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Heart of Asia

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Drought, Famine May Hit Afghanistan this Year: IOM

Afghanistan could face drought and famine this year, with 17 million people facing risk of hunger, warns the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

An emergency response officer with IOM in Afghanistan said reduced levels of snowfall and rain this winter across the country could lead to drought and famine.

In a statement from IOM, Nick Bishop called for putting in place an effective humanitarian response plan to cushion the impact of the likely natural calamities.

The IOM officer said: "Afghanistan's agriculture is heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture and snowmelt... so the humanitarian response plan for this year suggests that as many as 17 million Afghans – about 42 percent of the ... **P2**



More than 7,000 soldiers from Kyrgyzstan served in Afghanistan

President Sadyr Japarov delivered an address on the occasion of the day of Soviet troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan on February 15.

"By tradition, every year on February 15 we mark remembrance day for the soldiers-internationalists who died in combat. The Afghan war lasted 9 years, 1 month and 19 days. Over 620,000 Soviet soldiers, including more than 7,000 from Kyrgyzstan, served in Afghanistan," he noted.

"Over 200,000 servicemen, workers and employees were awarded orders and medals for courage, heroism and bravery. Sixty-six soldiers were Heroes of the Soviet Union, including two of our countrymen, Sergei Gushchin and Yuri Islamov. Soldiers-internationalists not only fought, but also restored Afghanistan, provided food, medicines, constructed social objects," said Japarov. He wished all veterans-internationalists, their relatives and friends strong health, good luck, happiness and prosperity on the 32nd anniversary of withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

65 Human Rights Defenders, Journalists killed in 3 years: UNAMA



United Nations mission in Afghanistan in a report recorded a total of 65 Human rights defenders and media professionals killed since January 2018 until January 2021, 32 individuals were killed from human rights sector and 33 were killed from the media sectors.

UNAMA reported on Monday that 11 Human rights defenders and media workers have died in different attacks since the start of peace negotiations from September 2020 to January 2021.

"The killings have had the broader impact across society of also

diminishing expectations around efforts towards peace," UNAMA statement read.

Media space and human rights with many professionals have started exercising self-censorship in their works and duties, or they have quit their job or left their homes and

country for the hopes of safety.

Many journalists and high-profile personalities fled the country, and that the killings had a broader impact on the society of reporters and human rights defenders.

Deborah Lyons, head of UNAMA in Afghanistan said "The Afghan people need and deserve a flourishing civic space – a society where people can think, write and voice their views openly, without fear,"

"The voices of human rights defenders and the media are critical for any open and decent society. At a time when dialogue and an end to the conflict through talks and political settlement should be the focus, the voices from human rights and the media need to be heard more than ever before, instead, they are being silenced," she added.

According to the report Journalists and Human rights defenders work on a range of issues including violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, for their work they get exposed to threats, harassment, intimidation, arbitrary detention, and surveillance. UNAMA report indicated that all actors play an important role in preventing such attacks and intimidation, preventing impunity, and promoting accountability, the report also added that the investigations... **P3**

Taliban kidnaps 11 engineers, works of Pashdan Dam

The Taliban have kidnapped 11 engineers and workers of the Pashdan Dam in western Herat province, Project Director Mohammad Arif Achakzai said on Monday.

According to Achakzai the Taliban kidnapped engineers and workers of the dam project on Sunday from the Canal Band area of the construction site. Herat governor acknowledged the kidnapping of workers and said efforts were on for the release of kidnapped persons.

The Pashdan Dam is constructed in the Kurkh district on the Harirud River at the cost of \$117 million. The facility has the capacity to store 45 million cubic water and produce two MW of electricity.



Tajik Security Chief Visits Afghanistan to Discuss Regional Issues

The head of Tajikistan's State Committee for National Security, Saimumin Yatimov, has discussed regional issues and bilateral cooperation with his Afghan counterpart in Kabul.

The head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah, wrote on Facebook on February 14 that he met with Yatimov and discussed ongoing intra-Afghan peace talks in Qatar's capital, Doha, bilateral security cooperation, and the situation along the Afghan-Tajik border.

Abdullah's aide, Mujibrahman Rahimi, wrote on Facebook that during the Abdullah-Yatimov talks, the two sides discussed the regional implications of the situation in Afghanistan and joint efforts against terrorism and extremism.

"Authorities in Central Asia, including Tajikistan, are concerned



about the unclarity in the ongoing Afghan peace talks, the continuation of violence in Afghanistan, the activation of terrorist groups in Afghanistan's north, and the growing illegal drugs smuggling via the Afghan-Tajik border," Rahimi wrote.

Numerous clashes between Tajik border guards and Afghan drug traffickers have been reported by the media in both countries in recent years.

This is Yatimov's second trip to Kabul since early September.

Yatimov visited Kabul on September 9-11 last year.

On the eve of Yatimov's visit to Kabul, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon and his Afghan counterpart, Ashraf Ghani, discussed regional issues and bilateral ties by telephone, the Tajik president's press service said on February 15.

The Tajik-Afghan border is more than 1,340 kilometers long. Illegal drugs, mainly opium, transit from Afghanistan to Russia and further to Europe via Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries.

Drought, Famine...

total population – will be impacted by drought and famine.”

Last year, IOM recorded its largest-ever return for undocumented Afghan migrants, with almost a million returnees. “That is almost double the previous year.”

Additionally, thousands of internally-displaced people, due to ongoing conflicts in large parts of the country, were struggling with unemployment, the organization said.

The situation of Afghans struggling with unemployment could get even worse due to the shortage of rain and snow in Afghanistan in the past few months, Bishop explained.

The statement added: “Peace negotiations between the Taliban and Afghan officials have stalled. Violence across the country is on the rise and experts predict a possible drought on the way.”

Kremlin...

delimitation and where is demarcation there,” the president said.

Moscow and Tokyo have been in talks to sign a peace treaty since the mid-20th century. The main stumbling block to achieving this is the ownership issue over the Southern Kuril Islands, called the Northern Territories in Japan. After the end of World War II, the Kuril Islands were incorporated into the Soviet Union. However, the ownership of Iturup, Kunashir, Shikotan Islands and uninhabited islands called Habomai has been challenged by Japan. The Russian Foreign Ministry has repeatedly said that Russia’s sovereignty over these islands, which is committed to paper in international documents, cannot be called in question.

By: Akramjon Nematov, Azizjon Karimov

New Uzbekistan – A New Model of Foreign Policy

...The growing initiative of the country on these platforms, the mutually beneficial nature of the proposals put forward and their focus on solving problems that meet collective interests also speaks of the intensification of Uzbekistan’s foreign policy activities.

In particular, in 2017-2020, the Uzbek side at the SCO summits put forward more than 30 initiatives, and during this period, 36 proposals were initiated within the CIS.

In recent years, the participation of Uzbekistan within the framework of the UN has also acquired intensive dynamics. A significant event in this regard was the country’s election for the first time in its history as a member of the UN Human Rights Council.

At the same time, the country began an active dialogue on joining the World Trade Organization to gain its worthy place in the world trade system, corresponding to our resource and economic capabilities and human potential.

Another notable event in this regard is the receipt by Uzbekistan of the observer status in the EAEU, which opens up new opportunities for the country in achieving the goals of progressive economic development.

Negotiations are nearing completion on an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union, which will help create more favorable conditions for mutual trade and soften the foreign trade regime.

In this context, it should be noted that the goals outlined by the President of Uzbekistan during the Address to the Oliy Majlis on the development of individual programs and interaction strategies with the main external partners can fill the country’s international cooperation with new concrete content.

Fourth, an important distinguishing feature of the newly introduced strategy is openness, one might say, the democratization of foreign policy. Dialogue with the people, which has been declared a key principle of the activities of state power and administration bodies, has in recent years turned into an open dialogue with the outside world.

Wherein, the role of the public in the formation of the foreign policy agenda has significantly increased, and the circle of subjects involved in its implementation is expanding. In particular, the activity of parliamentary and people’s diplomacy is growing.

Parliamentarians and the people, today determine the vector and guidelines of foreign policy, take on the role of active conductors of foreign policy priorities and spokesmen for the country’s interests in the international arena.

Over the past three years, our country has become a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly. During this period, the total number of formed inter-parliamentary friendship groups reached 48, and last year the legislative body adopted the Concept of Parliamentary Diplomacy.

At the same time, international non-governmental organizations and public associations are actively involved in foreign policy, contacts at the level of twin-cities are increasing, ties between youth and women’s organizations are strengthening.

The openness of foreign policy is also confirmed by the expansion of the range of politically sensitive topics discussed and jointly resolved with foreign partners. Thus, the country resumed cooperation with international human rights organizations, unblocked access to various foreign news resources.

Fifth, another significant principle is constructivism. Uzbekistan is convinced that the confrontational defense of national interests in foreign affairs, especially with neighbors, will not give the expected long-term effect.

It is important to search for reasonable compromises and a mutually acceptable balance of interests in resolving acute issues of bilateral and multilateral interaction. At the same time, any controversial issue should be a subject of discussion and not an obstacle to political dialogue.

This approach is based on other principles of our country’s foreign policy. This is peacefulness and good neighborliness, which reflect the peculiarities of the mentality of the people of Uzbekistan.

The practical implementation of the above principles in a short period of time led to the settlement of the problems accumulated in Central Asia, which for many years were considered systemic irritants hindering the development of regional cooperation.

The issues of water use, delimitation and demarcation of state borders between Uzbekistan and neighboring countries, the use of transport communications and border crossing have been resolved.

Thanks to this approach, Uzbekistan has significantly

intensified its participation in peacebuilding in Afghanistan, contributes to strengthening the international and regional consensus on achieving long-term and sustainable peace in the neighboring country.

Meanwhile, Uzbekistan’s efforts in the Afghan arena are not limited only to the goals of preventing the emergence of new hotbeds of tension or ensuring security in the region. Practical assistance in transferring Afghanistan to the track of socio-economic recovery and ensuring its integration into the system of regional interconnectedness remains a priority.

The President of Uzbekistan paid special attention to this issue in his next Address, stressing the intensification of work on the creation of a trans-Afghan corridor. This demonstrates the country’s long-term commitment to helping to rebuild Afghanistan’s peaceful economy and ensuring its integration into international trade and economic relations.

As a result, the political climate in Central Asia is radically changing. If earlier the region was seen as a powder keg or a tangle of intractable disagreements, today it is turning into a space of stability, good-neighborliness and peace.

All Central Asian states without exception are becoming beneficiaries of such a transformation in the perception of the region in the world. This is evidenced by the improvement in the aggregate economic indicators of the region’s countries.

In particular, in 2019 compared to 2016, the total GDP of the region increased by 19.6 percent, and foreign trade by 56 percent. At the same time, the total volume of attracted investments for the specified period showed an increase of 40 percent. Despite the pandemic, the commitment to the chosen course of regional cooperation will undoubtedly keep the dynamics of growth in the region in the long term.

Another indication of the changing approaches and increasing international attention to the region was the revision of their strategies towards Central Asia by the world’s leading states. Thus, the United States, the EU and India have already presented new strategies for the region; the key place of Central Asia is highlighted in China’s Belt and Road Initiative and Russia’s Great Eurasian Partnership Project. Uzbekistan invariably advocates the conjugation of all these strategies to turn the region into space ... **P3**

By XiMeng

Does the United States think the WHO is its own free playground?

A few days ago, a senior U.S. official said in a statement that the U.S. would return to the World Health Organization, but asked who to adhere to the “highest standards” recognized by the U.S. At the same time, the statement has questioned WHO’s ongoing work. The international community still remembers the crucial period in the global fight against COVID-19, July last year, the then U.S. President formally announced that the United States would withdraw from the organization. It is not difficult to find that the United States, as the most developed country in the world today, regards the World Health Organization and other important international cooperation agencies as its private tools. When it is happy, it often gives orders to other countries as it likes, and when it is unhappy, it will leave immediately. Does the United States really regard WHO as its own playground or back garden?

This kind of irresponsible “retreat” behavior of the United States

originates from its unilateralism and hegemonism position of “American interests first”, which has been repeated on the international stage again and again. In the past few years, it has withdrawn from the trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP), the Paris Agreement on global climate change, the UNESCO, the Iran nuclear agreement and other multilateral mechanisms. It seems that there is only one standard behind its behavior, that is, the United States only wants to enjoy the benefits of multilateral cooperation mechanism, and is not willing to bear the corresponding responsibility.

In addition, the United States is also good at criticizing others in order to find some high sounding reasons for itself. Recently, some U.S. media, including the New York Times, quoted a number of WHO experts as saying that in the investigation process of the WHO Joint Expert Group on the traceability of COVID-19, some actions of China seriously hindered the investigation

process. However, soon, the experts quoted in the article successively refuted the rumors, saying that their views were distorted, accusing the New York Times of “shameless” behavior. The expert from WHO, Peter Daszak, tweeted: “This was NOT my experience on @ WHO mission. As lead of animal/environment working group I found trust & openness w/ my China counterparts. We DID get access to critical new data throughout. We DID increase our understanding of likely spillover pathways.” Another expert, Thea K Fischer, also tweeted: “This was NOT my experience either on the Epi-side. We DID build up a good relationship in the Chinese/Int Epi-team! Allowing for heated arguments reflects a deep level of engagement in the room. Our quotes are intendedly twisted casting shadows over important scientific work.” Mr. Peter Daszak, added that: “It’s disappointing to spend time w/ journalists explaining key findings of our exhausting month-long... **P3**

Iran warns...

“Unfortunately, the United States is still moving in the wrong direction of the previous administration, and what is happening today is no different from before January 20.”

“The same so-called maximum pressure and the violation of the rights of the Iranian people still continue today.”

He said, “Today, the United States is no different from the Trump era in terms of sanctions, and this can really be a shame for those who campaigned on distancing themselves from the Trump administration’s arrogant policies.”

Khatibzadeh said, “We believe that if the US adopts a principled policy, that is, to return to multilateralism and fulfill its commitments and leave the path of maximum pressure, the Islamic Republic will certainly respond appropriately to such policies, as it has said publicly before.”

No compromise on security, national interests

In response to a question regarding the Europeans baseless claims against Iran’s defensive missile program, Khatibzadeh said, “Missiles and JCPOA are two completely different issues.”

“There is no country in the world

that would compromise its national interests and national security, and the Islamic Republic of Iran will never compromise with anyone about its security and national interests.”

Iran always seeks peaceful nuclear power

The spokesman once again reiterated the peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear activities and said, “Iran’s position against nuclear weapons has not changed.”

He reiterated that the country has always and will always follow the peaceful path of nuclear activities.

“The fatwa [religious order] of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution regarding the unlawfulness of using weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons remains in place.”

Regional issues only discussed with regional countries

Khatibzadeh, in response to a question about the visit of the UN Special Representative for Yemen to Tehran, said, “The talks that took place between Iran and Mr. Griffiths and the time of his visit was planned in advance.”

“Iran is discussing regional issues with the countries of the region; of course, the United Nations has its own position as a facilitator of these talks.”

Grabbed Lands Worth 8 Billion Afgs Retaken: Kabul Mayor

Kabul Mayor has announced that eight billion afghanis worth of grabbed lands have been retaken from upsurpers. Daud Sultanzoï, the mayor of Kabul province at the "accountability to nation" program on Monday said that about 55,000 square meters of white land, 173,000 square meters of median and green areas, 18,000 square meters of parking and dozens of other cases of usurpation have been retaken. Explaining the performance of the Kabul Municipality in implementing the National Security Pact, Sultanzoï said that 8,333 illegal shops located in green areas and public property in different parts of Kabul had been

demolished and removed. He also noted that 100 km of public roads and alleys have been reopened to traffic and citizens, and 276 km of sidewalks have been cleared of obstacles. According to him, 8,286 wheelbarrows have also been set up in appropriate places. The mayor of Kabul added that 12,325 grabbed areas by shops, bakeries and butchers were destroyed on the main and secondary roads, and 164 unlicensed buildings, 164 substandard buildings were identified and 124 illegal buildings in the city were completely and partially destroyed.



65 Human Rights...

should be independent, thorough, effective, impartial, prompt, credible, and most importantly transparent, the report added.

Prosecution of suspected perpetrators should strictly follow fair trial standards, the report suggested, adding that the use of charged rhetoric against the role of civil society and the media, threats against whistleblowers, and target list circulation contributes to perpetuating conditions to further shrink civic space and put an unsettling effect on the population, human rights defenders and the media. UNAMA called on all of the insurgent groups including the Taliban to stop killing journalists, human rights defenders, and civil society activists.

Particularly the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan called on the Taliban to condemn such attacks at their leadership level,

UNAMA demanded the Taliban to investigate cases where Taliban members are alleged to have been involved and whether they are accountable for order and implementing such killings of human rights defenders, journalists, and media workers.

The group was also encouraged to adopt, publicize and enforce policies that prohibit the killings of human rights defenders, journalists, and media workers and to repeal existing policies (and refrain from adopting new ones) limiting civic space, including restrictions to freedom of association, the work of civil society and humanitarian actors, and freedom of expression.

UNAMA asked the Taliban to publicize any policies that prohibit the killings of human rights defenders, journalists, civil society activists, and media workers and repeal existing police and refrain from adopting new ones that limited civic space and imposed restrictions on freedom of association, freedom of speech, freedom of expression and narrows duties for society and humanitarian actors.

The international community was also called on for assistance by condemning the killings of human rights defenders and media workers and called on them to put the importance of their roles on the table.

UNAMA called on the international community to further increase supports to the programs that allow Afghan journalists, human rights defenders, and media workers privileges in the fields of travel, security, finance, capacity building, and other areas, the organization called for prolonged and increased assistance to such sectors of the Afghan society.

New Uzbekistan...

for mutually beneficial cooperation, and not into a zone of competition.

Most importantly, thanks to the use of this approach, the authority of Uzbekistan in the world arena is significantly strengthened and its international subjectivity is growing. The country has established itself as a regional actor capable of exerting a stabilizing effect on the processes taking place in the region.

In his Address to the Oliy Majlis, the President once again paid special attention to the issues of bringing interregional cooperation to a new level, announcing plans to hold the third Consultative meeting of the heads of Central Asian states.

Sixth, another principle that began to prevail in the foreign policy, reformed under the leadership of the Head of the state, is the humanization of foreign policy.

This can be seen in the example of the increased concern of the state for the interests of citizens of Uzbekistan abroad, including through the provision of state services to compatriots and involvement in the implementation of socio-economic, cultural and humanitarian projects.

In particular, back in 2018, the President of Uzbekistan signed a resolution on improving the state policy

on working with compatriots living abroad. And this year, some practical measures have been implemented to promptly resolve the problems of Uzbekistan citizens living abroad.

Thus, during the pandemic, more than 500,000 labor migrants returned to the country. The assistance of various kinds was provided to about 100,000 compatriots, who found themselves in a difficult situation outside the country. Humanitarian measures continue to return citizens, mainly women and children, who, by the will of fate, found themselves in the zone of armed conflicts.

In this context, the initiative to create the fund "Vatandoshlar" (Compatriots), put forward by the leader of the country during the Address to the Oliy Majlis, deserves special attention.

The implementation of this initiative will be another significant step in supporting the citizens abroad and strengthening dialogue with them.

The humanization of Uzbekistan's foreign policy is also manifested in expanding the geography of humanitarian aid provided by the country. Recently recipients of humanitarian support from Uzbekistan have become not only residents of neighboring countries but also the peoples of remote regions, such as the

Palestinians and Rohingya, who find themselves in a difficult situation.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has achieved a qualitative shift in the international arena. The country seeks to become a responsible and predictable partner, ready in a constructive and open dialogue to solve the most pressing problems of both regional and global agendas, creating the necessary favorable external conditions for the implementation of a large-scale program of reform and modernization of the country, primarily for the benefit of the people living in Uzbekistan.

In this regard, the approval of the Concept of Foreign Policy Activity in the new edition is an objective necessity and is intended to lay a solid foundation for conducting an effective foreign policy aimed at ensuring the further dynamic growth of Uzbekistan in post-pandemic realities.

Akramjon Nematov,
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Does the United...

work in China, to see our colleagues selectively misquoted to fit a narrative that was prescribed before the work began. Shame on you @nytimes!"

Generally speaking, scientists are more direct and objective. They still use the word "shame", which shows that the professional quality of American media has degenerated to what unbearable situation.

On the topic of the return of the United States to WHO,

the Chinese Embassy in the United States also responded. China welcomes the return of the United States to the World Health Organization, which is a multilateral authority in the field of international health. But it is not whose free playground. It is hoped that the U.S. can exercise self-discipline with the highest standards, show a serious, earnest, transparent and responsible attitude, take corresponding responsibilities, support the work of WHO with practical actions, and make due

contributions to international anti epidemic cooperation.

In addition, on the issue of Afghanistan, China has repeatedly called on the U.S. troops stationed in Afghanistan to withdraw in an orderly and responsible manner, so as to ensure a smooth transition of the situation in Afghanistan and prevent terrorist organizations from taking advantage of chaos. Afghanistan is also not the playground and back garden of the United States. You can't come and go as you like.

Biden Promises...

Congress to pass a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package to boost the US economy and provide relief for those suffering from the pandemic. The White House said he would discuss his economic

agenda with G7 counterparts and encourage them and all industrialised countries to maintain "economic support for the recovery" and other collective measures.

Climate change would also be

on the agenda. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen spoke to her G7 counterparts last week and called for continued fiscal support to secure the economic recovery.

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Biden Promises to Re-engage the US with the World in Upcoming G7 Meet

US President Joe Biden will hold his first event with other leaders from the Group of Seven nations in a virtual meeting on Friday to discuss the coronavirus pandemic, the world economy and dealing with China, the White House said on Sunday. The meeting is the first by top leaders from the G7 group of rich democracies since April, it said. "This virtual engagement with leaders of the world's leading democratic market economies will provide an opportunity for President Biden to discuss plans to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic, and rebuild the global economy," the White House said in a statement. The White House said Biden would focus his remarks on a global response to COVID-19 vaccine production and distribution as well as "continued efforts to mobilise and cooperate against the threat of emerging infectious diseases by building country capacity and establishing

health security financing." Biden, a Democrat who took over from Republican Former President Donald Trump on January 20, has sought to project a message of re-engagement with the world and with global institutions after four years of his predecessor's "America First" mantra. Trump withdrew the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Paris climate accord and largely scoffed at multilateral organizations and groups. Biden brought the US back into the WHO and rejoined the Paris accord and has signalled a desire to work with allies in confronting China on a host of thorny issues. The China challenge "President Biden will also discuss the need to make investments to strengthen our collective competitiveness and the importance of updating global rules to tackle economic challenges such



as those posed by China," the White House said. Trump challenged China over its trade policies by imposing punishing tariffs, an instrument he also used on the US's traditional allies, drawing

criticism for not taking a more unified approach to stand up to Beijing on issues such as intellectual property theft and other economic practices. Domestically, Biden is pressing ... **P3**

A look at the world

Kremlin considers Elon Musk's offer to talk to Putin interesting

The Kremlin considers the offer made by Elon Musk, founder of SpaceX and Tesla, to talk to Putin on the Clubhouse social network interesting, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday. However, this offer should be considered in detail first, he added. "We want to make sense of it first. Putin himself does not use social networks, he doesn't have any personal accounts," the spokesman told reporters. Peskov noted that Musk's proposal is "without a doubt, very interesting." "But we need to understand somehow what he means, what the offer is about, we need to



verify this first, and then we will respond," the spokesman said. Earlier, Musk mentioned the Kremlin's official account on Twitter, inviting President Vladimir Putin to have a conversation on the Clubhouse social network. However, Moscow plans to foster relations with Japan, but won't take any steps that run counter to Russia's Constitution, Russian President Vladimir Putin told a meeting with editors-in-chief of Russian media outlets, aired by the Rossiya-24 TV channel on Sunday. "We want to develop ties with Japan and we will do this. But we won't do anything that runs counter to the key law of the Russian Federation," the president said at a meeting broadcast in the Moscow. Kremlin. Putin TV program. In reply to a question that one of Russian constitutional amendments implies a ban on the alienation of territory, Putin told reporters that it's up to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to comment on further relations with Japan in the context of sovereignty of the Southern Kuril Islands. "You should ask Lavrov this question. He will explain to you where there is ... **P2**

Iran warns of halting Additional Protocol by late February



Iran says the implementation of the Additional Protocol to the NPT Safeguards Agreement will be halted in late February in case the other parties to the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) do not fulfill their commitments. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh referred on Monday to Iran's counteractive plan regarding the lack of commitment by the parties to the JCPOA, saying, "In case the other side does not its commitments by the first week of Esfand [12th Iranian month that starts Feb. 19], the Iranian government will be obliged to suspend the implementation of the NPT's Additional Protocol." "However, Iran will remain a member of the NPT Safeguards Agreement, but will only withdraw from the Additional Protocol," the spokesman reiterated during his weekly presser. Khatibzadeh underlined that Iran will continue its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), stressing that "all these [counteractive] measures will be reversible provided the other parties will commit to their obligations." Referring to a recent statement by the European trio - The UK, Germany and France - the Foreign Ministry spokesman said, "The three European countries have an easy way... And that is to end the tensions and return to their [JCPOA] commitments." Khatibzadeh stressed, "This way is much easier than the current path the Europeans have taken; they should know that JCPOA is in a critical situation and these tensions do not help at all." US administration still moving in Trump's wrong direction Asked about the US State Department spokesman's tweet about the JCPOA, Khatibzadeh said, ... **P2**

Myanmar's Suu Kyi detained on remand until February 17: lawyer

Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi will be remanded in detention until Wednesday, February 17, for a court hearing, her lawyer said. "We came here to submit our power of attorney letter and discussed with the district judge. According to him, the remand is until the 17 and not today," her lawyer Khin Maung Zaw told reporters in the capital Nay Pyi Taw, adding he was still trying to see her in line with the law. Suu Kyi was originally expected to be released Monday.



Myanmar's military detained Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint and declared a state of emergency on February 1, alleging massive voting fraud in the general elections in November. The two leaders were later charged by a Myanmar court - Suu Kyi for violating the import/export law, and U Win Myint for violating the Natural Disaster Management Law. Both were asked to be grounded until February 15. Khin Maung Zaw has previously revealed that he's unable to meet them. Demonstrations have been staged across Myanmar and some cities around the world this month, calling for the release of detained officials. On Monday, armored vehicles were deployed in major cities including Yangon as large crowds of protesters took to the street and faced police. In Nay Pyi Taw, over 30 student protesters were arrested by police. And in Myitkyina, Myanmar's Kachin state, four people were injured and five reporters detained after police fired tear gas to disperse protesters in a local power station.



Shigal English Academy

AMERICAN ENGLISH FILE



Western Street of Kabul University Close to Dehbori Park.



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