



New Charade

U.S. again accuses Iran of providing Russia with drones

By Sadegh Fereyounabadi

TEHRAN – In yet another indication that the U.S. has become obsessed with Iranian drones, the White House leveled extensive accusations against Iran regarding the provision of drones for use in the Ukraine war.

On Friday, the White House released an “intelligence finding” purportedly showing that Iran is providing Russia with materials to build a drone manufacturing plant east of Moscow.

Citing U.S. intelligence officials, U.S. National Security Council spokesman John Kirby claimed that a plant in Russia’s Alabuga special economic zone could be operational early next year, according to an AP report.

The White House also released satellite imagery taken in April of the industrial location, several hundred miles east of Moscow, where it believes the plant “will probably be built.”

While the U.S. leveled similar accusations against Iran over the last year, this time the accusations are accompanied by satellite im-



U.S. National Security Council Spokesman John Kirby briefing reporters on accusations against Iran regarding the alleged provision of drones to Russia on June 9, 2023.

agery and alleged intelligence assessments to make them seem real.

Ever since the start of the Ukraine war, Western media and officials repeatedly accused Iran of providing combat drones for use in the

Ukraine war despite the fact that Iran sought to keep a safe distance from the war. Iranian officials have long said Iran does not take sides in the Ukraine war and is ready to support any political solution to the war. ▶ Page 3

● Iran Factcheck A canard defying reason

TEHRAN – In yet another unfounded allegation, a Jewish media outlet reported that 11 UK universities have been accused of assisting Iran in developing its domestically built drones.

What’s the matter: The outlet, Jewish Chronicle, said on June 8 that “scientists at British universities helped the Iranian regime develop technology that can be used in its drone program and fighter jets.” At least 11 British universities, including Cambridge and Imperial College London, are involved, with staff producing at least 16 studies with potential Iranian military applications, the Jewish Chronicle added.

Why it matters: The news comes amid continued allegations in the West against Iran’s drones. Over the last year, especially after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war, the West has been leveling accusations against Iran over its alleged provision of drones for use in the Ukraine war. In recent days these allegations gained momentum with a CNN report saying that Russia is building an attack drone manufacturing factory with Iran’s help. Citing U.S. officials, CNN claimed that Iran is sending equipment for the plant, as well as fully-built drones, to Russia via the Caspian Sea. Iran has long denied any provision of drones to Russia for use in the Ukraine war. Iranian officials have stressed the fact that Iran does not side with any of the warring sides and is of the opinion that the war should be ended through political dialogue. Despite Iran’s repeated denials, the West continues to level such accusations.

What’s really the matter: The latest accusation that came out of the Jewish Chronicle is one such unfounded accusation that is clearly flying in the face of common sense. It came at a time when Iranian students are totally barred from studying academic disciplines that might result in dual-use results. And not just these disciplines that are considered off-limits to Iranian students but also even an Iranian student studying a safe discipline, say sociology, is unlikely to get a visa to study in the West. Each year a very limited number of Iranian students succeed in obtaining a study visa in the West compared to students from other countries. ▶ Page 3

Report

Putin: Ukraine counter-offensive has ‘begun’

By Ali Karbalaee

TEHRAN- Russian President Vladimir Putin says a Ukrainian “offensive” has begun, signaling the start of Kyiv’s long-awaited counter-offensive.

Fierce attacks are underway in Ukraine’s east and south where a military operation by Ukraine to recapture territory from Moscow appears to be underway. Russia, meanwhile is witnessing an uptick in attacks against residential areas inside its territory.

Speaking to reporters in Sochi, after meeting with leaders of other states in the Eurasian Economic Union, Putin stated “we can clearly say the offensive has started, as indicated by the Ukrainian army’s use of strategic reserves, but the Ukrainian troops haven’t achieved their stated tasks in a single area of fighting,” he said. “We are seeing that the Ukrainian regime’s troops are suffering significant losses.”

“Ukrainian troops did not achieve their goals in any sector – thanks to the courage of Russian soldiers, proper organization of troops.” Putin added. ▶ Page 5

Raisi, Macron seek roadmap for engagement

TEHRAN- The presidents of Iran and France on Saturday discussed measures to enhance relations and come to an agreement on a plan for future interaction, a senior government source in Tehran said.

Mohammad Jamshidi, the Iranian president’s deputy chief of staff for political affairs, said in a tweet that President Ebrahim Raisi and President Emanuel Macron spoke on the phone for 90 minutes.

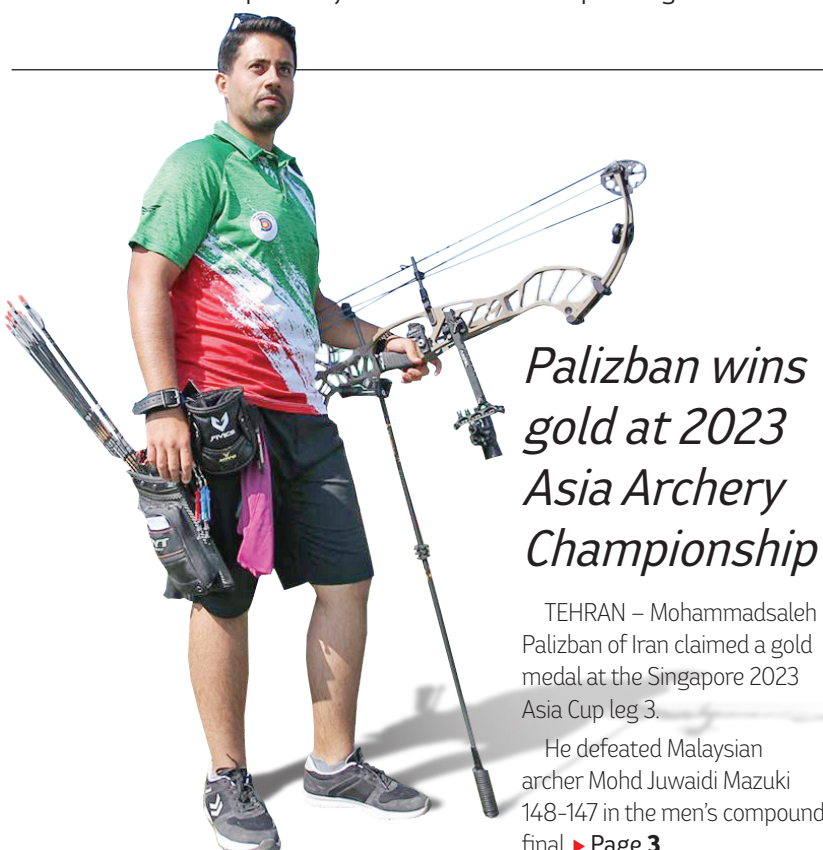
The French president, he asserted, is eager to increase contact with Iran.

“The 2 sides discussed how to promote relations esp about ongoing negotiations & regional developments. They agreed on a roadmap for engagement,” the Iranian official tweeted.

By agreeing to a historic nuclear agreement with six countries, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran demonstrated to the world the benign nature of its nuclear program.

However, the future of the agreement was uncertain following Washington’s unilateral departure in May 2018 and re-imposition of sanctions against Tehran.

In April 2021, talks in Vienna, the capital of Austria, began with the goal of easing sanctions against Iran and determining how serious the United States was about rejoining the agreement. ▶ Page 2



Palizban wins gold at 2023 Asia Archery Championship

TEHRAN – Mohammadsaleh Palizban of Iran claimed a gold medal at the Singapore 2023 Asia Cup leg 3.

He defeated Malaysian archer Mohd Juwaidi Mazuki 148-147 in the men’s compound final. ▶ Page 3

U.S., Iran hold indirect talks in Oman: Axios

TEHRAN – There has been a scoop that Iranian and American officials held indirect talks in Oman in a bid to halt Iran’s nuclear program in return for releasing some of Iran’s frozen assets, three sources briefed on the issue told Axios.

The U.S. and Iranian officials held indirect talks in Oman last month with Omani officials shuttling between their separate rooms to deliver messages, Axios said in its report published on Friday.

Political analysts believe that such a scenario is launched to pin the blame on Iran in order to seek more concessions.

In the other word, U.S. officials have done their best to shape the public opinion that it is Iran and not the United State or its European allies still party to the 2015 nuclear deal that prevent a revival of the multilateral agreement. To put it more bluntly, it sounds weird that they want to put this bitter fact into oblivion that it was the U.S. that reneged on the internationally-agreed accord and is solely responsible for all the consequences. ▶ Page 2



‘Iran’s free trade, special economic zones, safe haven for investment’

▶ Page 4

TEHRAN PAPERS

“Interim agreement” is the code name of psychological operation

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

The Iran newspaper commented on the nuclear negotiations. It said: The Western news media have purposefully published news claiming that Iran and the U.S. are reaching an “interim agreement”. Of course, they had previously tried to turn the nuclear negotiations, especially in recent months, into a political mystery, and portray the negotiations and exchange of indirect messages between Iranian and American diplomats, which are intended to find a way to lift sanctions on Iran, as “strange”. However, the high-level diplomatic officials of Iran and the United States have repeatedly confirmed both the existence of diplomatic channels between Tehran and Washington to resolve the nuclear issue and the indirect sending of messages. It was two weeks ago that Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said: “Iran has been indirectly exchanging messages with America for weeks and good progress has been made. We hope to reach a point where we will get clear results and inform the people about it.” However, the new spokesman of the U.S. State Department, Matthew Miller, tried to accuse the Iranian Foreign Minister of making wrong statements about the indirect exchange of messages between Iran and the U.S. in the past weeks and the progress in the negotiations. Miller said: “We have always stated that we will maintain the ability to communicate with Iran, to transmit and to send our messages to Iran whenever it is in the interest of the United States.” He added: “We never describe the content of the messages, but we still believe that diplomacy is the best verifiable and sustainable way to ensure that Iran is prevented from obtaining a nuclear weapon.” The stances by the two diplomatic officials of Iran and the United States confirm that the negotiations are still ongoing to lift the sanctions. Therefore, the meeting of the Iranian ambassador to the United Nations with the U.S. special envoy for Iran could not be anything other than delivering the message of their governments to each other. This is the fact that the Western-Zionist news teams avoid saying that outrightly. This exchange of messages is part of a long path that will continue

until the demands of the Islamic Republic are fulfilled, but that these media outlets, in the midst of such fateful talks, discuss the claim of an “interim agreement”. Such reports have no purpose except diverting the path of the negotiations and creating an obstacle to conclusion of the talks.

Kayhan: What is the root of the rumor of interim agreement?

In its editorial Kayhan wrote: The action of the 13th government to free foreign policy from the JCPOA and FATF shackle is still being energetically pursued. Yet concurrent with a decrease in prices of the dollar, housing, cold coins, and immediately after Iran's participation in the BRICS Summit, the rumor of an “interim agreement” is being spread by the Western, hostile and pro-Western media outlets. Why?! It is because, firstly, deceptively they want to convoy this idea that decrease in the price of the dollar is related to the news of the interim agreement, and then through psychological operations promote this idea that in absence of an agreement, there will be disruption in the downward trend of the dollar's price and some other markets.

Sobh-e-No: West's psychological war in nuclear negotiations

In its editorial, Sobh-e-No discussed the status of the nuclear negotiations. The paper wrote: Undoubtedly, the West's psychological war will reach its peak on disputed cases in the coming days. They are trying to exonerate themselves and blame Iran in order to convince Iran to agree on minimum concessions. It is obvious that the diplomatic and foreign policy systems of our country must clarify the real intentions of the main and behind-the-scenes actors to the domestic and global viewers before such a show goes on the screen. Of course, considering the performance of Iran's nuclear team in the last two years, changes in the team for presenting new initiatives, better interaction with media, proper use of opportunities, and timely decision-making can increase Iran's maneuverability in negotiations.

Iran, Syria firm to carry out agreements



TEHRAN – Tehran and Damascus have reaffirmed their commitment to enforcing the bilateral accords reached during the Iranian president's most recent trip to Syria.

In a phone call on Saturday, Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian praised the fruitful outcomes of Raisi's successful visit to Damascus early in May and underlined Iran and Syria's commitment to carry out bilateral agreements made during the president's visit.

Mekdad and Amir Abdollahian also discussed recent regional developments as well as collaboration between Tehran and Damascus.

Mekdad also briefed his Iranian counterpart on resumption of Syria's ties with Arab nations and the Syrian president's attendance at the most recent Arab League summit in Saudi Arabia.

Amir Abdollahian, for his part, praised Syria for attaining political achievement and called the most recent changes “constructive and positive.”

For the first time since November 2011, Syria rejoined the Arab League, signaling a regional trend toward diplomatic rapprochement.

The Arab League summit was held in Jeddah on May 19.

This breakthrough came after a joint statement that the foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia issued in Beijing in February in an effort to mend fences and set up the reopening of embassies and consulates.

A foreign-backed insurgency broke out in Syria in 2011, which led to the suspension of the country's membership in the Arab League.

“Prioritizing neighbors, Muslims, Asians”

In a meeting with the representatives of the Supreme Council of Community of the Qom Seminary Educators on Friday in Qom, Iran's top diplomat also said that the Raisi administration prioritizes Asian, Islamic, and neighboring countries in its foreign policy.

The clergymen received an update from the foreign minister on Iran's international relations and policy over the last two years.

In order to improve ties with countries throughout the world, he pointed out that the Raisi administration has placed a strong emphasis on having balanced foreign relations.

Citing a number of successes of this strategy, the minister noted that the Foreign Ministry has made efforts to strengthen economic and trade ties with the foreigners, contribute to the domestic economy and livelihood of people, and pay special attention to the Iranian expatriates.

U.S., Iran hold indirect talks in Oman: Axios

From page 1 ▶ Due to Israeli machinations, the White House is trembling to find an appropriate solution for the long-running dispute.

Iran has invariably underscored on the peaceful nature of its nuclear program and left all doors open for IAEA investigation but there are some misgivings that the U.S. and Israeli regime are scouting around to worsen the situation.

Based on the report published by Axios, White House Middle East coordinator Brett McGurk secretly flew to Oman on May 8 to meet with Omani authorities about potential diplomatic outreach to Iran on its nuclear program.

A delegation from Iran also arrived in Oman at the same time, according to the three people who were informed on the situation. One of the reports said that Ali Bagheri Kan, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, was a member of the team.

The sources said that there was no meeting between McGurk and the Iranian officials. Omani authorities were standing between the two sides, passing messages as they were in different places.

The sources claim that deterrence was one of the U.S.'s key topics.



The sources said that the U.S. made it plain that Iran will pay a high price if it continues with uranium enrichment at the level required to make a nuclear bomb, which is 90%.

Additionally, Axios purportedly said that the Biden administration and Iran engaged in an indirect message-exchange with the intention of “understanding” how to de-escalate the Iranian nuclear program, Iran's regional actions, and its alleged involvement in the war in Ukraine.

Such a consensus and de-escalation in the region may subsequently serve as the foundation for negotiations on a new nuclear accord between the parties. Whether the parties are on the verge of coming to such an arrangement is still up in the air.

As previously revealed by Axios, the Biden administration in April explored a potential plan for an interim agreement with Iran that would entail partial sanctions relief in exchange for Tehran suspending certain aspects of its nuclear program.

The Biden administration's stance on Iran, according to a representative for the White House National Security Council, has not altered.

To rule out the possibility of a bilateral deal in the near future, Iranian MP Mojtaba Tavangar has verified media reports of covert Iran-U.S. negotiations in New York.

“To have Iran's frozen assets unblocked, the U.S. seeks to get nuclear concessions from Iran, and this runs counter to the law and national inter-

ests of Iran,” Tavangar tweeted.

Amir Saeed Irvani, Iran's ambassador to the UN, and Robert Malley, the U.S. special envoy on Iran, have had multiple meetings in person, according to a report from the Middle East Eye.

Quoting “two sources with direct knowledge of the talks”, the Middle East Eye said, “Iran and the United States are nearing a temporary deal that would swap some sanctions relief for reducing Iranian uranium enrichment activities.”

The Iranian MP also said, “Despite the negotiations in New York, due to the U.S. obstructionism, no agreement is possible in the foreseeable future.”

The Middle East Eye said, “Under the terms of the deal, Iran would commit to ceasing its 60 percent-and-beyond uranium enrichment activities and would continue its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the monitoring and verification of its nuclear program.”

Tavangar added that the U.S. is still attempting to “drag Iran into official direct talks.”

He maintained that the U.S. efforts to get nuclear concessions from Iran are “illegal” and contrary to Iran's “national interests”.

Raisi, Macron seek roadmap for engagement



From page 1 ▶ However, the discussions have been put on moratorium since September 2022 due to Washington's refusal to remove all sanctions and its reluctance to provide required guarantees that it will not quit the accord again.

In a statement at a session of the Board of Governors at the International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA) on June 7, Iran's permanent representative at the United Nations office in Vienna Mohsen Naziri Asl urged the European governments to avoid “provocative and unconstructive attitudes” towards the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear program and work towards the resolution of disputes.”

Iran responds to report by IAEA chief

“There has not been any undeclared location which is required to be declared under the CSA”

TEHRAN– Regarding a recent report that IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi presented to the IAEA Board of Governors, the Iranian representative to the Vienna-based organizations provided an explanation on Saturday.

What follows is the text of the explanatory note about the comments and observations of Iran:

Following the Report of the Director General, entitled: “NPT Safeguards Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran” (GOV/2023/26, 31 May 2023), the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Vienna would like to share its comments and observations on the report as follows:

A. General comments:

1. The Islamic Republic of Iran is determined, as has also shown so far, to comply with its obligations under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (INFCIRC/214) and it has done its utmost to enable the Agency to continue its verification activities in Iran, which is unique in the Agency's verification system.

2. On the issue related to the so-called three locations, it should be highlighted that the origin of the issue goes back to the fabricated information provided to the Agency by an ill-intended third party, namely the Israeli regime, which does not accept to have a single commitment under any WMD instruments, including in particular the NPT, and repeatedly

threatens to attack Iran's nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes, contrary to the numerous IAEA and UNGA resolutions.

B. Comments on the report, Background:

3. Paragraph 2 of the report states that: “The Agency is seeking explanations from Iran... at three undeclared locations...” is contrary to Paragraph 18 of the report which reads: “... The Agency at this time has no additional questions on the depleted uranium particles detected in ‘Marivan’ or on the location, and the matter is no longer outstanding at this stage.” Therefore, the number of locations is no longer 3. This is also the case for paras.4 and 7 of the report.

• As explained frequently by the Islamic Republic of Iran (e.g.: INF-CIRC/996 dated 7 June 2022 and INFCIRC/967 dated 3 December 2021), there has not been any undeclared location which is required to be declared under the CSA. Iran's nuclear activities remain peaceful under the Agency's full-scope safeguards. Therefore, there is no legal basis for expressing “deep concern” by the Director General.

• The mere finding of natural uranium particles in environmental samples at a location cannot be considered as an indication that a quantity of nuclear material had been presented at that location.

• As it was explained on many occasions to the Agency, there is no undeclared nuclear material in Iran, and the Agency's assertion is

merely based on false and fabricated information provided by illegitimate Israeli regime with a long-standing background of stringing chains of lies.

• In light of further cooperation with the Agency, Iran has exhausted all its efforts so as to discover the origin of such particles. Iran has explained its assumptions about the probable causes of the presence of uranium particles. Given the fact that Iran could not yet find any technical reasons for the presence of uranium particles, it would reasonably imply that possibly external elements, such as sabotage and malicious acts, have been involved in the contamination.

4. The report further states in paragraph 3 and related footnote, “... unless and until Iran provided technically credible explanations for the presence of the aforementioned uranium particles at the three undeclared locations in Iran and informed the Agency of the current location(s) of the nuclear material and/or of the contaminated equipment, the Agency would not be able to confirm the correctness and completeness of Iran's declarations under its Safeguards Agreement.” It should be noted that:

• The mere presence of a few uranium particles at the claimed locations could not be considered as presence of nuclear material or contaminated equipment. It should be noted that the Agency has not provided Iran with any authentic supporting documents for its claim.

• As explained by the Islamic Re-

public of Iran in numerous occasions, there has never been any undeclared location which is required to be declared under the CSA. Furthermore, based on our intensive investigations into the background of activities carried out in two remaining locations has not yet been found. There has not been any nuclear activity or storage in these locations. Therefore, as yet no technical explanation concerning the origin of reported particles were found, however, the possibility of presence of such particles by the sabotage acts cannot be excluded.

5. The Agency's claim in footnote 7 that “... some of the containers stored at Turqubad were dismantled at the location, others were removed from Turqubad intact in 2018 and moved to an unknown location...” is not based on authentic information and evidence. Turqubad is actually an industrial place encompassing various kinds of warehouses and depots for storing detergents, chemicals, foodstuffs, fabrics & textiles, vehicle tires and parts, tubes & joints and some industrial scraps. Movement of containers in and out of such an area is a usual activity; therefore, the claim of containers removal cannot be considered a ground for such an allegation. Despite the lack of solid and authentic documents, Iran granted, on a voluntary basis, complementary access to the locations for the Agency. This clearly indicates Iran's willingness to address any possible ambiguity along with its full transparency.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

No need for trans-regional forces for Persian Gulf security: commander

TEHRAN – Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, commander of the IRGC Navy, stated on Friday that since Iran and its southern neighbors are working together there is no need for trans-regional forces to protect the strategic waterway of the Persian Gulf.

According to Rear Admiral Tangsiri, the countries in the region own the Persian Gulf and are responsible for ensuring its security.

Iran has welcomed and will continue to welcome the strategic principle of allying and forming the community of Persian Gulf countries, he said, adding Tehran's policy



has always been de-escalation and this has demonstrated in practice.

He reaffirmed the IRGC Navy's valiant forces' successful accomplishment in their fundamental duty to stabilize the security of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

The commander made the comments during a visit to the Nazeaat Region in the Persian Gulf waters.

The Greater and Lesser Tunbs, Siri, Abu Musa, and the Nazeaat Region are four islands in the Persian Gulf close to the Strait of Hormuz.

These islands are regarded as the Strait of Hormuz's defensive stronghold.

New Charade

U.S. again accuses Iran of providing Russia with drones

From Page 1 ► So far, Iran has roundly rejected at the highest levels any involvement in the Ukraine war. Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has said many times that Iran is involved in this war. In March, he rejected the lie that Iran is involved in the Ukraine war. “We categorically deny any presence in the Ukraine war. And such a thing is not true at all,” he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei also referred to America's role in the Ukraine war, stating that America waged the Ukraine war in order to expand NATO to the east and now while the people of Ukraine are in trouble and grappling with problems, America and its weapons manufacturing companies are making the most of this war in terms of profits. And for this reason, they stand in the way of the necessary things to end this war.”

In October last year, the Iranian mission to the UN expatiated on the Iranian position on the Ukraine war in a non-paper to the UN. “The Islamic Republic of Iran's position on the Ukraine situation is clear, consistent, and unwavering, which has been



A map disseminated by the U.S. government purportedly shows the alleged routes for shipments of drones and other equipment from Iran to Russia. The routes could well be used just for trade and commercial purposes. The U.S. government provided no tangible evidence to back its allegation up.

pronounced since the start of the conflict. From the beginning, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always emphasized that all UN Members must fully respect the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter as well as applicable international law, including sovereignty, independence,

unity, and territorial integrity,” it said.

The U.S. has been obsessed with what it calls the Iranian threat and it seems that would use whatever accusations at its disposal to damage Iran's reputation. The latest accusation that Iran is helping Russia with

building a drone manufacturing plant could be a plot to make a dent in Iran-Russia cooperation. While it seeks to further bolster its ties with Russia in various areas of cooperation, Iran has made it crystal clear that that cooperation is not directed against a third country.

Iran factcheck: A canard defying reason

Iran's 'suicide drones' are being developed at British universities

Senior MPs express deep concern over JC findings and revelations intensify calls for ban on Iran terror Guards

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From Page 1 ► Moreover, leveling accusations against universities based on loose standards such as dual-use applications is too much unfair. Because in some cases even soap can have dual-use applications. One may be surprised to know that in the 1990s some countries even put strict restrictions on exporting soap to Iraq out of fears that it might be used for military purposes.

Therefore, the allegation of the Jewish Chronicle can be labeled as canard because of its nature

of flying in the face of reality. There is no solid evidence beyond unsubstantiated allegations that can prove that UK universities assisted Iran with developing drones. Moreover, Iranian drones are fully domestic and built with technology innovated by Iranian talents. Had the reports that parts of the Iranian drones are built with Western technology been true, the West would have certainly banned it. But the Iranian drones are fully built with Iranian technology and capabilities that are impossible to take away.

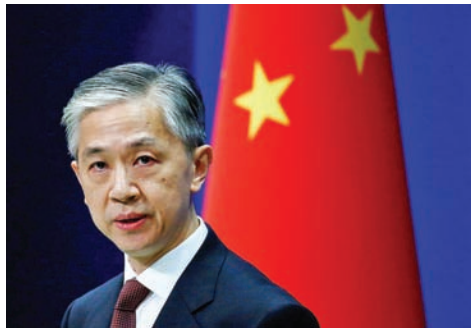
China lambasts Western double standards on Iran

TEHRAN – China has criticized the West for applying double standards with respect to nuclear non-proliferation, saying that the West strictly pressures Iran over nuclear issues while giving Australia weapons-grade nuclear material.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin made the remarks in response to a question on the AUKUS nuclear submarine cooperation between the U.S., the UK, and Australia.

“The IAEA has reviewed the AUKUS nuclear submarine cooperation for the eighth consecutive time. The review shows that the cooperation involves complex political, security, legal and technical issues and has led to serious concerns and controversy in the international community. The US, the UK and Australia claim to abide by the ‘rules-based international order’, but when it comes to their own fulfillment of non-proliferation obligations, they blatantly apply double standards and place selfish geopolitical interests above nuclear nonproliferation,” he said at a regular press conference on Friday.

AUKUSs is a security pact between Australia, the UK, and the U.S. based on which London and Washington agreed to provide Australia with nuclear-powered submarines. The pact angered France and raised concerns



in China. France took Umbridge at the pact because it already had a deal with Australia to provide a non-nuclear-powered submarines. However, at the UK and U.S. urging, Australia scuttled the deal and turned to London and Washington for the nuclear submarines.

And China is concerned because AUKUS is seen as a new security alliance against China.

“Looking back on past discussions at the IAEA, whenever the US, the UK and Australia sought to set the rules for other countries, they would always stress the importance of ‘the intergovernmental process led by member states.’ However, when it comes to AUKUS nuclear submarine cooperation, all they do is thwart the intergovernmental process involving all parties, attempt to coerce the IAEA Secretariat into accepting

He added, “The message of the people of Azarbaijan is the message of unity, cohesion and resistance against enemies and building the country by the capable hands of the beloved youth.”

In January, an attack on Azerbaijan's embassy in Tehran led to a deterioration in ties between the two countries.

Following the event, the Republic of Azerbaijan shut down its diplomatic mission and withdrew its staff in response to what it described as a “terrorist act,” with President Ilham Aliyev attributing it to the “Iranian establishment.”

Investigations suggested that the attacker was motivated by “personal and family-related problems.” Other points of concern between Iran and Azerbaijan include the dispute between

their proposal and impose the so-called “rules” on other member states. What kind of “rules-based” behavior is that?” Wang added.

He continued, “On the Iranian nuclear issue, the US, the UK and some other countries wouldn't budge an inch and strictly prohibits Iran from obtaining highly-enriched uranium. However, the two countries plan to transfer to Australia tons of highly enriched weapons-grade uranium of over 90% purity through their nuclear submarine cooperation. The contrast once again laid bare their hypocrisy on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation.”

The spokesperson noted, “We urge the US, the UK and Australia to earnestly fulfill their international obligations on nuclear non-proliferation and stop double standard and political manipulation. We call for joint efforts by all IAEA member states to advance an open, inclusive, transparent and sustainable inter-governmental discussion process to firmly defend the international nuclear non-proliferation system, uphold the international order underpinned by international law, and advance peace and security in the world. At the same time, we hope the IAEA Secretariat will follow through the IAEA Statute and its mandate from member states, fulfill its non-proliferation duty and help advance the inter-governmental discussion process.”



Azerbaijan and Armenia as well as Baku's increasing ties with the Israeli regime.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said in March that Israel and the Republic of Azerbaijan had agreed to form a unified front against Iran. The comments came after Azerbaijan's embassy in Tel Aviv inaugurated.

IRAN IN FOCUS

JUNE 11, 2023

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

Palizban wins gold at 2023 Asia Archery Championship

From Page 1 ► The bronze medal went to Korean archer Jaewon Yang after edging his Indian rival Priyansh.

The competition was held at the Bukit Gombak Stadium in Singapore from June 5 to 10.

The Singapore meet featured over 200 archers from 22 Asian countries.

Tashkent hosted leg 2 of the continental event last month.

Asian Archery Championships is the archery championship organized by the World Archery Asia.

It has been held biannually, and since 2001 has included both the recurve and compound disciplines. The tournament began in 1980 and it was first hosted in India. Countries such as South Korea, China, Japan, and India compete, with many of the world's leading archers representing them.

Iran start 2023 World U20 Water Polo Championships on high

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Argentina 15-13 in Group F of the 2023 World Aquatics Men's U20 Water Polo Championships on Saturday.

The Iranian team will meet Australia on Monday. Each team will play at least six games throughout the tournament.

The winners and the second-placed teams in Groups A and B will advance directly to the quarterfinals.

The 3rd-placed and 4th-placed teams in groups A and B and the winners of groups C, D, E, and F will try to reach the quarterfinals, playing in the playoffs and the Round of 16.

In the preliminary stage, the teams in Division 1 will play in two groups of four teams. The teams in Division 2 will play in four groups of three teams. A round-robin system will be applied (each team in groups A and B will play three, and each squad in the remaining four groups will play two games).

The competition is being held in Bucharest/ Otopeni, Romania from June 10 to 17.

Britain defeat Iran at 2022 IWBF World Championships

TEHRAN – Holders Britain defeated Iran 90-59 at the 2022 International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) World Championships on Saturday.

Team Melli are scheduled to face the U.S. and Iraq in Group F on Monday and Wednesday, respectively.

Group A consists of Australia, Italy, Brazil and the UAE. Egypt, Germany, Canada and Thailand are in Group B and the Netherlands, Argentina, South Korea and France are drawn in Group C.

The competition was originally scheduled for November 16 to 27, 2022 but was postponed until June 9 to 20, 2023.

The first unofficial Wheelchair Basketball World Championships for men was held in 1973, with Bruges, Belgium being the first host city.

The U.S. are the most decorated team in the competition with six titles.

Kiani wins silver at 2023 World Taekwondo Grand Prix

TEHRAN – Nahid Kiani of Iran won a silver medal at the Roma 2023 World Taekwondo Grand Prix.

She lost to Great Britain's Jade Jones 2-0 in the women's -57kg final.

In the first semi-final, Kiani defeated Korea's Kim Yu-jin Yu-jin and in the second semi-final, Great Britain's Jones faced America's up-and-coming taekwondo star Faith Dillon. Jones won the match to secure a place in the final.

Kiani had won a gold medal in the 2023 Taekwondo World Championships, held in Baku, Azerbaijan last week.

Niazmand set to stay in Sepahan through 2025

TEHRAN – Payam Niazmand will remain in Iranian club Sepahan until 2025.

The 28-year-old goalkeeper joined Sepahan in 2021 on loan from Portuguese club Portimonense.

He finished runner-up with the Isfahan-based football club in Iran Professional League (IPL) 2022-23 season.

On Friday, Niazmand extended his deal with Sepahan for two more seasons.

Niazmand is a member of Iran national football team in the 2023 CAFA Nations Cup, where Team Melli is drawn in Group B along with Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Boys and girls teams learn fate at 2023 CAVA

TEHRAN – The drawing of lots for the 2023 Central Asian Volleyball Association Boys and Girls U16 Volleyball Championships was conducted online by the CAVA Events and Referee Committee on Wednesday.

The inaugural edition of the Championships will be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan between July 14 and 20, 2023, with nine teams comprising five men's and four women's teams joining the fray, asianvolleyball.net reported.

According to the results of the drawing of lots, the men's event features hosts Uzbekistan, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, while the women's competition consists of Uzbekistan 1, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan 2.

In both categories, participating teams will play single round-robin format, with top two teams advancing to the final showdown and teams finishing third and fourth places fighting it out in the third-place playoff clash for bronze medal.

Hosting an event is no small task and requires planning and coordination. However, since Tashkent is hosting the first Asian Men's U16 Volleyball Championship from July 22 and 29, to host the first edition of the CAVA Boys and Girls U16 Volleyball Championships allows the capital city of Uzbekistan hosting experience to handle organizing the Asian Championship effectively and efficiently.

However, ahead of the aforementioned CAVA Championships, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are likely to strut their stuff in the first Asian Women's U16 Volleyball Championship between July 1 and 8 in Hangzhou, China.

Top three teams apiece from the Asian Men's and Women's U16 Championships will make the cut for the next year's FIVB Volleyball Men's and Women's U17 World Championships.

Iran defeat China in VNL 2023

TEHRAN – Iran defeated China 3-1 (23-25, 25-15, 25-20, 25-11) in the 2023 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) Week 1 in Nagoya, Japan on Saturday.

Amin Esmailnejhad led the way for Iran with 26 points, while China's Jingyin Zhang scored 20 points.

Team Melli are scheduled to play Slovenia on Sunday.

It was Iran's first win after suffering two losses against Japan and Poland.

The fourth edition of the Men's Volleyball Nations League (VNL) is underway with the top 16 nations fighting to get into the final round.

Only eight teams will make it to Gdansk, Poland for the final round from 19 to 23 July.

Iran exports non-oil goods worth over \$2.4b to China in 2 months



TEHRAN- Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$2.418 billion to China during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Mohammad Rezvani-Far said that China was the top export destination of Iranian non-oil goods in the mentioned two-month period.

The official further announced that exporting non-oil goods worth \$2.396 billion to Iran, China was also Iran's first source of import in the first two months of this year.

According to the data released by China's

customs administration, the value of trade between Iran and China reached \$5.23 billion in the first four months of 2023.

Based on the released data, the four-month trade between the two countries increased by four percent as the figure was \$5.02 billion in the first four months of 2022.

As reported, Iran's exports to China in the mentioned four months faced a 39 percent decrease compared to the same period last year and reached \$1.52 billion. In the same period last year, China imported \$2.49 billion of goods from Iran.

During this period, China's exports to Iran, however, increased by 46 percent and reached \$3.71 billion. China exported \$2.53 billion worth of commodities to Iran during January -April last year.

According to the data previously released by China's customs administration, the value of trade between Iran and China increased by seven percent in 2022 compared to the previous year.

Based on China's customs data, the Islamic Republic and China traded \$15.795 billion worth of commodities in 2022, \$1.035 billion more than the figure for 2021, IRNA reported.

TSE to hold 10 new IPOs by March 2024

TEHRAN - Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) plans to hold 10 new initial public offerings (IPOs) in the current Iranian calendar year (ends in late March 2024), an official with the organization announced.

According to Mohammad-Amin Ghahremani, head of TSE's derivatives operation, the entity plans to facilitate the entrance of new companies into the stock market in order to attract more capital.

"One of the ways to properly direct liquidity into the market is to attract resources through initial public offerings," Ghahremani told IRNA.

"In order to facilitate the initial offerings, we

cannot ignore important issues and only consider enhancing the processes, we do not do such a thing in any way, and the policy of the Tehran Stock Exchange regarding the initial offerings is not such a thing," he added.

The official noted that TSE has been recently focusing on listing project-oriented companies and the priority for the upcoming IPOs will also be such companies.

"We accepted the first company about a month ago, and now the necessary steps are being taken to obtain an underwriting license," he said.

Export from Khorasan Razavi rises 40% in 2 months on year

TEHRAN- The value of non-oil export from Khorasan Razavi province, in the northeast of Iran, increased by 40 percent during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), as compared with the same period of time in the past year, an official with the customs department of the province announced.

Javad Jafari said that 400,000 tons of commodities valued at \$250 million were exported from the province in the mentioned 2-month period, indicating also 16 percent growth in terms of weight year on year.

He also announced that 31,000 tons of non-oil goods worth \$88 million were imported to the province in the first two months of the present year, with 11 percent fall in value, and five percent drop in weight, year on year.

As previously announced by the official, non-oil

products worth \$1.434 billion were exported from Khorasan Razavi province during the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Putting the weight of exported products at 2.22 million tons, Jafari said that the annual export indicates 15 percent drop in weight, while 1.1 percent growth in value.

He named saffron in packages of more than 30 grams, pistachios, steel bars, apples, and flooring as the major exported products, and Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the main export destinations.

The official further announced that 275,000 tons of non-oil goods worth \$644 million were imported to the province in the past year, with 11 percent and 20 percent growth in value and weight, respectively.

Oil projects worth \$14.5b to go operational across Iran by March 2024: Oji

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji has said 64 new and semi-completed oil industry projects with a total investment of \$14.5 billion are going to be completed and go operational throughout the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2024).

"Despite the harsh conditions and problems created by the sanctions, including the difficulties related to financing or the provision of some sensitive and complex equipment, the Oil Ministry has not neglected investment in this strategic industry which is the driving force of the national economy," the minister told Shana on Saturday.

Iraq releases \$2.7b of Iran's assets

TEHRAN - The chairman of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce announced that Iraq has released \$2.7 billion worth of Iranian assets.

Yahya Al-e Es'haq said on Saturday that a part of Iran's frozen assets in Iraq has been

allocated for the provision of funds needed by Iranian Hajj pilgrims.

Also, another part of the assets has been used to pay for the provision of basic commodities, he added.

TEDPIX drops 73,000 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), drops 73,378 points to 2.215 million on Saturday.

As reported, over 9.465 billion securities worth 72.177 trillion rials (about \$172 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).

'Iran's free trade, special economic zones, safe haven for investment'

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- The establishment of free trade zones (FTZs) in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989 - March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

Considering the significant role of the free trade and special economic zones in the country's economy, the development of the existing zones and the establishment of new zones has become one of the major economic approaches of the Iranian government.

In order to be informed about the latest status of these zones, the Tehran Times took an exclusive interview with Hojatollah Abdolmaleki, the secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council, which comes as follows.

How much was the value of export from the free trade and special economic zones in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), and what percentage of the country's total export was this amount?

The value of exports from free trade and special economic zones last year was close to \$18 billion and about a third of the country's non-oil exports value. Of this amount, the share of special economic zones was more, and the share of free trade zones was \$1.7 billion, and considering that the value of imports to the free zones was almost \$1 billion, then the trade balance of these zones was \$700 million positive, and it was the first time that this happened.

This year we plan to have a jump in non-oil exports from the free zones.

How much domestic and foreign investment was made in free trade and special economic zones last year? What are the plans of the Secretariat to attract investment this year?

In the past, the amount of foreign investment made in the zones was very limited and the reason was that the investment opportunities and capacities in these areas were not well introduced. This year, we started a program that, thank God, is working very well, and that is preparing investment packages and introducing them to domestic and foreign investors.

These packages are in fact a preliminary feasibility study plan that shows the profitability of that plan, the amount of capital required, the required raw materials, technical and technological issues, consumer and market, which is actually the feasibility studies of that project and it shows whether the project is profitable or not.

This is the first part of our investment package, and the second part of our investment package is the necessary permits to carry out the work, including the land supply permit, water, electricity, and other infrastructure permits, and the construction permit that we have prepared.

Therefore, a package has been prepared that contains both the economic studies plan and the permits, and this package is anonymous, that is, the entire investment process is ready for an unknown person, and the



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interested person comes and announces, and if he is qualified, he will receive a license. The name will be given to him immediately and the work can be started from tomorrow. And this is the first time that such work is done in free and special zones.

In the first phase, last month, we unveiled 370 investment packages worth almost five billion euros and presented them at Iran Expo. And in the four days of the exhibition, about one-fifth of these projects, worth nearly one billion euros, reached an initial memorandum of understanding with domestic and foreign investors.

We regularly produce these packages, which are registered online on the secretariat's website. According to the latest statistics, 528 investment packages worth almost 5.5 billion euros have been registered.

We gave the title of "Safe haven for Investment" to Iran's free trade and special economic zones because, first of all, the cost of production in these areas is very low, the cost of land, the cost of manpower, the cost of energy and the cost of access to raw materials are very low, and there is appropriate infrastructure in these areas, and they mostly have good access to global markets, in addition to domestic markets. And in these areas, very special discounts and exemptions are offered as well.

Profitability in these areas is very high and our goal with these packages is to make the work of the investor easy.

Please explain about the latest status and the plans to establish new free trade and special economic zones.

According to the law, the establishment of seven new free trade zones and 13 new special economic zones were approved in the parliament in [the Iranian calendar year] 1398 (March 2019-March 2020). We carried out the administrative work of the seven free zones, their statutes were approved by the Guardian Council last winter, the exact geographical boundaries of six zones (except that in Ardebil) have been determined, the master plan studies of all six zones have been started for several months and on average the study plans have more than 50 percent progress and we are currently selecting the members of the board of directors and managing director of these zones.

Please explain about the establishment of joint zones with neighboring countries. Has a zone been created now? Explain the plans of the secretariat in this field.

We have negotiated to set up joint zones with 18 neighboring and non-neighboring countries. These are the new generation of free zones in the world.

Most of the countries are neighbors and some are non-neighbors like China and Uzbekistan.

In relation to these zones, there are two main things: First, the rules of work for the entrepreneurs of the two countries will be the same there; and second, all laws of free zones will be according to international standards.

Meanwhile, exchanging land and services is possible according to the laws.

First of all, this work is an important model in nullifying the sanctions and secondly, it greatly facilitates the trade between Iran and those countries.

Three or four joint free zones will probably be established by the end of this year.

Please let us know about the establishment of the international stock exchange in the free zones.

We have two goals in these zones. One is to popularize them, so that they will benefit the people of the region and the country, and the investors, and two is to globalize them.

In relation to the internationalization of the zones, we say that the free trade and special economic zones are members of the national team of the international economy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and they are basically our spearheads for the powerful presence of Iran in the world economy.

In the field of globalization of our zones, we follow five policies, one of which is to complete the software infrastructure of the international economy in these zones; part of this infrastructure is in the financial field, such as the international stock market, international insurance, international financial institutions, and offshore bank.

We received the final approval for the establishment of the international stock exchange from the Supreme Council of the Stock Market a week or two weeks ago, and we are entering the process of appointing partners to establish it.

Some foreign and some domestic partners have voiced their readiness, and the first international stock exchange will be hopefully set up in Kish Free Zone (in south of Iran) by the end of the present year.

Please expound upon the plans of the secretariat in relation to the realization of the slogan of the year, "Production Growth", in the free trade and special economic zones.

We follow the growth of production from two dimensions in these zones. One is the issue of improving the business environment, which will lead to businesses doing their work more easily and reaching their full production capacity, or new businesses wanting to start can do their work at a lower cost and faster.

We started a big and important project called "deregulation" in the zones last winter which required our colleagues in the zones to review all existing regulations and remove redundant regulations. The second phase of this work is already underway this spring, during which business processes are made simpler and faster.

The second task that we are pursuing in relation to the realization of the slogan of the year in the zones is the investment jump, which was mentioned earlier.

The third task is related to export jump and that is the establishment of export companies and export management companies in the zones with the aim of marketing the products produced in the mainland abroad.

We are trying to set up companies for international marketing in the free zones, so that we help to increase production in the mainland.

We expect this year to be a prosperous year in terms of exports

What are the main problems on the way of developing free trade and special economic zones?

One of the main problems is that the economic capacity of these zones is unknown even inside the country and even for the country's officials.

This weak and incomplete information sometimes causes decisions to be made that are detrimental to these zones.

One of our plans is to make the capacities and potentials of these zones known to both domestic officials and domestic and foreign investors.

WB sees a 2.2% growth for Iran's economy in 2023

TEHRAN - The World Bank (WB) in its latest report dubbed "Global Economic Prospects" has estimated a 2.2 percent growth for Iran's economy in 2023, a figure which is higher than the average growth forecast for the global economy and despite the fact that the country is still under sanctions imposed by the United States.

The bank has predicted that due to the contractionary monetary policy adopted by many countries this year, the average economic growth in the world is expected to decrease from 3.1 percent in 2022 to 2.1 percent in 2023.

Based on the WB report, Iran's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 4.7 percent in the last quarter

of the previous year, while the average GDP growth for most of the advanced countries like the U.S., China and many European countries was less than the said figure.

In terms of economic growth, Iran ranked 15th among the world's 72 major economies in Q4 2022, which means that only 14 countries had higher economic growth than Iran in

this period.

Iran's 4.7 percent GDP growth in Q4 2022 was achieved, while the average economic growth of developed countries was only 1.2 percent in this period.

The U.S. economy grew by only 0.9 percent in the mentioned period, the Eurozone by 1.8 percent and Japan by 0.4 percent.

Putin: Ukraine counter-offensive has ‘begun’

From page 1 ► Moscow has been preparing for this counter-offensive, which Ukrainian leaders have delayed on several occasions.

Ukraine, backed by the U.S.-led NATO military alliance, has refrained from making any public comments on its military operation to recapture territory lost to Russia.

In his nightly video address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he had discussed tactics and “achievements” with military leaders but made no mention of the counter-offensive.

“For our soldiers, for all those who at this time are engaged in particularly heavy combat. We see your heroism, and we are grateful for every moment of your lives,” Zelensky said.

Experts believe lack of statements by officials in Kyiv on the highly sensitive counter-offensive (which may influence future Western military and diplomatic support for Ukraine) could be down to the fact that Ukrainian authorities had demanded more sophisticated weapons from the U.S.-led NATO military alliance, as well as training, before starting the long-awaited counter-offensive.

Others argue that announcing the start of the counter-offensive could backfire as Ukraine could suffer major losses on the battlefield and the operation may not succeed.

The counter-offensive is expected to include tens of thousands of Ukrainian troops that have been trained and equipped by NATO. Reports suggest Kyiv has 12 brigades of about 50,000 to 60,000 troops that are ready to enter the new phase of the battle. Nine of these brigades have been armed and trained by NATO members.

In the absence of any statements from Ukraine itself, NATO has filled the void. The New York Times has quoted three senior U.S. officials as saying that the counter-offensive was underway.

Another key Ukraine ally, the United Kingdom has also made similar public statements. On Saturday, the UK’s Defense Ministry said that in the last 24 hours, Ukrainian forces have made good progress in some areas and slower progress in others, without offering any evidence.

Ukraine has banned reporters from the frontline, which analysts point out is part of the wider information war being waged to hide the number of



casualties inflicted against its troops. The measure may have also been taken to keep the military operations secret and avoid Russian access to them. Bloggers have been reporting the first sightings of new German and U.S. weaponry on the battlefield.

With Kyiv appearing to be finally opening its counter-offensive, the U.S. has announced another military aid package for Ukraine, this time to the tune of \$2.1 billion, bringing to more than \$40 billion dollars Washington has shipped Ukraine in weapons since the conflict erupted in February 2022.

The latest package includes drones, missiles for Patriot air defense systems, artillery rounds and laser-guided rocket system munitions.

Other NATO members have also shipped tens of billions of dollars to Ukraine, with the number of advanced weaponry rising ahead of the counter-offensive, which is not expected to be an easy task for the Ukrainian military.

Russia’s Defense Ministry says it had repelled fierce Ukrainian offensives in the eastern Zaporozhzhia and Donetsk regions, killing more than 1,000 Ukrainian troops and destroying dozens of tanks and armored vehicles.

In a statement, the ministry said Ukrainian forces had attacked Russian lines four times with two battalions supported with tanks south of a region in the eastern Donetsk, but were pushed back. Russian forces had also repelled two attacks just south of the city of Orikhiv in the Zaporozhzhia region, the ministry said.

Moscow says Ukraine had lost around 1,200 military personnel, around 40 tanks and several aircraft, including a MiG-29 and a Su-25 in the past 24 hours.

In a briefing to military officials, Russian Defense Ministry spokesperson Igor Konashenkov said “the Russian Armed Forces carried out a long-range sea and airborne high-precision group strike against ammunition depots, foreign-made weapons and military equipment, including unmanned aerial vehicles. All designated targets were hit. As a result of the strikes, the Ukrainian troop supplies in the areas of combat operations were disrupted.”

On Saturday, the regional governor of Poltava said the Russian military had fired missiles and drones in the central Ukrainian region overnight, inflicting “some damage to infrastructure and equipment” at the Myrhorod military airfield.

The attack that used ballistic and cruise missiles also damaged eight private residential homes and several vehicles, governor Dmytro Lunin said in a social media post. No casualties were reported.

Russia says its attacks are limited to Ukrainian military, logistics and other sites such as NATO weapon depots, and does not target civilian areas.

Meanwhile, the last month has seen an increase in attacks from Ukraine into Russia, with NATO-supplied long-range missiles can reach the capital Moscow.

In late May, the Russian capital was struck with a series of drone attacks for the first time since

the eruption of the conflict. Kyiv denied any involvement, but the Kremlin accused the U.S. of encouraging cross-border “terrorist” attacks.

Russian regions that border Ukraine’s east have witnessed almost daily shelling that have at times hit residential buildings, leading to scores of civilian casualties.

Since May, the Russian Belgorod region, in particular, has been the target of intensified attacks, which has killed a number of civilians. One attack included a cross-border incursion on May 22 to 23.

Last week, Ukrainian forces continued to shell Belgorod overnight into Sunday after two people were killed the previous night and hundreds of children were evacuated away from the border.

More than 4,000 people had been forced to relocate to temporary accommodation in the region, the regional governor said.

Earlier this month, Russia’s Defense Ministry said it had thwarted three cross-border attacks near the town of Shebekino. The Kremlin has accused Ukraine of being behind the attacks using “terrorist formations”. Kyiv has rejected the accusation.

Some experts argue Ukraine and its NATO allies have been attacking Russian territory as a diversionary tactic for the counter-offensive that is now underway.

Moscow says its actions in Ukraine are a “special military operation,” and insists it was launched to protect Russian security from the threat of NATO’s military advances toward its borders.

WORLD HEADLINES

Five killed in explosion at Turkish rocket plant

Five people were killed in an explosion at a rocket and ammunition plant outside Ankara, according to the Turkish Defense Ministry.

“An explosion occurred at an MKE-owned plant that produces rockets and ammunition in Ankara province. Five of our workers were killed. An investigation is underway,” the ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

Situation is critical at Lachin corridor, says Armenian PM

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, in a meeting with the Russian President, stated that the situation at the Lachin crossing in Karabakh is serious.

The situation at the Lachin corridor and in Nagorno-Karabakh is critical after Azerbaijan set up a checkpoint in the Lachin corridor, Pashinyan told Putin at their meeting in Sochi.

“I think we will now discuss the situation in the zone of responsibility of Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh. Unfortunately, the humanitarian situation there remains tense, with no gas or electricity for several months. And the situation in the Lachin corridor remains tense. I will emphasize that Russian peacekeepers deliver food to Nagorno-Karabakh in limited quantities. In general, the humanitarian crisis there continues,” he said.

Israel demolishes Palestinian homes

At dawn on Thursday, Israeli forces stormed Ramallah city in the occupied West Bank and blew up the family home of a Palestinian prisoner.

The large contingent of Israeli soldiers poured into Ramallah al-Tahta (lower Ramallah) in the Old City area, cordoning off the family home of 27-year-old Islam Faroukh.

Video footage of the operation showed soldiers painstakingly planting explosives in the walls of the home before the massive blast that turned the spacious apartment to ruins and rubble, while also blowing out the windows of homes in the neighborhood.

Demolishing the homes of Palestinians “suspected of carrying out attacks” on Israelis is a long-held practice of Israel.

Thousands of Palestinian people have lost their homes to demolitions in what human rights groups say is a policy by Israel of “collective punishment” that may amount to war crimes.

China responds to WSJ ‘Cuba spy base’ claim

China has denied a Wall Street Journal (WSJ) report claiming it had struck a deal to build an “electronic eavesdropping facility” in Cuba. The claims, citing anonymous US officials, have also been dismissed by Havana and even the White House itself.

Asked about the WSJ report – which alleged that Beijing would use the spy base to monitor US military sites in Florida – Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said he is “not aware” of any such arrangement.

“It is well known that the US is an expert on chasing shadows and meddling in other countries’ internal affairs,” he continued, going on to state that the United States has “long illegally occupied Cuba’s Guantanamo Bay for secretive activities and imposed a blockade on Cuba for over 60 years.”

Published by the Journal on Wednesday, the story cited US officials who were said to be “familiar with highly classified

intelligence” about the “secret” plan. It said that China would pay “billions” to the Cuban government in exchange for rights to the surveillance facility, and that an agreement had been reached in principle.

Cuban Foreign Minister Carlos Fernandez de Cossio in Washington also rejected the report as “totally mendacious and unfounded information,” calling the charges “fabricated.”

Hunter Biden’s explicit laptop images released by former Trump employee

A former Donald Trump aide has published almost 9,000 images of Joe Biden’s son Hunter online, after claiming it took months to censor compromising images of him nude and with drugs and prostitutes.

The photographs come from a cache of material obtained from a laptop the US president’s son reportedly took to a computer repair shop in Delaware.

The contents were passed to the media and a number of the photos were published ahead of the presidential election in 2020 in an attempt to embarrass the Biden campaign.

The latest images were published online by Marco Polo, a right-wing non-profit organisation founded by Garrett Ziegler, a former employee of Trump.

They show the younger Biden, 53, naked and apparently taking drugs and in the company of sex workers.

The photographs are dated between 2008 and 2019.

Nord Stream sabotage probe turns to clues inside Poland: WSJ

German investigators are examining evidence suggesting a sabotage team used Poland as an operating base to damage the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea in September, the Wall Street Journal reported on Saturday.

German investigators have fully reconstructed the two-week voyage of the “Andromeda”, a 50-foot (15-metre) white pleasure yacht suspected of being involved in the sabotage of the pipelines that supply Russian gas to Europe, the newspaper said.

They have pinpointed that the yacht deviated from its target to venture into Polish waters, it said, citing data from the Andromeda’s radio and navigation equipment, satellite and mobile phones, Gmail accounts “and DNA samples left aboard, which Germany has tried to match to at least one Ukrainian soldier”.

Germany’s Federal Criminal Police Office and Poland’s Office of Chancellery of the Prime Minister did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment.

The Washington Post reported this week that the U.S. had learned of a Ukrainian plan to attack the pipelines three months before they were damaged by the underwater explosions.

Trump asked me to ‘choose between him and the constitution’ –Pence

Mike Pence directly addressed the rivalry between him and Donald Trump, saying on January 6, his then-boss asked him to “choose between him and the constitution.”

“January 6 was a tragic day in the life of our nation,” Pence began. “As I’ve said many times, on that fateful day, president Trump’s words were reckless. They endangered my family and everyone at the Capitol. But the American people deserve to know that on that day, president Trump also demanded that I choose between him and the constitution. Now, voters will be faced with the same choice: I chose the constitution and I always will.”

American foreign policy surrounded by fraudsters

By Saman Sofalgar

Of 10 top American think-tanks which are active in foreign policy sphere, all of them receive financial support from American firms including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and Northrop Grumman etc.

Tehran Times-For Years, the US governments have always claimed that the country’s foreign policy is centered on human values like democracy, peace, freedom, and respect to other nations. However, Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft recently published a detailed report which concludes the US arms companies play a substantial role to shape the country’s foreign policy.

The Institute suggests that of 10 top American think-tanks which are active in foreign policy sphere, all of them receive financial support from American firms including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and Northrop Grumman etc. In this regard, “Atlantic Council” and “Center for Strategic and International Studies” receive more than a million dollars from these companies annually.

The issue clarifies why most of American well-known think-tanks support the selling of

arms to Ukraine. Of course this is not the whole story. This puzzle also enjoys another piece. According to the Quincy Institute report, more than 85 percent of American media are in the long list of the recipients of American firms’ aid. The issue which unveils the fact that American arms’ firms justify their inhuman aims by using the so-called research and media tools.



Although different reports also refer to the fact that American Arms’ firms use lobbyists for every member of the US Congress to advance their agendas in a desired way. In this vein, it is



not surprising to see that the US foreign policy has created historical catastrophes like the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

It is noteworthy to say that in the midst of the Ukraine war, the executive manager of the US firm Raytheon Technologies clearly said: Geopolitical tensions of Eastern Europe carry profitable income opportunities for the company. From this perspective, it is fair to say that behind the scene of American well-designed foreign policy, criminals are the main determinants and meet their illegal goals at the expense of American people. The issue which once again confirm the fact that the distance between declared and practical goals of the US foreign policy is from the earth to the sky.

Handicrafts export, a favorable substitute for oil, deputy minister says



TEHRAN – Exporting handicrafts has great potential to become a very profitable alternative to relying on oil exports, the deputy tourism minister has said.

The production of handicrafts can serve as an excellent alternative to oil revenues for promoting tourism, which is one of the most significant contributors to the country's economy, Maryam Jalali Dehkordi explained on Friday.

Iranian handicrafts not only depict cultural themes but also represent the country's rich heritage and identity on a global scale, she added.

The value of Iran's handicraft exports stood at \$400 million during the first ten months of the Iranian calendar year 1401 (Mar. 21, 2022 – Jan. 20, 2023), the deputy tourism minister said in February.

Compared with the same period a year earlier, the figure represents some 30 percent growth, Jalali said.

Agritourism: Hamedan village to host rosewater festival

TEHRAN – To enrich its agritourism sector, a village in Hamedan province will be holding a public festival dedicated to damask roses for the first time.

Soltanabad village of Hamedan will hold a rosewater festival in a bid to develop its agritourism potential, attract more travelers and boost tourism revenues, CHTN quoted a local tourism official as saying on Friday.

Agricultural tourism is a new branch that those interested in this field can create a new income for themselves along with cultivation, the official said.

"The tourism industry is one of the most effective and important areas in job creation and income generation after oil and the automobile industry in the world, which can create permanent and stable employment with minimal investment."

Traditional competitions, rosewater destination rituals, handicrafts exhibitions, local foods and games as well as live permeances will be among the highlights of this festival, the official explained.

Golab-Giri or rosewater festival is observed annually in many Iranian villages and towns when lush rose fields bloom and produce an exquisite scent.

The festival usually begins with a procession of the locals carrying baskets of roses to local distilleries. The flowers are then sorted and placed in large copper pots where they are boiled to produce the oil. The pots are made from bricks, stones, and mud.

The festival-goers may experience a time-hon-

"The Islamic Republic exported \$400 million worth of handicrafts during the first ten months of the current year, which shows a 30 percent increase year on year."

Iran exported some \$320 million worth of handicrafts during the Iranian year (1400), the official stated.

The Islamic Republic has the most cities and towns registered with the World Crafts Council (WCC), followed by China with seven, Chile with four, and India with three designated ones.

The WCC-Asia-Pacific Region designated Shiraz, Malayer, Zanjan, and the village of Qasemabad in January 2020, bringing the total number of craft cities and towns in Iran from 10 to 14. Shiraz has been dubbed "the world city of [various] handicrafts."

Malayer became a center for woodcarving and carved wood furniture on a global scale. The designation "world city of filigree" was given to Zanjan. The village of Qasemabad, which is renowned throughout the country for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a major handicrafts center on an international scale.

Ceramics, porcelain, handwoven clothing, jewelry, and semi-precious stones are among Iranian handicrafts traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., and the Persian Gulf coastal states, to name a few.



ored distillation process in which the steam rises from the pots as the fragrant oil is captured in jars.

Moreover, the attendees may roam through vibrant bazaars where local vendors sell all sorts of rose-infused products, such as perfumes, soaps, and even tea. In fact, rosewater is an essential ingredient in Persian cuisine. Furthermore, there are various musical and cultural events, including folk dances and traditional performances.

The concentration of flowers and herbs has a deep history in Iran. Many believe traditionally distilled rosewater is of higher quality than that produced in factories, probably due to the shorter time interval between the harvest and distillation practices.

Rosewater is traditionally produced from a very sweet-smelling kind of flower, best known as Mohammadi roses in the country. Flower harvesting is almost completed early in the morning. According to rumors, essential oil quantity and quality decline as a result of delays in harvesting or transport to the distillery.

Archaeologists use AI to read ancient Mesopotamian texts



TEHRAN – A system of AI algorithms has been created by archaeologists from the University of Bologna that can locate previously undiscovered archaeological sites in the southern Mesopotamian plain.

Every application field has multiple uses for deep learning. It can assist with classifying items and text in the context of archaeology, identifying similarities, creating 3D models, and locating sites.

The team conducted a test in Iraq's Maysan province, where the AI algorithm correctly identified sites of interest with an accuracy of 80 percent.

The study's findings, which were published in the journal Scientific Reports, highlight the problem of the large number of resources needed to analyze the thousands of satellite photos that are

stored in archives. However, using an automatic AI system would greatly reduce the time and resources required.

According to the study authors: "This procedure falls into the domain of Remote Sensing (RS) which indicates the act of detecting and/or monitoring a point of interest from a distance. In the world of archaeology, this operation has become invaluable with the availability of more and better imagery from satellites that can be combined with older sources of information."

The study team made use of a dataset made up of vector shapes that represented the archaeologically known sites in the southern Mesopotamian floodplain. Using pre-trained models for semantic segmentation, honed on satellite imagery, and masks of the site shapes, they developed a system through training that is capable of identifying and delineating sites.

The study authors said: "The potential applications of this method are far-reaching and do not only concern its speed: it should rather be seen as a necessary complement to traditional expert-based photointerpretation, adding to the latter in many cases site features which may go overlooked but are likely to be significant."

Discover Agha Bozorg Mosque: a must-visit in Kashan

TEHRAN – Constructed in the late 18th century in Kashan, Agha Bozorg Mosque is far-famed for a madrasa sunken into the courtyard, its tiled minarets, and its lofty badgirs. It also has splendid muqarnas work on the dome of the entrance portal.

The mosque's decoration is largely café au lait brickwork with light blue and brown geometric tiles, but some of the patterned tiles are fabulous. Some say that its blue and turquoise tiles are tactfully and beautifully placed next to each other to form interesting Persian geometric patterns.

It has five floors and two courtyards above and below. One of the main points of the architecture of this mosque is that it unites the mosque and the school, summarizing all the different spaces that the school and the mosque need. This type of structure represents a sort of break with the principles of traditional design and cannot be compared to any other example, making it an architectural masterpiece.

The complex is named after the theologian Mulla-Mahdi Naraqi II, known as Aqa Bozorg, and an inscription dates the building to 1832-1833. It is said that the Agha Bozorg school was built in the style of the Chahar Bagh and Sadr schools in Isfahan.

Visitors may find another charming piece of Persian architecture in the courtyard. The central courtyard and the beautiful pool in the middle are good examples of this art. Another place where you can wonder about this structure is the ceiling under the dome. In general, you should NEVER forget to take a look at the ceilings of



historical Persian sites.

The building occupies a long, roughly rectangular floor plan oriented northwest to southeast. The courtyard, laid out on two levels (ground floor and balcony), occupies the center of the complex.

According to Archnet, the entrance to the complex is on the northwestern side, at the end of a high street lined with shops. It takes the form of an arched, domed, iwan-portal. This portal leads onto a large, domed vestibule, which overlooks the courtyard from an arched aperture placed directly across from the entrance portal.

This opening is flanked by two archways leading to a set of stairs leading onto an open roof terrace overlooking both levels of the courtyard.

On either side of these two archways (right and left as one enters the vestibule) are two broad cor-

ridors descending via ramps and turning at right angles, leading to arched entrances at either end of the northwest facade of the upper level of the courtyard.

The upper level of the courtyard is flanked on the north-west side by the aforementioned roof terrace (which is several feet above this upper level); on the southeast side by the facade of a monumental mosque; and on its two sides (southwest and northeast) by rows of blind niches deep enough to sit in. This level serves as a balcony overlooking the lowered ground level of the courtyard.

The ground floor is accessed by stairs leading to hallways that open at the four corners. It has a pool in the middle and is surrounded on three sides by dormitories for madrasa students. On the northwest side, under the roof terrace and entrance pavilion, is a basement (sard-

ab) consisting of a large open space with broad arches. From this subterranean structure rise windcatchers (badgir) in the form of towers flanking the entrance pavilion.

Adjacent to the south-eastern side of the main courtyard, the mosque is in the form of a domed pavilion (gunbad-khanah) flanked on one side by a small open courtyard and on the other by a hypostyle prayer hall (shabistan).

The interior of the structure consists of a central octagonal chamber with a large dome just behind the central iwan, open through archways on each of its eight sides to an ambulatory surrounding it on three sides. The two side arches of the main courtyard facade lead to the side arms of the ambulatory. The northeast arm of the ambulatory opens onto the small side courtyard, while the southwest arm leads to the Shabistan, a rectangular space divided by twenty free-standing columns into six aisles, each with five bays. A single mihrab marks the direction of prayer under the southernmost bay on the southwest wall of the room.

The rear of this building opens to a third open-air courtyard, which overlooks a smaller sunken courtyard (at ground level) on its south-eastern side.

Kashan is situated on a route that connects Tehran to the giant destinations of Isfahan, Shiraz, and Yazd. Moreover, the ancient town is a gateway to many sights, stories, and surrounding attractive villages to discover. Amongst the highlights are the lavishly decorated houses of Brujerdi, Tabatabai, Ameri, and Abbasi.

Historical mansion, now brocade weaving center, to be ceded to private sector

TEHRAN – The historical Sheikh al-Islam Mansion, which is a center for Zaribafi ('Brocade weaving') in the central city of Isfahan is planned to be ceded to the private sector, a local tourism official has said.

The historical building, which can be considered a museum of traditional arts, will be transferred to the private sector for improved maintenance, Nuroollah Abdollahi explained on Saturday.

Brocade is a class of richly decorative shuttle-woven fabrics, often made in colored silks and with or without gold and silver threads. Brocade is typically woven on a drawloom. It is a supplementary weft technique; that is, the ornamental brocading is produced by a supplementary, non-structural, weft in addition to the standard weft that holds the warp threads together. The purpose of this is to give the appearance that the weave was embroidered on.

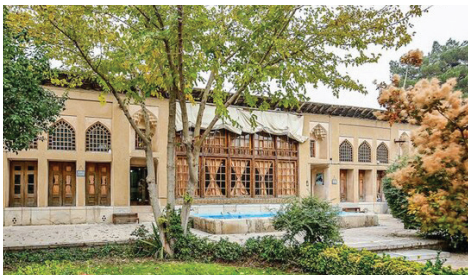
Ornamental features in brocade are emphasized and wrought as additions to the main fabric, sometimes stiffening it, though more frequently producing on its face the effect of low relief. In some, but not all, brocades, these additions present a distinctive appearance on the back of the material where the supplementary weft or float-

ing threads of the brocaded or broached parts hang in loose groups or are clipped away. When the weft is floating on the back, this is known as a continuous brocade; the supplementary weft runs from selvage to selvage. The yarns are cut away in cutwork and broché. Also, a discontinuous brocade is where the supplementary yarn is only woven in the patterned areas.

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

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

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its 'life-giving river', the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long be-



stowed the city an original beauty and fertility. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside.

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

Kordestan tourist arrivals rise 22 percent y/y

TEHRAN –Kordestan province has attracted over three million tourists since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), up 22 percent from a year earlier, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The travelers also made some 500,000 overnight stays in the

official accommodation centers across the western province during the mentioned time, which depicts a 25 percent rise compared to the same period in the past year, Mansour Mehrzad explained on Saturday.

The increase in the number of tourists visiting the area has pos-

itively impacted the region's economy, resulting in the creation of new job opportunities, the official added.

The name Kordestan refers to the region's principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuk period), the name was given to the region

comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains.

It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran's Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century.

UNESCO-designated silk spinning to improve tourism in Gilan



TEHRAN – The UNESCO-tagged traditional skill of silk spinning holds potential to boost tourism in the northern province of Gilan.

The traditional art and production of silk has the potential to attract enthusiastic tourists and travelers who seek to witness it firsthand.

Gilan, being a hub of silk production in the country, boasts several

historical edifices associated with this craft along with several thriving workshops run by skilled artisans.

In addition, these historical monuments, many of which are already registered on the national heritage list, have the potential to be transformed into attractive tourist destinations.

By focusing on the preservation of local customs and culture, it is possible to boost agritourism and showcase silk products in the region.

The art of sericulture entails utilizing traditional methods, techniques, and crafts related to cultivating and nurturing mulberry trees, as well as breeding silkworms and producing silk for weaving.

The key to achieving high-quality cocoon production is ensuring that mulberry trees are grown or maintained in optimal conditions, taking into account factors such as light, soil nutrients, ventilation, and humidity according to the climatic conditions. This creates the basis for both quantitative and qualitative leaf production.

Mulberry leaves are the primary food source of silkworms. As the silkworms mature, they produce eggs which require careful nurturing to ensure successful cocoon formation, where the adult silkworms undergo their transformative journey.

During the subsequent phase, the artisans engage in the creation of silk

by utilizing cocoon threads, interlace those threads to construct silk fabrics, and subsequently incorporate the textiles into various handicrafts.

Silk threads are the primary material used by rural artisans to create a diverse range of handicraft items, including cloth and carpets.

The significance of this element is amplified by the fact that silk thread production is often a family and community affair, which involves unique rituals and customs. The collective effort of families, neighbors, and colleagues not only enhances the social fabric of the community, but also ensures the sustainability of local cooperation.

Scientific progress helps achieve sustainable healthcare

TEHRAN - According to the Times Higher Education ranking system for 2015 to 2021, a majority of the scientific works of Iran have been produced to achieve the goals of sustainable development in the field of health and well-being.

The monitoring of scientific and technological productions is important for policy-making and planning at the macro level and sustainable development, Ahmad Fazelzadeh, head of the Islamic World Science Citation Database (ISC), said.

The Sustainable Development Goals are a set of 17 global goals designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all, IRNA quoted Fazelzadeh as saying.

In 2022, Iran ranked 17th in the world by publishing 48,156 scientific documents.

These goals were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a global call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity, he added.

"Due to the importance of these goals, the Times ranking system evaluates and ranks universities at different levels every year, pres-



ents a ranking called Impact Rankings, and ranks universities in the world based on their participation in achieving development goals."

The number of scientific works and the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on the scientific documents indexed in the topics of sustainable development goals in the Web of Science database from 2015, when these goals were approved by the United Nations until 2022 have been reviewed, he explained.

The status of Iran in the Web of Science database for the period of 2015-2022 is as follows: clean water goals ranked 5th, affordable and clean energy ranked 13th, eradicating hunger ranked 14th, cities and sustainable societies ranked 15th, responsible consumption and production ranked 17th, health and wellness ranked 18th and climate change and gender equality ranked 19th.

"In the period from 2015 to 2022, among the 17 goals of sustainable development, the most scientific works

were in 2021, and based on these documents, the best rank of the country was also achieved in the same year, which was 16th. Also, in 2022, Iran ranked 17th in the world by publishing 48,156 scientific documents."

Health Minister Bahram Einalahi has said many countries in the region are asking Iran for help with issues related to health.

Emphasizing that all diseases are currently treated in the country, the minister added: "With the help of scientists, we were able to educate efficient human resources," ISNA reported.

"With the efforts that have been made during the 44 years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, today we have the strongest health system in the region in such a way that the health indicators in the Islamic Republic are far ahead of other countries in the region."

All the indicators of health and treatment have made significant progress after the Islamic Revolu-

tion, and now Iran is one of the leading countries in this field, Saeed Karimi, the deputy health minister has said.

Health is one of the areas that got a good jump after the Islamic Revolution, ISNA quoted Karimi as saying.

It should be noted that in the early years of the Revolution, even for a cataract, which is a routine ophthalmic operation, the patient was sent abroad, but now patients from abroad come to Iran for the most advanced surgeries, he highlighted.

"At the beginning of the Revolution, there were just 56,000 hospital beds, but now we have 156,000 hospital beds," he noted.

Meanwhile, there were just seven thousand specialists, but now there are 70 thousand specialists and sub-specialists in the country, he added.

In June 2021, Ahmed al-Mandhari, the World Health Organization director for Eastern Mediterranean Region, said the Islamic Republic of Iran is a role model for primary health care.

For the past four decades, its PHC network has aimed to ensure that people have timely access to affordable, accessible, and acceptable essential health services, he explained.

In October 2021, World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Iran Jaffar Hussain, said that Iran's health system can be a model for other countries in the region, especially in the field of health and the use of valuable forces such as healthcare providers.

"Study in Iran" aims to attract more foreign students

TEHRAN - The Ministry of Science is planning to upgrade an online system titled "Study in Iran" in order to familiarize foreign students with universities as well as the conditions and costs of living in the country.

For the time being, the system is operating in four languages of Persian, English, Arabic, and Chinese, deputy science minister Hashem Dadashpour said.

"We plan to add three more languages, namely Russian, French, and Spanish in the next few months," he added, IRNA reported.

The system actually plays the role of an intermediary between universities and applicants for studies in Iran, Dadashpour said, noting: "We briefly introduce the universities with the license to admit international students, and at the same time, the applicants can be connected to the desired university through special links."

This possibility is also provided for the applicants to study in Iran to register and send the admission application while being familiarized with the cultural and academic situation in Iran, and at the same time to learn about the experiences of international students in the country, he highlighted.

Also, an exhibition will be held from November 14-19 with the aim of introducing the advantages of studying in Iran for international students, he said.

"The first section of the exhibition is related to Persian language teaching centers, and the second section is related to private institutions for attracting international students and institutions of target countries."

"The third section is dedicated to activists who are interested in attracting international students to Iran. The fourth section is related to scientific and technological achievements of science and technology parks and knowledge-based companies, and finally, the fifth section is related to the cultures and customs of foreign countries."

The Seventh National Development Plan (2023-2027) has obliged the Ministry of Science to increase the number of foreign nationals studying in the country.

The plan emphasizes the need to boost science diplomacy by increasing foreign students by up to 10 percent, IRNA reported.

It also highlights admitting non-Iranian scientists in research and technology education fields in universities and government institutes, as well as developing student exchange programs.

Currently, more than 94,000 foreign students are studying in Iran, of whom 24 percent (about 27,000 students), are studying in government universities.

Therefore, international students comprise about three percent of some 3.2 million university students studying in the country.

The minister of science, research, and technology has said the situation will be facilitated for foreign nationals to study in the country's universities.

The universities highly welcome foreign students and there is constructive competition between the universities in this field, Science Minister Mohammad-Ali Zolfigol has said.

In fact, the ground is ready and the conditions should only be eased to increase the number of foreign students, he added.

"Plans are underway to facilitate the issuance of visas for non-Iranian students as much as possible."

One of the policies of the Ministry of Science,



Research and Technology is to try to promote diversity in the admission of international students, ILNA quoted Dadashpour as saying.

In other words, "admitting from all countries and sending only to top universities," he added.

"We are determined and try to admit students from all nationalities, although, in line with the goals and strategic policies of higher education, we have priority over the countries of origin for admitting students."

"Now we have students from 91 nationalities in the country's universities, some of them are from European and American countries," Dadashpour said.

Naturally, a higher percentage of students is from neighboring countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, he noted.

"Our universities offer all the courses required in the doctoral, master's, and bachelor's degrees. Of course, fields such as law, computer, electronics engineering, medicine, accounting, Persian language and literature, civil engineering, business management, physical education, economics, Arabic language and literature, English language, psychology, mechanical engineering, and chemical engineering are more popular than other fields."

The Ministry of Science has facilitated residence for university students from Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria, Dadashpour said in March.

The possibility of staying during studies for students from these countries has been provided in some provinces and soon this issue will be extended to all parts of the country.

Students from these countries can enter and leave the country four times per year, he added.

Obtaining a residence permit every year and the requirement to do so is one of the problems of international students, he highlighted.

In this regard, through negotiations with several countries, including Syria and Lebanon, the problem of residence during the study has been solved.

For students of other countries, including Afghanistan, a three-year residence permit is issued from the second year of their studies, and students from this country can also enter and leave Iran without any problems, he explained.

These students are studying in different fields of science, research and technology, health and medical education, and also in the fields of humanities, Islamic sciences, Persian language, and literature, law, fundamentals of Islamic law, management fields, economics, psychology, social sciences, as well as engineering, agricultural sciences, animal sciences, and basic sciences.

The number of foreign students will double in Iranian universities in the next three years.

Iran is among the 15 successful countries in attracting international students, according to Mohammad Javad Salmanpour, the deputy head of the Organization for Student Affairs.

Desert greening on agenda to deal with drought



By Mehdi Garshasbi

TEHRAN - Iran is located in an arid and semi-arid belt and has been suffering from drought and low rainfall in recent years.

In proportion to the country's land area, the area of forests and green spaces are very small, and many of them have been already destroyed.

Considering that Iran is one of the countries with low vegetation and only seven percent of its total area is covered with forests, the need to increase the country's green space is very important.

There are two types of forests in the country's deserts, which include desert forests and man-planted forests, and the Natural Resources Organization plans to plant up to 40 million saplings in these areas.

Man-planted forests of desert areas are a part of the forests of this climate that does not have a natural origin and were created with the aim of stabilizing sinking sands and developing vegetation in desert lands through planting, cuttings, sowing, and seeding.

The main purpose of desertification activities

such as planting trees, building windbreaks, seeding, etc., is primarily to strengthen the vegetation of the area as the main factor in preventing wind erosion, protecting the soil, and preventing damage caused by the movement of quicksand.

Creating an ecological balance in transforming desert lands into an area capable of sustainable economic and social development of the region is considered one of the secondary goals.

One of the very important reasons for increasing the country's vegetation is that Iran is the seventh carbon-producing country in the world and in terms of carbon absorption, Iran has a very low rank.

Due to the importance of the per capita increase in Iran's green spaces, a campaign titled "Green Iran, Strong Iran" and a national program for planting one billion saplings over the course of four years were launched.

Experts say tree planting is a climate change solution that doesn't require scientists to come up with technological solutions to draw carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. It is available now. It is the cheapest one possible and every one of us can get involved.

The national budget bill for the current Iranian calendar year (March 2023-March 2024) has allocated a special line of credit for planting trees.

These credits are used for tree planting and annual maintenance, ILNA quoted Abbas-Ali Nobakht, head of the Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization, as saying.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has said: "If each Iranian plants three

saplings, the government's goal to plant one billion saplings over the next four years will be realized."

Over the past years, the environment has been damaged by various natural and human factors, and the main priority in planting one billion trees is to restore nature, Nobakht said.

On March 6 which marked National Tree Planting Day, Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to the importance of planting saplings in preserving the environment, emphasizing that with the help of the people, it is possible to plant one billion saplings.

Man-planted forests are created to stabilize sinking sands and develop vegetation in desert lands.

The destruction of forests and the environment and vegetation is equivalent to the degradation of national interests, and the depletion of part of the forests for construction, except in emergencies, is definitely to the detriment of the nation, he explained.

The Leader further called on people to plant and protect trees, saying that doing such important work requires national support. Tree planting is among the activities that can prevent the disappearance of forests around and inside cities through expanding vegetation cover.

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Hospital beds capacity rises to improve medical system

Health Minister Saeed Namaki inaugurated 23 health centers, including 201 hospital beds, in Lorestan, Kermanshah, and Khuzestan provinces on Tuesday.

Built on 26,935 square meters area, the centers were constructed with a budget of 2.9 trillion rials (nearly \$70 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

The Ministry of Health is scheduled to add 10,600 hospital beds to the capacity of the country's medical system within the next 7 months.

افزایش ظرفیت تخت های بیمارستانی

سعید نمکی وزیر بهداشت امروز به صورت مجازی ۲۳ مرکز بهداشتی و درمانی را شامل ۲۰۱ تخت بیمارستانی در استان های لرستان، کرمانشاه و خوزستان افتتاح کرد.

به گزارش ایرنا، این مراکز در زیربنای ۲۶ هزار و ۹۳۵ مترمربع و با اعتباری بالغ بر ۲۹۸۰ میلیارد ریال ساخته شده است. وزارت بهداشت قرار است تا ۱۲ فروردین سال ۱۴۰۰، ۱۰ هزار و ۶۰۰ تخت بیمارستانی به ظرفیت بیمارستان های کشور اضافه کند.



Wetland gets rid of water hyacinths

Environmentalists are removing invasive water hyacinths from the Anzali Wetland, one of the most important freshwater ecosystems in the southern Caspian Sea.

Water hyacinth is a naturally occurring weed that can grow aggressively, leading to many severe environmental impacts.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Heaven lies beneath the feet of mothers.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:04 Evening: 19:41 Dawn: 3:02 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:48 (tomorrow)

French literature in Persia

Part 2

These were made from the French because, for political reasons, the teaching staff had been recruited mostly from central Europe where French was the language of diplomacy and culture.

Within this context, translations played a mediating and pivotal role. They provided the bulk of the political, scientific and cultural material items of news for the journals and newspapers which had begun to appear, whether published by the government or by the political opposition abroad in Calcutta, Istanbul, Tiflis, Baghdad, Cairo, Paris, Berlin, and London.

The translation of French works into Persian, also dating back to the 1830s and the first printing presses, has witnessed high tides and low ebbs as a result of socio-political events which have shaped recent Persian history.

The first of these was the Constitutional Revolution (1905-11). Most of the translations prior to it remain in manuscript form and a large collection of these unedited manuscripts are preserved in the National library in Tehran.

About half of these texts are works of fiction, a quarter are history books, and the rest are memoirs or scientific works. At first there does not seem to be any underlying logic behind the choice of texts for translation.

Authors as widely different as René Lesage, Voltaire, Alexandre Dumas, Jules Verne, Comtesse de Ségur, and Fénelon were all translated.

Yet, within the intellectual and historical context of the time, an underlying concept of knowledge can be detected as the common denominator among these authors.

The choice was not primarily based on the work's inherent literary quality or merit. Increasingly mindful of their technological backwardness, the Persians of the time preferred texts that they thought would enhance their knowledge of the outside world, i.e., of history and geography or, more generally, any text which would lead them to a better understanding of Europe which was to serve henceforth as their model for modernization.

For translation purposes, Voltaire's L'histoire de Charles XII, Gil Blas by Lesage, Télémaque by Fénelon, or Alexandre Dumas' La Reine Margot were all on a par.

It was the extreme diversity of his work, covering the whole gamut of French history, that made Alexandre Dumas père the most translated author into Persian.

From the outset French theater occupied a special place in the choice of translators. This was due to the development of the modern education system in which French classical drama was read as part of the curriculum, as well as to occasional performances in Tehran and Rasht.

For example, Molière's Le médecin malgré lui, the first French play to be performed in Persian, was published by the office of translations at the Dar al-Fonun (tr. in 1888 by Mohammad-Hassan Khan Moqaddam Maraghei, Etemad al-Saltaneh (1843-96; Aryanpur, Az Saba ta Nima).

Molière's Le Misanthrope was translated from Turkish and published by Mirza Habib Esfahani (1835-93, Afshar) in Istanbul in 1869; another example was the same author's Mariage forcé translated and published in Tehran in 1904 by Mohammad Taher Mirza (1834-98; Aryanpur, Az Saba ta Nima) the famous translator of Alexandre Dumas' works.

From the Constitutional Revolution to Reza

Khan's Coup d'état of 1921, there were not only translations of authors who had already been translated, but new ones were also added to the list: Bernardin de St. Pierre (Paul et Virginie) Eugène Sue (Les Mystères de Paris), Victor Hugo (Les Misérables), L'abbé Prévost (Mannon Lescaut), Ponson du Terrail, Pierre Loti, and Paul de Kock.

The rise of the literary review was another important cultural event of the period. These reviews devoted considerable attention to the translation of poetry and prose.

The earliest of these periodicals was the monthly Bahar founded in 1910 by Mirza Yusuf Khan Ashtiani, Etesam al-Molk (1874-1938), the father of the famous poet Parvin Etesami.

The first translation of Victor Hugo's Les Misérables (tr. as Tيره-bakhtan) was serialized in Bahar during 1910.

Other famous reviews attempting similar translations were Dsnedhkadeh, Armaghan, and Now Bahar, first published in Mashhad as a political journal in 1910 by Mohammad-Taqi Malek al-Sho'ara Bahar (1886-1951) and then later in Tehran in 1922 as a literary review (Aryanpur, Az Saba ta Nima II).

After World War II literary reviews showed a considerable and uninterrupted development. Among them, Sokhan was the most receptive to the literature of other countries. Looking through its issues, one can find the names of all those important French writers hitherto unknown in Persia, as well as those of the majority of the best known modern Persian writers.

Under Reza Shah (1925-41) those French writers already known in Persia continued to be translated.

Others, such as Maurice Leblanc, Michel Zevago, or Lamartine, were added to the list. It was only until after the Second World War that great French writers, such as Montesquieu, Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, etc., were translated into Persian.

The first translators came from different social backgrounds. Before the Constitutional Revolution there were some twenty famous names among them, including the already mentioned Etemad al-Saltaneh, Mirza Habib Esfahani, and Mohammad Taher Mirza; as well as Abd al-Rahman Talebov (1834-1911), and Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani (1854-96).

They were intellectuals, writers, and high officials of the state. In the following period mention must be made of Mohammad Hossein Khan Zoka al-Molk Foroughi (1839-1907), the famous statesman and man of letters, who for years directed the office of translations at Dar al-Fonun; Mohammad-Taqi Bahar; Aliqoli Khan Sardar Asad Bakhtiari (1857-1917); Gholam-Reza Rashid Yasami (1895-1951), Bahar's collaborator in Daneshkada; Saeid Nafisi (1895-1976), the famous scholar who also wrote novels; Hosseinqoli Mosta'an (1904-83) a prolific writer and translator who also translated Les Misérables (Tehran, 1921), Abbas Eqbal Ashtiani (1896 or 97-1956); Qasem Ghani (1893-1952) the noted scholar and diarist and translator of Anatole France; the historian Nasrollah Falsafi (q.v., 1901-81), translator of the seminal work by the historian Fustel de Coulanges, La Cité antique as Tarikh-e tamaddon-e qadim and finally Mohammad Hejazi (1900-1973) and Ali Dashti (1896-1981), both also noted politicians and novelists.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica.

To be continued.

Seven overseas troupes to perform at Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival

TEHRAN – Seven troupes will give performances during the 19th edition of the Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival, which will take place in Tehran from June 28 to July 8.

Speaking to journalists, the festival's new president Hadi Hejazifar said that the groups are from Armenia, Turkey, Spain, Brazil and Peru.

“We tried to pick the works that have something new for students and puppeteers,” he said.

“We have avoided spending more money for the overseas troupes than what was spent for the Iranian groups. I have always criticized Iranian festivals for allocating a large portion of their budgets to foreign participants, something which has not produced positive outcomes,” he added.

With the new management, the festival aims to provide full-time employment for puppeteers, Hejazifar said and added, “This medium is a moneymaker around the world but this is not the case in Iran.”

Veteran puppeteers Hassan Dadashgar and Homa Jeddikar, both of whom were present at the press conference, will receive lifetime achievement awards at

Organizers pose after unveiling a poster for the 19th edition of the Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival in Tehran on June 10, 2023.

this year's festival.

Dadashgar wished that puppet shows would return to Iranian theaters, and asked people to change their frame of mind, which currently only recognizes a puppet show as children's entertainment.

Jeddikar expressed her happiness over the celebration of the 19th edition of the festival, and said, “I have known Hejazifar since the 1990s and believe in his creativity and perseverance.”

Iranian center to review Heather L. Dichter's bestseller “Soccer Diplomacy”

Front cover of the Persian translation of “Football Diplomacy” by Ehsan Mohammadi.

TEHRAN – Heather L. Dichter's 2020 bestseller “Football Diplomacy: International Relations and Football since 1914” will be reviewed during a meeting in Tehran on Monday.

Ehsan Mohammadi, the translator of the Persian edition of the book, published in 2022 by Pileh Publications, will attend the meeting, which will be held at 4:30 pm at the Young Thinkers House.

Mohammadi, who is also the director of the Diplomacy Academy and an international advisor to the University of Tehran, has added

“A Star for Everyone” appears in Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – “A Star for Everyone” by Evelien Jagtman has been published in Persian by Fatemi Publications.

Foad Sadeqian is the translator of the book originally published in 2022.

“A Star for Everyone” centers on Bear that gazed at the stars every night. In his mind he drew lines between them, creating the most beautiful drawings.

Front cover of the Persian edition of Evelien Jagtman's book “A Star for Everyone”.

“The Abyss of Madness” published in Persian

TEHRAN – “The Abyss of Madness” by the American clinical psychology expert George E. Atwood has been published in Persian by Now.

First published in 2011, the book has been co-translated by Peyvand Jalali and Arash Mehrkesh.

Despite the many ways in which the so-called psychoses can become manifest, they are ultimately human events arising out of human contexts.

As such, they can be understood in an intersubjective manner, removing the stigmatizing boundary between madness and sanity.

Utilizing the post-Cartesian psychoanalytic approach of phenomenological contextualism, as well as almost 50 years of clinical experience, George Atwood presents detailed case studies depicting individuals in crisis and the successes and failures that occurred in their treatment.

Topics range from depression to schizophrenia, bipolar disorder to dreams, dissociative states to suicidality.

Throughout is an emphasis on the underlying essence of humanity demonstrated in even the most extreme cases of psychological and emotional disturbance, and both the surprising highs and tragic lows of the search for the inner truth of a life – that of the analyst as well as the patient.

Atwood's major interests include personality theory, psychotherapy and the psychology of knowledge.

He has focused in recent years on the study of psychotic states, on the analysis of the psychological sources of philosophical systems, and on exploring the complex relationships between madness and creative genius.

Two books that are representative of these interests are: “Faces in a Cloud:

the press conference, and said, “With Hadi Hejazifar, we will enjoy a professional festival this year.”

He also announced his office's plan to establish a fund to support puppet shows and to allocate a Tehran theater exclusively for puppet performances.

The press conference ended with the unveiling of a poster for the 19th edition of the Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival.

orchestrated displays at matches, and more. In turn, soccer organizations have leveraged their power over membership and tournament decisions to play a role in international relations.

“In Soccer Diplomacy”, an international group of experts analyzes the relationship between soccer and diplomacy.

Together, they investigate topics such as the use of soccer as a tool of nation-state-based diplomacy, soccer as a non-state actor, and the relationship between soccer and diplomatic actors in subnational, national, and transnational contexts. They also examine the sport as a conduit for representation, communication and negotiation.

Drawing on a wealth of historical examples, the contributors demonstrate that governments must frequently address soccer as part of their diplomatic affairs.

They argue that this single sport, more than the Olympics, other regional multisport competitions, or even any other sport, reveals much about international relations, how states attempt to influence foreign views, and regional power dynamics.

Sorush, a publisher under IRIB, also released another Persian translation of the book by Imam Khodabandelu in 2022.

everyone can see it!

Jagtman was one of the winners of the World Wide Picture Book Illustration Competition 2019, for which she submitted a selection of pictures from “A Star for Everyone”.

This debut immediately places her among the leading creators of picture books today, both for her stunning pictures and the timeless story.

Front cover of the Persian edition of George E. Atwood's book “The Abyss of Madness”.

Intersubjectivity in Personality Theory” (1993, coauthored by Robert Stolorow) and “Worlds of Experience: Interweaving Clinical and Philosophical Dimensions in Psychoanalysis (2002, coauthored by Robert Stolorow and Donna Orange.)