Asia (Middle East) after the birth of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979?

I must explain that this answer comes from a different perspective. In a Latin American point of view we can compare to the Cuban Revolution. From a Middle Eastern perspective it changes the whole region, replacing the "Pan-Arabism" (that formed all of us, including by the thoughts of my Grandpa, a follower of general Nasser and Michel Aflaq) after the betrayal of Camp David. After the 1979 movement and the nationalization of full oil complex (starting in Abadan refinery as the symbol of Iranian strength) we can finally do have a sovereign country with capabilities to fight Zionism and Anglo Saxon imperialism (with U.S. as the inheritor of GB). Sadly, Iran had to face the Sacred Resistance against Saddam Hussein's stupidity. Gladly after 1988 the Axis of Resistance could be established by the veterans of Khuzestan campaign and based on a diverse economy related to the oil and gas complexity.

2) How did the Islamic Republic bring some changes to world order at the beginning of the 21st century?

Iran has been suffering U.S. blockade and sanctions since 1979. A similar situation to Cuba, suffering economic sabotage and until the mid-1990s, being a target of U.S. sponsored terrorism. We can establish the comparison to Zionism terror-

ism (also U.S. sponsored) and the weekly attempts against Iran installations and objectives. The capacity to resist of this huge war machine is very important. I think that the next step is to accompany Asian development and get rid of U.S. dollar as international currency. Same situation to the having access to Swift System forbidden by tyrants in Washington and the NYC/London financial markets. Iran is very well organized in Defense and high tech developments, but the financial and international business structures must be developed having deep connections to decision makers and parts of the public opinion in important countries like Brazil, South Africa and a full range of middle powers (for example, Malaysia and Indonesia). If it is accomplished the Republic will be more known in a comprehensive perspective and will have full conditions to advance as a source of soft power. Without Iran, Zionists would have destroyed the totality of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, same situation with their allies in Yemen. So, besides having serious challenges in the domestic politics, Iran is the balance and the game changer for West Asia and the greater region.

3) How do you assess the hostility against the Islamic Republic by the U.S. and its allies over the last 44 years? What are the major reasons of this hostility according to your observation?

The U.S. operates as the inheritor of GB imperialism all over the world, but especially

in the Middle East. They have their strategic ally - the Zionist Apartheid - and full conditions to try to control the middle powers and the oil production as the support for the international commerce. There is no dollar tyranny without the oil prices control. So the U.S. organized the coup d'etat against Dr Mossadegh's government in 1953 and tried to stop the process started in the Iranian Constitution process in 1905. Having the "so-called Pahlavi dynasty" (a former Russian Persian Cossack!) controlling one side of the Persian Gulf and the House of Saud on the other side they felt "safe" on being the "navy police" of the Strait of Hormuz as their allies Britain and Spain do in Gibraltar and the Mediterranean route to the Atlantic. For Washington it is not acceptable to have a sovereign country with a good and effective Navy fleet defying them while defend the Iranian national water limits. Then, the foreign policy of Iran, with good anti-imperialist positions, also not acceptable to the U.S. Third, the correct conception that the Zionist entity is a fake state established by European conquerors. In the 21st century, the Iranian scientific development - and not only nuclear capabilities - transformed the country into a permanent target for the "U.S. civil hawks" and their Zionist allies.

4) How do you evaluate the position of Iran in the Islamic world after the revolution? What are the opportunities and challenges?

Bottom of Form

First, I must be intellectually honest and affirm that I am not an Islamic believer, but do have full respect for this sacred tradition. My family comes from Maronite Lebanon and my grandfather was a nationalist and pan-Arabist. Going through the answer, it seems to me that Iran tries to find modernity and act as a model for other Islamic countries. I repeat that some delicate situations must be solved and the inner public debate goes on. I also realize that a well-established modern society is a goal for all Islamic world, but this is more difficult with takfiri terrorism networks (very useful for Western countries) and with domestic sabotage backed by the Zionist and U.S. intelligence services. The balance of modernity, stability and civil rights is a challenge for all Islamic world and also having the right to exercise full sovereignty. Those are the great opportunities, achieving that balance, moving forward on economic developments and establishing actual models or republican institutions inside countries with Islamic majorities. In a historical perspective it is quite similar to the late 18th and whole 19th centuries during the several "Islamic Revivalism", as occurred in Malaysia against the British invasion. In this century, the opportunity is to have good relationship inside the Islamic world - respecting its own diversity - and diminishing the space for capitalist greed inside those societies.





**By Mehran Shamsuddin**  
TEHRAN – In a new wave of diplomatic escalation, several European countries summoned Iranian diplomats on various excuses amid renewed Israeli bluffs against Iran.

The European hostile rhetoric against Iran has come with Israeli allegations that the Europeans are planning to snap back international sanctions on Iran before the upcoming UN General Assembly meeting later this year.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen predicted that the Western powers would trigger “snapback” sanctions on Iran before the 78th UN General Assembly in September. “The [United States] and relevant European countries will force snapback (sanctions) on Iran before the UN General Assembly in September,” he told an Israeli news channel.

Considering the U.S. is no longer a party to the Iran nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Washington technically is unable to restore the UN sanctions on Iran. The three European signatories to the deal, however, have the option of doing so. If true, this shows that the far-right Israeli government has turned into spokesman for Europe, which is escalating tensions with Iran almost on a daily basis.

In recent days, Britain, Germany, and Austria have summoned the Iranian ambassadors each for various reasons. Germany even declared two Iranian diplomats stationed in Berlin as persona non grata.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said in statement that Germany decided to declare “two Iranian embassy staff members to be persona non grata and ordering them to leave Germany immediately.”

Relations between Iran and Europe started going south in the wake of European expressions of support for unrest in Iran in recent months.

The European Union also imposed sanctions on a number of Iranian individuals and entities.

Iran responded in kind.

On Wednesday, the most senior British diplomat in Tehran was summoned to the Iranian foreign ministry over “baseless allegations” by British authorities against the Islamic Republic.

“Iran’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) summoned Ms. Isabelle Marsh the interim chargé d’affaires of the British Embassy to protest the continuation of baseless allegations

issued a statement on Tuesday slapping a fresh list of sanctions on several British and European Union (EU) individuals and organizations for supporting terrorism and inciting violence against Iranians.

The ministry had cautioned on Monday that Iran will respond to similar measures by the UK and the Council of the European Union against a number of groups and individuals in Iran over what they claimed was the Islamic Republic’s response to foreign-backed riots that broke out in some Iranian cities in September.

that people who have been sanctioned cannot be granted visas and cannot enter the Islamic Republic, the ministry said.

Bank accounts and other assets belonging to the named people and organizations must also be frozen as part of the measures.

The counter-sanctions list includes 15 current and former European officials, including Isabelle Lonvis-Rome, France’s Minister for Gender Equality, Diversity, and Equal Opportunities; Roland Lescure, France’s Minister Delegate for Industry; Josef Schuster, Germany’s Central Council of Jews; Alex Benjamin, Europe Israel Public Affairs’ Director; Jamie M. Fly, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; and head of Ger.

It also lists 13 European organizations, including Christians for Israel, the European Coalition for Israel, the Center for Information and Documentation Israel, the Eurospike armaments manufacturer, and six German defense contractors.

Eight more British citizens are included on the list, including Alan Jacob, a member of The Jewish Chronicle’s board of directors, Matthew Jonathan Jukes, assistant commissioner for specialist operations for the Metropolitan Police Service, and six military officers.

The tit-for-tat move comes at a time when the Europeans are deliberately escalating tensions with an Iran that seeks to soothe tensions.

Instead of building bridges, the Europeans are burning them. The latest move in this regard is the allegations regarding enrichment at 84% purity in Iran, a claim that Iran rejected as technically unimportant.

Despite European allegations, Iran held meetings with inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to provide clarifications. Currently, the inspectors are in Iran studying the situation.

## The counter-sanctions list includes 15 current and former European officials, It also lists 13 European organizations

against the Islamic Republic of Iran,” the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The statement added, “In this meeting, the head of the Foreign Ministry’s Third Department of Western Europe called the baseless claims a continuation of the Iranophobia policy and demanded an end to this unfriendly approach adopted by the British government.”

It further said, “He described the new British sanctions as politically-motivated, adding that a country that has dealt with migrants and Muslims with the most severe discrimination and transfers refugees to Rwanda in breach of international law, is in no position to preach about human rights.”

The statement concluded, “In the past four decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has shown that it will not give in to hype and foreign pressures, and it will accordingly announce a counter-response to the British regime’s sanctions soon. Ms. Isabelle Marsh also said she would convey Iran’s protest to London at the earliest.”

Also, the Iranian foreign ministry

The ministry said the countermeasures will put restrictions on certain European individuals and entities.

According to Press TV, the ministry’s statement described the reciprocal actions as “counteraction” that had been sanctioned by the “relevant authorities” and “counter-sanction mechanisms” of the Islamic Republic.

It listed the EU and UK’s “support for terrorism and terrorist groups” and their “incitation to acts of terror and violence against the Iranian people” as some of the justifications for the adoption of the reciprocal measures.

Iran’s intelligence services affirmed that the violent riots left footprints of U.S. and other Western espionage agencies.

The ministry also criticized the EU and UK for “interfering in the domestic affairs of the Islamic Republic” and for “propagating lies and disinformation about Iran.”

Iran’s reciprocal actions require

Iran and Oman enjoy close relations at various levels. And Oman has historically mediated between Iran and the United States and it continues its efforts in this regard, according to Amir Abdollahian.

Also on Tuesday, Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani met with Rear Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis bin Abdullah Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces.

The meeting was held in the Omani capital Muscat during Irani’s visit to the sultanate, IRNA reported.

The Iranian commander also held separate meetings with top Omani military commanders, including commanders of the Royal Navy of Oman.

Irani visited Muscat on Sunday and was welcomed by Rear Admiral Saif Nasser Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO).

In his meeting with the MPs sitting on the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee,

Amir Abdollahian also addressed the recent visit by Raisi to China. Quoting Amir Abdollahian, Alizadeh said the achievements of the Raisi visit to China were mainly economic.

“For example, according to Mr. Amir Abdollahian, during this trip, the two countries

finalized economic cooperation worth about 50 billion dollars, under which 19 contracts were signed by the parties. Of course, the considerations of the Chinese side were that the concluded contracts should not be made public for the time being in order to avoid pressure by the West,” the lawmaker said.

Alizadeh pointed out that according to the memorandums signed during the president’s visit, the Chinese are supposed to operationalize about 50 billion dollars of investment by the end of the Raisi administration.

“Among the projects that have been agreed upon by the parties is the construction of a 4,000-megawatt nuclear power plant on the shores of Makran, which has been approved by the president of our country. Also, operational investment contracts have been signed between the two countries in infrastructure areas, such as roads and ports, as well as agricultural and dairy products,” he added.

The lawmaker noted, “In addition, based on another agreement made between the two countries, it is stipulated that the Chinese will renovate and invest in Iran’s oil and gas infrastructure in exchange for part of the oil purchased from Iran.”

of technology, knowledge-based companies and agriculture. They underscored the necessity of using the existing potentials in ties with East Asian nations as well as the need for smart and active interaction with the ASEAN countries and pursuing the conclusion of basic economic documents with those nations.

Safari has been spearheading Iran’s economic diplomacy over the course of the presidency of Ebrahim Raisi.

stressed the need to improve trade relations between Iran and India and expand ties in the fields of knowledge-based products, IT and logistics parks.

The participants also held talks about the latest state of economic ties with the ASEAN and East Asian countries.

The attendees highlighted the long-time relations between Iran and East Asian countries in the fields

## FIFA Forward 3.0 launched to help football’s improvement

From Page 1 ▶ The total investment for the benefit of FIFA’s member associations, the confederations and zonal/regional associations amounts to USD 2,250 million for the 2023-2026 cycle. This next stage of the program represents an almost seven-fold increase in football development investment compared to the development programmes in place prior to 2016.

FIFA’s budgeted revenue for 2023-2026 reaches an unprecedented high of USD 11bn, of which almost USD 10bn goes back to game.

Compared to the previous budget cycle, the 2023-2026 budget assumes a substantial increase in revenue of USD 4,560 million to a total of USD 11,000 million. The investment budget for the 2023-2026 cycle has increased to a similar extent as the revenue budget, totaling USD 10,900 million, producing a result before taxes and financial result of USD 100 million.

The new FIFA Forward 3.0 will increase the funds earmarked under Forward 2.0 by a substantial 29%, representing an almost sevenfold increase in football development to 2016. It means every one of FIFA’s 211 member associations will receive approximately USD 8 million for football development projects and operational.

## Woman skier Beyrami makes history at Worlds

TEHRAN – Iranian woman skier Samaneh Beyrami Baher secured her place in the women’s 5km individual final race in freestyle technique at the Cross-Country Skiing World Championships underway in Planica, Slovenia.

She crossed the finish line with a time of 16:12.4 and came eighth.

Beyrami is the first Iranian woman skier to compete in the final.

Brazilian skier Jaqueline Mourao took home first place at the qualification race with a total time of 14:42.0.

## Persepolis defeat Sepahan to advance to Hazfi Cup quarterfinals

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team earned a 4-2 win over Sepahan in extra time in Iran’s Hazfi Cup Round of 16 on Wednesday.

In the match held in Isfahan’s Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium, Persepolis winger Mohammad Omri was brought down in the area in the 11th minute by Siavash Yazdani and Giorgi Gvelesiani opened the scoring for the visiting team from the penalty spot. The goal was canceled out after Danial Esmaeilifar scored an own goal with five minutes remaining to the break.

Persepolis dominated the second half from start of the second half. They passed with purpose, spread it wide and created several chances and Issa Alekasir finally found the back of the net with a header in the 57th minute.

Shortly after, Sepahan came back to the game and dominated possession. Their forwards Shahriar Moghanlou and Omid Noorafkan were on the verge of finding back of the net but Persepolis goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand caught their efforts.

In the 75th minute, Sepahan midfielder Farshad Ahmadzadeh leveled the score, after Beiranvand failed to save Milad Zakipour’s cross from the left flank and unmarked Ahmadzadeh opened the empty goal.

The match ended in a 2-2 after 90 minutes.

Siamak Nemati, who came off the bench in the second half, scored Persepolis’s third goal in the 94th minute.

Sepahan were reduced to 10 men in the 99th minute after Yazdani was shown his second yellow card for falling brought Persepolis Brazilian striker Leandro Pereira in the penalty area. Gvelesiani made the scoreboard 4-2 from the penalty spot.

## Hamidreza Rajabi appointed Foolad interim coach

TEHRAN – Hamidreza Rajabi was named as Foolad interim coach a day before the match against Al Hilal in AFC Champions League 2022 (West) quarterfinals.

The Ahvaz-based club are scheduled to meet holders on Thursday at the Al Janoub Stadium.

Foolad will have a new head coach in charge following the resignation of Javad Nekounam with Rajabi to guide the side.

“I want to thank Nekouman as he was with us for four years. With him in charge, Foolad Club are one of the best four teams in West Asia.

“I know that his heart is with us. He is a professional coach and due to this fact, his expectations are also professional. We were hoping he would be the head coach for the next match. We will miss him,” said Hamidreza.

Having said that, Rajabi was confident that Foolad will be ready for the quarterfinals.

“Al Hilal’s match is very tough for us because it is against the best team in the history of Asia, the defending champions and runners-up of the FIFA Club World Cup. However, we have not suffered any losses in the AFC Champions League (this season) and every team must know that when you play Foolad, you will have a tough match.

“I would like to thank my players for they have remained focused and are really determined to be at their best for the quarterfinals,” he concluded.

## Iran to meet Japan for last 2023 World Cup ticket remaining

TEHRAN – It seems like Group F will have an entertaining run to close out the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 Asian Qualifiers as it could go down to the absolute final buzzer because all qualification spots are confirmed. Iran will Japan on Thursday.

The last ticket remaining in the group will be fought for between Iran and Kazakhstan in a tight race. Without overthinking anything, their main objective is pretty easy to understand: win.

For the two teams that are in must-win mode, it will be tough away games with Iran in Japan and Kazakhstan in Hong Kong. Again, even if both China and Japan are qualified, they won’t simply roll over and wait for the main event later this year. Expect these to be hard fought games to the end, fiba.com wrote.

Unless Iran defeat Japan and China defeat Kazakhstan on Thursday, Kazakhstan will go up against Australia and Iran go up against China at the same time, playing for the World Cup qualification ticket down to the final seconds. Exciting times indeed.

Iran have enough sharpshooters in Behnam Yakhchali and Mohammad Jamshidi, so if Sajad Pazrofteh can step up and add some length and athleticism to this mix, Team Melli could raise its ceiling a bit more.

## Al Hilal motivated for match against Foolad: Diaz

TEHRAN – Al Hilal head coach Ramon Diaz says that his team are very motivated for Thursday’s match against Foolad in AFC Champions League 2022 (West) quarterfinals at the Al Janoub Stadium.

He had stated after the Round of 16 that he had not been overly satisfied with his team’s performance against Shabab Al Ahli, with the Argentine saying the issue had been addressed.

“We understand that we have to play more aggressively and efficiently, especially in the midfield. The players agreed and are very motivated for the quarterfinals.”

Al Hilal, chasing a third AFC Champions League title in four years, can expect a torrid test from Foolad but Diaz said the reigning Saudi Pro League champions will not change their approach.

“In the last match, the team was very effective in scoring goals although we were not at our best. Foolad are very strong and will press. Their players combine well and have dynamism but our target will be to play at our level,” the Argentine added.

“We will not change our approach and our focus will be on our tactics and on how we can control the game,” Diaz concluded.

## Sultan of Oman to visit Iran to discuss JCPOA

TEHRAN –Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has reportedly said that the Sultan of Oman will pay a visit to Iran to discuss the situation around the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Amir Abdollahian made the remarks during a meeting with the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee in which he said Oman is ready to mediate between Tehran and Washington.

Ali Alizadeh, a member of the Parliament’s presiding board, offered some details about the meeting. “Recently, the Omani authorities have repeatedly expressed their willingness to act as a mediator between Iran and the United States to complete the nuclear negotiations,” Alizadeh quoted Amir Abdollahian as saying, according to state media.

He added, “In this regard, the sultan of this country has announced that he is trying to travel to Iran with good news in the near future with the messages exchanged between the Iranian and American officials.”

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi paid a visit to Oman last year and signed many agreements with the Arab country.

## Iranian foreign ministry hosts session on economic ties

TEHRAN – The 18th session of the Headquarters for Coordination of Foreign Economic Ties has been hosted by the foreign ministry under the chairmanship of Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari.

The issue of looking into challenges and opportunities of expanding economic relations with India and strengthening economic ties with the ASEAN and East Asian countries topped the agenda of the talks.

The meeting was attended by members of the headquarters and directors of relevant bodies, according to the ministry.

The participants underlined the importance of India in Iran’s foreign policy. They also discussed areas of cooperation with India while putting an emphasis on the need to expand Chabahar Port. The participants further highlighted the necessity of launching the North-South corridor and



## TCCIMA calls on mining companies to fulfill their social responsibilities

TEHRAN – The Industry and Mining Committee of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), in its 28th meeting on Wednesday, discussed issues related to the social responsibility of the mining companies active in the country.

In this meeting, which was attended by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister for Mining Affairs Reza Mohtashami-Pour, the attendees emphasized the need for mining companies to fulfill their duties towards the local community and adhere to their social responsibilities, the TCCIMA portal reported.

Speaking at the gathering, Deputy Head of the TCCIMA Industry and Mining Committee Sajad Ghoroghi pointed out some positive and negative impacts of mining activities in any region and said: "Creation of employment, development of the region, increase in



gross domestic product, generation of income for governments and development of infrastructure are among the positive points of mining activity in a region, and on the other hand, loss of pastures, pollution of surface and underground waters, disruption of the landscape, change in the direction of waterways and soil pollution are among the negative consequences of mining."

## Export of agricultural products to China rises 5 folds

TEHRAN – Iranian Agriculture Minister Javad Sadati-Nejad said the export of agricultural products to China has increased by fivefold in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2022-January 20, 2023), as compared to the previous year's same period, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Sadati-Nejad, who accompanied President Raisi on his recent visit to China, said earlier that the Chinese president is interested in

Iranian agricultural, food, and dairy products, and such products can conquer China's one-billion markets more than ever.

Speaking to IRNA on February 15, the minister referred to signing a number of cooperation documents in the agriculture field with China, adding, "Today three agriculture documents were signed with China, two of which is about exporting Iranian dairy products to China and one is on exporting apples to that country."

## Export from North Khorasan rises 157% in 10 months on year

TEHRAN- The value of export from North Khorasan province, in the northeast of Iran, rose 157 percent during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2022-January 20, 2023), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to a provincial official.

Abbas Baqeri, the director-general of the province's Customs Department, said that 169,000 tons of products worth \$116.773 million were exported from the province in the 10-month period, indicating also 234 percent rise in terms of weight.

He mentioned petrochemical products, steel sections, aluminum ingots, sponge sheets, agricultural products, and constructional materials as the major exported items, and Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Italy, and Iraq as the main export destinations.

The official further announced that over 87,000 tons of products worth \$51.177 million were imported to the province in the first ten months of the present year, showing 26 percent rise in value, and three folds growth in weight, year on year.

As previously announced by Mehrdad Davoudzadeh, the deputy head of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department for commercial affairs and trade promotion, commodities valued at over \$173 million were exported from North Khorasan during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022).

Davoudzadeh named Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Germany, India, Turkey, Ukraine, Pakistan, Poland, Syria, Russia, Kuwait, Austria, Oman, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, and Canada as the main destinations to them the products were exported from North Khorasan in the previous year.

Putting the province's worth of imports at \$42 million in the past year, the official further named China, Russia, Sudan, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, Germany, South Korea, Turkey, India,

Netherlands, Ethiopia, Denmark, Austria, Oman, United Kingdom, Taiwan, Italy, Turkmenistan, Sweden, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Azerbaijan and France as the major sources of imports.

As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil exports rose 17.66 percent during the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year, registering a new record high.

According to Mohammad Rezvani-Far, Iran exported about 103 million tons of non-oil goods valued at \$45.3 billion in the mentioned 10 months, also registering a 2.93-percent increase in weight.

Liquefied natural gas was the main exported product in the said time span, accounting for 15.4 percent of the total value of the exports.

Major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China, Iraq, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and India, according to the official.

The average value of each ton of exported goods has increased from \$385 in the first 10 months of last year to \$440 in the current year's same period, which indicates a growth of 14.31 percent, the IRICA head said.

The Islamic Republic also imported 31 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$48.5 billion in the first 10 months of the present year, with a 16.86-percent growth in value and a 7.6-percent decrease in weight, year on year.

Corn, rice, soybeans, wheat, sunflower oil, barley, and soybean meal were among the items imported into the country in the said period, according to Rezvani-Far.

The United Arab Emirates was the top exporter to Iran in the mentioned 10 months, followed by China, Turkey, India, and Germany.

The average value of each ton of imported goods in the said 10 months was \$1,571, which has grown by 25.74 percent compared to the figure for the previous year's same time span.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. 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).

# 2,300 production units put into operation in Iran since last March

from page 1 ► Providing infrastructure and incentives to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are among the major programs that the ministry has been following in relation to industrial parks.

Rasoulzadeh had earlier said that over 2,023 projects related to providing infrastructure for industrial parks, including water, electricity, and gas supply, with 60 trillion rials (more than \$132.7 million) of credit were underway in different parts of the country.

According to Rasoulzadeh, 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, 2022).

The official noted that with the reviving of the mentioned units, job opportunities were created for



over 39,000 people.

"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,"

Rasoulzadeh said.

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

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

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, Rasoulzadeh said.

## Iran raises March oil prices for Asian buyers

TEHRAN – National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has raised its official crude oil selling prices (OSP) for Asian buyers in March, Reuters reported on Wednesday, quoting an industry source.

As reported, the National Iranian Oil Company has set the price of its light crude oil for sale in March at two dollars a barrel above the Oman / Dubai average prices.

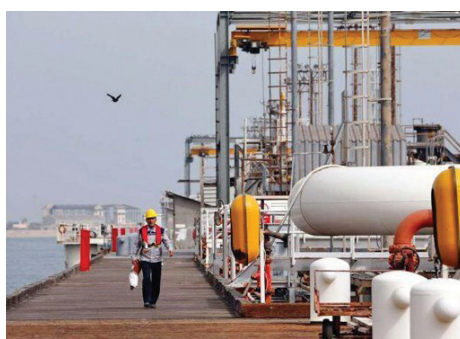
Based on the Reuters data, the OSP for Iranian light crude in March is set 20 cents above the prices for the previous month.

According to OPEC's latest monthly report published on February 14, Iranian heavy oil price also increased by \$2.45 in January to register a 31-percent increase compared to December 2022.

The Iranian heavy crude oil price reached \$81.56 per barrel in the first month of 2022, compared to December's \$79.11 per barrel.

According to the report, the country's average heavy crude price was \$85.59 in 2022.

The average price of Iranian oil in the first month of 2023 registered a decrease of \$4.03 compared to the same month in 2022. The price of Iranian heavy crude in the first month of 2022 was



\$85.59 per barrel, on average.

Iran has been ramping up its oil production and exports over the past year as the country has been implementing new strategies to overcome U.S. sanctions.

Earlier this month, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji said the country's income from the sales of oil, natural gas, gas condensate, and petroleum products in the first 10 months of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2022-January 20, 2023) increased by 40 percent compared to the same period last year.

## ‘Support policies for greenhouses need to be revised’

TEHRAN- Support policies for greenhouses need to be revised, the head of the Agriculture Department of Ardebil Province, in the northwest of Iran, emphasized.

Saying that the cost of the construction and transfer of greenhouses is high, Nader Taqizadeh reiterated that the policies supporting greenhouse owners should be reviewed.

If the costs of constructing the greenhouses are reduced by at least half, many problems in this sector will be solved and the development of greenhouses will be accelerated,



he added.

In addition to the establishment of greenhouse villages, small-scale greenhouses should also be supported and given serious

attention, because with little capital, they increase the amount of employment and production, the official further commented.

The head of the Ardebil province Agriculture Department also emphasized the training of workers, employers, and agricultural technical supervisors regarding the updating of information and equipment from the production process to the export of greenhouse products.

It is while Mohammad-Mehdi Boroumand, the deputy agriculture minister for horticulture affairs,

has recently said, "Now the area of greenhouses has increased to 25,000 hectares in the country, and by using the capacities of the private sector and the government, efforts are being made to make policies in this area towards the creation of large-scale greenhouses."

Saying that the country was dependent to build structures for the establishment of greenhouses, the official underlined, "At the present time, we can provide the knowledge and technique in this due to other countries."

## Inflation rate rises 1.4%

The center put the country's point-to-point inflation rate at 53.4 percent in the eleventh month, which means families have paid an average of 53.4 percent more for purchasing the same package of commodities and services in that month, compared to the same month in the preceding year.

The inflation rate was 46.9 percent for the urban households, rising 1.4 percent from the previous month, and 51.7 percent for the rural households, increasing 1.7 percent from the previous month.

The Statistical Center of Iran has put the average inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on March 20, 2022, which marks the end of the past Iranian calendar year 1400, at 40.2 percent.

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

average of 34.7 percent more for purchasing the same package of commodities and services in that month, compared to the same month in the preceding year.

The inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on March 20, 2022 was 39.7 percent for urban households, and 42.8 percent for rural households.

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

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

## Over 46,000 tons of pistachios exported in 10 months

TEHRAN- Iran exported over 46,000 tons of pistachios in the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2022-January 20, 2023), Arsalan Qasemi, the chairman of Agriculture and Food Industries Committee of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC), announced.

Although Iran is mostly known for its vast hydrocarbon resources, there are some other precious

products that people all around the world put the Iranian brand on and appreciate greatly, one such product is Iranian "green gold" or pistachio.

Cultivation of pistachios in Iran dates back to the Achaemenid period or the fifth century B.C. Like the great dynasty, the Islamic Republic was the world's unrivaled, leading producer of pistachios for a long time, with southeastern

Kerman province being the hub of production for so-called green gold.

Over the past decade, climate change has caused severe drought in Iran, leading to 85 percent of the country being classified as arid or semi-arid. The decline in annual average rainfall and shortage of surface water has forced farmers to dig more wells to pump water from underground reserves.

The situation is the same in Kerman province, which accounts for 70 percent of Iran's pistachio production. As announced by Hossein Rezaei, the secretary-general of the Iran Pistachio Association (IPA), the production of pistachio in Iran fell by 70,000 tons in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2022) to hover at around 150,000 tons.

## TEDPIX loses 2,800 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 2,816 points to 1.656 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 13.493 billion securities worth 84.056 trillion rials (about \$200 million) were traded at the TSE.



# China has a peace plan for Ukraine, what is the U.S. afraid of?

From page 1 ► The country's foreign ministry provided further details about the new proposal.

Spokesperson Wang Wenbin says it “lays out 20 priorities of cooperation in response to the most significant and pressing international security concerns at present.”

These include “upholding the UN's central role, facilitating political settlement of hotspot issues, tackling traditional and non-traditional security challenges and strengthening the system and capacity for global security governance.”

The paper that China will publish also identifies new platforms and mechanisms of cooperation.

On seeking political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, Wang Yi, China's Director of the Office of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission, says, “The document will reaffirm President Xi Jinping's important propositions, including respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, taking seriously the legitimate security concerns of all countries, and supporting all efforts conducive to a peaceful resolution of the crisis. These are consistent with the concept and principles laid out in the GSI. There will be more on this in due course.”

He noted that so far more than 80 countries and organizations have praised and expressed support for the GSI, adding China is “convinced that with the release of the concept paper, more and more countries and organizations will join” the initiative.

Senior Chinese officials say Beijing will start organizing regular meetings of foreign, defense and interior ministers from countries affiliated with the GSI.

As the war in Ukraine drags on, Beijing's plan offers a new course to end it by addressing the root causes of the fighting by calling for mutual respect, openness and inclusion, multilateralism, mutual benefit as well as satisfactory results for all parties to the conflict.

The GSI is part of China's broader effort to safeguard world peace and security with the country pointing out it is ready to work with all parties to achieve this goal.

As the U.S. and NATO once again appear clueless on how to end another conflict they have instigated, China is saying it's time to take practical and effective measures as the world enters a period of uncertainty and transformation.

The diminishing U.S.-led world order, needless to say, has failed the international community in achieving peace and security.

Washington's colonial rule around the world, with its record number of military bases, has brought nothing other than global instability, insecurity, a sharp rise in terrorism in addition to its disregard for international rules and order.

Beijing's new initiative will be viewed by Washington as posing an indirect threat to U.S. hegemony despite China's call on all international parties to sit around the table and talk rather than fight.

Beijing's initiative is expected to be officially published under the title “Concept Paper of the Global Security Initiative”, reportedly around the February 24 anniversary of the Ukraine war.

It is not surprising that the U.S. and some of its Western allies have launched a fresh smear campaign against China in a bid to limit or even bring an end to the



popularity of its peace plan.

After all, peace is the last word on the minds of U.S. foreign policymakers.

Over the past week or two, the Pentagon's dramatic and videoed shutdown of a Chinese weather balloon that strayed into U.S. airspace and which Washington

**China's Wang says “the wars and military operations launched by the U.S. in the name of fighting terrorism have claimed over 900,000 lives and created 37 million refugees around the world.”**

labelled as a spy object, was just the tip of the iceberg.

Then came the statements, out of nowhere, but suspiciously coinciding with China's peace efforts for Ukraine.

It is fair to say the US, the UK, NATO, and the EU have launched a massive information war to damage Russia's international reputation by initially silencing Russian media outlets, thereby having only one narrative about the conflict for their domestic audiences: A Western narrative.

And so any party linked with Russia in its war with Ukraine and the U.S.-led NATO military alliance would be an easy target for the U.S. and NATO to publicly condemn.

This is despite the fact that many experts say Russia has stood alone in fighting the U.S. and NATO, with Ukraine being used as a proxy.

Nevertheless, out of the blue, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared that China is “strongly considering” providing Russia with “lethal assistance.”

“We've seen already over these past months the provision of non-lethal assistance that does good directly to aiding and abetting Russia's war effort,” Blinken said.

He added that further information indicates that Beijing is considering providing “material support to Russia's war effort that would have a lethal effect.”

U.S. Vice-President Kamala Harris said Washington was “troubled that Beijing has deepened its relationship with Moscow.”

Washington's Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield also warned that China would face “consequences” if it provided lethal aid to Russia.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, as is the norm now, echoed U.S. statements?, saying “we are also increasingly concerned that China may be planning to provide lethal support

for Russia's war.”

“We are providing support to Ukraine, unprecedented support. We step up and deliver more heavier, more advanced weapons,” Stoltenberg said.

Speaking to U.S. media, he also alleged that China is closely watching Russia's success in Ukraine, with the outcome of Europe's war likely to have wide-reaching implications for Beijing's behavior in Asia-Pacific.

“Beijing is watching closely what's going on in Ukraine. And if Putin wins there, of course, that will impact their decisions on how to behave in Asia,” Stoltenberg told U.S. media.

Senior EU official Josep Borrell also said that if China sent arms to Russia, this would be a “red line”.

Beijing has slammed the statements, saying these are all unfounded allegations.

China's top diplomat says the “China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination is built on the basis of non-alliance, non-confrontation and non-targeting of any third party, which is within the sovereign right of any two independent states. We do not accept the U.S.'s finger-pointing or even coercion targeting China-Russia relations.”

He added that “the U.S. should seriously reflect on what it has done, stop fanning the flames or profiting from it, and stay truly committed to promoting peace talks as China has been doing.”

The Chinese foreign ministry

**“China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination is built on the basis of non-alliance, non-confrontation and non-targeting of any third party.”**

also responded by accusing the U.S. of being the biggest source of weaponry for the battlefield in Ukraine.

“The U.S. side announced a further \$500 million worth of military aid to Ukraine. It makes people wonder what the U.S. is up to by falsely claiming that China is offering weapons, and whether the U.S. finds it conscionable to tell the world it wants peace and yet sit and watch its defense industry lining up their pockets. We all saw what the U.S. did in Afghanistan with its strategy of ‘fighting to the last Afghan’. Does it now want Ukraine to ‘fight till the last Ukrainian?’”

U.S. President Joe Biden, in a surprise visit to Kyiv, announced a

fresh military package for Ukraine with advanced weapons. including HIMARS rocket launchers.

Washington has shipped tens of billions of dollars worth of weapons to the warzone.

Western leaders have in general reacted with scepticism to China's peace announcement in public. It remains to be seen how different European governments accept the initiative.

Blinken, who apparently speaks for the West, has declared that the West is skeptical of the Chinese peace initiative that called for an immediate ceasefire.

The U.S. reluctance to entertain China's peace plan and denouncing the country as a whole saw Beijing hit back with Wang saying “the U.S. abuses its political hegemony and is used to throwing its weight around ... it has been creating division and stoking confrontation all over the world.”

He added “the U.S. abuses its military hegemony with wanton use of force. From Afghanistan to Iraq and Syria, since 2001, the wars and military operations launched by the U.S. in the name of fighting terrorism have claimed over 900,000 lives and created 37 million refugees around the world.”

He lashed out at Washington once more, accusing the U.S. of abusing “its economic hegemony featured by looting and exploitation. From abusing its control over international economic and financial organizations, to willfully suppressing its opponents with coercion and doubling down on unilateral sanctions and ‘long-arm jurisdiction’, the U.S. claims to uphold fairness and justice, but all it ever cares about is how to advance its selfish interests.”

Germany, once Europe's economic powerhouse and now the worst hit by the Ukraine war, signaled a warmer stance on the Chinese peace plan.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said of the Chinese proposal that “we have to exploit every chance for peace”. She added, “It's good?..?that China sees it as its responsibility, as a member of the UN Security Council, to stick up for world peace.”

In a sign of just how fragile and paranoid the U.S. has become, it is viewing the mere proposal of a peace plan to end the Ukraine war as a move that could cause division between the U.S. and its European allies.

At the end of the day, it's Western Europe that has suffered the most from the breakout of the conflict, with households and public workers protesting and taking action against record inflation levels.

This is while voters are toppling governments in Western Europe one by one as a result of the cost of living crisis brought on by the Western sanctions imposed on Russia.

This is while U.S. arms manufacturers, politicians and energy firms that are making massive profits from the ongoing war.

As Beijing notes there are more than enough facts to show the true nature of the U.S. as a source of trouble rather than a “defender of peace” for the world.

As China's foreign minister Wang Yi talks about the necessity for peace on his trip to Europe, American officials are planning their next arms shipment to the continent.

## WORLD HEADLINES

**At least 10 Palestinians killed in Israeli raid in Nablus**

At least ten Palestinians have been killed and more than 70 injured in Israeli forces' raid in the occupied West Bank city of Nablus.

According to the Palestinian health ministry, on Wednesday 71 people were injured, including at least 50 who were hit by live ammunition.

At least six of the injured Palestinians are hospitalized with severe injuries.

Widespread confrontations broke out soon after the army raided Nablus with dozens of armored vehicles and special forces at 10 am local time.

The Israeli forces blocked off all entrances to the city before surrounding a home with two wanted Palestinian leaders, Hossam Isleem and Mohammad Abu Bakr, who were both killed.

The number of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces since the start of 2023 has now risen to 57 people, including 12 children, in the occupied territories.

**Chinese president planning to visit Moscow**

Chinese President Xi Jinping will travel to Moscow for a meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in the coming months, the Wall Street Journal claimed on Tuesday. Reports of the trip come as Beijing looks to take a leading role in resolving the conflict in Ukraine.

The visit will take place sometime in April or early May, the American newspaper said, citing “people familiar with the plan.” The sources claimed that Xi will use the summit with Putin to push for multiparty peace talks aimed at ending the fighting in Ukraine.

Successive rounds of peace talks failed last year, with Kyiv abruptly withdrawing from negotiations in Istanbul in April. Russian officials and others elsewhere have claimed that Western powers pressured Ukraine into abandoning the talks, despite an agreement being close at hand.

**Putin meets China's top diplomat, says ties important for international stability**

Russian President Vladimir Putin met on Wednesday China's top diplomat Wang Yi, and said that Russian-Chinese relations are important for maintaining global stability.

**U.S. Embassy in London locked down amid security alert**



An alarm has been set off at the US Embassy in London with people inside evacuated amid an “ongoing” security alert inside. One person who was inside said he was told to “clear the area”.

Aro Korol posted on Twitter: “Alarm at the U.S. Embassy in London. They told us to move far from the windows. The situation is ongoing.”

Putin said international relations did not get better after the collapse of the bipolar system but became more dangerous.

“In this regard, cooperation in the international arena between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, as we have repeatedly stressed, is very important for the stabilization of the international situation,” he said.

Wang, for his part, said Chinese-Russian relations withstood pressure from the international community in a “very complex, volatile international situation,” and the ties are developing steadily.

“The crises constantly appears, but in crises there are opportunities, and opportunities also turn into a crisis -- this is a historical experience,” he said.

**Russian parliament approves suspension of New START treaty**

The Russian parliament approved on Wednesday a bill on the suspension of Moscow's participation in the New START nuclear treaty.

According to the bill, once adopted, it will be considered effective starting from the moment of its publication on the official government portal.

In a separate statement, the Russian Defense Ministry said Moscow will continue to comply with the New START's restrictions on the number of nuclear warheads carriers, and will continue the exchange of notifications about missile launches.

Under the treaty, the sides may request information about up to five launches of missiles per year, should exchange information on the number of warheads and carriers twice a year -- in March and September -- and have the right to carry out up to 18 inspections per year.

The treaty limits the number of deployed missiles and bombers to 700, deployed warheads, including multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles and bombers, to 1,550, and deployed and non-deployed launchers -- missile tubes and bombers -- to 800.

Addressing the Russian parliament on Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Moscow will suspend its participation in the treaty due to the US involvement in the conflict in Ukraine -- there are risks Washington will transfer to Kyiv intelligence for strikes on Russia's strategic military facilities, obtained during inspections, provided by the treaty.

Kelly Betts, who was queuing in the building said on Twitter she was told to “move away” but was still unsure what was happening.

Another social media user called Roshan Kar wrote: “Situation ongoing at U.S. Embassy London. Told us to stay away from the windows...”

Mr. Korol shared a video of dozens of people say against a wall in the Embassy.



## Archaeologists to commence underwater survey in Persian Gulf

TEHRAN – Underwater archaeological surveys will begin in the Persian Gulf, near Bandar Mahshahr, a port city in the southwestern Khuzestan province, a local tourism official has said.

From the Paleolithic to the contemporary period, there are works and artifacts in this region that deserve further study, Sara Ebadi explained on Wednesday.

Back in December, an Iranian tourism official announced that Iran and China signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to expand cooperation in the underwater archeological excavations in the Persian Gulf.

By using these MOUs Iran inks with other countries including China, there is hope that the country can strengthen underwater archaeology, the official said.

Underwater archaeology has many limitations and challenges, but Iranian authorities attempt to grow and develop this field in spite of these problems, she noted.

However, the budget problem still exists, and research budgets for this field of archaeology are heavy at the moment, she added.

The Persian Gulf is a shallow, epi-continental sea approximately 1,000 km long and 200-350 km wide, narrowing to about 60 km across at the Straits of Hormuz. According to Encyclopedia Iranica, to date, no Neolithic remains have been found anywhere along the Persian Gulf coast of Iran. The earliest archaeological remains yet identified on the coast of Iran consist of sherds of Mesopotamian Ubaid type picked up by M.



E. Prickett and A. Williamson on the surface of Halilah, a prehistoric site on the Bushehr peninsula.

The Persian Gulf has always been a source of pride and honor for Iranians. For thousands of years, the people of Iran have lived alongside the Persian Gulf and have enjoyed its endless benefits.

In addition to having vast resources of energy and economic significance, the Persian Gulf has an ancient and unique history and culture.

The southern Iranian gulf has been referred to by historians and ancient texts as “Persian” since the Achaemenid Empire was established (550 BC) in what is now modern-day Iran.

According to the book “Documents on the Persian Gulf’s Name, the Eternal Heritage of Ancient Time,” the term Persian Gulf and its equivalents have been used continuously since earlier than 400 BC in all languages, especially in the Arabic language.

On almost all maps printed before 1960, and in most modern international treaties, documents and maps, this body of water is known by the name “Persian Gulf.”

ancient mud-brick city of Bam in the southeast Kerman province, killing at least 31,000 people.

Iran’s deadliest was a 7.4-magnitude quake in 1990 that killed 40,000 people, injured 300,000 others, and left half a million homeless across the northern town of Rudbar.

The ancient region of Fars, also spelled Pars, or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (ca. 550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

Its capital city, Shiraz, is home to some of the country’s most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital which was the literary capital of Persia during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

train throughout the country have been meeting people in between sites. “One of the great things about traveling around Iran is nobody leaves you alone,” says Koyagi, who has shared many a night train compartment with strangers. “Other people in the compartment talk to you, they share food with you, they ask all sorts of questions, you get to hear all sorts of stories—it’s not the kind of rail travel I have experienced elsewhere.”

Train tickets are also extremely affordable, says Matin Lashkari, an Iranian travel blogger and co-founder of Persian Food Tours. “It’s very peaceful, it’s very safe, and it’s a kind of slow travel without a big carbon footprint,” she says.

Lashkari also believes a new era of tourism is on the horizon. She recently traveled to the UNESCO World Heritage city of Yazd, known for its notable earthen buildings, traditional hammams and bazaars, and handwoven textiles. “It has transformed completely,” she says, adding that a host of new restaurants, cafés, boutiques, and hotels have sprung up in the past five years.

“I’ve never met anybody who came to Iran and was not surprised by what they saw,” Lashkari says. “They’re blown away by the hospitality, by the openness of people. I have this sense that a lot of people think that Iranians aren’t open to foreigners because the country has been very isolated for so many years, but it’s just the opposite.”

(Source: National Geographic)  
Concluded.

# Iran’s hospitality culture spread by tourist guides, deputy minister says

From Page 1 ▶ Talking about the number of outbound passengers, the official said: more than seven million Iranian nationals traveled abroad [during the mentioned period], and of the number about six percent, were one-day visitors.

He put the number of outbound passengers at 2.8 million for the past Iranian year, adding some 10% of the passengers were one-day visitors.

Earlier in August 2022, the tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami announced that the Islamic Republic had recorded about 2.9 million foreign tourist arrivals “over the past 11 months.” “With the support of President Ebrahim Raisi [the issuance of the tourist] visas has been resumed and 2,900,000 people entered Iran in less than a year. And this amount is growing and increasing,” Zarghami said in a televised speech.

The minister added one of the priorities that his ministry follows was to develop tourism ties with the neighboring countries. “Our priority is to strengthen relations with neighboring countries and now we are pursuing the project of cheap overland travels with



neighboring countries.”

Long shunned by Western travelers, the Islamic Republic has steadily stepped-up efforts to use tourism, over the past couple of years, to help promote its international image battered by endless opposition mostly from the U.S.

Before the COVID pandemic, Iran’s tourism had constantly been growing, reaching more than

eight million visitors in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (started March 21, 2019). That surge, however, helped prejudices to become thick and thin.

Some experts believe even before the pandemic, Iran’s tourism was already grappling with some challenges, on top of those Western “media propaganda” aimed at scaring potential travelers away from the Islamic Republic. They say Iran

is still somehow “unknown” for many potential travelers due to such a “media war.”

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.

## Cuban ambassador visits tourist sites in Qazvin

TEHRAN – Cuban Ambassador to Iran Alberto González Casals on Tuesday visited some tourist attractions in west-central province of Qazvin.

He toured the Safavid-era (1501-1736) palace of Chehel Sotoun and the 19th-century bazaar of Sa’d-al Saltaneh amongst other sites, CHTN reported.

Chehel Sotoun is the only remaining palace from the royal palace of Shah Tahmasp (1524-1576) in Qazvin, with special historical importance, type of architecture, and decoration, which makes it a major tourist destination.

The monument was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1948.

The interior of the building was radically altered in the Qajar period (1789-1925), but in the 1970s it was largely restored to its original appearance.

Restoration work in the 1970s revealed the remains of wall paintings on both levels. Upstairs, on the south wall of the western arm of the cruciform hall, there is a very lively representation of an individual wearing a European dress in the style of the 16-17th centuries.

Its Safavid and Qajar decorations are distinguishable: tiles, mostly of the Qajar period, on the exterior and both tiles and wall paintings from the original Safavid structure on the interior. The high quality of

the surviving wall paintings suggests a date in the period when Qazvin was the capital.

The building consists of two stories. On the ground floor, a quadrangular central room communicates with the surrounding gardens through four iwans (porches), one on each side. Each iwan was originally connected to the central room by three short passages. The four corners between the iwans contain four rooms, each on a different plan.

On the exterior instead of corners, there are oblique walls, so that the plan is that of an unequal octagon. Around the exterior of the structure, eight massive columns and eight corner piers with engaged columns support a gallery encircling the upper story, which is reached via a bent staircase leading from the southeastern corner room.

Upstairs thirty-two slender wooden supports carry the roof of the gallery. The main portion of the upper story consists of a large cruciform hall, with four corner rooms, each with a small adjacent chamber.

Whereas the rooms on the ground floor and the iwans are vaulted, all the rooms on the upper story have flat wooden ceilings.

Sa’d-al Saltaneh bazaar is located adjacent to a beautifully restored Qajar-era caravanserai of the same name, which is one of the biggest roofed caravanserais in the country. Dating back to the Qajar era, it’s a place for discovering tens of Hojreh shops,



cafes, yards, and a stunning mosque. It’s a place for visitors who want to experience the culture, cuisine, and hospitality of Iran.

Qazvin was once the capital of the mighty Persian Empire, under Safavids, from 1548 to 98. It is a major tourist destination with a wonderfully restored caravanserai-turned-arts precinct, some quirky museums and a handful of decent eating options. For most travelers, Qazvin is also primarily the staging point for excursions to the famous Castles of the Assassins and trekking in the sensational Alamut Valley.

Also known as the castle of the Assassins, the 12th-century Alamut castle is nestled on top of a peak. It was once a shelter for the followers of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070–1124) who was a spiritual leader of an Islamic sect. In the early 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book “The Valleys of the Assassins.”

## National conference to discuss tourism in Makran

TEHRAN – The tourism capacities of the Makran coastal strip in southern Iran will be discussed during a national conference in Bandar Jask, Hormozgan province on February 28, CHTN reported on Wednesday.

The two-day event will showcase the strategic importance of Makran coastline in creating jobs for the locals, as well as its role in national and international interests of the country, the report added.

In 2020, an official with the tourism ministry announced that the natural and historical attractions of the Makran coastal strip hold the potential to be registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Being home to some unique attractions such as Darak village, Martian Mountains, pristine beaches of Chabahar and sacred fig trees makes Makran coast a top tourist destination for domestic and foreign travelers, the official said.

Inviting tourists to travel to the region and enjoy its noteworthy attractions, he also



noted that Makran coast is unique not only in the country but also in the world, however, its tourism infrastructure needs to be provided to attract more travelers.

To get to that point, historical buildings in the region are to be restored, and some of them will be ceded to the private sector for better maintenance and preservation, he added.

Located in the southern part of the Sistan-Baluchestan province, Makran is a semi-desert coastal strip along the coast of the Gulf of Oman.

The narrow coastal plain rises rapidly into several mountain ranges. Of the 1,000 kilometers coastline, around 750 kilometers is in Pakistan. Makran is very sparsely inhabited, with much of

the population concentrated in a string of small ports including Chabahar, Gwatar, Jiwan, Jask, Sirik, Gwadar, Parni, Ormara, and many smaller fishing villages.

Shahid Beheshti Port, which is Iran’s only oceanic port, is the main port of the country on the Makran coast.

Darak village and Martian Mountains, commonly known as Miniature Mountains, which are located on the Makran coast, are also among the top tourist destinations in the region that eye to gain a UNESCO tag as well.

Located between the two important port cities of Chabahar and Bandar Abbas, Darak is one of the few places in the world where the sea and the desert meet. Darak or Darag in the local language means settling along the sea.

The beach and the amazing village, along with the Oman Sea, are tourist destinations where sand dunes, palm trees, and blue sea in a frame together create fantastic scenery.

Hiking, swimming, and

photography are among the best activities tourists could enjoy while traveling to Darak Beach. It is known for its extraordinary beaches and has a pristine shoreline.

Mars or Martian Mountains, also known as “Koochay Merikhi” in Persian, are a type of badlands stretched out parallel to the Gulf of Oman. Their current shape results from millions of years of erosion by wind and water. The height of the mountains varies between five to over 100 meters.

Locals named them Martian Mountains since it seemed as if aliens – in this case, people from Mars – built them; with almost no vegetation, their curvy scenery stands in strong contrast with the landscape around.

For decades, Sistan-Baluchestan used to be shunned by potential foreign travelers though it is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites of Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut Desert, shared with Kerman Province.

## One of the most scenic railways in the world spans Iran

### Part 3

#### A new era of railway travel

In 2015, nuclear-related sanctions on Iran were lifted after the successful negotiation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran deal. Tourism rebounded almost immediately. (Former President Donald Trump reinstated U.S. sanctions on Iran in 2018, and in 2021, President Joe Biden once again began talks to lift sanctions.)

According to a United Nations World Tourism Organization report, the Middle East recorded the highest growth in tourism in 2019, and Iran was among the fastest-growing destinations. The nation aims to attract 20 million visitors by 2025 (up from 4.8 million in 2014) and is investing in hotels, tourism facilities, and transportation. That includes more than 4,300 miles of new railways in the past seven years, including a high-speed rail line between Tehran, Qom, and Isfahan.

The Trans-Iranian route alone travels past dozens of national parks and wildlife refuges, including the UNESCO-inscribed Hyrcanian Forests and storied Mount Damavand, the highest peak in Iran, which attracts climbers from around the world. You can see the strokes of history in Khuzestan, one of the oldest regions on the Iranian plateau, where the labyrinthine hydraulic system in Shushtar dates back to the fifth century B.C.

Koyagi, who has been traveling to Iran since 1997, says his fondest memories from taking the



From page 1 ► For over four decades, Iran has been hosting one of the largest and most protracted refugee situations in the world and has provided asylum to refugees, mostly from Afghanistan.

The recent fast-paced turn of events in Afghanistan has the potential to create additional population movements; internally displacing families and potentially driving them to neighboring countries to seek refuge.

Iran is home to over 800,000 registered refugees and some 2.6 million undocumented Afghans. Today, more than 500,000 Afghan children- including undocumented Afghans and those who have newly arrived in Iran following the Taliban-takeover-are benefitting from Iran's inclusive education policies, one of the most progressive in the world.

On January 23, the Iranian ambassador to Afghanistan, Hassan Kazemi Qomi, urged the United Nations to help Iran provide better support for Afghan refugees.

He called for the UN to benefit from all of Iran's capacities to help the people of Afghanistan and increase regional cooperation in solving the economic, social, and educational problems of Afghan people and refugees.

He made the remarks in a meeting at the place of the embassy in Kabul with Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, the special representative for Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

UNHCR's Officer in Charge, Inna Gladkova, said in November 2022 that despite the sanctions and economic pressures, Iran continues its comprehensive



## Health system covers some 170,000 refugees

policy of providing services to refugees, and this is appreciable.

The best solution and the most stable support system for refugees are access to schools and education just like Iranian nationals, she stated, IRNA reported.

Iran has taken effective and continuous measures to include all refugees, and the UNHCR also declares its readiness to fulfill its obligations, she noted.

In the provision of educational services, there are different aspects, she said, adding, school construction, equipping schools, providing teachers and human resources, and providing quality educational services are the main and important work done by the Ministry of Education.

On December 22, 2022, a plan

UNHCR's Officer in Charge, Inna Gladkova, has said despite sanctions Iran continues providing services to refugees, and this is appreciable.

to complete the vaccination and screening of foreign nationals living in Iran was piloted on Kish Island for three months.

Giving the polio vaccine to children under 15 years old, injecting measles and rubella vaccines in children aged 9 months to 15 years, screening for tuberculosis

in people aged 12 and above, and providing vitamin A supplements to children under 5 years old are some parts of the plan.

In May 2022, it was announced that all foreign immigrants and refugees under the age of five would be vaccinated against polio and measles. Children under the age of five and foreign immigrants will be inoculated through door-to-door visits in high-risk areas across the country.

The measles vaccination program in Iran started in 1984 when 34 percent of the population was vaccinated in the first year and 90 to 95 percent of the population after 6 years. Also in 2003, 33 million people were vaccinated with a national program to eradicate measles in the country.

## Climate change causes coral bleaching in Indian Ocean: expert

TEHRAN – An expert at the Iranian National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Science believes that the lack of oxygen and the bleaching phenomenon of corals in the Indian Ocean are the consequences of climate change.

The rising temperature is one of the phenomena that is strongly affected by climate change. Because the increase in temperature will cause a lack of oxygen in aquatic environments, ISNA quoted Ali Mehdiinia as saying.

He also said that the increase in temperature causes acidification of the Indian Ocean water, which will affect the ecosystem of Iran's coasts, such as corals and mangrove forests.

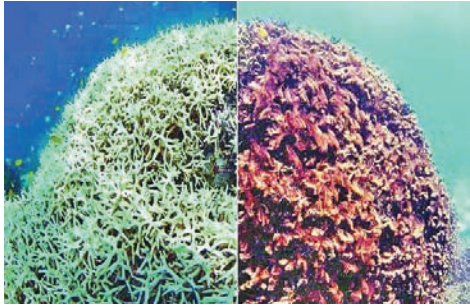
The smallest change in sea life affects the spawning system of marine animals such as turtles, which is why many of these creatures are at risk of extinction, he highlighted.

Finally, all the effects of these changes will be on humans, he stressed.

"As much as the industrial facilities expand on the coasts of Oman, this will lead to the release of carbon dioxide in the environment, which will lead to an increase in water acidity and a change in the ecosystem of this water basin."

Mehdiinia pointed out that the fourth workshop on the effects of climate change on the marine environment of the Indian Ocean was held in Tehran.

In this three-day workshop, experts from South Africa, Sri Lanka, India, and the countries bordering the Indian Ocean are present.



The smallest change in sea life affects the spawning system of marine animals such as turtles.

The Indian Ocean Rim Association Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (IORA RCSTT), the Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST), the Iranian National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Sciences (INIOAS), and the Regional Education and Research Centre on Oceanography for West Asia organized the workshop.

The aim of the workshop was to enhance the knowledge of Member States and share information on the impacts of climate change on the marine environment.

The specific objectives were to promote sharing knowledge and findings on the effects of climate change on various aspects of the

marine environment and ecosystem.

The Indian Ocean, as the third-largest body of water in the world, plays an important role in the economy, ecosystem, and weather from local to global scales.

Many properties of the Indian Ocean, can be fundamentally influenced by climate change. Climate change is rapidly impacting the weather, ecosystems, and life of more than two billion people.

The impacts of climate change are putting increasing pressure on both marine and terrestrial environments, through more extreme weather conditions that also increase the likelihood of natural disasters.

Climate change is predicted to result in an increase in global temperatures, sea level rise, ocean acidification, more intense tropical cyclones, and an increase in the frequency, intensity, or duration of extreme weather events.

It is predicted that climate change-driven disturbance will have a negative effect on water supply; food security; health, industry, settlement, and society, especially for those located in coastal areas and river flood plains.

In addition, climate change would also impact natural systems and resources, infrastructure, and labor productivity which may lead to reduced economic growth and increasing poverty and inequality.

Therefore, the investigation of climate change effects from different points of view, from marine environment/biodiversity to weather variation, is significant.

## Biotechnology saves \$1.8b in healthcare sector

TEHRAN - The secretary general of the Biotechnology Development Headquarters has said about \$1.8 billion have been saved as a result of biotechnological activities in the field of medicine.

"Efforts in the ecosystem of technology and innovation are so great that every year we see a decrease in spending foreign exchange and an increase in domestic production in the field of medicine and treatment," ISNA quoted Mostafa Qanei as saying.

Products that have been manufactured with the help of indigenized biotechnology have met domestic needs, he added.

"Currently, about 800 knowledge-based companies are operating in the field of biotechnology, and we are trying to increase this number qualitatively and quantitatively by increasing support," Qanei highlighted.

In January, Qanei said the U.S. sanctions have impeded the country's ability to acquire a targeted 3 percent share of the global biotechnology market.

Iran is an advanced and developed country in the field of biotechnology and home to outstanding technologists, he added.

"We could easily increase Iran's share of the global biological market to three percent," he said.

Considering that Iran has 1 percent of the world's population, we aimed to gain 3 percent of the world's biotechnology market, but the sanctions did not allow us to become a good actor in the field of biotechnology at the international level.

The Secretary of Biotechnology Development Headquarters considered financial exchanges to be the main problem in this field.

"In recent years, we have tried to realize this plan, and technologists and knowledge-based companies have also taken steps in this direction, and good successes have been achieved, but we are far from reaching the desired point," he noted.

Currently, around 30 types of biotech medicines are produced in the country in addition to



kits, vaccines, and blood products. Also, 80 percent of biotechnology pharmaceutical items are domestically produced.

Biotechnology today is widespread in all fields and is no longer limited to biomedical drugs so it has replaced injured limbs.

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology is set to achieve a 3 percent share of the global biotechnology market.

In May 2021, the Biotechnology Development Council launched 129 production projects with the aim of saving up to \$1.44 billion in foreign currency.

Iran is ranked 12th in the world and first in West Asia in terms of biotechnology, as 9.5 percent of the income of knowledge-based companies and more than 60 percent of their exports are related to biotechnology.

Foreign exchange savings of \$1 billion per year by producing 22 biopharmaceuticals, gaining the first rank in biotechnology products and vaccines in West Asia, and the presence among the top five biotechnology producers in Asia are among the country's achievements, Qanei said in October 2020.

So far, 27 biotechnology medicines, 12 vaccine projects, 90 pharmaceutical raw materials, and 55 projects in agriculture and food security have been implemented in order to gain a 3 percent market share and biotechnology assistance to the development of the economy, he explained.

## WORLD RAMSAR SITES

### Gulf of Tubli

Gulf of Tubli is a sheltered bay with large intertidal mud/sand flats in Bahrain. The site accommodates the last remaining mangroves in the country. It is important nursery area for prawns and some fishers.

The bay represent is a good staging and wintering area for many waterfowl species.

It is a natural shallow sheltered bay surrounded by developed urban areas and date palm plantations.

The bay contains extensive intertidal mud and sand flats. Large area is covered by brown and green algae which is used by traditional fishermen as bait.

The only remaining natural mangrove site is located at Ras Sand in the southwest. It receives freshwater and brackish water from nearby garters irrigated plantations and treated sewage effluent form two treated plants.

The tidal regime is semi-diurnal and salinity is about 40 ppt.

Gulf of Tubli is an important nursery ground

for commercially important shrimps such as *Penaeus semisulcatus* and *Metapenaeus stebbingi* as well as some other marine fishers.

The bay was an important location for many submarine freshwater springs.

The site is the only place for mangrove *Avicennia marina* in Bahrain. It represents a good place for salt-marsh community.

It is one of the main sites for migratory waterfowl in the country. More than 45 different species of waterfowl were reported.

This includes Herons, shorebirds, gulls, terns and ducks. Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* and Black-winged stilt *Himantopus himantopus* breed among mangrove trees. Various species of shrimps and fish visit the bay during high tide.

It is considered as very important nursery area for prawns and some fishes. It is an ideal place for outdoor recreation and very attractive area for nature-based tourism.

Source: Ramsar.org  
To be continued

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Philanthropists support 28,000 orphans, deprived children

Iranian benefactors have made cash and kind contributions from the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan (starting on May 6) to help 28,000 children who are either orphaned or whose parents are financially struggling, deputy director of Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has announced.

There are currently 600,000 philanthropists who support orphaned children as well as children living in families in financial distress, IRNA quoted Alireza Asgarian as saying on Wednesday.

The foundation also intends to build housing units for families who cannot afford to rent houses, he added.

## مردم ۲۸ هزار کودک بی سرپرست را تحت حمایت قرار دادند

معاون توسعه مشارکت‌های مردمی کمیته امداد امام خمینی (ره) گفت: خیرین و نیکوکاران کشور از ابتدای ماه مبارک رمضان تاکنون ۲۸ هزار کودک بی‌سرپرست را تحت حمایت های مالی و غیرمالی خود قرار دادند. علیرضا عسگریان روز چهارشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار اجتماعی ایرنا افزود: ۶۰۰ هزار حامی در سطح کشور در یاری رسانی به ایتم و فرزندان محسنین با کمیته امداد همکاری دارند.

عسگریان اظهار داشت: ساخت مسکن برای خانواده های تحت پوشش کمیته امداد از دیگر برنامه‌های اجرایی و دارای اولویت کاری این نهاد در سال جاری است.



## Miankaleh hosting migratory birds

Flamingos arrive at Miankaleh International Wetland in the northern province of Mazandaran. About 80,000 flamingos enter Miankaleh and other wetlands in the region and remain until the beginning of next spring.





FEBRUARY 23, 2023

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Whoever delights his/her parents, has delighted Allah and the one who displeases them has displeased Allah.*

**Prophet Muhammad (S)**

Prayer Times » Noon:12:18 Evening: 18:12 Dawn: 5:18 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:41 (tomorrow)

## Iran: classical Persian literature

### Part 8

Ferdowsi: Originally from a family of landowners in Tus in Khorasan, he belonged to a social class that maintained its cultural links with the pre-Islamic past of the country.

He was probably born around 940; and at the age of 71, in 1010, he believed he had at last completed his great poem, the Book of Kings (Shahnameh).

He put the finishing touches on it when he was “approaching eighty;” and he died around 1020.

We associate his life with the composition of his poem. He began to compose it at the end of the Samanid reign, a dynasty celebrated for its cultural sophistication and sympathies for pre-Islamic Iranian courtly traditions, but completed it under the rule of the first Ghaznavid, Sultan Mahmud, a monarch of Turkish descent.

At the dawn of an era when the Turkish rulers were embracing Islamic culture wholeheartedly and their poets and panegyrists were consequently distancing themselves from the pre-Islamic past, Ferdowsi had managed to paint a vast canvass depicting the Iran of the bygone days, a poetic creation which would inform and inspire subsequent generations.

He dedicated his book to Mahmud of Ghazni and received a paltry reward. It is also true that in the process of glorifying Iran, he was not too kind to the Turks.

Furthermore, by openly declaring his Shiism faith, he displeased Mahmud, the self-declared champion of Sunni orthodoxy. In spite of his fame and support from various patrons, the poet ended his days in distress and discomfort.

The Book of Kings (Shahnameh): The earliest extant manuscript, which contains only the first part of the Shahnameh, dates from 1217, two centuries after the poet's death.

It was discovered in the Laurentian Library in Florence in 1980 by Angelo Michele Piemontese.

Among other important manuscripts one can mention a 16th-century copy of a manuscript dated 1276, which contains the entire text and is preserved in the British Library.

There are many other manuscripts of good quality in existence, and most probably Ferdowsi left more than one redaction of his poem.

Given this complex and uncharted textual history, the major critical edition begun by Jalal Khaleqi-Motlaq, of which six volumes have already been published, cannot be said to be definitive in the strict sense of the term (Cerquiglini).

Some of the texts that Ferdowsi had drawn upon in his Book of Kings have come down to us. The most famous is a Pahlavi text, The Testament of Ardashir son of Pabag.

We are therefore able to assess the poet's close adherence to his sources, as well as his remarkable ability to weave the material available to him in a sequential narrative, endowing his poem with a sense of order and cohesion.

The medieval manner of composition is evident in his skillful use of the narrative formulae—often repeated to enable declamation of well-defined episodes divided into delineated parts.

The Book of Kings tells the story of Royal Glory (farr) and its vulnerable and only too human supporting cast of characters.

In its early sections it introduces three civilizing world rulers. However, in a moment of excessive pride, Jamshid, the third amongst them, instigates a fall that shatters the initial

universal harmony.

A world divided into three kingdoms emerges; only Iran at the center inherits the Royal Glory. But the country's welfare and safety depend on a noble family of Sakas from Sistan, eventually led by its most famous and long enduring leader and hero, Rostam, the crown-bestower (Taj-bakhsh).

The three Iranian kings and princes, Key-Kavus, Siavash and Key-Khosrow, are emblematic figures of willful capriciousness, innocence and martyrdom, and legitimate vengeance, respectively.

Rostam is actively involved in all their adventures. However, he refuses to convert to the ‘good faith’ of Zoroaster. Having served as mentor and companion in arms to Esfandiar, son of King Goshtasp, circumstances force him to bring the downfall and death of the prince in a dramatic duel—a climactic moment in the Book of Kings.

Overlooked in Ferdowsi's sources, the Achaemenids and the Arsacids are mostly passed over in the Book of Kings, the Arsacids celebrated by a recital of their names in a few lines.

The heroic figure that follows Rostam is Alexander. In his work, Ferdowsi integrates a rare and intriguing version of the Alexander Romance—redrawn with psychological finesse.

First shown as a liberator, Alexander ends up as the great divider of Iran. He attempts to benefit from the Royal Glory of the Iranians, only to taste the bitter fruit of usurped grandeur: death.

Faithful to his sources, the poet then created the foil to Alexander, the character of Ardashir, the founding ruler of the Sassanid dynasty.

He unites Iran by making a pact with his people, based on justice and faith in one single religion, Zoroastrianism.

Later in the Sassanid section the ideal figure of Khosrow Anushervan (Khosrow I) is described in some detail. According to the sources of the book, it is in this monarch that Royal Glory appears in its clearest manifestation.

All the traits of other royal figures in the book are combined in this central character. The history of the Sassanids is then continued in the manner of traditional chronicles until an evil day, a Satanic or Ahrimanic moment, when the last king of the dynasty is betrayed and, while on the run from the Arab armies, killed by a miller.

Throughout his narrative, Ferdowsi pursues a fecund thematic idea characteristic of the epic tradition that portrays the vulnerable yet heroic man confronting his relentless destiny.

Salvation lies in wisdom, for it, above all else, makes man aware of the dehumanizing cycle of Time-Destiny. By maintaining his distance from Chronos, man escapes from the illusory nature of this world.

Only genuine fame (nam) derived from selfless and heroic conduct is worth striving for and fit to be left as a memento.

Ferdowsi exploits substantial portions of the ancient epic material available in his time. The remaining parts dealt with individual heroes and were drawn upon by other poets.

It was left to others, including Asadi of Tus (11th century), to recreate and exploit other available epic material, in his case, in the Book of Garshasp.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued.

# St. Petersburg VivaMuse Ensemble performs at Fajr Music Festival

From Page 1 ► The Concerto Grosso is a form of baroque music, in which the musical material is passed between a small group of soloists and a full orchestra.

Antonio Vivaldi's Concerto “Lestro armónico” (The Harmonic Inspiration) No. 5 for two violins, strings and basso continuo, A major, RV519 (Op.3) was the second part of their repertoire.

The concert ended with “Libertango”, a composition by tango composer and bandoneon player Astor Piazzolla.

In a press release published on Wednesday by the Fajr Music Festival, pianist Chirskov expressed satisfaction with VivaMuse's performance.

“The audience was really great and they seemed to like the performance,” he said

He said that European classical music appeals to almost everybody in the world and added that the pieces selected for the concert based on this fact.

VivaMuse performs a wide range of musical styles ranging from baroque music to works from contemporary composers.

It consists of leading musicians of the St. Petersburg State Capella Symphony Orchestra and soloists



VivaMuse Ensemble performs a concert during the 38th Fajr Music Festival at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on February 21, 2023. (ISNA/Amir Kholusi)

of the Glinka Choir, one of the oldest choirs in Europe. Violinist Klevtsova is the artistic director of the ensemble.

The group takes an active part in cultural life by performing at various events, including

those held at the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Hall, the State Hermitage Museum, the Great Hall of the Gnessin Russian Academy, the State Russian Museum, the Moscow Theological Academy, the Kaliningrad Cathedral, and the St

Petersburg State Capella itself.

VivaMuse is also the holder of the first-degree diploma of the All-Russian Competition Musical Talents of Russia 2020 in the chamber ensemble competition.



Sogol Tahmasbi and Amin Zendegani act in a scene from “Habib”.

From Page 1 ► “The series was produced to feature the valor of those who fought to defeat ISIS,” he added.

“ISIS is very cruel and their cruelty has been depicted in the series... however, we blended the saga with a love story to make it appropriate for viewing by families,” he explained.

In some scenes, the series depicts former IRGC Quds Force chief General Qassem Soleimani in battles with ISIS.

Hushyar-Parsian refused to reveal the name of the actor who portrays the commander to avoid spoiling the series.

Some Iranian VOD platforms are also streaming a local series on ISIS, which has received considerable popular acclaim. Sajjad Pahlavanzadeh is the director of the serial entitled “Fall”.

“‘Habib’ and ‘Fall’ are not in conflict with each other,” said Hushyar-Parsian, adding, “They are in two different worlds that just aren't comparable.”

## Iranian bookstores offering “Life Is like an Ocean”

TEHRAN – Chinese writer Mai Jia's 2019 novel “Life Is like an Ocean” has been published in Persian.

Qoqnus is the publisher of the book translated by Hamed Vafai from the Chinese edition.

“Life Is like an Ocean” is the latest full-length novel of Mai Jia, the winner of the Maodun Literature Prize.

From the perspective of a child, it tells a story of the struggling life of a man in the era, encompassing a puzzle that needs to be solved.

It is rich in suspense, and its story background spans almost a century.

The life situations that will make people sigh are hidden in the uncanny stories. Life is like an ocean, which contains age, legend and people's hearts, with cruelty caused by reality and compassion brought by time.



A combination photo shows Chinese novelist Mai Jia and the front cover of the Persian edition of his novel “Life Is like an Ocean”.

Jiang Benhu, better known by his pen name Mai Jia, served as the president of the Zhejiang Writers Association and vice president of the Zhejiang Literature and Art

Association.

Jia was born in Fuyang District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province in 1964. He was drafted into the People's Liberation Army and

served for 17 years.

He graduated from People's Liberation Army Foreign Language College in 1983, where he majored in wireless radio.

He started to publish works in 1986. Jia was accepted to People's Liberation Army Arts College in 1987 and graduated in 1991, majoring in literature.

In 1997, he worked in Chengdu Satellite TV as an editor. In 2008, he was transferred from Chengdu to Hangzhou.

In December 2010, Jiang was elected the vice president of the Zhejiang Literature and Art Association. On July 1, 2013, Jiang was elected the president of the Zhejiang Writers Association.

Jia is also the author of the novella “Letting the Masked Man Speak” and the novels “Decoded”, “In the Dark” and “Sound of the Wind”.

## New Persian translation of “Great Leaders Grow” published

TEHRAN – A new Persian translation of “Great Leaders Grow: Becoming a Leader for Life”, co-authored by Ken Blanchard and Mark Miller, has been published by Morsal.

Behruz Jokarkashi is the translator of the book originally published in 2012.

Another Persian translation of the book by Mohammadreza Keramati was previously published in 2013 by Zendegi-e Shahd.

Successful leaders don't rest on their laurels, because leadership is not a title on a business card. Leadership is a living process—and life means growth.

As Ken Blanchard and Mark Miller write in the introduction, “the path to increased influence, impact, and leadership effectiveness is paved with personal growth... Our capacity to grow determines our capacity to lead. It's really that simple.”

“Great Leaders Grow” shows leaders and aspiring leaders precisely which areas to focus on so they can remain effective throughout their lives.

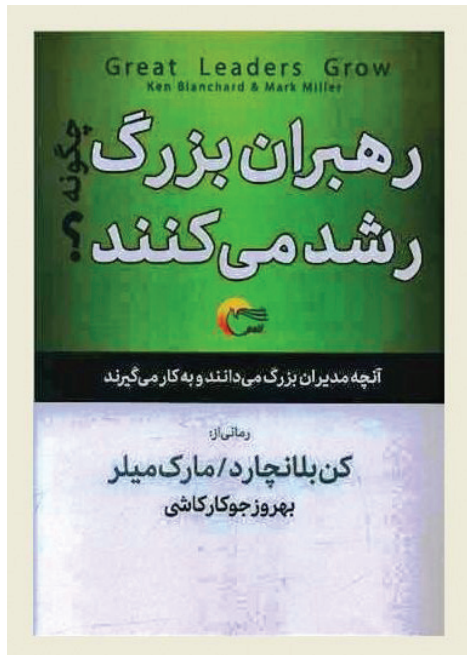
Debbie Brewster—the protagonist from

Blanchard and Miller's international bestseller “The Secret” returns in this book to mentor her mentor's son, Blake, as he begins his career.

Now an accomplished leader herself, Debbie shows Blake how growing as a leader and as a human being are inextricably linked. “How well you and I serve will be determined by the decision to grow or not,” she says. “Will you be a leader who is always ready to face the next challenge? Or will you be a leader who tries to apply yesterday's solutions to today's problems?”

As Blake confronts the challenges of business in the real world, he turns to Debbie for guidance. Step by step, Debbie and Blake explore the GROW model—four ways that leaders must challenge and stretch themselves, both on the job and off, to fulfill their highest potential.

Whether you're a CEO or an entry-level employee, this book will inspire you to reflect on your life and design your own long-term growth plan—a plan that can lead not only to continuing professional success but to personal fulfillment as well.



Front cover of the Persian edition of “Great Leaders Grow”.