

Six Diplomatic Missions

- Explaining convincingly the rationale behind the country's approach to various issues
- Having an effective, directive presence in various political-economic phenomena, events and currents in the world
- Strengthening the governments and organizations that are allies with Iran as well as developing the country's strategic depth
- Weakening dangerous centers
- Overcoming and reducing threatening policies and decisions against Iran
- Detecting the hidden layers in regional and global decisions and actions

Opinion **T**

More diplomat than any diplomat

By Mohammad Sarfi
Editor-in-Chief

The essence of yesterday's speech by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in his meeting with officials of the Foreign Ministry and Iranian ambassadors emphasized the important point that the Islamic Republic is not inclined to deviate from its foreign policy principles. After the signing of the JCPOA in 2015, some abroad believed that the nuclear agreement, which was achieved through "heroic flexibility" policy, was the first step in Iran's diplomatic turnaround. Some within Iran also held this belief.

Therefore, the United States and its allies expected the Islamic Republic of Iran to give them significant points in other issues such as missile power and regional influence. The Islamic Republic's steadfastness on its fundamental foreign policy principles disappointed and angered them. Although some may want to attribute the US withdrawal from the JCPOA to Trump's madness, the reality is that even if a Democrat president were in the White House instead of Trump, the JCPOA would not have had a better fate.

Even during the Obama's presidency, the JCPOA was never fully implemented. Iran was fully committed to its obligations, but the Americans prevented Iran from benefiting economically from the JCPOA through bad faith and malice to the point where one senior official of Rouhani's government said that our achievement from the JCPOA was "almost zero" before the US withdrawal from the agreement. **▶ Page 3**



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei meets Foreign Minister, senior Foreign Ministry officials, ambassadors and representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran in other countries on May 20, 2023. **▶ Page 2**

Seventh National Development Plan unveiled

TEHRAN – The final document of Iran's Seventh National Development Plan was unveiled on Saturday, in a ceremony attended by more than 500 government officials, experts, and scholars, ISNA reported.

Members of the cabinet, parliament members, First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, and Head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Davoud Manzour, along with representatives of the country's private sector were among the attendees of the event.

Speaking at the ceremony, Manzour said one of the main features of the seventh plan is that it is problem-oriented and tries to resolve the country's economic imbalances, including budget imbalances, energy imbalances, and banking system imbalances, while increasing the powers of the central bank.

According to the official, the plan also places special importance on

people's health and livelihood.

Stating that the seventh development plan bill has been examined and reviewed by the government's selected committees, the vice president said: "We hope that what has been prepared and unveiled today can meet the country's needs in the next five years."

The official noted that the plan has 22 chapters and sections, the main aim of which is to resolve the country's major economic issues.

Iran-Russia railway deal could be game-changer for global transit

TEHRAN –Iran and Russia, both under harsh Western sanctions, on May 17 inked an agreement on the long-stalled construction of a railway connecting the northern Iranian cities of Rasht and Astara.

The railway is key to the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

Spanning 162 km (100.6 miles), the railway is a crucial element of the INSTC. The corridor integrates road, rail, and sea transportation, facilitating the movement of goods between Russia and India via Iran.

Through a video link, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin addressed the ceremony in Tehran where the two countries' transport ministers signed the agreement.

Raisi thanked Putin and the Russian government for their involvement in the initiative and referred to it as an "important strategic step" in bilateral cooperation that will benefit all countries involved in the INSTC. Putin, for his part, called the occasion a "landmark moment for the entire global transport infrastructure." **▶ Page 3**

Iran calls Taliban's declaration on Helman River 'contradictory and incorrect'

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Friday dismissing the Taliban's remarks on water rights from the Helmand River as "contradictory and incorrect".

Since coming to power in summer of 2022, the Taliban has promised to honor Iran's water rights from the Helmand

River. However, until this date it has refused to do so.

The Helmand River is the longest watercourse in Afghanistan. It originates from the Hindu Kush Mountains, west of Kabul, and flows in an arc southwest until it empties out into the Hamoun wetlands in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan Province.

Iran and Afghanistan signed a treaty in 1973 that "clearly and unambiguously" specified the Iranian side's water rights, the ministry said. "This is a legal, objective and definite right" and Afghanistan is committed to provide Iran's share of the water and avoid taking "any action." **▶ Page 3**

Leader to naval forces: Welcome home

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Interview **T**

Remarkable achievements of Iran 86th Naval Fleet

By Mohammad Shaltouki

TEHRAN- Admiral Farhad Fattahi, the commander of Iran's 86th Naval Fleet, has outlined achievements of the flotilla after a round-the-world voyage.

Admiral Fattahi emphasized that "the first achievement of the voyage can be mentioned as the design, production and operationalization of the all-Iranian meteorological software, which was developed by Iranian youths in the army and yielded fruitful results." **▶ Page 2**

Research of Watson Institute shows

4,500,000 Victims of U.S. wars after 9/11

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TEHRAN PAPERS

Unified warning to the Taliban

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

Most of newspapers in Iran on Saturday highlighted Tehran's warning to the Taliban about water right from the Helmand Rive. In a commentary on the matter, Shargh quoted an expert who says: "Considering the fact that water crisis and water shortage are getting worse in the region and the world, water has found a special function in the geopolitical developments and needs of countries. From this point of view, from Afghanistan to Turkey, they try to use water as a political and diplomatic pressure to realize interests and goals towards other countries such as Iran. The issue is not limited to the Taliban government; rather, all successive governments and different political bodies in Afghanistan have tried to avoid giving Iran's share of water under unrealistic excuses and justifications over the years.

Etemad: Do not recognize the Taliban

In a note, Etemad discussed Iran-Taliban relations. It wrote: Iran-Taliban relations are a fire under the ashes, and any excuse or issue can ignite this fire and spread its flames inside and outside of our country. Anyway, any nationalist Pashtun tension with Pakistan or religious tension with Iran can set the region on fire and make Iran and Pakistan face a serious crisis. Therefore, it is better for Pakistan and Iran to focus on their national interests and make it their main foreign policy priority and seriously avoid taking any action that would strengthen the Taliban or help recognize them as official.

Iran: Effective diplomacy against Taliban is necessary

The Iran newspaper devoted its editorial to the statements of Zohre-Vand, the former ambassador of Iran to Afghanistan, and said: "The change of the region's ecosystem by the Taliban is only a part of the costly approaches of the new rulers of Afghanistan." The approach taken by the Taliban shows that they have formulated long-term strategies in the field of geopolitics and geoculture in the region and are implementing them. The Iranian government

decision makers and politicians should pay attention to the fact that the issue of Helmand is only a part of the Taliban's destructive policies and we are seeing their destructive actions in the cultural and religious fields as well. As a "solution" to get rid of such a situation and deal with the existing threats in this region, it can be pointed out that an effective confrontation with the Taliban requires "effective diplomacy". Considering that the other party does not have an official government, we should review our diplomacy towards the whole of Afghanistan. While changing patten of water consumption in the region and using new technologies, we must solve the existing water challenges independently of the Taliban. In such a situation, we can overcome the issues raised in this area by applying diplomacy.

Sobh-e-No: Rule of Jurisprudent is the path to reform

In its editorial, Sobh-e-No discussed the authorities of the Supreme Jurisprudent and wrote: In most of cases in which the Supreme Jurisprudent has used his maximum authority have been at the request of various government or state bodies, especially the executive power, even when this government branch has been controlled by the so-called reform faction. The rest of the cases were either to protect the Islamic revolution and to prevent it from turning off its correct path, which is the most important task of the Leader of the revolution, or to make the system's mechanisms flexible to pass through the difficult stages. In the end, once again while emphasizing the issue of reform, we point to the part of the Supreme Jurisprudent's statements. He says: "Reform is one of the traditions of human life and human history. If we do not reform and move forward, it will be imposed on us." Today, we desperately need managers and elites who firstly understand the necessity of reform; secondly, have the scientific and practical ability to explain or make reforms; and thirdly, have the necessary courage to both understand the importance of reform and have the ability to realize it!

Nouri solitary confinement smashes world record, lawyers say

TEHRAN - Hamid Nouri's lawyers have challenged his trial procedure and how he is being treated in jail, noting the time that the 62-year-old man is being held in solitary confinement is too long and is considered a "world record."

Nouri has been unlawfully jailed in Sweden for more than three years.

According to the Iranian Judiciary-affiliated Mizan news agency, Nouri's attorney Hanna Larsson stated that her client has now spent 3.5 years in solitary confinement in Swedish detention centers.

She also called the lengthy period a "record" in the world and the way his jailers treat him as "very heinous."

Based on Larsson's remarks, Nouri's family members have been unable to visit him.

Additionally, she put the blame on the Swedish jail officials for failing to set up visits despite having "enough time to do so."

Also, she said, Nouri has recently been denied access to his laptop and iPad by the jail authorities.

"He is entitled to have in-person and virtual meetings, but no meetings are held," the lawyer added.

Larsson criticized the Swedish government for denying Nouri access to important documents that are necessary for his legal defense in court and rejected the prosecutor's claim that the records had

been given to her client as "not true."

"These documents were of great value to our client and now we cannot defend him as we should and be ready for defense," lawyer stressed.

The issue of Nouri's poor eyesight was also brought up by Larsson, who said that her client had previously asked the prison officials to arrange an appointment for him to see an ophthalmologist.

Larsson's comments were corroborated by Nouri's other attorney, Thomas Bodstrom, who also criticized the way his client's trial was conducted.

Nouri, a former member of the Iranian judiciary, was detained and put in jail as soon as he arrived in Sweden in November 2019.

On the basis of false accusations made by the terrorist Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO), he was placed on trial.

Nouri has strongly denied the terrorist group's accusations that he participated in the murder and torture of MKO members in 1988.

Nouri was given a life sentence by a Swedish court back in July of last year. Based on the MKO claims, the court—which Iran first said was illegal—convicted Nouri of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Since his unauthorized arrest, the 62-year-old has been held in solitary prison. On May 29, he will be questioned by the appeals court again.

U.S. slaps fresh sanctions on Iran, Russia

TEHRAN - As Iran and Russia strive to improve their relations, the United States has announced fresh sanctions that target what it refers to as the "logistics network" connecting the two nations.

The U.S. State Department expanded its unlawful campaign against the Iranian people on Friday by adding two Iranian shipping companies, a port operator, and a marine service provider to its new sanctions list.

According to the department, they were a part of the "logistics network" that connected Tehran and Moscow. Two Iranian shipping enterprises, Khazar Sea Shipping Line and Nasim Bahr Kish, as

well as a Russian marine service company, Grand Sea LLC, were among the targets.

Additionally, organizations connected to the most recent deal between Iran and Russia to construct a railway section of the International North-South Corridor (INSC) are included in the sanctions.

The move was done because the U.S. is upset over the Iran-Russia relations.

Included in the list is a recent deal between Iran and Russia to complete the 162-km Rasht-Astara railroad project that will complete railway links between southern Asia and northern Europe.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Six diplomatic missions

Leader: Against enemies' desires, maintain policy of honorable ties with neighboring, Islamic, and friendly countries

TEHRAN- Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, on Saturday emphasized the importance of maintaining honorable relations with neighboring, Islamic, and friendly countries.

Addressing a group of Iranian Foreign Ministry officials and ambassadors to other countries in Tehran on Saturday, Ayatollah Khamenei delineated the meanings of the three keywords "honor, wisdom, and expediency" in the Iranian foreign policy, according to khamenei.ir

"Honor is the negation of imploring diplomacy, both in words and in content and the avoidance of pinning hopes on the words and decisions of foreign officials," he said.

The Leader described the lack of reliance on principles in foreign policy as a violation of honor and the cause of hesitancy.

"In all global issues, in 'words, actions and when facing the measure that others have taken' we move with honor and in accordance to our principles," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei described the meaning of "wisdom" as speech and behavior that is "wise, well thought-out and prudent."

"All measures in foreign policy must be logical and well thought-out. Detering, uncalculated decisions and actions have inflicted harm on the country at certain times."

The Leader of the Revolution called the lack of unwarranted trust in the other parties as another concept of "wisdom."

"Of course, not everything should be regarded as a lie in the world of politics, because there are truthful and acceptable words as well, however, not everything that is said should be trusted," he said.

"Expediency" in the sense of having flexibility in places where it is necessary to bypass hard and rocky



obstacles in order to continue a path, was another important keyword that the Leader clarified.

In this regard, he underlined that, "Being flexible does not mean that you should ignore principles in the aforementioned sense. Of course, a few years ago, when I mentioned the term, 'heroic flexibility', it was misunderstood both inside and outside the country. Because expediency means finding a way to overcome difficult obstacles and to continue the path until you reach your goal."

Ayatollah Khamenei explained six mandatory rules in foreign policy, underlining that, "compliance with these indicators is a sign of successful foreign policy, and if these rules are not observed, there will be problems either in the theory of foreign policy or in the functioning and operations of diplomacy."

The first principle that the Leader outlined is the ability to convincingly explain the rationale behind the country's approach to various issues.

The other five principles included: "Having an effective, directive presence in various political-economic phenomena, events and currents in the world," "Overcoming and reducing threatening policies and decisions against Iran," "Weakening

dangerous centers," "Strengthening the governments and organizations that are allies with Iran as well as developing the country's strategic depth," and "The ability to detect the hidden layers in regional and global decisions and actions."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution hailed the current Iranian administration's policy to communicate with neighboring countries, describing it as a correct and important measure. He added that "foreign hands are actively creating problems between Iran and its neighbors and you should not allow this policy to be realized. Contrary to the enemy's desires, you should continue having relations with our neighbors, Islamic countries and countries whose policies are in line with that of the Islamic Republic."

He also considered it important to maintain a having relations with like-minded and Islamic countries, even if they are located in far regions. "Today, the cooperation and alignment of some big and important countries of the world with the Islamic Republic of Iran in some processes and fundamental lines of international politics is an unprecedented phenomenon, and we should appreciate this opportunity and

strengthen the relations with those countries."

Pointing to the issue of the ambassadors' meeting regarding a transformation in the current world order and the frequent repetition of this issue in world literature, the Leader said, "The change in the world order is a long-term process full of ups and downs and affected by possible unforeseen events, and different countries have different and conflicting opinions and approaches to it."

He considered it necessary to properly place Iran in the new order by monitoring and evaluating global developments and recognizing the exact direction and behind the scenes of events. "Based on this observation and evaluation, practical suggestions should be extracted. Our ambassadors and heads of delegations play an important role in this field, especially in the influential countries."

Ayatollah Khamenei remarked the importance of foreign policy and its important role in the administration and improvement of the country. "Despite paying attention to the economic and cultural factors in the analysis of the country's current state, the foreign policy factor is often neglected in discussions. This is while a good and successful foreign policy will definitely improve the state of the country. On the other hand, disturbances and problems in foreign policy will result in problems in the general situation of the country, of which there are plenty of examples."

The Leader of the Revolution described Iran's representatives abroad as representatives of the Iranian people, underlining that their behavior reflects the identity and nature of the Iranian nation. "An Iranian diplomat must serve as the epitome of faith, patriotism towards Iran, zeal, determination, dynamism, and hard work."

Leader to naval forces: Welcome home

Navy plans to send flotilla to Antarctica soon

TEHRAN- The Iranian Navy's 86th flotilla of warships has moored to the southern port city of Bandar Abbas after a round-the-world voyage as part of Tehran's enterprise to widen its nautical presence in high seas.

Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani landed on the deck of the Makran warship with a helicopter on Saturday afternoon to welcome the commanders and staff of the 86th flotilla on their historic success.

Iran's 86th Naval Fleet, which included the home-built Dena destroyer, came home on Wednesday after the first round of the world in a mission dubbed "360-Degree".

The flotilla completed a lengthy cruise around the world and sailed across the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic oceans without needing assistance from land for the first time in Iran's naval history.

On September 20, 2022, it departed from Bandar Abbas, a port city on the Persian Gulf. It finally anchored at Oman's Salalah harbor on the 236th day of its journey.

The flotilla traveled 63,000 kilometers and crossed the equator four times.

"A unique and strategic honor"

In a statement on Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian lauded the homecoming of 86th flotilla of warships after sailing around the globe as part of the nation's ambitions to increase its naval presence in open seas.

"The successful mission of the 86th flotilla of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army in navigating

the waters around the world, with the all-Iranian destroyer Dena and the Makran forward base ship, is a unique and strategic honor," Amir Abdollahian stated.

The top Iranian diplomat went on to add, "I congratulate the great success to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the great nation of Iran, the dedicated and zealous armed forces, especially the Navy, and the command and personnel of the 86th Fleet of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"The operation, along with the long and professional navigation of international seas, oceans, and straits showed the parity of the authority and maritime power of dear Iran with the world powers in the open waters of the world," the statement stressed.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Wednesday that the fleet earned another award at the international level by undertaking a lengthy journey around the globe.

In a post on his Twitter account, Kanaani said the flotilla brought about another honor on the international stage for the first time in the country's history.

On May 14, the 86th flotilla of warships, which had already traveled further than any other Iranian flotilla in international seas, berthed at Salalah, the port city of Oman.

The Dena destroyer and Makran forward base ship are part of the Iranian flotilla.

The 86th flotilla berthed at Brazil's southeastern port city of Rio de Janeiro in February.

Dena is a Mowj-class warship that joined the



Iranian Navy in June 2021.

The military vessel is outfitted with anti-ship cruise missiles, torpedoes and naval cannons.

Makran, a forward base ship weighing 121,000 tons, is the other vessel in the flotilla.

The oil tanker that was converted into a warship is used to support the combat vessels logistically and can carry five helicopters.

The Iranian Navy has established three ocean commands to oversee naval missions to the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic oceans.

Iran to send flotilla to Antarctic soon

In the near future, a flotilla from the Iranian Navy will be sent to the Antarctic.

The news that the Navy intends to send a flotilla to Antarctic comes just as the 86th flotilla returned home.

One of the primary objectives of the recent operation carried out by the 86th flotilla appears to have been sending Iranian warships to the Antarctic.

Remarkable achievements of Iran 86th Naval Fleet

From page 1 ▶ "Secondly, we have proven that the Iranian products are totally trustworthy and reliable. It means that the Dena destroyer is an Iranian product that is 100% reliable," he added.

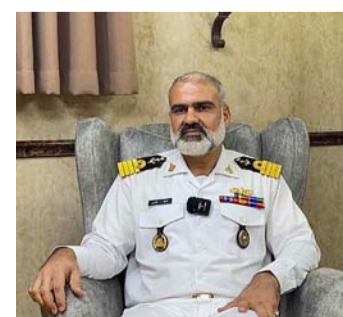
The admiral continued, "Given the maritime diplomacy, one of the achievements is that the flotilla docked in the port of Rio de Janeiro to mark the 120th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Iran and Brazil."

"Another remarkable achievement is that Iran's flag was waved in the world's four major oceans,

seven seas and seven strategic straits," he noted.

The admiral also said that "a unique phenomenon emerged in the cultural sphere as the flotilla's commanders and staff were representatives of Iranian-Islamic cultural values."

He added, "There is a huge difference between Iranian tourists and flotilla's staff... I mean that when at least 300-400 staff and personnel were disembarked, this would steal the limelight from media due to the military and official nature of this entry. When it happens, the whole



city and country can recognize that an Iranian fleet is on a mission in their country and will be known easily whenever they go."

Admiral Fattahi remarked that

"during the mission, we used the home-built Dena destroyer, whose capabilities grabbed the attention of other countries' naval commanders and forces. This came as no surprise that all naval commanders expressed congratulations over building such a military feat."

The flotilla, comprising of the Dena warship and the Makran port ship, had set sail from Iran's southern port city of Bandar Abbas on September 20 last year for a global voyage. It returned to Iran's territorial waters a few days ago.

Iran calls Taliban's declaration on Helman River 'contradictory and incorrect'

From Page 1 ▶ which fully or partly, strips Iran of its water rights, under Article 5 of the Treaty."

Writing on his Twitter account on Friday, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said in recent months he had repeatedly asked the interim Afghan foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi that his country honor its commitments by providing a condition for Iranian technical teams to assess the volume of water flowing from the Helman River but they have refused.

Abdollahian added, "Sistan suffers from drought. The criterion that there is water or not is technical and objective visit and not issuance of political statement."

The Foreign Ministry statement said, "As long as the experts of the Islamic Republic of Iran are not allowed to visit the route and upstream of Helmand as part of the Treaty — especially Article 5 of Protocol No. 1 of that Treaty — any comment regarding the depletion of Helmand's water is not accepted," according to Press TV.

The ministry reiterated Iran's emphasis on technical cooperation and study in the area of exploration through the water commissioners of the two sides and its demand for a "detailed" investigation of the water situation in Helmand and provision of the Iranian side's quota in accordance with the treaty.

Afghanistan has built dams over



the course of the river and diverted the path of water.

"Continuing to fill the diversionary Kamal Khan dam, deviate the natural course of the Helmand River and disrupt the river's natural conditions, in addition to the non-cooperation of the Afghan authorities in determining the locations of water delivery and installing technical systems related to water level measurement, are clear violations of Articles 3, 5 and 6 of the Helmand Treaty," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said.

In its statement the ministry said Iran has always respected the principle of good neighborliness and neighborly rights.

The ministry added Iran reserves the right to act against Afghanistan's "unacceptable" non-adherence to the treaty on Iran's water rights.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran reserves the right to take necessary measures and underscores the full responsibility of Afghanistan in this regard," it stated.

Based on the 1973 Treaty, Iran should receive an annual share of 820 million cubic meters from the river. However, Afghanistan has grossly violated it in letter and spirit, endangering the lives of many Iranians who rely on Hamoun wetlands for drinking water, agriculture, and fishing.

Special envoy says Taliban

should have "constructive interaction" with neighbors

Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Iran's interim ambassador to Kabul and Tehran's special envoy for Afghanistan, has suggested that if the Taliban rulers want to establish a stable government in their country, they should have a "constructive interaction" with their neighbors.

The special envoy added if it is proven that there is water in the dams built over the course of the river but they refuse to allow Iran's share of water to flow into Hamoun wetlands then should be held "accountable".

"In that case Iran knows how it should act," he noted, according to akharinkhabar.ir.

Iran-Russia railway deal could be game-changer for global transit

From Page 1 ▶ The deal came a day after Iran's Trade Promotion Organization chief Alireza Payman-Pak announced that Russia's second-biggest bank, VTB, had opened a representative office in Tehran.

Peyman-Pak said that the office, which marks the first "direct presence" of a Russian bank in Iran, will be used for foreign currency transfers.

State-owned VTB was sanctioned by the EU, UK, and the US following the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in Feb. 2022.

The railway deal has been hailed by state officials and media in Iran as part of a significant future source of income.

Raisi's Deputy Chief of Staff for Political Affairs Mohammad Jamshidi has predicted that the earnings from the INSTC would be able to rival Iran's oil revenue. In this vein, the ISNA news agency on May 17 estimated annual revenue of \$20 billion from the Corridor.

The Jam-e Jam newspaper described Iran as the "golden path of trade" in an article highlighting the potential benefits of the railway.

Meanwhile, the Tasnim News Agency said ahead of the deal that the "curse" that has so far stalled the railway project would be broken through "Russian partnership."

India, Iran, and Russia initially struck an accord in 2002 to forge the INSTC. The ambitious undertaking aims to create a new transit route linking India to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Russia via Iran's southern and northern coastal regions.

The corridor is seen by Russia as a potential rival to the Suez Canal, a far longer route for trade with northern Europe.

Iran has been a key player in the INSTC and stands to benefit greatly from its full realization. As reported by Amwaj.media, the Raisi government has seemingly banked significantly on transit becoming a top revenue generator. But Iran stands to gain from the project in more ways.

The operationalization of the corridor could mean improved relations between Iran and India, aligning New Delhi more closely with Tehran's regional interests.

A vital element of the INSTC, the Rasht-Astara railway project has been stalled for years due to costs, engineering, and logistical complications.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei stressed the importance of completing the stretch of railway in his July 2022 meeting with Putin in Tehran.

VTB's new office in Tehran is part of Iran and Russia's ongoing efforts to connect their banking systems.

The two countries signed an agreement on Jan. 29 to link their inter-bank messaging systems.

Due to Western sanctions, both countries have been cut off from SWIFT—a leading Belgium-based financial messaging service.

Both Iran and Russia are looking to reap the potential economic benefits of increased transit amid Western sanctions.

The Raisi government seeks to mitigate the adverse effects of sanctions through de-dollarization of trade and the establishment of direct banking and payment channels outside the international banking system.

Dr. Bijan Khajepour, managing partner of the Vienna-based Eurasian Nexus Partners, told Amwaj.media that if the legal structures

are put in place, it could take only a few months for VTB's new office to process transactions. However, Khajepour cautioned that "usually, it is the lawyers who delay such processes," adding that "to complete the picture" it is also necessary to consider that VTB is subject to Western sanctions and that its operations in Iran "will have to rely on the agreements and structures between Moscow and Tehran, such as a non-SWIFT messaging system."

On the political side, a successful increase in transit revenues will reinforce Iran's "Look to the East" policy of strengthening ties with neighboring countries and eastern powers as a response to western pressure. This could encourage Raisi's hardline supporters, who have touted Iran's place in an emerging multipolar "new world order."

Russia has failed to hide its angry of the rising ties between Iran and Russia. The U.S. State Department deputy spokesperson has expressed alarm about the Rashst-Astara railway deal. At a news conference on May 17, Vedant Patel stated, "We of course would find deeply concerning any steps or any project being undertaken to go around sanctions."

In response Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said the Joe Biden administration's concerns about Tehran's expansion of trade cooperation with other nations is "unjustified and invalid."

Kanaani said the most recent agreement with Russia is in line with Iran's emphasis on the policy of good neighborliness.

He stressed that the cornerstone of closer ties with neighbors is "cooperation for common security, development, and welfare."

Iran's UN ambassador to chair Social Forum

An Iranian diplomat has been appointed to chair the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Social Forum in November 2023. UNHRC President Vaclav Balek announced the appointment of the Iranian foreign policy expert in a letter

dated May 10, 2023. Ali Bahreini, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, was chosen from among several regional candidates.

The UN Human Rights Council

2023 Social Forum, scheduled November 2 and 3 in Geneva, will focus on the contributions of science, technology, and innovations to the promotion of human rights, including in the context of post-pandemic recovery.



More diplomat than any diplomat

From Page 1 ▶ Another point is that there is no serious and strategic difference between the two American parties regarding Iran. Biden, despite his promise to return to the JCPOA, has taken Trump's path in practice and raised the same unacceptable demands and ransom demands, albeit with softer rhetoric.

Iran did not succumb to US pressure and stood firm against sanctions and threats. This steadfastness, of course, has not been without cost, but its cost is much less than that of surrendering because US extortion knows no

bounds. As an Iranian proverb says, if you say A, you must continue to Z.

The dignified steadfastness of Iran in the field of diplomacy is gradually yielding results and is being talked about as a new world order. In this order, the United States is no longer the sole player. If Iran had succumbed to US pressure or allowed Syria to be defeated by Western-backed terrorists and Iraq to surrender to ISIS, what would the situation in the region and even the world order be like today?

The formation of a coalition of powerful

countries in the world, including China and Russia, who are not willing to bow down to Washington and are working towards a new world order, is owed to Iran's smart diplomacy and resistance. And the architect of this diplomacy is Ayatollah Khamenei, who said a few years ago that: I'm not a diplomat but a revolutionary. While he does not fall for Western promises or fear their threats, he guides Iran's diplomatic ship in a stormy sea full of pirates towards its new position. The secret of America's enmity and hatred towards this man lies in this point.

SPORTS

Iran to compete at 2023 Women's Basketball Division B Asian Cup

TEHRAN – Iran will participate at the 2023 Women's Basketball FIBA Division B Asian Cup.

The competition will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from August 13 to 19.

The event will bring Thailand, Iran, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Jordan together.

Greek basketball coach Eleni Kapogianni will lead Iran in the tournament.

Turkey defeat Iran volleyball in friendly match

TEHRAN – Iran volleyball team lost to Turkey 3-1 (19-25, 30-28, 25-20, 29-27) in a friendly match in Istanbul on Saturday.

Behrouz Ataei's men had defeated Turkey 3-1 in their first match.

Iran are preparing for the 2023 Volleyball Nations League (VNL), which will be held between June 6 and July 23.

Team Melli will meet Japan in Nagoya in the competition's opener.

The final round of VNL 2023 will take place in Ergo Arena in Poland's Gdansk.

Iran league champions Persepolis at a glance

TEHRAN – On Thursday, Persepolis won their sixth Iran football league title in seven years, solidifying their status as the leaders in the country.

The Reds earned back the championship title after a 4-0 win over Nassaji at Ghaemshahr in the last game of the season.

Yahya Golmohammadi's team grabbed the title with 66 points, one point ahead of second-placed Sepahan, and this was their fourth major award since Golmohammadi took the helm of the club in 2019.

The five-year run of IPL titles for Persepolis came to an end last season when they lost the title battle to Esteghlal. The performance of the team and the choices made by the technical staff, Golmohammadi in particular, left the fans feeling very disappointed.

As the criticism of the head coach increased, there were those who believed that he would need to be discharged and finish his period with Persepolis.

Despite this, Yahya decided to stay with the team and reclaim the title that had cost him much.

Last season, Esteghlal won the league in a nearly perfect manner and many people thought this marked the end of Persepolis dominance.

Golmohammadi began to reconstruct his team and fix the shortcomings of the prior season. He transformed Persepolis' backbone by signing four new players: Alireza Beiranvand, Danial Esmailifard, Giorgi Gvelesiani, and Morteza Pouraliganji.

He correctly believed that his team's defensive inadequacies caused them to lose the championship last season.

The most consistent team usually win the league, and Persepolis have been that, largely thanks to their defensive numbers. After 30 games, they only conceded 13 goals and goalkeeper Beiranvand kept 18 clean sheets to break the IPL record.

The team began to win the games. That's not to say there have not been hurdles, though. Persepolis gave up their number one spot in the league table and let Sepahan

move in at some point during the season. Despite this, they recovered their confidence and got back on track, profiting from other teams' mistakes to regain their spot at the summit of the table.

Shahdab fail to reach 2023 Asian Club Volleyball Championship final

TEHRAN – Shahdab Yazd of Iran lost to Suntory Sunbirds of Japan 3-1 (25-22, 23-25, 34-32, 25-17) in the 2023 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship.

Shahdab will play losers of Jakarta Bhayangkara Presisi and Qatar's Police in the third-placed match on Sunday.

The 23rd Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship started on May 14 in Manama, Bahrain and will run until May 21.

The champions will qualify for the 2023 FIVB Volleyball Men's Club World Championship.

Taremi linked with PSG: report

TEHRAN – Porto football team striker Mehdi Taremi has been reportedly linked with a move to Paris Saint-Germain.

O Jogo reported on Friday that FC Porto's Taremi is a name PSG is interested in this summer.

Furthermore, they're not alone, as Ligue 1 rivals Lille OSC and FC Nantes are also keen on the 30-year-old.

The Iran international has scored 26 goals and registered 13 assists in 48 appearances in all competitions for Porto this 2022-23 season.

Iranian woman Hesamifard scales Mt. Lhotse

TEHRAN – Afsaneh Hesamifard successfully scaled Mt. Lhotse.

Hesamifard has already summited K2 (8,611m), Everest (8,848) and Annapurna (8,091).

Iranian male mountaineer Rouhollah Kazemi had successfully scaled Mt. Everest and Mt. Lhotse over the past several days.

Lhotse ranks as the fourth highest mountain in the world at 8,516 meters (27,940 ft), after Mount Everest, K2, and Kangchenjunga.

A tangled web: Iran U23 football team management

TEHRAN – Once again the project failed. Iran football federation and National Olympic Committee (NOC) failed to introduce the new head coach for Iran U23 football team.

Last night, the media reported that Paykan coach Mojtaba Hosseini has accepted to take charge of the team but today they have reported that he has refused to lead the team.

Afshin Ghotbi, Mehdi Tartar, Mohammad Rabiei and Mohraram Navidkia have been shortlisted to lead the team so far but the federation and the NOC have not yet succeeded in choosing the head coach.

With four months remaining until the 2024 AFC U23 Asian Cup qualification, the team are in a confused state.

The competition will be held from Sept. 4 to 12 in Qatar.

The 2024 AFC U23 Asian Cup will act as the AFC qualifiers for the 2024 Paris Olympics men's football tournament.

Iran U23 football team have not qualified for the Olympic Games since 1976.

Annual export from Fars province rises 80%



TEHRAN- The value of export from Fars province increased by 80 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20), according to a provincial official.

Ayoub Zareie, the director-general of the province's customs department, said that 732,878 tons of commodities worth \$807.05 million were exported from the province in the past year, showing also 101 percent growth in terms of weight, year on year.

He named aluminum ingot, urea fertilizer, and milk powder as the main exported items, and Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Oman as the major export destinations.

The official further announced that 182,251 tons of products valued at \$314.25 million were imported to the province in the previous year, and named China, UAE, Turkey, Germany, India, Philippines and Australia as the main sources of

imports.

As announced by the spokesman of Trade Development Committee of the Iranian House of Industry, Mining, and Trade, the value of Iran's non-oil export rose 10 percent in the past year.

Ruhollah Latifi said that 122.056 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$53.166 billion were exported in the previous year.

China with the purchase of \$14.584 billion of commodities (no change), Iraq with \$10.238 billion (15 percent growth), Turkey with \$7.459 billion (23 percent growth), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with \$5.767 billion (28 percent growth), and India with \$2.146 billion (18 percent growth) were the first five export destinations of Iranian goods in 1401, the official stated.

Latifi further announced that 3718 million tons of non-oil commodities valued at \$59.655 billion were imported to the country during the past year, with a 10 percent drop in weight, and a 13 percent rise in worth, year on year.

The UAE with sales of \$18.395 billion (11 percent growth), China with \$15.744 billion (24 percent growth), Turkey with \$6.99 billion (15 percent growth), India with \$2.019 billion (80 percent growth), and Germany with \$2.019 billion (five percent growth), were the first five countries supplying goods to Iran in 1401, he stated.

The official went on to say that the country's non-oil trade reached 159.236 million tons worth \$112.821 billion in the previous year, with an 11.2 percent growth year on year.

TEDPIX drops 23,000 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 23,324 points to 2.298 million on Saturday.

As reported, over 13.683 billion securities worth 108.319 trillion rials (about \$216.63 million) were traded at the TSE.

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).

The stock market transactions in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20) went through volatile days, which, according to experts, despite the value of the stock market for investment, the mistrust of shareholders and their fear of entering their capital into this market led to a decrease in liquidity and creating severe fluctuations in the stock market.

This condition caused the government and the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) to take effective measures to restore prosperity and investors' confidence in this market, in a way that many capital market experts believe that the outlook for investing in the stock market is positive in the current year.

Hossein Abdi, a capital market expert said that the government has a supportive approach to the capital market, and it seems to affect market transactions positively.

Analyzing the upward trend of the stock market and breaking the record of the index this year, he said the capital market started its work in the first week of this year with a very positive trend, which promises good days in the capital market for 1402.

TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is Iran's main stock exchange, jumped to 2.1 million points on April 4, registering a record high.

The forecasts indicate that the stock exchange transactions in the first three months of this year will experience good days and will provide good returns to the shareholders, Abdi further noted.

Meanwhile, as stated by the secretary general of Iran's Securities Exchange Brokers Association (SEBA), the government and Securities and Exchange Organization worked well to make changes in the stock market during the past Iranian year.

Mohammad-Reza Dehqani Ahmad-Abad added that these measures can bring good returns in the first half of 1402, but measures must be taken to remove the concerns from the stock market in the long term.

Also, in a message on the occasion of the New Year, SEO Head Majid Eshqi mentioned the measures taken by this organization in the past year, and explained the priorities and key plans of SEO in 1402.

NIOC inks 170 deals, MOUs with knowledge-based firms during Iran Oil Show

TEHRAN – Head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has said the company signed 170 deals and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with knowledge-based firms on the sidelines of the 27th International Oil, Gas, Refining, and Petrochemical Exhibition of Iran (Iran Oil Show 2023).

According to Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr, the mentioned documents include 120 MOUs and 50 deals, Shana reported.

Referring to the slogan of this year's exhibition, which is "oil industry, knowledge-based production, and optimal consumption", the official added: "We have had good meetings with the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology and Knowledge-



Based Economy in order to solve upstream issues and challenges related to oil and gas fields."

"I hope that at the end of this exhibition, we will witness the finalization of these contracts, and next year, we unveil the products of these [knowledge-

based] companies at the exhibition, and this will be the most important achievement," he added.

Iran Oil Show 2023 kicked off in a ceremony in the Iranian capital Tehran on Wednesday. The exhibition was wrapped up on

Saturday.

In addition to the Iranian firms, some 200 companies from 13 countries took part in this year's exhibition.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the exhibition, Oil Minister Javad Oji emphasized that Oil Show 2023 is more than a common exhibition, saying: "The presence of 200 foreign companies in this exhibition shows the strengthening of energy diplomacy by the current government."

This major event is one of the largest oil exhibitions in West Asia and the world, which is held every year more prosperously than in previous years despite the sanctions on the oil and gas industry, he added.

Iran's monthly non-oil export to Iraq up 43%



TEHRAN- The value of Iran's non-oil export to Iraq increased by 43 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 20), as compared to the first month of the past year, the spokesman of Trade Development Committee of the Iranian House of Industry, Mining, and Trade announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that importing non-oil commodities worth \$6.9 billion, Iraq was Iran's

first export destination in the said month.

The Arab country was Iran's sixth source of import in the first month, through exporting non-oil goods valued at \$71 million, with 30.5 percent drop year on year, he added.

As previously announced by an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), the value of Iran's export to Iraq increased by 15 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Farzad Piltan, the director-general of TPO's Office of West Asian Countries, said that based on the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported commodities worth over \$10 billion to its neighbor in the previous year.

By stating that Iraq is one of the strategic partners of Iran in the field of foreign trade and especially exports, he put the value of Iran's import from Iraq at about \$200 million in the past year.

Considering Iran's vast export capacity and Iraq's large market for Iranian goods, both sides want to expand the volume of bilateral economic exchanges.

Iran and Iraq have set a target of \$20 billion in annual trade, and businessmen and authorities of both countries are determined to meet that target, Head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce Yahya Ale-Es'haq has stated.

"In general, Iran and Iraq have agreed to improve relations and change the monetary and banking conditions so that the central banks of the two countries will ease the current situation and solve the problems," he has noted.

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

Iran, Russia to develop fishery ties

TEHRAN - In a meeting of the Joint Fisheries Committee of Iran and Russia, the two sides stressed the need for the expansion of cooperation for facilitating the export of fishery products to Russia through the development of transportation routes.

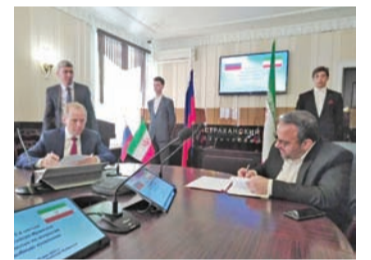
As IRIB reported, during the meeting, the fishery officials of the two countries discussed ways of cooperation in various areas including processing and trade

of fishery products, scientific and research, restoration of reserves and aquaculture, as well as, the development of investment in Iran's fisheries industry.

Iran and Russia have been boosting their economic ties as the two sanctioned nations take new steps for expanding cooperation in the energy sector and increasing settlements in national currencies.

In early February, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko told Interfax that the two countries are actively cooperating in banking and are planning to ramp up the share of national currencies in mutual settlements.

"We are continuing to work with Iran while promoting trade transactions in national currencies. The share of such settlements exceeded 60 percent



in 2021. The positive trend continued last year," Rudenko said in an interview with Interfax.

IGTC's annual gas transmission expected to hit 280b cubic meters

TEHRAN – Natural gas transmission via Iran's national network is expected to reach 280 billion cubic meters in the current Iranian calendar year 1402 (began on March 21), Iranian Gas Transmission Company (IGTC)'s Managing Director Gholam-Abbas Hosseini announced.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 27th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2023) on Saturday, Hosseini said the volume of gas transmitted through the country's network increased by 2.2 percent in the previous year.

As IRNA reported, the official said NIGTC delivers natural gas to 2,200 pressure reduction stations, cities, and large industries such as petrochemicals and power plants.

"Gas is also stored at Shourijeh and Sarajeh storage facilities and injected into oil wells at three points," he added.

Hosseini noted that NIGTC operates the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)'s largest physical asset which is the country's national



gas network, saying: "In total, there are 39,000 kilometers of high-pressure gas transmission lines, 90 pressure reduction stations, 61 operating yards and 330 compressors operating under NIGTC across the country."

According to the official, the company also managed to complete 107 cases of major overhauls last year, and while conducting smart tracking on 3,000 kilometers of pipelines, 1100 cases of small repairs and 48,000 kilometers of leak detection were also carried out on the facilities and lines operated by the NIGTC.

Operating the largest natural gas network

in West Asia, NIGC has been continuously expanding this network into the country's most remote areas so that currently over 98 percent of the urban population, as well as 90 percent of the country's rural population, have access to natural gas through this huge network.

IGTC completed 107 cases of major overhauls last year.

IGTC, as the NIGC's subsidiary in charge of the management, maintenance, and operation of the country's national gas network, has been working around the clock to ensure a safe, secure, and sustained supply of natural gas throughout the country all year long, especially during the cold seasons.

350 tons of Sabalan honey exported in a year



TEHRAN- The deputy head of the Agriculture Department of Ardebil province announced that 350 tons of Sabalan honey

were exported in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Nobakht Ajdari said that currently, there are 534,000 beehives in the province, and the beekeepers of the province produce more than 9,000 tons of honey annually, of this amount, 1,500 tons are consumed inside the province.

Honey is one of the most important souvenirs of Ardebil province in the northwest of Ira.

The honey produced in Ardebil province, which is known as Sabalan honey, has been registered internationally and has a national

and international reputation.

According to the latest census of the country's aparies by the Agriculture Ministry, the production of honey is 136,000 tons in the country, a board member of the Iran Beekeepers Association has announced.

Mohammad Fekri said that with producing 30,000 tons of honey per annum, West Azarbaijan province supplies more than 22 percent of the country's annual honey, East Azarbaijan, Fars, Ardebil and Kermanshah provinces come next, and about 43 percent of the honey is produced in other provinces.

4,500,000 victims of U.S. wars after 9/11

By Ali Karbalaei

TEHRAN- New research reveals the U.S. so-called war on terror has killed at least 4.5 - 4.6 million people and counting.

The study, published in a report, by the Costs of War project at Brown University in the American state of Rhode Island has revealed the horrifying numbers as a result of U.S.-led military adventurism in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Libya and Somalia.

The report cites the direct war fatalities such as attacks that directly killed nearly one million people.

According to the research, another major aspect that has indirectly killed millions more is the military destruction of economies, public services, infrastructure, and the environment, which adds to the death toll long after bombs are dropped and increases over time. The report estimates that these factors have contributed to the deaths of more than 3.5 million people.

The second aspect requires more research, which the project highlights as "many long-term and under-appreciated consequences of war" that need to be studied in more detail.

Other research indicates that the direct war fatalities that killed nearly one million people is an undercount, something which again the report alludes to, saying "precise mortality figure remains unknown".

In another section of the project's report on the death toll in Iraq, it reads "estimates of war deaths in Iraq have been particularly controversial. A 2006 article in The Lancet estimated that approximately 600,000 Iraqis had died due to war violence between 2003 and 2006".

The report goes on to say the controversy over the conflicting reports on the death toll in Iraq stems from news outlets that are opposed to the war, who overplayed the death toll, while those who supported the illegal invasion downplayed the death toll.

The project cites a report from the Lancet that says the death toll in Iraq from 2003 and in the following three years alone had reached 600,000 Iraqis. There have been various unbiased studies that concluded more than one million Iraqis have been killed as a result of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq from 2003 to 2011.

Even the one million mark of Iraqi deaths can be considered an undercount when there were daily reports of almost daily terror



bombings that killed either scores or hundreds of Iraqis. And then, add to that the era of the U.S. and Daesh from 2014 to 2017 where hundreds of thousands of others were slaughtered and it's not difficult to imagine more than one million Iraqis have died and continue to die today as a result of the U.S. so-called "war on terror".

There is little doubt that the U.S. has brought nothing but insecurity and instability to West Asia, with its military presence. In January 2018, the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said:

A report from the Lancet says the death toll in Iraq from 2003 and in the following three years alone had reached 600,000 Iraqis.

"America's corrupting presence in this region should end... In this region, they brought war, discord, sedition, destruction, destruction of infrastructure. Of course, wherever they stepped in the world, they acted the same way... this must end."

The latest research by the Costs of War project also warns that "these wars are ongoing for millions around the world who are living with and dying from their effects." The report put emphasis on the effects of U.S. wars on women and children who "suffer the brunt of these ongoing impacts."

The report notes that while some people were killed in fighting, far more, especially children, have been killed by the reverberating effects of U.S. wars, such as the spread of disease and damage to public

services for example. "More studies are necessary on the impact of war's destruction of public services, especially beyond the healthcare system, on population health," the report says. "Damage to water and sanitation systems, roads, and commercial infrastructure such as ports, for instance, have significant but less understood consequences."

The research says wars and conflicts which the U.S. has waged or been engaged in under the pretext of countering terrorism since September 11, 2001 makes clear that the impacts of war's ongoing violence are so vast and complex that they are unquantifiable.

It should be noted that after the September 11 attacks, the U.S. waged wars and sparked conflicts, especially in West Asia under the pretext of fighting terrorism. However, as a result of the U.S. military adventurism, there has been an extremely sharp rise in terrorist groups that had no presence in West Asia or countries such as Somalia before Washington's intervention in the region.

In other words, the so-called "war on terror" has had the complete opposite effect of the slogan under which the Pentagon waged a campaign of instability in West Asia that allowed terrorism to flourish.

The report says the damage caused and ongoing deaths from wars means those who waged them should shoulder the responsibility in repairing the damage inflicted.

Millions of people are still in distress, pain and traumatized in both current and former warzones, the study says, calling on the U.S. as well as its allies to alleviate the ongoing losses and suffering of millions of people and provide the required "reparations, though not easy or cheap". This is something "imperative," the report points out.

The project blames the U.S. for its role in the military adventurism it has embarked on post 9/11, in particular the casualties inflicted

during the American two-year war and occupation of Afghanistan.

The report focuses on Afghanistan as an example of how people, in particular women and children, the most vulnerable in society, are dying because despite the U.S. (shambolic) withdrawal, the damage Washington inflicted on Afghanistan's vital services, such as the health sector and the damage the U.S. caused to the country's sanitation and other infrastructure in the 20 years of war and occupation means Afghans are still dying today.

"Though in 2021 the United States withdrew military forces from Afghanistan, officially ending a war that began with its invasion 20 years' prior, today Afghans are suffering and dying from war-related causes at higher rates than ever," the report alarmingly points out.

The Costs of War project said that far more research is needed to collect more adequate data "to guide life-saving interventions."

"More studies are necessary on the impact of war's destruction of public services, especially beyond the healthcare system, on population health," the report noted. "Damage to water and sanitation systems, roads, and commercial infrastructure such as ports, for instance, have significant but less understood consequences."

In the case of Somalia for example, U.S. intervention and the war that followed has prevented the delivery of humanitarian aid, which the research says exacerbated famine; this is a natural disaster that could have been alleviated if the U.S. instead chose to spend a vast amount of money in humanitarian assistance programs and not radicalizing the local population (and increasing terrorism and bloodshed) by bombing civilians with drones in the sky.

A section of the report reads "though all warring parties must be held responsible, in the sections on the causal pathways this report does touch on relevant consequences of United States actions in particular because that is where the Costs of War project is based and has the most potential to promote government accountability."

Critics argue that if the United States had not waged war against countries in West Asia or provoked conflicts in the region, then other parties would not have engaged in any combat missions. In this case, the U.S. must be solely responsible for the disturbing direct and indirect death toll as a result of its provocative and illegal military measures.

WORLD HEADLINES

G7 expresses commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons: statement

The Group of Seven (G7) countries expressed their commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons in a statement adopted at the G7 summit in the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

"We express our commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all, through taking a realistic, pragmatic, and responsible approach," the statement read.

The G7 leaders also reaffirmed "the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts to create a more stable and safer world."

"The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy," the document added.

UK warned about food inflation shock

Rising food prices will soon overtake energy costs as the main force fueling inflation in the UK, an independent think tank warned in a report on Friday.

Food makes up a far larger share of the typical household's consumption than energy, says the Resolution Foundation, whose aim is to improve living standards for those on low to middle incomes.

As grocery prices will remain at a high level while energy costs decline, this summer "food costs will have overtaken energy bills in the scale of the shock they are administering to family finances," the think tank predicted.

Grocery bills have jumped by almost 20% during the past year, official figures for March showed, with the overall consumer price index standing at 10.1%. Energy prices peaked at record levels last year but have since declined significantly.

Apart from energy, food-cost increases in the UK have been attributed to factors such as supply-chain disruptions caused by the conflict in Ukraine, Brexit-related trade barriers, rising labor costs, and bad weather.

'War is not an option', Taiwan president says

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen vowed on Saturday to maintain the status quo of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait amid high tensions with China, which has stepped up military pressure on the governed island.

Taiwan will not provoke and will not bow to Chinese pressure, Tsai said in a speech in the presidential office in Taipei marking the seventh anniversary of her governance.

US to allow allied transfers of F16-s to Ukraine

The US government will not block allied countries from sending F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine, multiple news outlets reported on Friday, citing American officials.

Sources cited by the Washington Post, CNN, NBC, and other outlets said the White House is prepared to allow F-16 shipments after months of Ukrainian requests for the aircraft, which is used by more than two dozen nations.

A senior White House official told NBC that Washington had already informed its partners about the decision.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Hiroshima on Saturday, White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said, "In the coming months, we will work with our allies to determine when the planes will be delivered, who will be delivering them, and how many."

Global de-dollarization begins in practice, Lavrov says

"Global de-dollarization has started to take effect, as evidenced by practical measures and conceptual speeches," stated Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during the 31st Assembly of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy on Saturday.

He added that "de-dollarization is underway." Earlier, Vaola Sambo (Ph.D.), an economics and management expert from the University of South Africa, told TASS that creating a reserve currency for trade purposes is seen by BRICS countries as a step towards de-dollarization, which could reduce reliance on the US dollar.

By Salman Parviz

The share of U.S. dollar reserves held in central banks fell to 59 percent - its lowest level in 25 years - during the fourth quarter of 2020, according to the IMF's Currency Composition of Official Foreign Exchange Reserves (COFER) survey. Some analysts say this partly reflects the declining role of the U.S. dollar in the global economy.

Economic analysts expect that the U.S. dollar's share of global reserves will continue to fall as emerging market and developing economy central banks seek further diversification of the currency composition of their reserves. A few countries, such as Russia, have already announced their intention to do so.

Greenback's rise

On July 1, 1944, as the battles of the Second World War raged in Europe and the Pacific, delegates from 44 countries met at the secluded Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. Thus, the name Bretton Woods Agreement to create a new world order in the post-World War II era. The agreement instilled the dollar as the de facto global currency.

Under the agreement gold was

the basis for the U.S. dollar and other currencies were pegged to the U.S. dollar value. By 1971, former U.S. President Richard Nixon ended the dollar's convertibility to gold as U.S. balance of payments deficits led to foreign-held dollars exceeding the U.S. gold stock, implying that the U.S. could not fulfill its obligation to redeem dollars for gold any longer.

Although the Bretton Woods was short-lived, the dollar standard remained as the currency for international trade and the price of the commodity that made the global wheels run, i.e. price crude oil was fixed in dollars.

Today the dollar reigns supreme. The world's biggest economy can print greenbacks at will to save itself from budget deficits, can lower or hike federal reserve interest rates to control the price of global crude and other commodities, can manipulate interest rates to pressure emerging and poor economies that hold their foreign reserves in the Greenback.

Recent U.S. Federal Reserve's historic interest rate rises raised indebtedness of emerging economies. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members are exploring how to promote

Dethroning dollar

The rise and fall of the Greenback

the use of local currencies in their bilateral trade.

Downward trend

According to the IMF the greenback's share of global foreign-exchange reserves has extended a two-decade decline, but it's still used more than all other currencies combined.

The dollar continues to play the role of number one global currency as the American economy has been producing a shrinking share of global output over the last two decades.

RMB bloc

Chinese trade and lending have been expanding in recent years as the renminbi (also known as yuan) use has risen.

With China's share of global goods trade now around 15 percent, the renminbi's reach will expand. The world's second largest economy and the largest consumer of crude is bound to challenge the dollar's hegemony with renminbi.

Kicking off his first visit since taking

office in January to China, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva attacked the U.S. dollar hegemony in international trade, asking "why can't we do trade based on our own currencies?"

Lula called on developing nations to work towards replacing U.S. dollar with their own currencies in international trade. He called on BRICS (acronym for five regional economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) to come up with their own alternative currency for use of trade.

Prior to Lula's visit, China and Brazil agreed to settle trades in each other's currencies. France also recently conducted its first liquefied natural gas sale in renminbi.

The rise of the Chinese currency will take some time as only three percent of central bank reserves are in renminbi. The Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) puts global transactions in renminbi at 2.5 percent, compared to 39.4 percent for the dollar and 35.89 percent for the euro.

Sanctions regime

The U.S. economic sanctions on many nations have prompted them to use alternative currencies and even barter trade for exchange of goods.

After sanctions were applied to Russia following the Ukrainian conflict and simultaneously many Chinese companies were sanctioned by U.S. and EU, transactions between the two neighbors shifted to renminbi.

Official data shows yuan became the most widely used currency for cross-border transactions in China overtaking the dollar for the first time.

Imports of Russian oil, piped-gas, coal and some metals from its neighbor were settled in renminbi. According to Reuters, the bilateral trade stands roughly at 88 billion dollars. This accelerates China's efforts to internationalize its currency.

Iran and India established a rupee payment mechanism to eliminate dollar transactions. The state-owned United Commercial Bank (UCO) has been the primary payment settlement bank for India-Iran trade ties due to U.S. sanctions on Iran.

The payment mechanism to import crude from Iran had provided the state-owned lender good chunk of interest-

free floating fund, which helped it reduce its cost of funds.

Last year in a meeting between Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and his Indian counterpart Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Abdollahian pointed out that there are existing mechanisms within the framework of international law which can help in reviving the "banking and financial interaction", pointing out that Tehran has implemented such a mechanism with a dozen countries already.

A landmark agreement was signed by Jaishankar and visiting Russian deputy prime minister Denis Manturov on April 18 in New Delhi, where India agreed to adopt the Russian SPFS financial messaging system for making banking payments to Russia.

The deal also allows acceptance of Indian Ru-Pay cards and India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) in Russia, and the Russian MIR cards and its Fast Payments Systems (FPS) in India.

Meanwhile, last year UCO Bank received the necessary approval from the regulator - the Reserve Bank of India - to open a special rupee account with Russia's Gazprombank to facilitate trade between the two countries.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Iran's Shalbfafian, Tatarstan's Ivanov explore ways to step up cooperation on tourism



TEHRAN— On Friday, Iran's deputy tourism minister Ali-Asghar Shalbfafian and Tatarstan's chairman of the state committee for tourism, Sergey Ivanov explored ways to expand cooperation on tourism.

Direct flights between Tehran and Kazan, fam tours, B2B meetings and attempts to simplify visa requirements were among issues discussed in their meeting held in Kazan on the sidelines of the 14th International Economic Forum, "Russia-Islamic World."

Moreover, the officials agreed to exchange delegations from tourism companies to help develop mutual tourism relations, Mehr re-

ported.

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.

Iran's foreign tourist arrivals in 2022 rose 315 percent from a year earlier, as mentioned by the statistics bureau of the World Tourism Organization. Data showed around 4.1 million tourists came to the country in 2022, while the Islamic Republic attracted 990,000 tourists in 2021.

There are three UNESCO world heritage sites in Tatarstan—Kazan Kremlin, Bulgarian State Museum-Reserve, and Assumption Cathedral and Monastery of the town-island of Sviyazhsk. The annual growth rate of tourist flow to the republic is on average 13.5%; the growth rate of the volume of services in the tourism sector is 17.0%. Tatarstan is located in the center of the East European Plain, approximately 800 kilometers east of Moscow.

Sa'd al-Saltaneh jewel of Iran caravanserais, deputy tourism minister says

TEHRAN – Iran has nominated 56 caravanserais for a collective inscription on the UNESCO list for World Heritage, deputy tourism minister Ali Darabi said on Saturday.

"[A selection of] 56 Iranian caravanserais will be registered on the UNESCO list... and Sa'd al-Saltaneh caravansary of Qazvin shines like a jewel among them," the official said.

He made the remarks during a visit to Qazvin province when he called it a cradle of culture and arts, Mehr reported.

Located in the ancient city of Qazvin, the vast caravanserai is flanked by a beautifully restored Qajar-era bazaar of the same name.

For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a caravanserai can be a wide experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age!



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 castle of the Assassins and trekking in Alamut Valley.

Bone tools in Neanderthal cave hint at prehistoric osseous industry



The recent discovery of over 1,000 bone tools in a Neanderthal cave in Siberia has ignited a debate over whether our extinct cousins were capable of producing utensils from animal skeletons as well as stone.

To assess whether this osseous assemblage was a one-off, the authors of an as-yet un-peer-reviewed study looked for similar artifacts at other Neanderthal sites, concluding that the ancient species routinely made tools out of bone, IFL Science reported.

Previously, it had been assumed that only anatomically modern humans used bone as a material for toolmaking. The appearance of the earliest Homo sapiens coincides with the appearance of bone objects such as hunting weapons, ornaments, and figurines in the archaeological record.

In contrast, the absence of bone artifacts prior to the emergence of modern humans had fueled the belief that Neanderthals did not produce a bone industry. However, this widely-supported notion received a significant challenge with the discovery of around 1,200 bone tools at the Neanderthal site of Chagyrskaya in Altai, Siberia.

"To date, the Chagyrskaya bone tools provide the only example of a Neanderthal bone

industry, at least, for which the authorship of [modern humans] cannot be considered," write the study authors. They, therefore, questioned whether the use of bone tools was common to all Neanderthals or emerged as a local adaptation within this eastern population.

To investigate, the researchers searched for bone assemblages in the western reaches of Neanderthal territory. Specifically, they analyzed a series of ancient remains that were discovered at the Chez-Pinaud site in France in 2019.

"Our main study objective was to identify, in the western side of the Neanderthal expansion zone, evidence of a common use of bone as a raw material for tool making, as we did in the easternmost part in the Chagyrskaya Cave," write the authors. "The identification of 103 bone tools... at the Chez-Pinaud site provides such evidence," they continue.

Of these 103 bone tools, 83 are classified as "retouchers," meaning they display only a small amount of modification and are therefore ambiguous in terms of their function. However, among the remaining 20 items, the researchers identified bone tools that functioned "as wedge/chisel, lateral cutting edges and, perhaps, pressure flaker."

Importantly, the number of bone tools discovered at the site was roughly equal to the number of flint tools, indicating that the cave's Neanderthal occupants "produced a variety of tools for different tasks."

According to the authors, bone was seen as "a privileged medium for the manufacture of objects" by ancient Homo sapiens, as its "resistance to impact and relative elasticity make it better suited to certain tasks than flint." And while their analysis is yet to be scrutinized or published, their findings suggest that Neanderthals may have been equally appreciative of the wonder of bone.

Deep in dark: the allure and adventure of Iran caves

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – Having a wealth of geological and cultural treasures, caves have always been mysterious and fascinating for adventurers.

Cave tourism is a unique and rewarding form of traveling that allows visitors to discover the hidden wonders of the earth, contribute to the local economy, and support conservation and scientific research.

Some say exploring these underground labyrinths is not only an adventure of a lifetime, but also a way of understanding the Earth's history, biodiversity and human heritage.

One of the most popular destinations for cave enthusiasts is Ali-Sadr Cave, located near the city of Hamadan. It is a gigantic water-filled cavern is believed to date from the Jurassic era. It embraces a huge matrix of sunless channels, ponds, grottoes, and water passages which are stretched along with imposing rock formations and stalactite-covered tops in a span of several kilometers.

The entrance to the lengthy cave is situated some 70km north of Hamadan. Sightseeing there is connected with traversing well-lit labyrinths of waterways via paddle boats, walking on subterranean islets, as well as observing rock carvings of hunting scenes, artifacts, paintings, and vessels that are associated with prehistoric troglodytes.

Another popular destination is Katala-Khor, a limestone cave full of natural crystals believed to date from the Jurassic era, which



Visitors walk through the picturesque Katala-Khor cave in Zanjan province, west-central Iran. Jam-packed with natural crystals, the limestone cave is believed to date from the Jurassic era.

is located in the northwestern Zanjan province.

Literally meaning "Mountain of the Sun", the cave is said to date back to some 120 million years ago, so it has embraced lots of natural and artificial changes during this lengthy period. The cave was reportedly discovered some seven decades ago by a group of Iranian cavers.

The interior of the cave includes huge hallways and corridors, impressively illuminated by flashlights. So far, about three-sevenths of the extensive cave have been explored. A length of about 3 km of the cave is open to the public, while a 4 km long path is accessible to experienced cavers and researchers.

Situated on a large cliff, some 40 km from Takab in the western province of Kordestan, the Karaftu Cave ensemble has served as a dwelling since the

early Sasanian period (224–651). The enigmatic caves were formed naturally, but have been modified by the inhabitants over the centuries. In ancient times, these caves were important from an economic point of view because they were on the Silk Road.

The Karaftu ensemble is also significant for a Greek inscription found in them, as this is one of the few examples of such a script preserved in situ in Iran.

Quri Qaleh (or Quri Qala Cave) is located in the foothills of the Shaho mountain range, 86 kilometers from the western province of Kermanshah.

The water cave, which is formed some 65 million years ago, is 12 kilometers long and 3,140 meters deep. Being explored for the first time in the 1950s, the cave is one of the longest caves in Western Asia.

There are some historical signs

from the Sassanid era (224–651 CE) found in the cave, including silver plates, some pieces of pottery and 15 coins from the Yazdgerd III period. There are also some words in Pahlavi on plates and coins. Moreover, archaeology excavations have revealed that the Quri Qaleh Cave was a hunting lodge during the Stone Age.

Cave tourism in Iran is not just limited to these destinations. Other popular caves include Sarab Cave and Chama Ice Cave, which boast unique features, ranging from stunning underground waterfalls to mesmerizing crystal formations.

The historical cave of Sarab is located in the small town of Baba-Heidar, in the southwest of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province. The limestone cave is considered one of the most beautiful and original attractions in the region. Entering this cave and trekking through it is a very exciting and challenging task, as it is in a spot with a narrow path that runs parallel to a valley.

Even if you cannot enter the cave, you can enjoy the cold and refreshing water of spring at the entrance of the cave. The cave's small entrance opens into a beautiful corridor with stalactite-covered spikes that look like chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

One of the most popular destinations for nature travelers in the southwestern province of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari is the Chama Ice Cave, which despite its natural beauty is very dangerous. Located in the central part of Koorang town, the Ice Cave is a popular place for people who want to escape the heat.

Tehran, Moscow sign memorandum of understanding on tourism

TEHRAN – Iran and Russia on Friday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to expand tourism cooperation.

The MoU was inked by Ali Asghar Shalbfafian, Iranian deputy minister of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts, and Dmitry Vakhrukov, Russia's deputy minister of economic development on the sidelines of the 14th International Economic Forum "Russia-Islamic world" held in Kazan.

Under the agreement, related Iranian and Russian ministries will jointly push forward the implementation of a visa-free agreement signed in 2017 for granting visa waivers to tour groups from the two countries.

Among other things, the MoU also aims to strengthen bilateral tourism cooperation and promote tourism exchanges between the two sides, including the exchange of tourism experts and the exchange of experience and information.

Shalbfafian said at the signing ceremony that Russia could become a high-priority tourism market for Iran.

Vakhrukov, for his part, expressed hope that Iranian tourists could be granted visa-free en-

try to Russia as of summer.

The officials exchanged views on prospects of a visa waiver for tourist groups, based on an initial agreement that former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin inked in 2017.

Emerging destination

Ivan Malofeev from the Moscow City Tourism Committee believes that Iran, as a travel destination, is still obscure for potential Russian travelers, noting its Islamic culture may be a strong incentive to draw sightseers.

Meanwhile, Iran's Islamic culture is expected to be a significant factor for some Russians to visit Iran, Malofeev told ILNA in an interview published earlier this year.

Regarding Russian tourists' awareness of Iran as an emerging destination, Malofeev said: "My opinion is that although we are now witnessing the development and expansion of relations between the two countries, that caution still exists among many Russians whether it is possible to travel to these new countries or not."

As mentioned by Ebrahim Pourfaraj, who presides over the Iranian Tour Operators As-



sociation, the majority of potential Russian travelers are unaware of the vast tourist attractions that exist in every corner of Iran. "The fact is that Iran's political and economic relations with Russia are considered good, but this has nothing to do with attracting tourists because it is directly connected with the Russian people. It is the Russian people who must choose Iran as their destination."

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.

Collection of rarely-seen carpets unveiled at Tehran museum



TEHRAN – A collection of rarely-seen carpets has been unveiled for a public exhibition at the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran, Mehr reported on Saturday.

The collection showcases 32 handwoven rugs and carpets that date from the Safavid era (1501-1736) and Qajar epoch (1789 to 1925).

Moreover, the ensemble showcases three pieces of traditional-

ly decorated textiles, the report said.

The exhibit is organized to commemorate the International Museum Day and will be running through May 27.

Persian carpets are sought after internationally, with the medallion pattern being arguably the most characteristic feature of them all. Weavers spend several months in front of a loom, stringing and knotting thousands of threads. Some practice established patterns. Some make their own.

Each Persian carpet is a scene that seems as ageless, a procedure that can take as long as a year. These efforts have long put Iran's carpets among the most complex and labor-intensive

handicrafts in the world. When the weaving is finally done, the carpet is cut, washed, and put out in the sun to dry.

Throughout history, invaders, politicians, and even enemies have left their impact on Iran's carpets. As mentioned by Britannica Encyclopedia, little is known about Persian carpet making before the 15th century, when art was already approaching a peak.

For instance, the Mongol invasion of the 13th century depressed Persia's artistic life, only partially restored by the renaissance under the Mongol Il-Khan dynasty (1256–1353). Although the conquests of Timur (who died in 1405) were in most respects disastrous to Persia, he favored artisans and spared them to work on his great palaces in Sa-

markand.

Later in the 17th century, there was a growing demand for the production of so many gold-and silver-threaded carpets that were ultimately exported to Europe. Some were made in Kashan, but many of the finest came from Isfahan. With their high-keyed fresh colors and opulence, they have affinities with European Renaissance and Baroque idioms.

At the beginning of the 18th century, nomads and town dwellers were still making carpets using dyes developed over centuries, each group maintaining an authentic tradition. Not made for an impatient Western market, these humbler rugs of the "low school" are frequently beautifully designed and are of good material and technique.

Health Ministry concludes tuberculosis control program

TEHRAN - Mahshid Nasehi, a health ministry official, has said that the ministry has concluded a tuberculosis control program across the country.

"In this program, a total of 13,478 people were identified with suspected symptoms of tuberculosis, of which 386 people were found to be suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis, and free treatment was also started for them," she explained.

The national strategic program for tuberculosis control is one of the main interventions to carry out active TB diagnosis (screening) in populations at higher risk or vulnerable populations, Nasehi noted.

"Among the vulnerable populations that have been added to the list of population subgroups defined in the national tuberculosis control program in recent years and have been emphasized more than before, we can refer to immigrants and refugees regardless of nationality," she pointed out.

In February, Nasehi said that the issue is not limited to non-Iranians, that is, 30-40 percent of the people who may be covered by vaccination or TB treatment in this program are Iranians.

"Family members of tuberculosis patients, people with HIV infection, people who have kidney failure and are on dialysis, those who have pulmonary silicosis or are candidates for transplantation, and patients who, due to the treatment process, need suppressive treatments, are the main groups that we are responsible for checking their sta-



tus."

"Other groups such as people who live in underdeveloped areas, homeless people, drug addicts, and immigrants coming from countries with a high prevalence of tuberculosis are also our second priority."

Vaccination of foreign nationals

A plan for the vaccination of foreign nationals against three contagious diseases was started on December 31, 2022, and is progressing according to the schedule.

The program was started in 27 universities of medical sciences in the country, and fortunately, the work has progressed well and has been welcomed by the target community, Mohsen Zahraei, the head of the preventable diseases department of the Ministry of Health, said on January 11.

By referring to health centers and bases, they receive the oral vaccines of polio, double measles, and rubella, he said.

On December 23, 2022, a national specialized workshop for 'risk communication and social participation' was held in order to empower health workers in the supplementary vaccination campaign for the refugee population with the participation of UNICEF.

Considering the Risk Communication and Social Participation Program (RCCE) is one of the most important health promotion programs the program was a combination of information campaigns, health promotion, social mobilization, attracting people participation, and other organizations, and establishing effective communication.

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.

Concerns about the spread of measles in the country are growing as the Afghan population grows.

Polio is a highly infectious viral disease that largely affects children under 5 years of age. The virus is transmitted by person-to-person spread mainly through the fecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (e.g. contaminated water or food) and multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and cause paralysis.

Measles is caused by a virus in the paramyxovirus family and it is normally passed through direct contact and through the air. The virus infects the respiratory tract, then spreads throughout the body. Measles is a human disease and is not known to occur in animals.

More than 140,000 people died from measles in 2018 - mostly children under the age of 5 years, despite the availability of a safe and effective vaccine.

The inhumane sanctions have had devastating effects on the health system and the question is who is responsible for the deaths of some innocent patients due to the lack of essential medicines, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has said.

Family doctors: the heart of health care

By Ebrahim Nouri Goushki

TEHRAN - Family physicians are often considered the heart of a nation's healthcare program for several reasons.

Long-term communication: Family physicians are often the first point of contact for the healthy and sick community seeking health care.

They provide continuous and comprehensive care to healthy and ill people throughout their lives and build long-term relationships with them.

This allows doctors to understand the medical history, lifestyle, and social conditions of the community under their care and provide them with personalized care and support.

Holistic approach: Considering the physical health of the covered community, family doctors not only have a holistic approach to health care but also consider the improvement of her emotional, social, and psychological relationships.

They focus on preventive care, screening, and early detection of diseases to help patients maintain health and prevent chronic diseases.

Care Coordination: Family physicians serve as the central point of coordination for the health care needs of the community.

They work with other healthcare providers, such as specialists and hospitals, to ensure that people receive the best possible care and avoid duplication of services.

Advocacy and education: Family physicians are advocates for their communities, helping them navigate the health care system and access the resources they need.

They also educate patients about their health, including how to manage chronic disease conditions, make healthy lifestyle choices, and prevent disease.

Family doctors play an important role in improving the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

Their dedication, compassion, and expertise make them the heart of healthcare and a trusted source of support for patients and families.

Family doctors have always been the backbone of health care. Family doctors have always been a platform for comprehensive, compassionate, and people-oriented care.

Family doctors have a unique perspective on patients' health challenges and can provide comprehensive care, playing a major role in this axis towards primary health care.

We believe that the focus should be on preventive health care and social care, and better use should be made of existing human resources, especially family doctors, in the field of care and prevention.

The humanization of primary care means that family physicians (they go by many names: general practitioners, family doctors, primary consultants) should be more involved in prevention and health care and not just work as supervisors and gateways to secondary services.

Governments should be responsible for coordinating health care because it is part of the health care infrastructure in their countries. Governments are also well placed to facilitate



the necessary cooperation between different interest groups by advocating effective policies.

There is a clear need for "human-centered" designs across the spectrum of healthcare (including new technologies). This is critical because it can help optimize the patient experience.

Currently, in several countries and regions of the world, sufficient leverage has been provided to move toward these goals.

Patient communities must guide the discussion around awareness and understanding of the importance of the existing social contract and its potential changes.

All stakeholders are urged to consistently respect and apply these frameworks for a humane approach to health care, and more than any other group of health care providers, family physicians play a uniquely pivotal role as stewards of the system.

They have public health care, although there are limitations in the health care system, including the inability to focus on eliminating health disparities and timely provision of financial resources as the main drivers of power in health care.

In any case, family physicians provide primary and continuing care for the entire family in communities, addressing physical, mental, and social problems and coordinating the full range of healthcare services with other professionals.

In Iran, more than 38 years have passed since the successful implementation of the network expansion plan in accordance with the principles of PHC in the villages, which has been the reason for the pride of the health system of the Islamic Republic of Iran in all corners of the world.

Since 2005, by maintaining the same structure, free insurance plan for villagers with family doctor plan and referral system in rural, nomadic areas and cities with less than 20,000 people, provided the means to improve the health of more villagers.

According to many national and international experts, relying on the same principles by removing the weaknesses of its program on the one hand and the not so satisfactory success of the people and service providers in providing the O2 urban version in Fars and Mazandaran which made the fundamental changes in health promotion, our expert team on the other hand decided to consider the weaknesses of the existing packages (rural and urban) to implement a model of family medicine program and referral system with a team-oriented approach as it happened in the country's rural networks. Let's implement the whole country, both rural and urban, with almost the same conditions.

Jobs created for over 3,000 women heads of household

TEHRAN - More than 3,000 jobs have been created for women heads of household across the country, Ensieh Khazali, the vice president for women and family affairs, has said.

Within the framework of a sustainable family-oriented business program, jobs have been created for more than three thousand female breadwinners in 21 provinces, she added.

Referring to the key role of women and mothers in promoting the culture of work and laying the foundation for production directly and indirectly, the vice president said: "Population growth is one of the important factors of sustainable production.

Therefore, we should pay attention to the labor force, both quantitatively and qualitatively, as the most important component of power and economic growth."

The National Headquarters for Women and Family Affairs has approved six plans to support families and empower women and improve their status in society.

The formation of a loan guarantee fund for women heads of households was one of the plans of the National Headquarters for Women and Family Affairs.

According to official statistics, there are 3.5 million female heads of households, but according to unofficial statistics, the figure reaches more than 6 million.

The government has prioritized such families for targeting socio-economic support.

The Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs has released a report on the achievements of women after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in 7 areas of "education", "health", "employment and entrepreneurship", "media", "sports", "decision-making", and "environment, climate, and crises".

In the field of education, the share of women in university faculty members has increased by 33.3 percent, and in medical sciences universities by 34 percent. Also, the number of female students in the country's universities has increased by 56 percent, according to the report.

Also, illiteracy among women and girls has been nearly eradicated as the literacy rate reached 99.3 percent and the ratio of female to male students has increased by 28 percent.

The report also says that after the Islamic Revolution until the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022), more than 9,500 female authors and 840 female publishers were active in the country.

In the field of employment and entrepreneurship, 4,200 rural women's credit funds have been operating. Also, 2,390 women work as members of the board of directors of knowledge-based companies.

According to this report, there are 16,111 sports



clubs for women in the country, and 3,302 medals have been won by female athletes in recent world events.

Moreover, 70 women have been presidents of sports committees at the provincial level, and 51 women have been presidents and heads of sports federations. Also, 88,366 women referees have participated in national and international competitions, and Iranian women have worked in 97 international seats in world sports federations.

In the field of media, the participation rate of women in the field of information technology has reached 5.31 percent, 903 women filmmakers have worked in the field of cinema and 2000 women specialists have worked behind the scenes.

Also, 114 national awards and 128 international awards have been won by female filmmakers in prominent festivals.

ENGLISH IN USE

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'Climate change impact on Iran doubles world average'

The effects of climate change on Iran has more than doubled on average compared to other parts of the world, while southern provinces of the country are more likely to bear the consequences, secretary of environmental policy at the center for strategic studies affiliated to the presidential office has said.

"The Hoomand-Absard station in Damavand county in northeast of Tehran experienced a temperature increase of 2.7 °C over the past 50 years, while over the past 100 years, the temperature rise was about 0.76 °C," ISNA quoted Mohammad Darvish as saying on Tuesday.

Climate change impact is increasing in southern part of the country, among which Yazd province's condition has raised concern, he said, adding, the industries operating in the province must reduce their dependency on water, otherwise water scarcity might worsen in the region.

تغییرات اقلیمی در ایران دو تا سه برابر جهان

محمد درویش، دبیر سیاست محیط‌زیست مرکز بررسی‌های استراتژیک نهاد ریاست جمهوری گفته، ایران با تأثیرات تغییر اقلیمی دو تا سه برابر بیشتر از تأثیرات ایجاد شده در کره زمین روبرو شده است.

محمد درویش، در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایسنا با اشاره به گزارش‌های منتشر شده توسط سازمان هواشناسی، وزارت نیرو و سازمان آب، اظهار کرد: ایستگاه هومند افسرد در دامنه‌های کوه دماوند طی نیم قرن اخیر افزایش دمایی حدود ۲.۷ درجه سلسیوس را نشان می‌دهد و این مسئله در حالی رخ داده است که در ۱۰۰ سال گذشته، حدود ۰.۷۶ درجه سلسیوس افزایش دما داشته‌ایم.

وی اضافه کرد: هر چقدر به شهرهای جنوبی‌تر کشورمان نزدیک می‌شویم، تغییرات اقلیمی هم بیشتر می‌شود به طوری که از این میان یزد وضعیت نگران‌کننده‌ای دارد. باید میزان وابستگی صنایع در یزد نسبت به آب کاهش پیدا کند چرا که در غیر این صورت می‌تواند شتاب خشک‌سالی‌ها را افزایش دهد.



Book-loving children

Children are searching for books at the 34th Tehran International Book Fair, May 18, 2023. The motto for this year's book fair is "The future is worth reading."



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be not like the hypocrite who, when he talks, tells lies; when he gives a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he proves dishonest.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:27 Dawn: 3:14 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:55 (tomorrow)

Iranian studies in German: Islamic period

Part 4

A special interest in the Mongol period served as a hallmark for this school and has remained a characteristic feature of historical research on Persia in Germany.

Mention should also be made of Monika Gronke and her studies on the early dervishes attached to the Safavid shrine of Ardabil (1982, 1993) and of Birgitt Hoffmann, who has just finished an important analysis of Rashid ad-Din Fazlollah's waqf-nama (forthcoming).

Roemer was particularly interested in diplomatics and paleography (1954, 1957). Thanks to his endeavors, a relatively large number of studies on historical documents have been produced.

Recently, this specific area of research was expanded in the direction of Central Asia (E. Schiewek, Ch. Werner, et al.), India, and, within Persia, to the Zand and Qajar periods.

Christoph Werner of Bamberg University has recently published an analysis of the data given by Nader Mirza Qajar on the administration of pre-Qajar Tabriz, which is, at the same time, a contribution to biographical studies as well (1996-97).

He is also preparing a major study on early Qajar provincial administration in Azerbaijan.

The pilot study in this field of research among German scholars was Heribert Busse's still unsurpassed Untersuchungen zum islamischen Kanzleiwesen (1959), which is a thorough study of Persian farmans from the Turkman and the Safavid periods; it was soon followed by his programmatic position paper on Persian diplomatics.

Mention should also be made of Gottfried Herrmann's important contributions to our knowledge of farmans from the Mongol period.

It is fair to say that, in addition to the efforts of Persian and Soviet scholars, German contributions to Persian diplomatics constitute an important element in historical research on Persia.

An early synthesis of these various efforts is Klaus-Michael Röhrborn's fundamental study on the institutional body of Safavid administration (1966), which is still regarded as a standard of scholarship on the Safavid period.

Economic and social history emerges in some respects from studies on administration. Hinz was a pioneer in this field, too (1949, 1950, 1952).

Under his supervision, Paul Luft, now at the University of Manchester, wrote an important dissertation on the Persian society under Shah Abbas II (1968).

There is also an authoritative study on Persia from the 15th and 16th centuries by Rosemarie Quiring-Zoche (1980) and the research of Heinz Georg Migeod concerning the structure of Persian society under Nasser ad-Din Shah (1990).

Fragner's contribution to the 6th volume of the Cambridge History of Iran is also noteworthy here. A significant contribution to this area of research is Monika Gronke's detailed study of the economic and social affairs in connection with the early Safavid dervishes in the 14th century (1993).

Roemer also laid great emphasis on studies concerning chronicles. His last major undertaking was a translation of Nezam ad-Din Shami's Zafar-nama (forthcoming).

Partly due to Roemer's influence, similar translations and analyses of chronicles have

appeared, among them Birgitt Hoffmann's translation of Mohammad-Hashem Asef's Rostam al-tawarikh, and Ursula Ott's study of Fazlollah khonji's Mehman-nama-ye Bokhara.

Heribert Busse produced an English translation of the important 19th-century chronicle Fars-nama-ye Nasserī by Mirza Hasan Fasai.

Hinz, by means of his aforementioned study on the early Safavids (1936), had opened the gate to Safavid studies, but it was mainly Roemer who fostered the Safavid period as one of the most representative themes in Persian studies in post-World War II Germany.

In addition to studies already mentioned, this interest in Safavid affairs led also to the production of a series of contributions to religious history, among which Michel Mazzaoui's study of religious trends among the early Safavids deserves specific mention (originally pub. in 1972 in what then was Roemer's Freiburger Islamstudien series).

Qajar history has also been treated, albeit somewhat hesitatingly in the beginning, and interest in this field is growing.

Studies by Busse (1972), Hoffmann (1986), and Migeod (1990) have already been mentioned. A pupil of Busse's, Kamram Ekbal, tried first to combine his interest in diplomatics and archive research with the history of early intrusion of the British into Persia (1977).

Fragner analyzed memoirs and autobiographies in order to define their value as sources for the history of 19th-century Persia (1979).

Outside Germany, we find historians who do not belong to this school. Karl Jahn, an Austrian scholar who was originally from Prague but lived for a long time in the Netherlands, deserves to be mentioned here.

He concentrated on the Il-Khanid period (13th-14th cents.), in particular on Rashid ad-Din Fazlollah, the famous vizier, and his Jame' al-tawarikh, large parts of which he edited (Tarikh-e Ghazani) and rendered into German (1971).

Another Austrian Orientalist and Turkologist, Herbert W. Duda, contributed heavily to our knowledge of Persian historiography from medieval Anatolia. To him we owe a German translation of Ebn Bibi's chronicle on the history of the Seljuks of Rum.

Literature: Another outstanding figures in German Oriental studies is Helmut Ritter.

He started as a philologist and a scholar of the religion of Islam, but along with his contributions to Arabic and Turkish studies he concentrated particularly on the interface between Persian literature and Sufism.

Ritter should be considered, as Walther Hinz is in case of historical studies, as the pioneer and founder of the German "school" for studying Persian mystical literature.

In Ritter's tradition, we find such distinguished scholars as Fritz Meier (University of Basel, d. 1998) and Annemarie Schimmel.

Richard Gramlich and Bernd Radtke were pupils of Meier, and so was Rudolf Gelpke, who died young in 1972. Johann Christoph Bürgel and Michael Glünz (both at the University of Bern, Switzerland, until the beginning of the 1990s) must also be counted within the circle of Fritz Meier in the wider sense.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica.
To be continued.

Venezuelan minister launches Persian translation of his book in Tehran

TEHRAN – Venezuelan Culture Minister Ernesto Villegas Poljak launched a Persian translation of his book "April, Inside the Coup" in Tehran on Friday.

The book launch celebration held at the Tehran International Book Fair was attended by Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili and several other Iranian officials.

Published in 2010, "April, Inside the Coup" ("Abril Golpe Adentro") is a journalistic essay that narrates the events surrounding the coup against President Hugo Chávez Frias on April 11, 2002 and his return to power not yet forty-eight hours after his overthrow.

Villegas Poljak was the editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper Ciudad Caracas and also wrote for El Nuevo Pais, Economía Hoy, El Universal, Ultimas Noticias, and several other dailies.

From 2001 to 2008, he served as a head anchor on the daily television show "En Confianza", while also writing for the daily El Universal, a position he resigned after the 2002 coup. He is the co-author of "El Terrorista de Bush" ("Bush's Terrorism"), a book about Luis Posada Carriles.

Speaking at the book launch celebration, Villegas Poljak said that he is pleased about the publication of the Persian edition



Venezuelan Culture Minister Ernesto Villegas Poljak and his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, hold a Persian copy of his book "April, Inside the Coup" at the 34th Tehran International Book Fair on May 19, 2023. (IQNA/Amir-Mohammad Khazaei)

of his book.

"Seven years after the abortive coup against Mr. Chavez, the West wrote a book about this event; this coup still continues in different ways, only the plotters change; it is imperialism supporting all of them," he explained.

Esmaeili suggested translating "April, Inside the Coup" in March during his visit to the International Fair of Venezuelan-Iranian Culture

and Friendship in Caracas.

The book was translated and published at Iran, a state-run Persian daily.

"I was really surprised that the translation team rendered the book so fast," Villegas Poljak said and added that he is keen to conduct an interview with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

He also invited his Iranian

counterpart to attend the International Book Fair of Venezuela (FILVEN), which will take place in Caracas in November.

He also asked for Iran's cooperation with Venezuela on cinema and other cultural topics.

Earlier in March, the Spanish translation of Ayatollah Khamenei's autobiography "Cell No. 14" ("Celda No. 14") was launched in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas.

Iranian Artists Forum to review doc on Indonesian mass killings of 1965–1966



"The Act of Killing" by Joshua Oppenheimer.

TEHRAN – The Oscar-nominated documentary "The Act of Killing" on the individuals who participated in the Indonesian mass killings of 1965–1966 will be reviewed at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran.

Critic Navid Purmohammadreza will conduct the review on Monday after a screening of the 2012 documentary, which will begin at 5 pm.

American-British filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer directed the documentary along with his assistant Christine Cynn and an

anonymous Indonesian.

The documentary challenges former Indonesian death-squad leaders to reenact their mass killings in whichever cinematic genres they wish, including classic Hollywood crime scenarios and lavish musical numbers.

The co-production by Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom won the 2013 European Film Award for Best Documentary, the Asia Pacific Screen Award, and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature at the 86th Academy Awards.

It also was picked as best documentary at the 67th British Academy Film Awards. In accepting, Oppenheimer said that the United States and the United Kingdom have "collective responsibility" for "participating in and ignoring" the crimes, which was omitted from the video BAFTA posted online.

This participation has been extensively documented by numerous professional historians, journalists and an international tribunal, and documents declassified in 2021 indicate that the UK was even more closely involved than

previously thought.

After a screening for U.S. Congress members, Oppenheimer demanded that the U.S. acknowledge its role in the killings.

Oppenheimer also directed the companion film, "The Look of Silence", which was released in 2014. The movie was ranked 19th on a list of the best documentaries ever made in a 2015 poll by the British Film Institute. In 2016, it was named the 14th most excellent film released since 2000 by a poll of critics published by the BBC.

"The Act of Killing" received widespread acclaim from critics.

The review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes reported a 95 percent approval rating with an average rating of 8.80/10 based on 156 reviews.

The website's consensus reads, "Raw, terrifying, and painfully difficult to watch, 'The Act of Killing' offers a haunting testament to the edifying, confrontational power of documentary cinema."

On Metacritic, the film holds an average score of 91 out of 100, based on 33 reviews, indicating "universal acclaim."

"Mind the Gap" in Iran for Persian readers

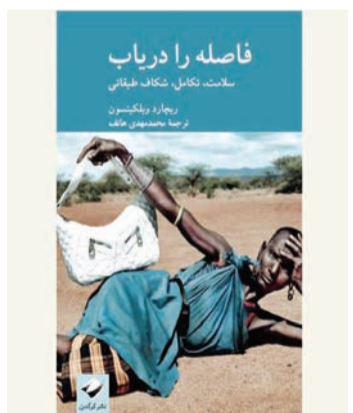
TEHRAN – "Mind the Gap: An Evolutionary View of Health and Inequality" by Richard G. Wilkinson has been published in Persian.

Kargadan is the publisher of the Persian edition translated by Mohammad-Mehdi Hatf. The book was originally published in 2000.

Inequality kills. Both rich and poor die younger in countries with the greatest inequalities in income.

Countries like the United States with big gaps between rich and poor have higher death rates than those with smaller gaps such as Sweden and Japan. Why?

In "Mind the Gap", Wilkinson



Front cover of the Persian edition of Richard G. Wilkinson's book "Mind the Gap".

provides a novel Darwinian approach to this question. He points out that inequality is new to our species: in our two-million-year history, human societies became hierarchical only about ten thousand years ago.

Because our minds and bodies are adapted to a more egalitarian life, today's hierarchical structures may be considered unnatural. To people at the bottom of the heap, the world seems hostile and the stress is harmful.

If you're not in control, you're at risk. This is a penetrating analysis of patterns of health and disease that has implications for

social policy.

Wilkinson concludes that rather than relying on more police, prisons, social workers or doctors, we must tackle the corrosive social effects of income differences at their roots.

Wilkinson has played a formative role in international research and his work has been published in 10 languages.

He studied economic history at the London School of Economics before training in epidemiology and is Professor Emeritus at the University of Nottingham Medical School and Honorary Professor at University College London.

I.J. Parker's "Hell Screen" published in Persian

TEHRAN – "The Hell Screen" by detective and mystery writer Ingrid J. Parker has recently arrived at Persian bookstores.

Parker is best known for creating Sugawara Akitada, who solved crimes in the Heian era of ancient Japan.

Originally published in 2003, the book was translated by Samiramis Babai. Qatreh is the publisher of the Persian edition.

Eleventh-century Japan: After a difficult but successful assignment as provisional governor of Eichigo, Akitada Sugawara is finally allowed to return to Heian Kyo.

But instead of a triumphant homecoming accompanied by his beautiful wife and young son, Akitada must ride ahead of his entourage to the sickbed of his dying mother.

Fading light and a steady downpour interrupt his journey, forcing him to take refuge in a temple

where a brilliantly illustrated hell screen and a piercing cry disturb his restless sleep.

Upon his arrival, Akitada finds his mother, sick and bitter, cursing his return, while his youngest sister, Yoshiko, forsakes her own happiness to serve as the elderly woman's nurse and maid.

Only his sister Akiko seems fortunate, married to a wealthy nobleman, Toshikage, and expecting their first child.

But appearances prove to be deceptive, for it is not long before Akitada is asked to help clear his brother-in-law's name.

In the course of his investigation, Akitada learns that his night at the temple was disturbed by more than a terrible scream.

A woman has been murdered, and because of his reputation for detective work, Akitada must solve another mystery.

Personal and professional interests begin to



front cover of the Persian edition of Ingrid J. Parker's book "The Hell Screen".

merge as Akitada becomes ensnared in a tangled web of deceit and malevolence that will, in the end, strike very close to home.