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By Mahnaz Abdi
Head of Economy Desk

Sweets, chocolates export of \$1b targeted, but production faces challenges

The confectionery and chocolate industry is one of the oldest food industries in Iran, and it is now the second-largest exporter in the country's food sector after the dairy industry.

The industry has been able to directly employ 400,000 people throughout Iran. About 100 percent of the investment in this industry belongs to the private sector and most of its products are competitive globally.

The advantage of the confectionery and chocolate industry is the supply of its raw materials inside the country.

With this advantage, any investment will bring profit to this industry.

As a result of supporting domestic producers and products and banning the import of foreign products in this sector, Iranian producers are now able to meet the needs of the domestic market and are welcomed by domestic consumers.

This industry is also targeted to boost export to different markets all around the world.

Iran exports sweets and chocolates to 66 countries and the annual export of \$1 billion has been planned for this industry.

The latest data in terms of exports show that Iran has exported \$250 million of sweets and chocolates during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21).

Neighboring countries, Persian Gulf littoral states, Commonwealth of Independent States, and Europe have been the major export destinations of these products in the mentioned period of time.

The Chairman of the Association of Iranian Confectionery Manufacturing Companies Jamshid Maghazaei says that the country's annual export of sweets and chocolates is estimated to reach \$550 million-\$600 million this year.

While the industry is trying to materialize the objective of surge in production and also boost export, it is facing some challenges especially in terms of production, as the production costs are increasing.

Meanwhile, the sanctions and coronavirus pandemic have made access to global markets difficult, and domestic demand has also declined. →4

Mining must not come at cost of environmental degradation

By Farnak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Mining is among the most destructive activities in the environment. Although there are some laws in place that are intended to minimize the damage, they are not enough to prevent the irredeemable footprint of mining on nature, especially in cases where the regulations are difficult to enforce.

Iran is a country with diverse capabilities, natural resources, and different climates, which due to special geological conditions and rich Hydrocarbon reserves along with different types of mines have a special advantage for investment among the countries in the region, so that even some experts in the world consider Iran as a mining country rather than oil-rich, so the role of development and protection programs in order to properly exploit these resources is very important.

According to mineral exploration in the country, Iran has seven percent of the world's

mining reserves, which can be a source of employment and high income, but in return, the damage caused to nature should be the main obsession, because, in addition to destroying vegetation, it causes migration or extinction of some animal species.

Therefore, mining projects must be accompanied by environmental assessments, which means that in the extraction of mineral products, environmental standards must be considered, and accordingly, each miner must receive an environmental assessment report from the DOE before an operation.

Some consider environmental protection to be against development, while this is not the case at all. The DOE, as the custodian of nature protection in Iran, believes that development should not be hindered, but this development should not come at the cost of destroying the environment. →7

Iran to neighbors: We'll remain here forever

By Mohammad Homaeefar

TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has advised neighboring countries not to bet on outsiders to provide their security, underlining that Iran is ready to cooperate with them to build a better future for all.

"A sincere message to our neighbors:

Trump's gone in 70 days, but we'll remain here forever," Zarif wrote on his Twitter page on Monday morning.

"Betting on outsiders to provide security is never a good gamble. We extend our hand to our neighbors for dialog to resolve differences," he said.

"Only together can we build a better future for all," he added. →2

Tehran, Doha stress expansion of bilateral ties

TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian met with Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on Monday in which the two sides discussed expansion of all-out ties, IRIB reported.

During the meeting, the officials emphasized the need to strengthen relations between the two countries and stated that necessary measures should be taken to implement the decisions and agreements made during

the Emir of Qatar's visit to Tehran last year when he met with President Hassan Rouhani.

The two sides also stressed that regional cooperation can play a key role in the sustainable development, welfare, and security of the people of the two countries and that Iran and Qatar, as two friendly and neighboring countries, need to cooperate in order to expand relations and be a model for other countries. →4

Leader writes commendation for Ala's poetry on Commander Qassem Soleimani

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has written a commendation for the latest poetry of Iranian poet Afshin Ala on Commander Qassem Soleimani.

"This summer, I made a journey to Kerman and paid a visit to the grave of martyr Soleimani in his hometown and decided to compose some poetry in his honor," he said.

"Fortunately, the poetry has been praised by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and he wrote a kind message to me. The Leader also gifted me his ring, which is more precious than any other gifts," he added.

"It [the poetry] is composed eloquently and meaningfully. It will be everlasting poetry, God Willing. I congratulate Mr. Ala for his talent and success," the Leader wrote. →8

U.S. protests: Trump plans rallies to protest his election loss to Biden

U.S. President Donald Trump is planning to hold rallies to protest the outcome of the vote that gave his Democratic rival Joe Biden a clean sweep in the race for the White House.

Trump's campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh said on Sunday that the president would hold rallies to build support for his fight to question the election results.

Four days after the November 3 election, Biden surpassed the threshold of 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the White House.

The former vice president also received four million more popular votes than Trump's.

Biden declared himself the winner in the presidential election after several news networks called him victorious on Saturday in Pennsylvania and Nevada, where ballot counting still continues.

Trump, however, has not conceded defeat

and launched an array of lawsuits to press claims of election fraud in swing states without producing evidence.

Trump censured the announcement and claimed that Biden "falsely poses as the winner" with the help of "his media allies."

He also claimed in a tweet that he had won the 2020 election "by a lot."

Trump also lambasted the mainstream media for projecting Biden as winner.

That's as president-elect Biden has taken the first steps of a transition plan into the White House.

He and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have launched a transition website that lists their four priorities of COVID-19, economic recovery, racial equity and climate change.

The transition website has said Biden is assembling a team to tackle the challenges on day one when he formally takes office.

Journey to the past: a glimpse of Tehran-Rome projects in archaeology

By Samaneh Aboutolebi

Tehran and Rome have enhanced cooperation over the past couple of decades, with the arenas of archaeology and cultural heritage at the topmost level.

In fact, archaeology has been proved to be one of the most traditional areas of cooperation between the two nations that celebrated 60 years of joint missions last November.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times in August, Italian ambassador to Tehran Giuseppe

Perrone said: "Archaeology is certainly an area for us that is extremely important because it tells the world how our countries are heirs to ancient civilizations and this extremely important because it is part of identity, it's part of who we are, and it helps us to better connect with one another."

"And I think because our cultural ties are so deep and so complete in every area, that we do have a responsibility to showcase this richness and to tell people the story of this important connection that has always existed between Italy and Iran in differ-

ent areas so we look forward to our future projects which are going to be quite amazing," he stated.

It's now 61 years that tens of Italian archaeologists have worked with their Iranian fellows to ace important discoveries. Their cooperation can be classified into four major lines given below:

Joint mission in Fars province

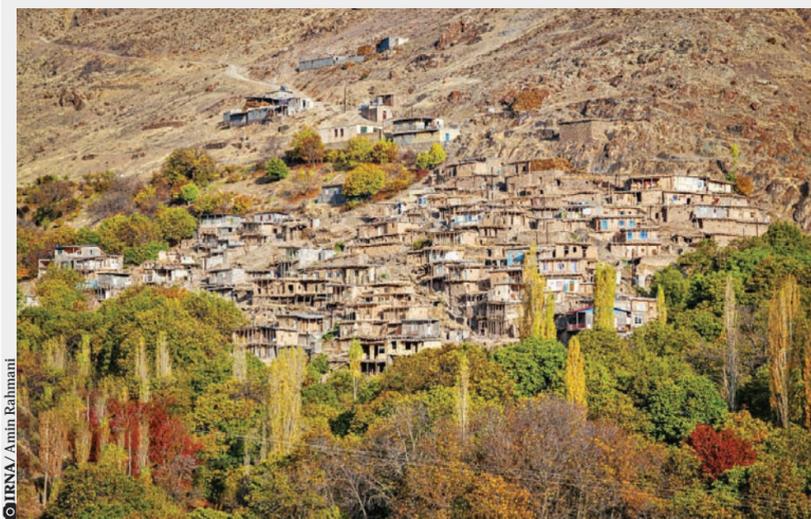
The oldest Italian archaeological collaboration now active in Iran (started in 2005) is the Iranian-Italian Joint Archaeological Mission in the southern province of Fars, →6

Earth-colored houses, one on top of another, like giant Lego blocks!

Photo depicts the atmospheric village of Shilandar, which its earth-colored houses are constructed one on top of another like giant Lego blocks! The village is situated in Taham rural district of Zanjan province, west-central Iran.

The unique ochre-brown structures of Shilandar follows similar architectural patterns to be found in some other mountainside villages such as Masuleh, Kang, and Uraman.

Here, the relatively intact landscape, architecture, and the local community flourish together. This is a village built not by trained architects, but by the inhabitants themselves. Like all vernacular architecture, it is clever in its sensitivity towards the environment, climate, materials, and local needs and traditions.



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Joy for many now for Biden, but tragedy may loom ahead for the U.S. ...

By Martin Love

If on the evening of November 7, after the mainstream media in the U.S. "called" the election win for Joe Biden earlier in the day, one happened to be in Chapel Hill, N.C., along main street you'd have thought the University of N.C. basketball team had won yet another of many past national championships. Hundreds if not more cars were blowing their horns and merrymakers on the sidewalks were shouting in glee because of Biden's apparent win.

Yes, these were mostly young people and students of all races, but elder townfolk, too, citizens of this usually conservative state where the election vote counting has not yet been completed and was likely going to conclude with a plurality for Donald Trump. But the tally in N.C. no longer matters. Biden as of late November 7th apparently won the requisite 270 electoral votes that are bound to give him the White House on January 20th.

If anything, the mood in progressive Chapel Hill is ebullient because at last Trump is headed for the dustbin of history, the U.S. Supreme Court despite the recent, quick elevation of conservative Amy Coney Barrett, has not and may not respond to Trump's claims of election fraud and his demands for recounts in various battleground states like Pennsylvania, and some of his supporters are beginning to realize they don't want to go down along with Trump, too, and are hedging their bets and support for him. The scene here is no doubt being played out similarly across half the country at least. Biden won a relatively big plurality of the popular vote, too. But herein lies the problem. →5

Advisor urges Britain to fulfil commitments

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, has urged the British government to fulfil its commitments with regard to Iran.

In a Sunday meeting with Britain's Ambassador to Tehran Rob Macaire, Amir Abdollahian decried London's refusal to facilitate trade with Iran under the 2015 nuclear deal, describing as "unconstructive" Britain's behavior in the course of bilateral relations.

While London was committed to open a banking channel for trade interactions with Iran, a number of British officials not only refuse to honor their commitments, but also raise baseless allegations against Iran, the adviser said, according to Tasnim.



"Negotiation for negotiation is a repetitive and fruitless game. The two countries have great potential for cooperation," he added.

For his part, Macaire said that the U.S. violation of the JCPOA and its unilateral withdrawal from the nuclear deal have created complicated conditions.

He said the UK, however, has voiced support for the nuclear agreement.

The British envoy also highlighted Iran's role in the establishment of regional peace and security, saying the UK embassy in Tehran would make efforts to strengthen the parliamentary relations between the two countries.

Back in May 2018, Trump withdrew from the historic 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers and imposed harsh economic sanctions on Tehran which he called the "maximum pressure" policy.

In response, Tehran reduced its commitments under the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and said with its "maximum resistance" approach, it will overcome the United States' maximum pressure campaign.

Iran has strongly criticized the three European countries to the JCPOA for failing to protect Tehran's interests under the deal and succumbing to U.S. sanctions.

Iranian sky no place for trial and error, general warns

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Commander of Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base Brigadier General Qader Rahimzadeh has warned Azerbaijan and Armenia against any violation of the Iranian airspace, saying Iran's sky is no place for trial and error.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's sky is no place for trial and error and mistake and we will strongly confront anyone violating the country's airspace," General Rahimzadeh said on Monday, according to Fars.



He said the Iranian armed forces are ready to defend the country's borders and sky, adding that any mistake by the warring sides will not be tolerated.

In similar remarks last week, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami said Iran will react decisively to any threat in its border areas.

"Our red line is sustainable security and any insecurity and threat in borders that harms our dear people's security and peace of mind is not acceptable," Salami said on Thursday as he visited border areas of Iran's northeastern region.

He said Iran is determined to strengthen its defense and security measures to preserve security at the border areas which are close to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict zone.

Since late September, heavy clashes have been underway between Azerbaijani and Armenian military forces over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Both sides blame each other for initiating the fighting in the Caucasus Mountains.

It has been the worst spate of fighting between the two former Soviet republics since the 1990s.

Meanwhile, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has voiced regret over the "bitter incident" between the two northern neighbors, suggesting that the main solution to the problem is a return of all occupied lands of Azerbaijan by Armenia and "this must be done and international borders must be respected."

However, the security of ethnic Armenians in the occupied region of Nagorno-Karabakh must be protected, Ayatollah Khamenei said in remarks last week.

Trump plans flood of sanctions on Iran by Jan 20: Axios

Trump's administration is planning to impose a "flood of sanctions" on Iran by January 20, 2021, after it recently targeted the country's oil and financial sectors, a media report said.

The administration, in coordination with Israel and several Persian Gulf Arab states, is pushing for the new sanctions, informed Israeli sources told the Virginia-based Axios media outlet on Sunday.

According to the sources, U.S. envoy for Iran Elliott Abrams arrived in Israel on Sunday and met Netanyahu and National Security adviser Meir Ben-Shabbat to discuss the plan.

On Monday, Abrams was to meet War Minister Benny Gantz and Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi to brief them on the proposal, the sources told Axios.

After Israel, the envoy is scheduled to visit the UAE and Saudi Arabia to discuss the sanctions plan.

The development comes several days after Abrams said at a closed briefing that the Trump administration wants to announce a new set of sanctions on Iran every week until January 20, when President-elect Joe Biden will be inaugurated as the new president, another informed source told Axios.

Iran to neighbors: We'll remain here forever

It came after the historic defeat of incumbent U.S. President Donald Trump in the November 3 presidential election against Democratic candidate Joe Biden. So far, Trump has refused to concede, claiming extensive voter fraud in the swing states that decided the election's outcome.

Zarif's remarks partly referred to the U.S.-brokered normalization agreements between Israel and Iran's two southern neighbors — the UAE and Bahrain which seek animosity with Iran. Observers say the normalization deals were foisted upon the two Arab countries by Trump so as to boost his chances of re-election.

Since Trump assumed office in January 2017, Israel, Saudi Arabia and certain Arab countries have pushed for a harsher U.S. foreign policy against Iran. They supported Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal — which was clinched under Barack Obama — and cheered the U.S. president for his subsequent sanctions on Tehran that caused more than two hundred billions of dollars in losses.

The nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was reached in Vienna on 14 July 2015 between Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, and also the European Union. Trump's unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA was deplored by all other parties to the deal.

In the meantime, hopes to revitalize the nuclear deal were raised after Biden was elected president. Biden has promised to "change course" and rejoin the accord "as a starting point for follow-on negotiations" if Iran returns to compliance with it.

On May 8, 2019, exactly one year after Trump's withdrawal, Iran began to gradually reduce its nuclear commitments according to the JCPOA, citing the other parties' failure to secure its interests under the deal. However, Tehran has repeatedly said that it will return to its commitments if the other parties can protect its interests against the United States' "toughest ever" sanctions.

"We do not seek war, but we uphold the rights of our nation powerfully," says Mohsen Rezaee, a former commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).



Seeing a probable end to the hawkish policies of the White House against Tehran, the Israeli regime warned last week that there could be an Israel-Iran war if Biden wins the U.S. presidency.

"Biden has said openly for a long time that he will go back to the nuclear agreement," Israeli Settlements Minister Tzachi Hanegbi said on Wednesday, reported The Jerusalem Post. "I see that as something that will lead to a confrontation between Israel and Iran."

On the other side, Iran has in recent days urged Biden to abandon the disastrous, lawless bullying of the outgoing regime, and to respect multilateralism and rule of law.

In a tweet on Sunday, Zarif said, "The world is watching whether the new leaders will abandon disastrous lawless bullying of outgoing regime—and accept multilateralism, cooperation & respect for law."

"Deeds matter most," he wrote, adding, "Iran's record: dignity, interest & responsible diplomacy."

President Hassan Rouhani also urged the U.S. president-elect to make up for Trump's mistakes, and return the U.S. to international laws and treaties.

"Now, an opportunity has opened up for the next U.S. administration to make up for the past mistakes and return to abiding by international commitments through respecting international regulations," Rouhani said in remarks on Sunday.

The president said the U.S. government's destructive policies over the last three years were not only rejected by the people of the world but were also opposed by the American people in the U.S. election.

Other officials also celebrated Trump's defeat and called for a revised U.S. foreign policy toward Tehran.

"Trump's defeat, which was welcomed

by the American people and most countries, means an end to the era of unilateralism, radicalism, escalation, violation of treaties and the rights of nations," presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi tweeted on Sunday.

"Four years of the Trump administration's harmful foreign policy could be a lesson for the new White House dwellers so that they seize this opportunity to change course and correct America's wrong policies and come to terms with the new conditions of the international system," Vaezi added.

Mohsen Rezaee, the secretary of the Expediency Council, said the new U.S. administration must lift all the anti-Iran sanctions immediately and apologize to the Iranian people for past mistakes.

"On the one hand, the new U.S. president must lift all the sanctions immediately, apologize to the Iranian nation for past mistakes and compensate for the economic damage inflicted upon the Iranian nation by the sanctions," Rezaee wrote in an Instagram post on Sunday.

"On the other hand, we should not wait for the lifting of sanctions. Instead, we should jump over the half-ruined wall created by America through relying on our capabilities and strengthening [our] economy, culture, domestic security and also the Resistance in the region," he said.

"We do not seek war, but we uphold the rights of our nation powerfully," added the former commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Meanwhile, as time runs out on the side of the outgoing Trump administration, it has resorted to ramping up efforts to put more pressure on Iran in order to make the path of returning to the JCPOA harder for the incoming administration.

According to reports, U.S. Secretary of

State Mike Pompeo is expected in Israel next week as the U.S. and the Israeli regime plan a last-minute spate of sanctions on Iran.

Pompeo will arrive in Israel on November 18 and will probably visit other countries in the region, the Israeli media reported.

The reports said the Trump administration — in coordination with Israel and Arab states in the Persian Gulf — was planning a new batch of wide-ranging sanctions on Iran to make it more difficult for the next administration to reenter the JCPOA.

Back in September, the Trump White House brought two historic defeats on itself, by failing to initiate the reimposition of all UN Security Council sanctions on Iran and failing to extend a UN arms embargo on Tehran which came to an end on October 18.

The architect of the defeats, Mike Pompeo, under whom the U.S. has pursued the so-called "maximum pressure" policy against Iran, claimed on Sunday that the Iranian government has caused the Iranian people to starve.

He made the remarks on Twitter, in response to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who said earlier "the situation in the U.S. and what they themselves say about their elections is a spectacle!"

"Regardless of the outcome, one thing is absolutely clear, the definite political, civil and moral decline of the U.S. regime," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Pompeo, who has threatened to starve the Iranian nation via sanctions, said, "Today, your people starve because you spend billions on proxy wars to protect your kleptocracy."

"You've personally stolen hundreds of millions of dollars from your people," the raging outgoing secretary of state added.

In response, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said it is fully understandable that Pompeo is "furious about having to leave Foggy Bottom after 2.5 yrs of one embarrassing failure after the other."

"Max pressure" failed, & so have the outlaw charlatans behind it," Khatibzadeh said via Twitter. "Soon he'll be on ash heap of history, as proud Iranian ppl stand tall."

Maximum pressure failed and so have to outlaw charlatans behind it, says Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh.

Tehran rejects rumors of contact with Biden camp

Foreign Ministry warns against partisan approach toward foreign policy

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Foreign Ministry has dismissed speculation that it was in contact with the Biden team before or after the U.S. presidential election, saying Iran will not be in contact with anyone outside of issues completely related to the nuclear deal, also referred to as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Iran awaits the formation of the new administration in the U.S. to see what will happen.

"We should see where the measures of the U.S. will lead to," he said. "It is measures that matter not words, analyses and speculations."

U.S. President-elect Joe Biden has signaled that he will reenter the United States into the JCPOA, and criticized the incumbent President Donald Trump for withdrawing from the deal in a unilateral move.

Since withdrawing from the JCPOA, the Trump administration has slapped the harshest ever sanctions on Iran.

Spokesman Khatibzadeh went on to say that it is still too soon to air judgment on the incoming Biden administration, noting that Iran should only rely on domestic capacities in face of sanctions.

"Solutions are inside the country and let decision-making to proceed in its natural and logical way," he suggested. He also warned against partisan look at foreign poli-

cy. "The most dangerous thing is to have factional view toward foreign policy. The establishment's top bodies decide about foreign policy."

■ 'U.S. election carried message for regional states'

Khatibzadeh also said the United States' presidential election had a message for the regional countries, which would take the risk of clinching enormous arms deals with his administration in the hope of buying security.

In 2017, Trump signed a whopping \$110-billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia during his maiden foreign visit. Two years later, the U.S. State Department approved weapons sales to Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, Riyadh's dedicated regional allies, worth almost \$6 billion.

Meanwhile, Biden has pledged to "reassess" the U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia over the kingdom's assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and its war in Yemen.

"Two years ago, Saudi operatives, reportedly acting at the direction of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, murdered and dismembered Saudi dissident, journalist, and U.S. resident Jamal Khashoggi," he said on the second anniversary of the murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

"Under a Biden-Harris administration, we will reassess our relationship with the Kingdom, end U.S. support for Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, and make sure America does not check its values at the door to sell arms or buy oil," Biden added.

In his Monday presser, Khatibzadeh was asked to



comment on the possibility of a war between Iran and Israel.

"Israeli officials are very much warlike, but want to do this [wage wars] at the expense of American troops' blood," he said.

Earlier, Tzachi Hanegbi, the Israeli regime's minister for management of its illegal settlements, said that the incoming American president's potential return to the JCPOA "will lead to a confrontation between Israel and Iran."

If the occupying regime had the ability to engage in warfare again, it would do so near Lebanon and Syria, Khatibzadeh added.

Top judge vows punishment for Soleimani killers even after Trump's term

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Iran's Judiciary chief pledged that Tehran will not back off from the efforts to punish those that assassinated top Iranian commander Lt. General Qassem Soleimani and imposed sanctions on Iran even though Donald Trump is leaving the White House with blood on his hands.

Addressing a Monday session of the Judiciary's Supreme Council, Hojatolislam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi said although a "terrorist" that has the blood of Iran's national hero on his hands has been thrown out of the White House, the Islamic Republic will not give up the firm resolve



to punish those behind the assassination of General Soleimani and the economic

terrorists who have committed crimes against Iranians by imposing sanctions.

The assassination of the prominent international figure in the war on terrorism was a cruel action not only against the Iranian nation, but against all regional and Muslim countries, Raisi added.

An example of such cruelty was the recent terrorist attack that Daesh launched on the University of Kabul, he said.

The top judge further explained that the ignorant terrorists that attacked the university and killed innocent Afghan students have been created by the US Democrats and employed by the Republicans.

US President Donald Trump ordered a fatal drone strike on General Soleimani's vehicle upon his arrival in Baghdad International Airport on January 3 at the invitation of the Iraqi government.

The attack also killed Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), as well as eight other Iranian and Iraqi people.

The two commanders were highly popular because of the key role they played in eliminating the US-sponsored Daesh terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

NOVEMBER 10, 2020

Divided States of America

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The United States plunged into the unknown after the two main presidential candidates in the November 3rd election declared victory over each other, further exacerbating the social divides that started to emerge since the early 2000s.

Joe Biden, who was recently declared as the U.S. president-elect by the mainstream media, has pledged to be a president for all Americans across the political spectrum, including those who voted for the incumbent President Donald Trump.

"I ran as a proud Democrat. I will now be an American President. I will work as hard for those who didn't vote for me as those who did," Biden said in a victory speech on November 7, four days after a presidential election whose results were fiercely contested by Biden's rival Donald Trump.

Biden noted, "I pledge to be a President who seeks not to divide, but to unify; who doesn't see red states or blue states, only sees the United States."

He added, "Now that the campaign is over — what is the people's will? What is our mandate?" Biden asked. "Americans have called on us to marshal the forces of decency and the forces of fairness. To marshal the forces of science and the forces of hope in the great battles of our time."

But as Biden declared the campaign was over, Trump just started a new legal campaign to challenge the election results in many battleground states such as Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Arizona.

Calling into question the results of the presidential election, Trump has said many times that the Democrats have stolen the election and that the election is far from over.

"All of the recent Biden claimed States will be legally challenged by us for Voter Fraud and State Election Fraud. Plenty of proof - just check out the Media. WE WILL WIN! America First!" Trump tweeted on November 5.

The president continued to question the results of the election in the ensuing day even after the mainstream media announced that Biden had won the election.

More disunity than unity

Trump claims that he easily wins the election if the "legal votes" are counted.

"I easily WIN the Presidency of the Unit-



ed States with LEGAL VOTES CAST. The OBSERVERS were not allowed, in any way, shape, or form, to do their job and therefore, votes accepted during this period must be determined to be ILLEGAL VOTES. U.S. Supreme Court should decide!" he tweeted on November 6.

Trump declared victory even before the results were announced, a move that prompted many analysts to warn about a social chaos across the U.S. Biden sought to heal in the U.S. and reduce the divides created during this election. But analysts believe that the United States will remain the Divided States of America despite Biden's efforts to portray himself as the healer-in-chief.

The debate over social divides in the U.S. is nothing new. When Trump moved into the White House four years ago, the mainstream media warned that Trump's victory will deepen the discord among ordinary Americans. This was reflected by the Time magazine's decision to choose Trump as Person of the Year in 2016 when it called him the President of the Divided States.

"For reminding America that demagoguery feeds on despair and that truth is only as powerful as the trust in those who speak it, for empowering a hidden electorate by mainstreaming its furies and live-streaming its fears, and for framing tomorrow's political culture by demolishing yesterday's, Donald Trump is TIME's 2016 Person of the Year," the Time magazine wrote as it announced Trump the 2016 Person of the Year.

Four years after Trump came into office,

the Democrats mobilized their supporters in what Biden called "the broadest and most diverse coalition in history" to defeat Trump with a landslide victory in the November 3rd presidential election but their efforts in this regard failed miserably and led to more divides in American society than unity.

On the other hand, Trump, who is accused of fanning the flames of racial tension and creating divides in society, keeps insisting that he has garnered the support of more Americans than in the 2016 election, and thus intruding himself as the sole protector of the American people's will against the Washington establishment, which, according to Trump, seeks to undermine the interests of the American people.

"71,000,000 Legal Votes. The most EVER for a sitting President!" Trump tweeted on November 8.

Risk of secession

As Trump and Biden continue to tussle over the election results, analysts warn about the divisions that could be created as a result of the election disagreement. Two recent books have argued that these divisions could lead to the U.S. being disintegrated.

Trump has gained more than 71 million popular votes in the recent election, nearly 9 million votes more than his votes in 2016. Pundits believe that almost half of the U.S. population is likely to feel betrayed by the result of the 2020 presidential election, especially after Trump questioned this result. That will further exacerbate the existing polarization that dates back to the 1990s.

In 2016, more than 61% of voters lived in «landslide counties» — areas where voters supported one presidential candidate by at least 60%. That was up from 50% in 2012 and 39% in 1992, according to the American news website Axios.

"If Democrats continue to congregate in heavily populated metropolitan areas as projected, the American political system's skew toward rural areas and states would only grow, so much so that by 2040, 70% of Americans could live in just 15 states, giving them a voice in just 30% of the Senate," the website wrote.

In light of these facts, authors moved to sound the alarm that the U.S. is on the verge of being divided.

"There is not a single important cultural, religious, political or social force that is pulling Americans together more than it is pushing us apart," writer David French notes in his new book "Divided We Fall: America's Secession Threat and How to Restore Our Nation."

French — whom Axios described as an anti-Trump conservative — argues that America's divisions are so great, and the U.S. political system so poorly designed to handle them, that secession may eventually be the result.

"If we keep pushing people and pushing people and pushing people, you cannot assume that they won't break," he told Business Insider in a recent interview.

Axios pointed to another book whose author also warned about the breakup of the U.S.

"We associate secession with Confederate states and the Civil War, but 'almost everybody at one time or another in every different part of the country has considered the idea of breaking up,' says Richard Kreitner, the author of 'Break It Up: Secession, Division, and the Secret History of America's Imperfect Union'" wrote the website, adding that after the 2012 election, secession petitions were launched in all 50 states, with campaigns in six states receiving enough signatures to require a response from the U.S. government.

French has laid out two plausible secession scenarios: one involving Democratic West Coast states leaving the union over gun laws, and the other involving Republican Southern states led by Texas seceding because of abortion laws, according to Axios.

SPORTS

Legendary swimmer Heydar Shonjani dies

SPORTS TEHRAN — Iranian legendary swimmer Heydar Shonjani passed away at the age of 75 on Sunday.



Shonjani was the first Iranian swimmer to compete at the Olympic Games. He participated at the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo at the men's 100-meter freestyle but failed to reach the final with a time of 1:02.1.

Shonjani was a member of Iran national water polo team who won a gold medal at the 1974 Asian Games in Tehran.

He also represented Iran water polo team at the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal, Canada, where Iran failed to qualify for the next stage after being defeated by Italy, Yugoslavia and Cuba. Bandar Anzali-born Shonjani helped so many Iranian swimmers find their way in the sport.

Tehran Times extends deepest sympathy to Shonjani's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

Mehdi Taremi thrilled with Porto win

SPORTS TEHRAN — Porto striker Mehdi Taremi is thrilled with his team's win over Portimonense at the Primeira Liga.

The holders beat Portimonense 3-1 at home at matchday seven Sunday night.

Beto scored for the visiting team in the 14th minutes but Mbemba equalized the match in the first half's added time. Taremi made it 2-1 in the 46th minute and Sergio Oliveira scored Porto's third goal in the 89th minute. With this victory, FC Porto now have 13 points and sit fourth in the table.

"Thank you to all the fans, the players, and the staff for all the support. I'm thrilled with the victory of the team. I hope the best for the future and for our fans. FC Porto are a great club, I am very happy to be here," Taremi told Porto's website.

"I want more victories, for me and for the team. We did a great job, as we were somewhat tired from the Champions League. But we did well, we could have scored more goals, but we won and that's what matters the most," he added.

Esteghlal transfer ban lifted

SPORTS TEHRAN — Iranian football club Esteghlal's ban has been lifted by FIFA.

The Blues had been handed the transfer ban by FIFA's Dispute Resolution Chamber (DRC) over non-payment of dues to former coach Winfried Schafer.

In a letter sent to the club, the world football governing body has confirmed that the Iranian team are eligible to sign player.

FIFA had already lifted transfer ban of Esteghlal archrivals Persepolis after the Iranian team paid Branko Ivankovic's payment.

Esteghlal complete signing of Sobhan Khaghani

SPORTS TEHRAN — Esteghlal football club have completed the signing of Iranian rising star Sobhan Khaghani.

The 21-year-old forward has penned a five-year contract with the Blues.

Khaghani most recently played in Tractor football team. He was a member of Iran U17 football team and represented Iran at the FIFA U17 World Cup 2017.

Esteghlal started the new Iran Professional League (IPL) on Saturday with a win against newly-promoted Mes Rafsanjan.

Six Iranians chosen for AVC Technical Committees

SPORTS TEHRAN — Six Iranians have been elected as members of the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) Technical Committees.

The 43rd AVC Board of Administration Meeting was held via video conference on Monday, with newly-elected Board members attending to handle administrative matters related to the meeting which include nomination of AVC Official Positions, AVC Technical Committee Chairpersons and selection of FITVB Board of Administration Members representing AVC.

Mahmoud Afshardoost and Gholamreza Norouzi retained their positions as members of Coaches Committee and Medical Committee, respectively.

Masoud Yazdanpanah was chosen as a member of Sports Events Council and Farhad Shahmiri was elected as new member of Referees Committee.

Mehdi Eslami and Kasra Ghafouri have been also chosen for Finance Committee and Beach Volleyball Committee.

The Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) was established on May 6, 1952, and since then AVC has become one of the largest continental volleyball associations in the world, with its member federations increasing to 65 from only 12 at the time of its set-up.

The first concept of the AVC was launched by the initiative of the late Mr. Nishikawa of Japan in April 1952, and on May 6 of the same year, AVC was officially established with 12 countries participating.

German FM calls for Europe-U.S. co-op to revive JCPOA

POLITICAL TEHRAN — German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said on Monday that Joe Biden's projected win presents "many new chances" for cooperation between Berlin and Washington, according to a Deutsche Welle report.

The chief German diplomat expressed hope that the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), would be revived through cooperation between the United States and Europe.

"We need to come back together on this," Maas told public radio Deutschlandfunk, adding that Biden's win in the U.S. presidential election could, among other things,

increase the scope of cooperation between European countries and the United States on the nuclear deal with Iran.

According to Maas, the debate over how to deal with Iran's nuclear program will heat up again in the United States.

Biden has stated that the United States will return to the nuclear deal with Iran and use it as a starting point to address other issues of concern.

It's not clear yet whether the new U.S. administration would seek to maintain the JCPOA or pursue the policy of reaching a new deal on Iran's nuclear program.

The German foreign minister pointed out that Germany is ready to go with both options. He warned that either in

connection with Iran's nuclear program or in connection with that country's missile program, the scattered and independent activities and efforts of Europe and the United States will not achieve the desired result.

Maas underlined that the United States and its European allies must pursue a joint strategy to achieve the desired result.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the nuclear deal on May 8, 2018, reimposing sweeping economic sanctions on Iran in an effort to reach what he called a better deal with Iran. But Iran refused to negotiate with the Trump administration over a new nuclear deal under the sanctions pressure.

Iran FM to visit Pakistan

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will pay a visit on Tuesday to neighboring Pakistan at the invitation of his Pakistani counterpart, according to the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Saeed Khatibzadeh.

Speaking at a weekly press conference on Monday, the spokesman said, "Tomorrow, the foreign minister will travel to Islamabad for a two-day visit at the invitation of

his Pakistani counterpart at the head of a political and economic delegation."

Khatibzadeh said Iran's chief diplomat will meet with several high-ranking Pakistani officials including his Pakistani counterpart and the commander of Pakistan's army.

Zarif has just concluded a regional tour of three Latin American countries, where he held high-level talks with the leaders of Bolivia, Venezuela, and Cuba.

In Bolivia, Zarif met with Bolivia's president-elect Luis Arce to discuss issues of mutual interest.

"Just arrived in La Paz, to celebrate with Bolivians the fruits of their struggle to restore their democracy. And honored to participate in inauguration of President Arce on Sun. Great to witness the joy people exhibit celebrating their restoration of liberty & democracy," Zarif said in a tweet upon his

arrival in the Bolivian capital.

Zarif attended the inauguration of Arce and congratulated him on being elected as Bolivia's new president, saying Iran will firmly stand by the Bolivian government and nation. Arce, in turn, thanked the Iranian foreign minister for attending his swearing-in ceremony, adding his country seeks to boost ties with Iran, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Iran congratulates Azerbaijan on liberation of Shusha

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Iranian embassy in Baku has congratulated Azerbaijan on the liberation of the strategic city of Shusha, a key city in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh which has been under Armenian control for more than two and a half decades.

"The embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Baku expresses congratulations on the liberation of the historical and cultural city of Shusha, which is one of the symbols of the cultural commonality of the two nations of Iran and Azerbaijan. God willing, the call of Takbir from the minarets of the historic Shusha Mosque will soon caress the souls of all Muslims and supporters of Velayat in the region," the Iranian embassy in Baku said in a statement on its official Telegram channel.

The statement also pointed to the recent remarks by Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, about Azerbaijan's right to liberate its occupied territories.

In a televised speech last week, the Leader expressed support for Azerbaijan, saying all Azerbaijani territories occupied by Armenia should be freed.

"This war is a bitter incident and it threatens the security of the region. Of course, all Azerbaijani territories occupied by Armenia should be freed. All these lands should be given back to Azerbaijan. One of the main conditions is that these lands should be returned to Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan is entitled to be in control of these lands, and therefore, all of them should be freed," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

He added, "Of course, the safety of all Armenians living in those lands should be ensured. International borders should be respected and the two sides should not transgress against the borders of other countries. The integrity of international borders should be protected and terrorists should not be allowed to deploy their forces near the borders. According to the reports that we have received, although some people deny them while there are reliable reports confirming this, a number of terrorists from here

and there have become involved in this war."

The Leader's remarks were immediately welcomed by Azerbaijan.

"We highly appreciate the statement made by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and the support given to the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan," the Press Service Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan said in a statement hours after the Leader expressed Iran's support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry added, "All the territories of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia must be liberated and all these territories must be returned to Azerbaijan, - the Supreme Leader said, reiterating the strong support of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Azerbaijan's just position based on international law."

Mohammad Hossein Farhangi, an Iranian lawmaker representing Tabriz in the Iranian parliament also congratulated Azerbaijan on liberating the city of Shusha.

In a televised message on Sunday, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced the liberation of the strategic city of Shusha.

"After 28 years, the adhan [call to prayer] will be heard in Shusha," Aliyev gleefully said in his address to the nation on Sunday.

On Monday, the Azerbaijani president announced in a tweet that his country's troops liberated 23 more villages from the occupation.

The Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense said in a statement on Monday that combat operations continued in various parts of the Nagorno-Karabakh region such as Aghdara, Aghdam, Khojavand, and Gubadly.

Last week, while Azerbaijani officials were expressing gratitude for Tehran's staunch support for Baku, a less known Azerbaijani lawmaker called Behruz Marramov made remarks that resulted in many Azerbaijani officials admonishing him for his careless remarks against Iran. The lawmaker downplayed Iran's support to Azerbaijan and implicitly accused

Sweets, chocolates export of \$1b targeted, but production faces challenges

1 → The chairman of the Association of Iranian Confectionery Manufacturing Companies has said that due to the sanctions, the import of raw materials and essences from Europe has been stopped and products from Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and China have been replaced, which are of much lower quality.

For this reason, the overall quality of confectionery and chocolate products has also changed, Jamshid Maghazei said.

In terms of exports, this industry has experienced a decline in the past year, as the exports stood at \$500 million, which was 30 percent lower than the figure for its preceding year.

It is while, according to Maghazei, Iran is capable of exporting \$1.5 billion of sweets and chocolates just to the regional countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf littoral states.

On the other hand, according to the secretary of the Biscuit, Confectionery and Chocolate Industries Association of Iran, the problems in the supply of raw materials such as sugar, oil and wheat, as well as exchange rate fluctuations and raw material prices reduce Iran's competitiveness in export markets; because when export commitments are not fulfilled in the established markets for any reason, export competitors replace Iran, and it is difficult to revive these markets.

TEDPIX loses 25,000 points on Monday

ECONOMY TEHRAN — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 25,369 points to 1.215 million on Monday.

Over 7.901 billion securities worth 59.928 trillion rials (about \$1.426 billion) were traded at the TSE on Monday.

The first market's index fell 24,755 points, and the second market's index 27,087 points.

TEDPIX finally experienced a weekly growth in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday) after several weeks of falling.

The index increased 2,000 points (less than one percent) to stand at 1.29 million points in the previous week.

Since the week ended on August 14, the TSE, which is Iran's major stock exchange, witnessed drop of its main index every week, except for the week ended on September 18.

Investment making significantly rises in Arvand Free Zone

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Investment making by both Iranian and foreign investors has highly increased in Arvand Free Trade Zone in Iran's southwestern province of Khuzestan.

Seyed Ali Mousavi, the deputy head of Arvand Free Zone Organization for investment and economic affairs, said that the zone has attracted 12 trillion rials (about \$285.7 million) of domestic investment since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), which has been 48 percent higher than the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

The official put the domestic investment in the zone at eight trillion rials (about \$190.4 million) during the same time span in the previous year.

Saying that the investment making has been mainly made by the private sector in different sectors including industry, production, development, trade, and services, Mousavi expressed hope that the trend of investment making will be preserved by the year end.



He also announced that \$50 million has been attracted in the Arvand Free Zone since the beginning of this year in the form of approved foreign investment projects.

Mousavi said: "Despite all the problems in the world, country, province and region due to the outbreak of the coronavirus, as well as the U.S. sanctions, the investment situation in the Arvand Free Zone is favorable and this year we managed to increase the volume of foreign investment in this free zone compared to the last year."

He added: "This amount of foreign investment in the Arvand Free Zone compared to \$2 million investment in the same period last year shows a significant growth."

Mousavi said: "According to this year's motto of surge in production, 13 production and industrial projects in Arvand Free Zone have been inaugurated and it is predicted that by the end of this year, this number will reach 20 projects, which will greatly help the growth of investment in the free zone."

Arvand is one of the seven major free trade zones of Iran. The zone with an area of 37,400 hectares is in the northwest of the Persian Gulf, including the cities of Abadan, Khorramshahr and Minushahr (Minu Island). It is located at the confluence of Arvand and Karun rivers. The region is in the neighborhood of Iraq and Kuwait.

Considering the important role that the free zones play in promoting the country's export and employment, Iran is seriously pursuing development of its existing free zones and establishment of new zones as well.

More development measures in this field have been taking since the U.S. re-imposition of sanctions on the Iranian economy in November 2018, as Iran is reducing its dependence on the oil income while elevating its domestic production and non-oil exports.

Although the sanctions have disrupted Iran's economic activities, they could not impede the development of Iranian free zones; in fact, the development of these zones has been even accelerated.

Many strides made for increasing activities in the free zones have played a significant part in boosting the country's non-oil exports and brought prosperity in the other economic sectors.

The secretary of Free Zones High Council also said, "We have started the creation of some infrastructure for the production activities since the past year which will increase production and investment making in these zones."

Development of the existing free zones and establishment of new zones is currently one of the major economic approaches of Iran and in a bid to attract more investments to these zones Iranian government offers various incentives to the investors.

Zanganeh inaugurates 181 gas supply projects in southern Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, on Monday, inaugurated 181 gas supply projects worth 1.88 trillion rials (about \$44.761 million) in the southern Fars province through video conference, IRNA reported.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by the Head of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Hassan Montazer Torbati and some provincial officials.

As part of the mentioned projects, a city, and 55 rural areas were connected to the national gas network, while natural gas was also supplied to 125 production and industrial units.

As reported, over the past seven years, more than 18,000 villages with 1.6 million households have been connected to the national gas network.

Back in August, Zanganeh said that currently about 88 percent of the country's rural areas are supplied with natural gas through the national network, while nearly 95 percent



of the country's total population is enjoying natural gas which is unprecedented in the

world. The NIGC head had earlier announced

that gas supply operations in rural and urban regions of various provinces were ongoing despite the limitations created by the outbreak of the coronavirus.

According to Torbati, in the past few years, every year more than 3,000 villages have been connected to the national gas network.

Earlier, NIGC's former dispatching director had said that the transmission capacity of the national gas network rose to one billion cubic meters per day (bcm/d).

The official mentioned the South Pars gas field's new platforms going operational in the current year and noted that with the increase of the national gas network's capacity the new production capacity from the South Pars platforms won't be idle.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar, covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran's territorial waters. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

Tehran, Doha stress expansion of bilateral ties

1 → It was decided in the meeting that based on the memorandum of understanding inked in the previous meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, Iran and Qatar would expand their cooperation in all areas mentioned in the said document.

The Emir of Qatar also instructed the country's Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Ahmed Al-Kuwari, who is the Qatari Chairman of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, to finalize the documents regarding the expansion of economic cooperation between the two countries and implement the necessary decisions.

In mid-April, Ardakanian, who is the Iranian chair of

the two countries' Economic committee, and Al Kuwari agreed on cooperation in energy and investment spheres between the two countries during a video conference.

The two sides also stressed that the meeting of the joint economic committee will be held as soon as the coronavirus pandemic ends and then seriously follow up the objectives of bilateral trade.

Meanwhile, they decided that until then both sides pursue the discussed issues through more video conferences.

In a joint press conference with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Tehran in January, Rouhani said that Iran has stood and will stand beside Qatar in the future.

"At a juncture of time, certain regional countries imposed restrictions on Qatar, but Iran stood beside Qatar and will stand based on its duties as a neighbor," Rouhani added.

He said that the two countries have a very good relationship in various areas of economy, science, and culture.

For his part, the Qatari emir said that Doha will never forget Tehran's help in difficult days.

"We praise the Islamic Republic of Iran's stance in recent years, especially when Qatar was under blockade," the emir said.

Sheikh Tamim also called for the expansion of relations.

Oil industry counting on knowledge-based firms to meet technological needs

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Research and Technology Directorate has said that the company is seriously pursuing a program for using the capacities of domestic knowledge-based companies for meeting the oil industry's technological needs.

"The National Iranian Oil Company intends to overcome some of its challenges regarding technological needs in various sectors including construction, services, and innovative solutions in cooperation with such companies and institutions," Ebrahim Taleqani stated.

According to Taleqani, NIOC and its subsidiaries have selected 51 main challenges among more than 220 issues and various needs, which

can be solved by using technological solutions and the scientific and technical capacities of knowledge-based companies.

Noting that the technological needs of construction and services have been prioritized based on their importance, he stated: "The selected challenges along with a brief description of them were sent to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology in order to identify capable knowledge-based companies for each issue, and related companies in various sectors have been introduced by the mentioned body."

According to the NIOC director of research and technology, cooperation between the oil industry and the country's knowledge-based companies, in addition to help the purposeful

growth of these companies and motivating them, will play an important and practical role in solving challenges and operational problems of NIOC subsidiaries and meeting the key needs of the oil industry's upstream sector.

Back in 2019, Taleqani had announced that his office was going to conduct 25 major research projects worth nearly 700 billion rials (about \$16 million) with knowledge-based companies.

Following a well-established plan, we will try to implement the projects in a parallel approach, he said.

The official mentioned NIOC Exploration Directorate's agreements with Iranian universities and knowledge-based companies for research in various fields, saying that the Exploration

Directorate is tasked to sign seven research agreements, four of which have been signed.

Taleqani also noted that other NIOC subsidiaries were also tasked to increase their research activities and in this regard, almost all of them are going to sign similar research agreements in the near future.

Since the reimposition of the U.S. sanctions, Iran has been encouraging domestic companies' presence in its oil and gas projects, in all sectors including research, exploration, and development sectors.

According to Ali Vatani, an advisor to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, currently, about 300 knowledge-based companies are active in the field of the oil industry in Iran.

UNAMA to cooperate with Iran's Energy Ministry to expand ties with Afghanistan

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Deborah Lyons held a meeting with Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian on Sunday to discuss expansion of cooperation between the two sides.

The officials discussed issues regarding the economic cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan and the role of this international organization in facilitating this cooperation, IRIB reported.

Speaking in the meeting, Lyons underlined great potentials for mutual cooperation between the two sides and voiced the United Nations' readiness for participation in facilitating joint cooperation.

The Iranian minister for his part expressed satisfaction with Lyons' visit to Tehran after her appointment as the head

of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and mentioned various needs of this country and the abundant professional and economic capacities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to contribute to scientific, industrial and economic progress in Afghanistan.

Ardakanian, who is also the chairman of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Economic Committee, emphasized the development of cooperation between the two countries in the fields of energy, customs, economy, and other fields related to this committee, and called for sustainable development and regional security.

At the end of the meeting, it was decided that the two sides will continue necessary coordination through the Iranian Energy Ministry's Center for International Affairs, in order to accelerate and better guide the process of cooperation

between the ministry and UNAMA.

Back in October, Chairman of Afghan Peace Council Abdullah Abdullah had said that there are great potentials for economic cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan and called for the expansion of trade ties.

Speaking in a joint press conference with Ardakanian, Abdullah Abdullah said there are favorable grounds and capacities for the expansion of mutual cooperation, and the establishment of the two countries' joint economic committee has been a positive step in this direction.

Abdullah noted that the two governments emphasize accelerating mutual efforts between the two sides, adding: "Given the needs of the Afghan people and the good capacities that exist, we will have a very good future, especially with the realization of peace in Afghanistan."

Iran, Turkey to discuss renewing gas export deal in near future

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Head of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Hassan Montazer Torbati said on Monday that Iran is going to discuss renewing its gas export deal with Turkey in near future.

"The discovery of the new gas field in the Black Sea has no effect on our contract and the discovered reserve is not significant compared to Turkey's demand. We will start negotiations to renew the contract in the near future," Montazer Torbati said on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony of new gas supply projects in Fars Province.

"Gas exports to Turkey are ongoing based

on the current agreement," the official added.

He also mentioned gas exports to Afghanistan, saying: "the initial plan has been prepared and diplomatic correspondence is underway. The basis for exports to Afghanistan is the private sector however we have prepared the infrastructure."

Back in May, Montazer Torbati had said that the conditions governing Iran's long-term gas contracts probably undergo essential changes after the coronavirus pandemic.

Iran, for long, has been one of the most important energy suppliers to Turkey, and the two countries already have a 25-year gas supply contract.

Recently, however, the news of a gas field discovery in the Black Sea as well as new developments in Turkey's energy geopolitics have caused some speculations about the future of energy cooperation between the two neighbors, and some claim that Turkey is not going to need Iranian gas in the future.

Iran is Turkey's second-biggest supplier of natural gas after Russia. Tehran sells about 10 billion cubic meters a year of gas under a 25-year supply deal to Turkey which it uses for electricity generation.

The gas exports are carried out via a 2,577 km (1,601 miles) pipeline running from Tabriz to Ankara.

Turkey imported 7.7 billion cubic meters of gas from Iran in 2019 or some 17 percent of its total gas imports.

After the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions in November 2018, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made it clear that his country would continue to buy natural gas from the Islamic Republic.

Natural gas exports from Iran to Turkey came to a halt on March 31 after an explosion and fire at a pipeline on the Turkish side of the border; the reasons for the blast were not officially announced.

Iran resumed gas exports to Turkey after a three-month hiatus.

Forex, gold coin, stock exchange markets in past week

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Jamal Razaghi, the head of Shiraz Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, has investigated the status of forex, gold coin, and stock exchange market in Iran during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday). What follows is a glimpse of his investigation.

Gold coin and forex markets started last week with a downward trend, despite the fact that several other petrochemical companies were included in the sanctions list.

What the foreign currency exchange market players had predicted from the U.S. election process was the fall in the price of the dollar and the prolongation of sales queues, so that the price of the dollar reached nearly 270,000 rials on Saturday.

The price of gold coin, following the dollar on Saturday,

decreased by 6,000 rials to less than 130 million rials (about \$3,95).

The atmosphere in the domestic financial markets is emotional due to the increase in uncertainties, and with the prediction of Biden's election and his return to Iran's nuclear deal, expectations of a price reduction have been formed among traders.

As the possibility of Trump's victory intensified in the middle of last week, the price pattern of the dollar changed, and the dollar reached 290,000 rials with a price increase of 15,000 rials. The gold coin also experienced significant growth of 13,000 rials.

But over the weekend, prices plummeted due to rapidly changing U.S. election results.

Those ups and downs made trading more cautious. Ac-

cordingly, the dollar reached 300,000 rials, and the gold coin reached 152 million rials (about \$3,619), but in the end, with the increase of Biden's chance of victory, both of them started a downward trend.

The stock market index did not fluctuate sharply with the caution of the investors, but with the strengthening of the probability of Trump's victory on Wednesday, the growth of 26,000 units occurred in this market.

Some believe that Biden's victory could bring a logical return to the market, and after the end of the current correction period, the excitement will decline and the demand for stocks will be based on their value.

On the last day of the previous week, the stock exchange index stood at 1.290 million units.

Trump defeated at the polls by mass sentiment

Trump will not leave office without a legal and political challenge to his electoral defeat

By Abayomi Azikiwe

All the major United States based corporate news networks finally called the national presidential elections in favor of former Vice President Joe Biden on Saturday morning, November 7.

President Donald J. Trump and his supporters have vowed to fight the results of the elections in the courts claiming massive vote fraud and a vast conspiracy to deny him a second term of office.

Trump has been saying since the summer that if he did not win in November it would be due to the manipulation of the polls in regard to mail-in and early voting. He has hired teams of lawyers to file objections in state and federal courts, planning to force the U.S. Supreme Court to hear a case filed by him and ultimately voting in his favor.

These ideas which permeate some conservative press agencies and social media groups represent the monumental divisions which exist in U.S. society. Although President-elect Joe Biden won a decisive victory in many regions of the country, overall, the results were extremely close.

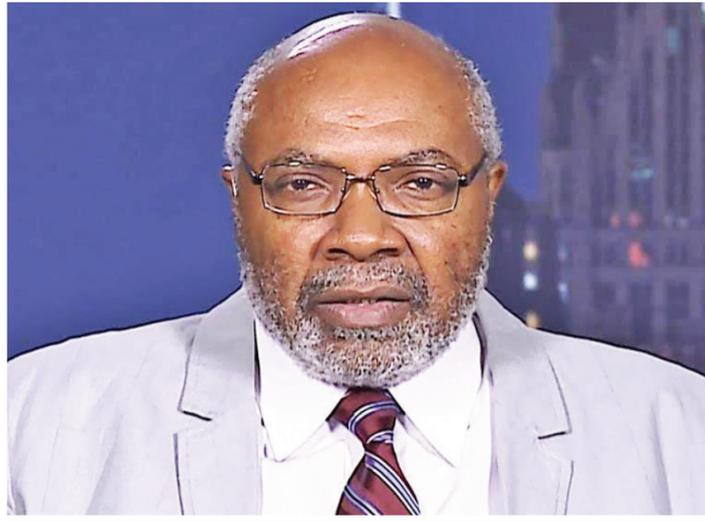
There have been demonstrations by Trump-Pence supporters in Detroit and Phoenix claiming conspiratorial voter fraud and the denial of Republican challengers to monitor the tabulation processes. State election officials and many media agencies have said that these allegations are preposterous.

In fact, it took four days of constant reporting and analyzing from the media to become convinced that the Biden-Harris ticket was insurmountable in the important states of Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arizona and Nevada. Even though most outlets agree that Biden and Senator Kamal Harris of California are ensured victory, votes are still being counted in many states.

Demonstrations were held as well by opponents of Trump. In Detroit on November 4, the day after the elections when the state of Michigan was declared as a Biden victory, a youth-led rally and march brought together numerous organizations and progressive political figures. Speakers at the rally included Nia Winston, the powerful president of Unite Here Local 24 labor organization, Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib of the 13th District, representatives of the Black Lives Matter and prisoner rights movements denounced the outrageous claims of the Trump campaign related to voter fraud and pledged to continue the struggle for healthcare, housing, education, anti-racism, environmental quality and the rights of all working and oppressed peoples in the U.S.

2020 has been a tumultuous year in the U.S. and internationally. The outgoing Trump administration weathered the storm of an impeachment trial only to be faced with the worst public health crisis in the more than a century.

The COVID-19 pandemic, due to the



“As Trump seeks to wage a legal and political battle over his defeat by the electorate it will be interesting to see how members of his cabinet, the leadership within the Senate and Republican minority figures in the House of Representatives fall out around his attempts to remain in office after his repudiation by the majority of voters in the U.S.”

inaction of the administration, has killed and sickened more people in the U.S. than any other country in the world. Consequently, the economic impact of the virus has rendered tens of millions unemployed, without health insurance and threatened with evictions from their homes.

Moreover, the escalation in racist vigilante and police violence against African Americans and other oppressed peoples fueled resentment and anger from California to New York City. The names of Ahmaud Abery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd became the rallying cries of millions who flooded the streets and highways screaming “Black Lives Matter.”

Mass demonstrations and rebellions erupted in many cities including Minneapolis, the city where George Floyd was publicly executed by the racist police, along with the municipalities of Chicago, Philadelphia, Louisville, Los Angeles, New York City, Detroit, Portland, Seattle and many others, indicated that the social situation was reaching an important historical juncture.

It was the role of the electorate in these cities which turned the tide against the Trump administration. The president said as much in his attacks on Detroit during his speech in the evening hours of November 5.

The administration has over the last several months in response to the protests and civil unrest against police misconduct, deployed thousands of federal forces ostensibly to bolster the local authorities.

The anti-racist Black Lives Matter protests were severely attacked by police, National Guard units and federal agents. Dozens of people have lost their lives in the events since late May. Thousands more have been injured and arrested. Curfews have been imposed while Philadelphia, which played such a critical role in the defeat of Trump, was occupied by National Guard troops after a mass rebellion the week before the elections in the aftermath of the police execution of Walter Wallace, Jr.

Attorney General William Barr has stood by Trump while he blatantly violated the fundamental rights of due process and equal protection under the law purportedly guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. As Trump seeks to wage a legal and political battle over his defeat by the electorate it will be interesting to see how members of his cabinet, the leadership within the Senate and Republican minority figures in the House of Representatives fall out around his attempts to remain in office after his repudiation by the majority of voters in the U.S.

The Trump administration has declared that it will not leave office without a legal and political challenge to his electoral defeat. However, his opponents, particularly those on the Left and militant elements within the oppressed communities across the U.S., have pledged to wage a relentless struggle to ensure that he exits the White House by January 20.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition in Detroit and other mass organizations in Wisconsin and the Bay Area of California has called for the formation of Peoples' Committees to organize against the attempted coup by the Trump forces. These Peoples' Committees can further agitate for a general strike among broad sections of labor, youth and community people in order to effectively shut down the U.S.

Such actions would alarm Wall Street and the Pentagon forcing them to either side with the coup makers or to demand along with the masses that Trump should leave the White House in an attempt to maintain some semblance of social stability. Nevertheless, during the transition process, the situation will inevitably become much more complicated both politically and economically.

An incoming Biden administration will be overwhelmed with the public health and financial crises impacting the U.S. at present. Biden has never come out in support of universal healthcare coverage for everyone living in the country. This is one of the critical issues along with the need for a guaranteed annual income, the halt to all foreclosures and evictions and the reigning in of the police and all law-enforcement agencies from their relentless war on the African American, West Asian, Asian, Native and Latin American populations in the U.S. If these issues are not immediately addressed by the incoming Democratic administration the masses of workers and youth will remain in the streets in defiance of the status-quo.

In addition, the U.S. foreign policy must be radically altered in order to prevent the continuation of the permanent war against the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the oppressed nations and working class within the confines of the U.S. and other imperialist states in Western Europe. A Biden administration should rekindle the Iran nuclear deal, the Paris Climate Accords, the lifting of sanctions against Zimbabwe, Cuba, Venezuela and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and move towards developing a foreign policy based upon peaceful co-existence as opposed to imperialist war and international exploitation of labor and resources.

Abayomi Azikiwe is the editor of the Pan-African News Wire. Azikiwe is a graduate of Wayne State University in Detroit. He has worked for several decades in solidarity with various liberation movements and progressive governments in Africa, the Caribbean and other geo-political regions.

Joy for many now for Biden, but tragedy may loom ahead for the U.S. ...

➔ Because few expected Trump to garner as many votes as he apparently did, and it's quite clear that almost half of Americans are despondent and angry that Trump apparently lost.

But is there going to be serious civil unrest and violence in the next couple of months? It's possible, for the U.S. has never been more divided since the Civil War in the 19th century. And this is depressing, because it suggests that support of Trump or at least “Trumpism” is not going to go away anytime soon. It is also surprising because it suggests that too many Americans are and have been flat blind and ignorant to support a divisive President of such low, immoral caliber and character who sports such vile, racist views as he has intimated and even demonstrated over the past four years. Granted, no president is consistently going to do all the right things, but one would at least expect or hope to have a leader who at least tries to represent ALL Americans of whatever race and disposition and be a person of relatively good will and morality who tells the truth and tries to unite the country. Trump has failed on so many counts it's hard to believe he ever was elected.

The other major problem is that those Americans who voted for centrist Democrat Biden are on balance much more “progressive” than Biden ever even pretended to be in his several decades in Congress and as Barack Obama's vice president. Most want things like reforms and universal healthcare, new election laws, even term limits for Congressional representatives and an expanded Supreme Court that disallows a majority of conservative ideologues like Barrett to sit for life on the court and strike down progressive legislation assuming it is even proposed going forward in a Biden/Harris regime.

Most who gave Biden their vote may be grossly disappointed in the next four years to find that very little in terms of policy is going to change much. It would have been much better for the Democratic Party and the country as a whole if, say, someone as consistent as Senator Bernie Sanders had been nominated by the party and had become president back in 2016 or now, because the reforms long sought by many might well

have been already made and might have assured that Democrats could manage to stay in power.

Sanders, for example, hotly opposed the war on Iraq that started in 2003, but Biden, sadly, pushed the war Baby Bush started, and that was probably the most grievous U.S. foreign policy mistake of this century and it has been compounded by amplified support by the Trump gang for the Zionists and the trashing of the JCPOA and sadistic sanctions on various countries like Iran and Venezuela and others that in one degree or another have nominally or overtly challenged rampant U.S. militarism simply because they have wanted to be left alone by the “empire”.

The fear is that “Trumpism” or something like it could well return in spades in 2024 (with a slicker presidential nominee than Trump) who has been put forth by the Republican Party. Biden could well become a tragic, one-term, figure in presidential annals UNLESS he leads strongly with new, progressive policies that somehow manage to take hold and thrive. Also, Biden is handicapped and he is likely to be tarred and blamed for breakdowns in the U.S. that have been essentially set up to unfold by Trump.

For example, a deep economic Depression probably looms ahead because the U.S. is virtually broke and the corrupted Federal Reserve Bank has been printing money like mad since the Great Recession of 2009 to try to keep financial markets and the economy afloat, and this could well lead to hyperinflation, crashing markets and the rejection of the dollar worldwide, which would mark the end of the U.S. “empire” and U.S. power and influence. Already some 30 million Americans are unemployed and that number could easily go ballistic. The very policies of governance and other reforms including economic ones that well-meaning Biden voters champion could well be impossible to enact by Biden's regime even if Biden tries to lead towards them strongly and with conviction. This is the potential looming tragedy that could set the stage in 2024 for a Republican president even more reactionary, racist, xenophobic and vile than Trump has been.

Changes that might have already occurred earlier

under a wiser Democrat when they were more possible than now with the U.S. in a deep, looming hole may be impossible now. Furthermore, Biden is not known for creative thinking or bold moves. His and his coming Vice President Kamala Harris, for example, do not seem to be aiming to help solve critical problems in the Mideast largely fomented by the selfish Zionists in Israel and even in the U.S. Both Biden and Harris (whose husband is a Jew) have been strong supporters of AIPAC for decades, for one thing, which is one reason to suspect that support for the radicals in Israel could be the ultimate undoing of the United States. Netanyahu, it should be noted, has claimed that Israel was going to go to war against its alleged enemies like Iran and Syria, and even Lebanon and Iraq, in the Mideast given a Biden presidency.

If Israel started any such war, possibly deploying some false flag ruse, the question is whether the Biden regime would permit it to happen and even reluctantly support the Likud extremists because this has been the longstanding default posture of the U.S. Most likely, given the vast ignorance of most Americans about the Mideast, Biden would oblige Israel and ruin any chances he has of a second term with vastly more carnage.

Meanwhile, Trump has more than two months left in the White House and does not look to be about accomplishing anything positive, like a gracious concession. If he did anything, which at least would put any memory of him in a better light, he would pardon Julian Assange and Edward Snowden and other besieged, brave whistle blowers in recent years and make one big, positive mark in the history books. Biden in any event may be just as cruel in this regard as Trump has been so far, even though Snowden may soon become a citizen of Russia, where he has been enlisted for several years.

Thus, for now anyway, there is some rare joy among at least half of Americans, including many in places like Chapel Hill in North Carolina, because Trump and Trumpism appear to be on the way out whatever crude and misguided ploy Trump may attempt during the next two months to upset the U.S. further and challenge a majority of Americans.

Putin says time for Syrian refugees to return home

Millions of Syrian refugees who fled their country's war should start returning home to help rebuild Syria now that large parts of the Arab nation enjoy relative peace, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday.

Putin's comments came in a video call with Syrian President Bashar Assad ahead of a two-day international conference on refugees in Damascus, scheduled to begin Wednesday. The controversial gathering, organized by Russia, has been criticized by UN and US officials.

Syria state media carried the Putin-Assad video call with Arabic voiceover of Putin's comments that he made in Russian.

In the video call, Putin said that “international terrorism has been almost wiped out and return to civilian life should begin gradually.” Russia and the Syrian government refer to all insurgent groups as “terrorists.”

Putin also told Assad that a deal for Syria's conflict should include the return of refugees and displaced in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolution 2254. He added that the millions of refugees “are people of working age and should work on rebuilding their country.”

Pfizer says Covid-19 vaccine 90% effective in Phase 3 trial

Pfizer Inc said on Monday its experimental COVID-19 vaccine was more than 90% effective, a major victory in the fight against a pandemic that has killed more than a million people, battered the world's economy and upended daily life.

Pfizer and German partner BioNTech SE are the first drugmakers to release successful data from a large-scale clinical trial of a coronavirus vaccine. The companies said they have so far found no serious safety concerns and expect to seek U.S. authorization this month for emergency use of the vaccine, daily Star reported.

If authorized, the number of doses will initially be limited and many questions remain, including how long the vaccine will provide protection. However, the news provides hope that other COVID-19 vaccines in development may also prove effective.

«Today is a great day for science and humanity,» Albert Bourla, Pfizer's chairman and chief executive, said.

ISIL gunmen kill 11 in Baghdad

The ISIL terrorist group (Daesh) reportedly attacks an army post in Baghdad, killing 11 people, including members of the Hashd al-Sha'abi or Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) anti-terror force, and wounding eight others.

The attack was carried out by Daesh gunmen in al-Radhwaniya District in the western part of the Iraqi capital on Monday, AFP reported, citing a security source.

“Daesh attacked the monitoring tower, killing five members of the tribal Hashd and six local people, who had come to help repel the attack,” the source said.

The wounded included army soldiers, Reuters reported, citing police sources and medics.

According to the sources, the assailants came along in four vehicles before launching a combined machinegun and grenade attack against the post.

The army and police forces have started an operation in search of the attackers, police sources said.

The Arab country defeated Daesh in 2017, with Iranian military advisory support playing a major role.

It has, however, been playing host to sporadic violence by Daesh's sleeper cells here and there ever since.

These attacks have reportedly intensified since early January, when the United States assassinated Iran's Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and PMU's second-in-command Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis as well as several others in a drone attack in Baghdad. The attack came while General Soleimani was paying an official visit to the Iraqi capital.

Resistance News

Raids and arrests in West Bank and Jerusalem

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— The Israeli occupation forces **d e s k** (IOF) launched a raid and arrest campaign on Sunday night and at dawn Monday in various areas of the West Bank and Jerusalem. Several Palestinians were arrested including a journalist.

In Nablus, IOF arrested on Sunday night the journalist and released prisoner Bushra Jamal Al-Tawil at Tiar checkpoint on the Yitzhar road. Tawil was taken to the Hawara camp, south of Nablus.

IOF released Tawil at the end of last July 2020 after spending 8 months in the occupation prisons.

Tawil was arrested for the first time in 2011, and she was sentenced to 16 months. She spent six months because she was released in the Wafa Al-Ahrar prisoner exchange agreement in December 2011. Then, she was re-arrested again in July 2014, and she was sentenced to ten months in prison, which is the continuation of her previous detention before the prisoner exchange agreement.

The third arrest was in November 2017, and the Israeli authorities ordered her administrative detention for eight months. The last arrest was on December 10, 2019.

Tawil's family suffered from the occupation's targeting of them through successive arrests. Her parents were arrested several times in the past, and her father spent a total of 14 years in the occupation's prisons. Her mother was also arrested on 08/02/2010, and was released on 01/02/2011.

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Virtual Isfahan tourism: a gift by the festival to the audience

TOURISM TEHRAN — This year, for the first time, no guests traveled to Isfahan to attend the Isfahan International Film Festival for Children and youth. Instead, Isfahan hosted its national and international audience. The Tourism and Urban Marketing Committee of the 33rd Festival, led by Nafise Hajati, a specialist journalist in the field of heritage and tourism, produced videos introducing the lesser-known attractions of Isfahan. During these video narrations, the relationship between Isfahan and the Festival was shown to the local, domestic, and international audiences.



A view of the 17th-century Hasht Behesht palace and garden in Isfahan

The produced films were also sent to the cultural advisers of the Iranian embassies in cooperation with the International Committee of the Festival so that this cinematic-tourist invitation could reach different countries.

The idea of virtual tourism and the introduction and branding of the event and origin were implemented for the first time in the 33rd Isfahan International Film Festival for Children and youth, and it can be claimed that none of the similar festivals had ever worked in this field. It is the beginning of a new way and chapter in content production for one of the main international festivals in Iran.

Training course aims to raise quality of wickerwork

TOURISM TEHRAN — A training course for wickerwork, one of the popular handicraft fields in the northern province of Mazandaran, is being held in the city of Babol, with the aim of improving the quality of the handmade product.

The course also aims at teaching different methods of designing, producing, and modifying the products to the crafters active in this field of handicrafts, CHTN quoted deputy provincial tourism chief Hossein Izadi as saying on Sunday.

Iran ranks first globally in the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council (WCC).

In late January, cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.



Shiraz was named a "world city of [diverse] handicrafts". Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a "world city of filigree". And Qassemabad village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts. Chador Shab, a kind of homemade outer-garment for women, was, however, the main subject for the WCC assessment for the village.

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19). Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornaments with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

A brief history of Persian pottery

(Part 4/8)
Under the red ware another type, the so-called "clinky ware" should be mentioned. This ware has a very fine thin body which is red outside and dark grey inside; when tapped it gives a tinkling sound, hence its name.

It also should be noted that zoomorphic vessels, in the shape of rhytons, were still very popular in Parthian times. These were made both in grey and in red, occasionally even in buff earthenware.

One of the greatest achievements in pottery-making during this period was the introduction of alkaline-glazed vessels. The body of these glazed wares was a fine white paste on which the alkaline glaze could be easily applied. Two of the most common types of vessels in this group were the "pilgrim flask", and large bowls. The latter usually rest on three or four short legs. These types of vessels may have been produced under Far Eastern influence, since their forms recall contemporary Chinese bronzes.

In addition to glazing, most of these Parthian glazed vessels reveal some kind of surface decoration, mostly simple incised lines or strokes. Another, rather important, group of Parthian glazed pottery were the large coffins which became widely used at that period due to a change in religious beliefs concerning burial.

Sasanian Period (224-651 CE)

In general it could be stated that Sasanian pottery is, strictly speaking, a continuation of Parthian traditions, with two exceptions; the grey ware was practically discontinued, as were the glazed coffins, since Zoroastrian burial customs were re-introduced.

Journey to the past: a glimpse of Tehran-Rome projects in archaeology

→ 1 which involves the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East (ISMEO), University of Bologna, Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism (RICHT), Iranian Center of Research for Archaeology (ICAR), Shiraz University, Fars Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Department and the Persepolis World Heritage Site.

This mission, co-directed by professor Alireza Askari Chaverdi from Shiraz University and professor Pierfrancesco Callieri from University of Bologna and ISMEO, has been active in the Persepolis region since 2008 and has produced one of the most sensational archaeological discoveries of the last fifty years, the Early Achaemenid gate of Tol-e Ajori, a larger replica of the Ishtar Gate of Babylon, characterized by the same plan and glazed brick decoration. The last excavation campaign, aimed at preparing the site for the conservation interventions necessary for the creation of a site museum, is currently underway, with the Italian team participating in remote due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The royal city of Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, which was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire, ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art.

Archaeological project in Shahr-e-Soukhteh

The international multidisciplinary archaeological project in the ancient Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City), southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province directed by Enrico Ascalone, was founded following the Agreement signed in December 2016 between the University of Salento and the RICHT of Tehran.

The project, assisted and hosted by the Iranian archaeological mission that has been working in the field since 1997, pursues a multidisciplinary approach borrowed from the pioneering studies carried out on the site between 1967 and 1978. Paleo-b-



People visit Gate of All Nations in the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, southern Iran

tanical, anthropological, archeozoological, and topographical studies are combined with excavation activities in the residential areas of the center. The project has made it possible to acquire new information on the occupational life of the site between the first and second half of the third millennium BC.

As in previous years, the research in 2020, has been sponsored by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the University of Salento, and due to the outbreak of the coronavirus, will be continued by a long-distance activity in order not to lose the enormous amount of work still to be done on the site. Although the Italian team is unable to travel, field research will be ensured through remote assistance via daily webinar contacts between the two research teams.

Founded around 3200 BC, "Shahr-e-Soukhteh" was populated during four main periods up to 1800 BC. Previous rounds of excavations showed that its residents had great skills in weaving, creating fine arts such as decorative objects, stone carving,

and pottery painting.

Sapienza University in Kerman-shah project

An archeological mission established by the Department of Ancient Sciences of the Sapienza University in collaboration with local institutions which began in 2019, has focused its interest on the cultural archeological, historical, and cultural heritage of Kermanshah region, western Iran, between late antiquity and early Islamic period.

As the region is of great historical importance as it is a gateway to the Iranian plateau as well as a crossroad of important roads leading to the Mesopotamian plain, it has extraordinary archaeological richness and an equally wide linguistic and cultural variety. The variety and abundance of its historical and cultural heritage now require full enhancement and redevelopment for tourism purposes.

The first activities started, concerned with the documentation of the impressive architectural evidence of the monumental site of Kangavar, carried out with innovative

methodologies and instruments in November 2019 to better understand the structure of the site and the land. The study of the territory is planned to be extended in the near future to the other key historical sites in the region, such as Qaleh Yazdgerd and the contiguous valleys of Piran and Ban Zardeh. At the same time topographical surveys on still poorly documented sites in the region, such as the Sassanid and proto-Islamic evidence of Qaleh Maryam, Zij Manijeh, Sorkheh Dizeh, Zij Anzal, Firuzabad, will offer prospectively essential data aimed at archaeological investigation and enhancement of the territory through the identification and organization of new itineraries of historical-cultural interest, first among which is the section between Qasr-e Shirin and Kangavar.

Expedition in Khuzestan

The Iranian-Italian Joint Expedition in Khuzestan, held by the RICHT-ICAR, the Centro Scavi Torino (CRAS), and the University of Torino operates since 2008 in the region of ancient Elymais, southwestern Iran, under the co-direction of Vito Messina and Jafar Mehr Kian.

Elymais was an ancient Parthian vassal state located east of the lower Tigris River and usually considered part of the larger district of Susiana. It incorporated much of the area of the biblical region of Elam, approximately equivalent to the modern region of Khuzestan.

Research is conducted on Hellenistic and Parthian archaeological remains with the purpose of investigating processes of interaction between the Iranian, Mesopotamian, and Greek cultures. Surveys, laser scanner acquisitions (conducted for the first time in Iran), and excavations have been so far conducted at Hung-e Azhdar in the plain of Izeh, Kal-e Chendar in the valley of Shami, and Qaleh Bardi, west of the Karun River. The sanctuary at Kal-e Chendar, which is under excavation, is particularly interesting for it testifies for the first time to the existence of religious and funerary functions in the same place.

Mass, unplanned travels not approved: tourism minister

TOURISM TEHRAN — Mass, unplanned and irresponsible travels are not approved to take place during the coronavirus era, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Monday.

"The outbreak of the coronavirus has caused damage to the tourism industry in Iran and [other parts of] the world in such a way that according to statistics, 50 million people are directly and indirectly exposed to unemployment due to the virus spread in the global scene," Mounesan added.

Smart and responsible traveling should replace "do not travel" recommendations, the minister stressed, adding: "In our country, Corona has caused problems in the tourism industry and the worrying point is the continuation of this trend."

"We are well aware of what the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control proclaims [the health protocols], hence as a proposal, we have formulated some smart, responsible travel packages by the implementation of which we could have secure travels

"Certainly, mass and unplanned trips are not approved by us because it is not beneficial for the tourism industry as well.... the opinions and directives of our friends in the Health Ministry, and the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control are all right but travels in the form of tours and under the full supervision of this ministry is a suggestion that can be realized."

The minister also cited examples of similar models being practiced in other countries, saying "Some countries, including a number of neighboring ones, have activated their tourism sector.... In some countries, a label has been affixed to some hotels indicating which particular hotels are safe and all health protocols are being strictly enforced."

"Recently, during his visits to several provinces, the health minister [Saeed Namaki] expressed satisfaction with the health status of some hotels and confirmed the observance

of health protocols in them."

Mounesan has repeatedly announced that his ministry is in full coordination with the Ministry of Health for strictly implementing health protocols in travel destinations, hospitality centers, and museums, amongst others, underlining that "people's health is our first priority."

Back in September, Mounesan said strict health protocols can be executed and monitored within package tours both for international or domestic ones, adding "Boutique hotels are amongst victims of the pandemic fears. Boutique hotels are on the verge of being bankrupt.... In normal situations, boutique hotels are usually overbooked for the next six months, and the Iranians could hardly fit in."

"Besides, many historical inns and caravanserais have been restored and repurposed to be guest houses. Moreover, many eco-lodge units have come on stream over the past couple of years."

Mounesan announced in August that the number of foreign travelers to Iran had drastically plunged due to the global coronavirus pandemic as the Islamic Republic registered only 74 visits during the spring season. "Iran's [inbound] tourism came to almost zero and the country had 74 foreign tourists in the first three months of this [Iranian calendar] year (started on March 20), due to corona outbreak."

Tourism [industry of Iran] was growing before the corona [outbreak], its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, near the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent, the minister explained.

He said 8.7 million foreign nationals visited Iran during the past [Iranian] year (1398), adding that Iran was ranked as the second fastest-growing country in tourism based on data compiled by the World Tourism Organization. "On the onset of coronavirus, tourism faced a sharp decline in the world including our country. So that in the first three months of the current [Iranian] year the number of foreign tourists



Ali-Asghar Mounesan

dropped to 74 --- it was reached almost zero."

The minister reminded that some 2.3 million foreign nationals visited the country during the spring of last year that showed a 40.66 percent increase year on year. The country hosted 1,443,551 million travelers during the same period a year earlier. Talking about losses to the travel and hospitality industry of the country, the minister said that the virus decease has caused damage to many countries around the world, and our country's travel sector has so far suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bath-houses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Rooted in ancient Persian civilization, the nation that has survived numerous alien invasions and natural disasters over its rich history while maintaining its appeal to local and foreign tourists.

Iran's first tourism farm inaugurated

TOURISM TEHRAN — The first tourism farm in Iran, measuring five hectares in area, has been created in a scenic fertile land adjacent to a dense forest in the northern province of Golestan.

"Agritourism is one of the neglected aspects for tourism development in Golestan [province] which has the potential to raise 92 agricultural products.... and the province enjoys a favorable climate and fertile lands near the Caspian Sea," IRNA quoted deputy provincial tourism chief as saying on Monday.



The tourism farm was inaugurated in Tuskestan village in the month of Mehr

(ended October 21) to open a new chapter of investments in agritourism across the province, the official said.

It includes sections for growing raspberries, strawberries, vegetables and summer vegetables, as well as animal breeding and agricultural education space, he noted.

"The main part of planting, holding, and harvesting in this farm is done voluntarily by holidaymakers."

Agritourism is a relatively new branch of the travel industry in which tourists stay with local people in rural areas abroad. It is a subset of a larger industry called rural

tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers' markets, non-profit agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside.

Today, agritourism is regarded as a stimulus to the imbalanced economy of agriculture sectors and the tendency for emotional and nostalgic roots of the modern world citizens and due to factors such as visitor participation in farm activities, direct purchase of products, spending a night at a farm, curiosity and learning about the farm and agriculture products has been able to create a wide target population.

Historical cistern undergoes restoration

TOURISM TEHRAN — The historical Panjireh Ab-Anbar (cistern) in the oasis city of Zavareh on the edge of the central desert of Iran in Isfahan province has undergone some rehabilitation works, a provincial tourism chief has said.

A budget of 300 million rials (about \$7,100 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been

allocated to the restoration project, Mehdi Mashhadi said on Monday.

The term Ab-Anbar is common throughout Iran as a designation for roofed underground water cisterns. It associates with water management systems in arid areas that are reliant on permanent springs or on seasonal rainwater.

Such underground reservoirs or Ab-Anbars are parts of the iconic qanat systems, which rely on snow-fed streams flowing down from surrounding mountains.

Qanats, according to UNESCO, provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.



Iran finds herbal medicines effective in COVID-19 treatment

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Two herbal medicines that are effective in healing the symptoms of COVID-19 have been permitted to be produced domestically.

The Food and Drug Administration has approved four domestically produced herbal medicine effective in the treatment of COVID-19 and has issued a production license for two of them.

Kianoush Jahanpour, the spokesman for the Food and Drug Administration, told IRNA on Monday that "none of these drugs are a cure for COVID-19, but they have effects to reduce the symptoms of this disease and should be further investigated."

The first herbal medicine in this collection is an oral spray containing six herbal essential oils, and according to the results of a clinical trial presented, if used, it helps to improve the pulmonary complications of coronavirus, including shortness of breath, cough, and arterial oxygenation, he explained.

The second drug is a syrup containing the extract of two herbs, which according to the clinical trial evidence provided if used, helps to improve the symptoms of fatigue and anorexia in patients with coronavirus, he noted.

Another natural product is a syrup containing seven plant components that are effective in reducing the length of hospital stay and improving hypoxia.

The fourth natural product is a syrup containing a medicinal plant that, based on the results of a clinical trial, has been



declared to be effective in improving some of the symptoms of COVID-19.

Iranian traditional medicine against COVID-19

Alireza Abbassian the health ministry's director of the traditional medicine department, said in March that Iranian traditional medicine can play an effective role in strengthening the immune system to resist the novel coronavirus infection.

Referring to the importance of health care, he explained that medical fasting, reducing calories consumed in a day by 20 percent less than usual, can help strengthen the

immune system and reduce inflammation, this method can improve the body's function against the disease.

8,000 herbal species grow in Iran

So far, about 30,000 plant species are identified in the world, with Iran's share of about 8,000 species that its plant diversity is more than the whole of Europe.

Currently, about 2,300 species of medicinal plants have been identified in the country; while medicinal plants account for one-third of the medicines used in human societies, the share of world trade in these products is about \$124 billion and Iran's share is \$570

million, which is only 0.5 percent of the total.

The per capita consumption of medicinal plants in Iran is about one kilogram of dried plants, in other words, 83,000 tons of medicinal plants worth 1.2 trillion rials (around \$29 million at an official rate of 42,000 rials) are consumed in the country, while in Europe this amount is 900 grams and in the United States is 2.5 kilograms.

COVID-19 cases at a record high

In a press briefing on Monday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 10,463 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 692,949. She added that 525,641 patients have so far recovered, but 5,561 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, coronavirus daily deaths and new cases hit the record high, as 458 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 38,749, she added.

Lari noted that so far 5,263,173 COVID-19 tests have been conducted across the country.

She said the high-risk "red" zones include provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, East Azarbaijan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Qazvin, Lorestan, Ardebil, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh-Boyer-Ahmad, Gilan, Bushehr, Zanjan, Ilam, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Alborz, West Azarbaijan, Markazi, Kerman, North Khorasan, Hamedan, Yazd, and Kordestan.

The provinces of Hormozgan, Fars, and Golestan and Sistan-Baluchestan are also on alert.

Mining must not come at cost of environmental degradation

therefore all projects should be environmentally assessed before implementation, including mining activities.

Mining is an inherently destructive industry, and the mining effects of even a single operation can have a severe impact on the environment and the wildlife that lives nearby.

In 2011, the parliament passed a law according to which mining in the rest of the country, except for protected areas, was exempted from environmental assessment, now the Department of Environment (DOE) is seeking help from the Soil Protection Law to prevent mining damages.

Does soil protection law reduce destructive effects of mining?

Masoud Tajrishi, deputy head of the DOE for human environment, told IRNA on Monday that "Contrary to the perception of some who claim that the environment is an obstacle to development, we believe that sustainable development should take place, not to sacrifice nature for development."

Criticizing the law on exemptions of the environmental assessment for mines outside the protected areas, he noted that the DOE is following the issue legally and is trying to use the soil protection law to prevent mining damages.

The soil conservation law was ratified by Guardian Council in June 2019, which has been passed by the Majlis (Iranian Parliament) earlier in February.

The bill has been approved after 14 years of effort put in by the Department of Environment, which is the responsible body to deal with business units polluting the soil or even shut down industries contributing to soil contamination. Moreover, the owners of mining, industrial, and manufacturing units active in the field of trade are obliged to comply with the law.

As per the law, any trade or export of soil is prohibited, and only the excretion of minerals or exportation of low amounts of soil for research purposes is excluded after meeting the legal process.

According to Article 24 of the mining law, an exploitation license is issued for mining activities, after which the person is allowed to operate in the mining area without any restrictions. Unfortunately, restrictions are imposed



only in protected areas, Tajrishi noted.

"We are trying to limit these activities by using some articles of the soil conservation law, now it is waiting for the response of the DOE's legal department," he further highlighted.

Of course, one of the shortcomings in this direction is that the destructions are not documented, while all the destructions and their economic losses must be documented in order to make the best decisions, he concluded.

How environment and wildlife suffer from mining activities?

Mining can lead to the destruction of habitats in surrounding areas. The process begins with deforestation. The land above the mine must be cleared of all obstructions to allow the miners to go to work. Sadly, most mining companies are quite willing to destroy an entire forest to get access to mineral wealth, according to the pegasusfoundation website.

Deforestation has several effects. Birds, animals, and creatures that depend on trees and plants for food or shelter lose their homes or starve to death. Any remaining survivors are forced to relocate and find a new dwelling.

Some mining methods cause further destruction, such as the use of explosions to destroy mountain tops. Toxic chemicals and minerals could go to streams, rivers, and other bodies of water which can create harmful effects on marine species.

Mining can leak pollutants into the environment that

may lead to water contamination.

It causes the water table to shrink. Water often seeps into areas that contain coal and other valuable products, and that water needs to be pumped out of the mine to allow the miners to work. Aside from pollution, the process would also cause water loss in the ground.

Many mines produce methane as a waste product. Methane is a relatively potent greenhouse gas; even a small amount of it can gradually worsen climate change. Coal mines are responsible for approximately six percent of the methane that is released due to human activities.

Will abandoned mines end the problem?

All mines are temporary structures. They can remain active for many years, but they will eventually run out of minerals and cease operations. This does not automatically mean that the environment and wildlife will no longer suffer.

Responsible owners would backfill the underground mine. However, not all mine operators would resort to this option because the process can be very expensive.

Failure to backfill the mine can lead to a problem called subsidence, which occurs when abandoned mines collapse. This will undo any efforts to re-establish a healthy ecosystem in the area, and often render it useless for many years to come. The problem only increases if contaminants were left on the site, since removing them after a collapse is exceedingly difficult. Ensuring that every abandoned mine is duly filled in and wastes are eliminated will help nature to recover.

How to minimize dire consequences of mining?

Mining is not going to stop, but it is possible to lessen their negative impact on the environment and wildlife. While it can turn to environmentally-friendly mining. For example, shutting down unregulated and illegal mines, enforcing accurate reporting of dumped toxic wastes, backfilling mine sites and proper waste clean-up, encouraging and investing in the development of sustainable mining technology, and improving mining legislation and regulations.

Responsible mining will not only save the environment and wildlife, but it can also ensure the safety of the people working in the mine and living in nearby areas.

Lake Urmia revitalization budget rises by \$76m

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — A total of 3.2 trillion rials (nearly \$76 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) was allocated to continue the Lake Urmia Restoration Program in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20, 2021).

Large structural projects such as the water treatment plant and its transmission line to Lake Urmia will be inaugurated in December this year, and 52 million cubic meters of treated water will be transferred to Lake Urmia annually, Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program's office in West Azarbaijan province, said on Monday.

Referring to the latest situation of Lake Urmia, he said that the current level of the lake is 1271.19 meters, which was 1271.23 meters in the same period last year.

Sarkhosh, stating that currently, the area of Lake Urmia is 2,741 square kilometers, noted that currently, 3.1 billion cubic meters of water is flowing in the Lake.

In August, Sarkhosh stated that a new budget amounting to 6.4 trillion rials (nearly \$152 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) will be allocated for the Lake Urmia revival, which will be spent on completing semi-finished projects.

Lake Urmia, located in the northwest of Iran, was once the most extensive permanent hypersaline lake in the world. Unsustainable water management in response to increasing demand together with climatic extremes has given rise to the lake's depletion during the last two decades. The lake's restoration program was established in 2013 and aims to restore the lake within a 10-year program.

At the beginning of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program in 2013, the Lake's level was about 1270.32 meters, 1783 square kilometers in surface area, and 1.14 billion cubic meters in volume, which indicates a 50 percent increase in the lake's surface area in comparison to the current water level.

Achieving sustainable rehabilitation requires countless efforts, such as preventing the lake's water flow from entering the agricultural land. Lake Urmia's condition stabilized with a positive trend due to heavy rainfall, but there is a fear that this trend will be reversed by drought in the coming years.

The above normal levels of rain came to help conservation measures to preserve Lake Urmia, however, it still needs 9.5 billion cubic meters of water to reach its ecological level of 1274.10 meters.

Synergy need to tackle climate change in Mediterranean

The Mediterranean region is warming 20-percent faster than the rest of the planet - and has already reached 1.5 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Experts have warned that an increase of two degrees is deemed to increase heat waves, forest fires, droughts and biodiversity loss, causing irreversible environmental damage in the area.

And sea-level rises represent a major risk for the Mediterranean's coasts, where already heavy rains cause catastrophic floods in low-lying coastal areas.

A notable example occurred in Venice in November 2019, when the highest water-levels recorded in more than 50 years caused the death of two people and millions of euros in possibly irreparable damage.

That is why the Interreg Med, a programme of 13 countries around the Mediterranean Sea, has made the fight against climate change the cornerstone of its strategy for the next years.

Ten of these countries are EU member states. The three others are Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In the period 2021-2027, the Interreg Med programme will aim to support projects that boost sustainable growth, improve the management of natural resources and promote the greening of living areas.

"The new strategy is a goal-oriented programme designed to contribute to the climate neutrality goal," the director of the managing authority of the Interreg Med programme, Tarja Richard, said on Friday (6 November) at the conference.

For this specific region, greening the so-called blue economy in the next years will be essential for the success of the Green Deal since overfishing, non-indigenous species or litter are among the key pressures of the Mediterranean sea, where around 40-percent of species are in decline.

However, this seems only possible to achieve with the cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries around the Mediterranean basin.

"The EU should lead by example, but we need to make sure we are not leaving our neighbours behind," said Isabelle Viallon, who works for the European Commission in maritime regional cooperation.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 53) (Source: saadifoundation.ir)

تمرین ۴. ساعت چند است؟ بنویسید:

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درک = کتاب کار

تمرین ۱. "من" یا "تو" بنویسید و غلطها را درست بنویسید:

۱. () دانشجویان به کلاس آمدند و سلام کردند.
۲. () استاد اسم دانشجویان حاضر را نوشت.
۳. () بیست دانشجو در کلاس غایب بودند.
۴. () استاد در باره ی دستور زبان توضیح داد.
۵. () چند دانشجو انشا خواندند.
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ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Clean air days double for Tehraners this year

Tehrani citizens have experienced a 2-fold rise in the number of clean air days since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2018) compared to the same period last year, an official with Department of Environment has said.

Since the aforementioned period, clean air stayed in the capital for 27 days, while last year, during the same period, Tehraners breathed clean air for only 14 days, IRNA quoted Shina Ansari as saying on Sunday.

Also, the air quality of the capital was healthy for 262 days, while being unhealthy for sensitive groups for 59 days, she said, adding that compared to the same period last year, Tehran's air quality reached healthy levels for 229 days and 97 days of unhealthy for sensitive groups has hit the capital.

تهرانی‌ها امسال دو برابر بیشتر روزهای پاک داشتند

مدیرکل دفتر پایش فراگیر سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: تهرانی‌ها از ابتدای امسال تا امروز (۱۲ اسفند ۹۷) نسبت به مدت مشابه سال گذشته، دو برابر هوای پاک تنفس کردند.

شینا انصاری روز یکشنبه در گفت‌وگو با ایرنا افزود: تهران از ابتدای امسال تا امروز، ۲۷ روز هوای پاک داشته در حالیکه سال گذشته در مدت مشابه، تعداد روزهای پاک ۱۴ روز بوده است.

وی اظهار داشت: همچنین از ابتدای امسال تاکنون، کیفیت هوای پایتخت برای ۲۶۲ روز قابل قبول و ۵۹ روز ناسالم برای گروه‌های حساس بوده که در مدت مشابه سال گذشته به ترتیب ۲۲۹ و ۹۷ روز بوده که هشت روز نیز ناسالم برای تمام گروه‌ها بوده است.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Lying would negatively influence your livelihood.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Leader writes commendation for Ala's poetry on Commander Qassem Soleimani

→1 "I hope this poetry will be published by the Martyr Soleimani Foundation in Tehran on his first martyrdom anniversary in January," he remarked.

"I hope this poetry will be a little gift for the hearts of the family of the martyr and all those who love him," he remarked.

Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force, the overseas arm of IRGC, was martyred during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.

Also in August, the Leader praised Ala for poetry that criticizes the United Arab Emirates' deal to forge ties with Israel.



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in an undated photo.

Ala published a long poem in response to the deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates intended to fully normalize relations, which follows a history of peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians and their Arab allies.

The poem composed in 34 verses is full of praise for Iran and Hezbollah's Secretary-General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah for their resistance against the Zionist regime and denouncement of the UAE for the deal.

"The poem you composed against the Arab leaders was really opportune and timely; thank you very much," Ayatollah Khamenei wrote in a message to Ala.

The Leader has always recognized authors and poets by writing commendations to their books.

Poets and literary figures from Iran and some Persian-speaking countries attend a meeting with Ayatollah Khamenei every year on the birthday of Imam Hassan (AS), which falls on the 15th of the holy month of Ramadan.

"The Crab" competing in Romania's Animest

→1 TEHRAN — Iranian director Shiva Sadeq-Asadi's short film "The Crab" is competing in the 15th edition of Animest, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Romanian animation, this year.

The movie tells the story of a shy schoolboy who is interested in performing in a play with his school's theater troupe. But the only part offered to him is to play the role of a crab.



A scene from Iranian director Shiva Sadeq-Asadi's short animated film "The Crab".

The animation produced at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults has been screened in various international events, including the 23rd Shanghai International Film Festival in China.

It is also competing in the official section of the 62nd International Documentary and Short Film Festival of Bilbao-Zinebi, which will be running in the Spanish city from November 13 to 20.

The moviegoers will be able to watch Oscar films, stories that have traveled around the world and master classes with elite animators until November 15 during the online Animest.

No less than 55 online screenings are being prepared to reach the homes of animation lovers, through the streaming platform of the festival.

Tehran City Council to rename streets after sculptor Tanavoli, filmmaker Shahid-Saless

→1 TEHRAN — The Tehran City Council approved on Sunday to rename two streets after sculptor Parviz Tanavoli and filmmaker Sohrab Shahid-Saless.

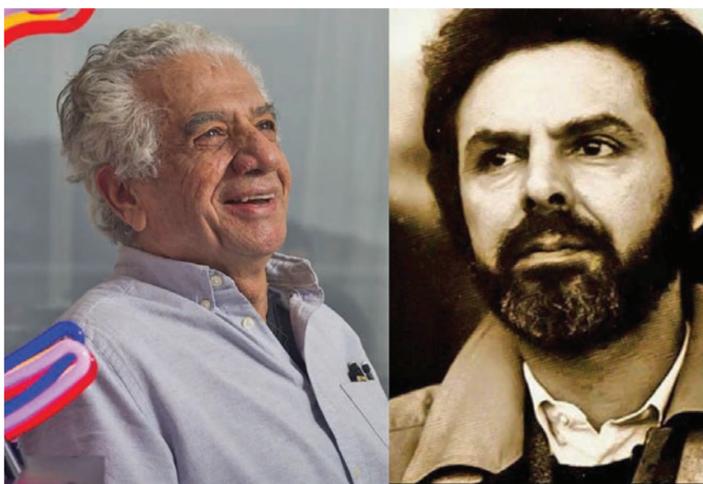
Besharat Street off Taleqani Avenue located between Qarani and Ostad Nejatollahi streets will be renamed Sohrab Shahid-Saless, a seminal figure of the Iranian New Wave cinema.

Shahid-Saless left his homeland in the mid-1970s to pursue his career in what was then West Germany, where he made an original lineup of works for cinema and television.

He made numerous films, including "Far From Home", "Black and White", "A Simple Event", "Still Life", "Utopia", "Coming of Age", "Order", "The Willow Tree", "Hans - a Young Man in Germany", "Diary of a Lover", "Changeling" and "The Long Vacation of Lotte H. Eisner".

In the early 1990s, he moved to Czechoslovakia after Germany did not allow him to continue his career in the country any longer. He then emigrated to the U.S. and died of cancer in Chicago in 1998 at the age of 54.

The Goethe-Institut London organized a review of his works in a program titled "Sohrab Shahid-Saless: Exiles" during November 2017.

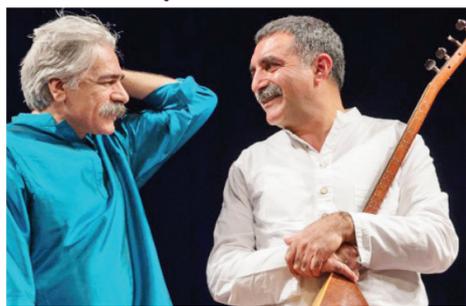


A combination photo shows sculptor Parviz Tanavoli and filmmaker Sohrab Shahid-Saless.

"In meditative but searing images of everyday life, his slow-paced films tell simple stories that speak forcefully to the traumas of homelessness and displacement.

They are more urgent than ever today," the organizers wrote about Shahid-Saless, who called himself a "guest worker" after moving to West Germany.

Kayhan Kalhor, Erdal Erzincan reunite to perform in Skopje



Iranian kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor (L) and Turkish baglama player Erdal Erzincan in an undated photo.

→1 TEHRAN — Iranian kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor and Turkish baglama

player Erdal Erzincan have teamed up to perform a duet during the 19th Offest festival in Skopje, Macedonia.

The performance will take place at the Macedonian Philharmonic on November 10, the organizers have announced.

OFFest was established in 2002 as a second festival, which grew up from the long-established tradition of the Skopje Jazz Festival.

The main idea was to create another important music event in a different period of the year, and in terms of music genres, more widely oriented.

The festival presents a variety of music from all continents, focusing on different categories from traditional, ethno, folk and roots to urban, contemporary and experimental music styles.

Kalhor and Erzincan have mesmerized Eastern music enthusiasts during many duets in Tehran, Istanbul, Rotterdam, Schiltigheim and many other cities around the world.

In a statement, the Offest 2020 organizers praised Kalhor as a five-time Grammy Award nominee whose "one of the most exciting of his innumerable projects and unique

collaborations that have attracted audiences around the globe is his duo with the renowned Turkish baglama player Erdal Erzincan."

Their album "The Wind" was released in 2006 by ECM and their collaboration has remained vibrant ever since.

"The classical music traditions of Persia and of Ottoman Turkey that inspire the music of Kalhor and Erzincan share a great deal in common, including the ancient modal compositional system known as maqam, and the idea of improvisation plays a definitive role in their intensely spiritual and emotional performances.

"Their music is thoroughly modern and seeks to bring the listener into its trance-like realm by intertwining ecstatic rhythms with sensual melodic phrases. The result is a set of instrumental compositions that flow into each other like one continuous work, with gently drifting passages, in which the two instruments echo and improvise on different phrases."

The eight-day festival opened with a performance by Spanish singer Silvia Perez Cruz on November 3.

Iran's Cinema Vérité to screen Hot Docs winner "Mother-Child"

→1 TEHRAN — The Hot Docs 2020 award winner "Mother-Child" by the Argentinian-born filmmaker Andrea Testa will go on screen at the 14th edition of the Cinema Vérité, Iran's major international festival for documentary films.

"Mother-Child" won the Best Mid-Length Documentary Award at the Hot Docs in Toronto, Canada, while it also received a special mention from the jury of the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) in 2019.

"Mother-Child" depicts the consulting rooms of a public hospital in Argentina, where social workers dialogue with pregnant young girls, women who have just given birth or those who are hospitalized due to unsafe abortions. Coming from the environment of



A scene from "Mother-Child" by the Argentinian-born filmmaker Andrea Testa.

extreme poverty and vulnerability, many of them are victims of gender violence. Hence their pregnancies discourage them even more to imagine a hopeful present or future.

The film reflects the desires, tensions and fears around forced maternity and clandestine abortion.

Andrea Testa made her feature documentary debut with 2016's "Pibe Chorro." Her 2016 feature film "The Long Night of Francisco Sanctis", co-directed with Francisco Marquez, was awarded as best international film at the Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema.

This year's Cinema Vérité will be organized entirely online during December due to a spike in coronavirus cases in the country over the past few months.

Polish filmmaker Hanna Polak will be holding a virtual master class during the festival.

She will be discussing the topic "making a documentary in a crisis" at the master class, the Documentary and Experimental Film Center, which is the organizer of the event, has announced.

This year, the organizers of Cinema Vérité have dedicated a special section to screening documentaries on the pandemic and COVID-19. Over 130 submissions in the pandemic and COVID-19 category have been received by the organizers of the festival.

The four top works selected in this category will be honored at the closing ceremony, while the international section of the festival is non-competitive this year.

Niall Ferguson's "The Square and the Tower" published in Persian

→1 TEHRAN — American historian Niall Ferguson's book "The Square and the Tower: Networks and Power, from the Freemasons to Facebook" has been published in Persian in Tehran.

The book translated by Zahra Aali has been published by the No publishing house.

Most history is hierarchical: it's about emperors, presidents, prime ministers and field marshals. It's about states, armies and corporations. It's about orders from on high. Even history "from below" is often about trade unions and workers' parties. But what if that's simply because hierarchical institutions create the archives that historians rely on? What if we are missing the informal, less well documented social networks that are the true sources of power and drivers of change?

The 21st century has been hailed as the Age of Networks. However, in "The Square and the Tower", Ferguson argues that networks have always been with us, from the structure of the brain to the food chain, from the family tree to



Front cover of the Persian copy of American historian Niall Ferguson's book "The Square and the Tower: Networks and Power".

freemasonry. Throughout history, hierarchies housed in high towers have claimed to rule, but often real power has resided in the networks in the town square below. For it is networks that tend to innovate. And it is through networks that revolutionary ideas can contagiously spread. Just because conspiracy theorists like to fantasize about such networks doesn't mean they are not real.

From the cult of ancient Rome to the dynasties of the Renaissance, from the founding fathers to Facebook, "The Square and the Tower" tells the story of the rise, fall and rise of networks, and shows how network theory - concepts such as clustering, degrees of separation, weak ties, contagions and phase transitions - can transform our understanding of both the past and the present.

Just as "The Ascent of Money" put Wall Street into historical perspective, so "The Square and the Tower" does the same for Silicon Valley. And it offers a bold prediction about which hierarchies will withstand this latest wave of network disruption - and which will be toppled.

George Martin's "Fire & Blood" comes to Iranian bookstores

→1 TEHRAN — A Persian translation of George R.R. Martin's "Fire & Blood" has recently been published by Chatrang Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Hadi Ameni.

Set 300 years before the events in "A Song of Ice and Fire", "Fire and Blood" is the definitive history of the Targaryens in Westeros as told by Archmaester Gyldayn, and chronicles the conquest that united the Seven Kingdoms under Targaryen rule through the "Dance of the Dragons", the Targaryen civil war that nearly put a final end to their dynasty.

The thrilling history of the Targaryens

comes to life in this masterly work by the author of "A Song of Ice and Fire", the inspiration for HBO's "Game of Thrones".

With all that fire and fury fans have come to expect from internationally bestselling author George R.R. Martin, this is the first volume of the definitive two-part history of the Targaryens in Westeros.

Centuries before the events of "A Game of Thrones, House Targaryen", the only family of dragonlords to survive the Doom of Valyria, took up residence on Dragonstone. "Fire and Blood" begins their tale with the legendary Aegon the Conqueror, creator of the Iron Throne, and goes on to recount the generations of Targaryens who fought to hold that iconic

seat, all the way up to the civil war that nearly tore their dynasty apart.

What really happened during the "Dance of the Dragons"? Why was it so deadly to visit Valyria after the Doom? What were Maegor the Cruel's worst crimes? What was it like in Westeros when dragons ruled the skies? These are but a few of the questions answered in this essential chronicle.

With all the scope and grandeur of Gibbon's "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", "Fire and Blood" is the ultimate Game of Thrones, giving readers a whole new appreciation for the dynamic, often bloody, and always fascinating, history of Westeros.

George R.R. Martin is the globally

bestselling author of many fine novels, including "A Game of Thrones", "A Clash of Kings", "A Storm of Swords", "A Feast for Crows" and "A Dance with Dragons", which together make up the series "A Song of Ice and Fire", on which HBO based the world's most-watched television series, "Game of Thrones".

Other works set in or about Westeros include "The World of Ice and Fire" and "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms". His science fiction novella Nightflyers has also been adapted as a television series, and he is the creator of the shared-world Wild Cards universe, working with the finest writers in the genre. He lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.