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Injecting homegrown COVID-19 vaccine to start by mid-June 2021 *Page 7*



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40,000 foreign nationals are studying in 43 Iranian universities

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© File photo

Iran back in form with Dragan Skocic

BY FARROKH HESABI

Iran football coach Dragan Skocic has so far proven that he has linked up so well with his side as he gained the second consecutive away win with the 'Persian Leopards'.

Iran national football team defeated Bosnia and Herzegovina 2-0 in a friendly match on Thursday. Kaveh Rezaei and Mehdi Ghaedi found the back of the hosts' net at the Asim Ferhatovic Stadium.

While there's a temptation to focus on how impressive the team's general performance was, that was true for the Iranian team all over the pitch.

They were impressive in tactical moves, with some magnificent combinations everywhere. Kaveh Rezaei and Ali Gholizadeh, who both play at Belgian First Division A club Charleroi, made good cooperation in this match. In another, it was Vahid Amiri and Ahmad Nourollahi in the mid-field, and even at the defensive line, Shoja Khalilzadeh, Morteza Pouraliganji, and Mohammad Hossein Kanaanizadegan were impressively in synch.

Although Iran was a bit slow at the start of the game, it was understandable because it is a team that has not worked together a lot. Moreover, it was just the second game with the Croatian coach at the helm.

But over time, the coordination of the players increased, especially in the attack, the movements were performed with high rhythm.

By putting three experienced center-backs, Dragan Skocic applied a new tactic, and that was important to give stability to the team.

In front of that, the national team were not physically as strong as before, but we had good technicians with Ehsan Haji Safi and Ahmad Nourollahi as defensive midfielders.

The two midfielders used the ball really well. Their combination with the wing-backs (Milad Mohammadi and Sadegh Moharrami) and the three forwards (Amiri, Golizadeh, Rezaei) was, at times, fascinating.

Against a well-organized side as Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Iranian national team were tested defensively as it was expected and, at the same time, created a lot of good opportunities and used the ball really well.

It was Dragan Skocic's second match in charge. Iran had defeated Uzbekistan 2-1 on Oct. 8 under the Croat's tutelage.

Riyadh, Abu Dhabi lost a valuable ally: American journalist

BY REZA MOSHFEGH

TEHRAN – An American journalist says that the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia lost Donald Trump as a "valuable ally" as he lost the November 3 presidential election to Joe Biden, a Democratic candidate.

"There's no doubt that the UAE and Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman lost a valuable ally with Donald Trump's electoral loss," Eli Clifton, an investigative journalist at The Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, tells the Tehran Times.

However, according to Clifton, the U.S. will keep "various forms of intelligence sharing" with Saudi Arabia and other Arab states in the Persian Gulf region.

Saudi Arabia along with Israel cheered Trump's exit from the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. Though nothing except hostility is not expected from Israel, especially under Benjamin

Netanyahu, Iran did not expect such a behavior from Saudi Arabia.

Iran has been a vocal critic of the Saudi-led war on Yemen, advising rulers in Riyadh to stop war on the fellow Arab nation.

Under Trump, the U.S. has been selling advanced weapons to the Saudi kingdom in its war on Yemen. The U.S. has even been providing logistical support for the Saudi-led war on Yemen.

Clifton says though Biden pledged to make Saudi Arabia a "pariah" and vowed not to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia it is unlikely to happen. "Cutting off arms sales is easier said than done when there are billions of dollars in signed contracts," the investigative journalist says.

The following is the text of the interview: **Do you think that under a Biden administration, hawkish influencers in the U.S. will be sidelined?**

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U.S. protests: 'It's not over yet, right?' Trump voters back president's refusal to concede

The red and blue political bunting and yard signs planted on suburban lawns are mostly gone and with them the outward signs of America's fiercely oppositional election. But in other respects, the tensions of the 2020 contest remain as acute as they were on polling day for many Trump supporters.

"Not many care about people as much as Trump," said tow-truck driver Vinny Nolan as he took a rest at a highway truck stop near Hackensack, New Jersey. "The [Russia] collusion bullshit was a set-up. He gave everyone money while we iron this virus situation then they announce a vaccine two days after the election. Why didn't they do that a week ago? He would have won."

According to Guardian, to more than half the country's voters the election is resolved with Democrat Joe Biden as the winner but to a marginally smaller share of Americans it remains an ongoing contest – no matter all the evidence against that. With Donald Trump as yet unwilling to recognize

defeat, and papering swing-states with baseless legal petitions challenging vote counts, many of his supporters still say they remain behind the president.

A pre-natal office administrator in suburban Rockland county, New York, who preferred to give only her first name – Emily – citing pervasive fears of being shunned for her support, conceded that Trump had failed to adequately address "the George Floyd thing", as she called the killing of a Black American by a white Minneapolis police officer that triggered a summer of unrest and anti-racism protests.

But Emily reasoned that Trump was not fundamentally a politician, a characteristic that lies at the heart of his enduring popularity for many of the 71 million Americans who voted for him on 3 November. And like many, protesters' calls to defund the police had worried her. "They talk about the community policing. But what community? No one wants to get involved."

Macron wants to identify himself with the American Zionism: Lebanese cleric

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – Shaikh Ghazi Honainah, a member of the leadership of the Islamic Action Front in Lebanon, believes that the motive that drove the French president to back the sacrilegious cartoons against the Prophet of Islam by the Charlie Hebdo magazine is that he wants to "identify himself with the American Zionism."

Shaikh Honainah tells the Tehran Times that Emanuel Macron endorsed insulting Islam and its Prophet Muhammad to "identify himself with the

American Zionism, which bears arrogant hostility to Mohammad as the Messenger of God and his message."

"The message of Prophet Mohammad has become today worldwide despite all efforts to distort the true image of the Messenger and Islam," the Lebanese cleric emphasizes.

The following is the text of the interview: **Last month, French President Emanuel Macron publicly attacked Islam in defense of the publication of the derogatory cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) under the**

pretext of freedom of speech. What do you think of his remarks?

A: Regarding the recent remarks of the French president, in which he endorsed the aggressive approach of the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo towards Islam and the Messenger of Islam, I should say that this is a president of a country that claims civilization, advancement, enlightenment, human rights, and addresses freedom, equality, and justice.

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Remains of Stone Age artifacts unearthed in northern Iran

TEHRAN – Vestiges of handmade tools, dating back to the Paleolithic era, also called the Old Stone Age, have recently been discovered in an archaeological survey in northern Iran.

The Paleolithic artifacts were discovered during a demarcation project to determine legal boundaries for the historical site of Takht-e Rostam in Neka county, Mazandaran province, ILNA quoted archaeologist Hossein Ramezani as saying on Thursday.

"The site of Takht-e Rostam was very attractive for human populations [in the Stone Age] due to its geological characteristics and the presence of calcareous formations and chert (a hard, fine-grained sedimentary rock composed of microcrystalline)," said Ramezani, who led the survey.

The archaeologist believes the site, which is adjacent to the Caspian Sea, was in fact home to a two-million-old workshop for the production of stone tools and artifacts.

Based on archaeological studies on geological sediments of the area, its deposits date back two million years and as a cultural heritage site is of great value, the report added.

"These sediments [should] not be [normally] seen on the entire southern coasts of the Caspian Sea, and to reach them, [archaeologists] should explore to a depth of several hundred meters, but due to tectonic events, these sediments are visible on the surface today and they also have high values in terms of geo-tourism."

Back in August, historical vestiges dating back to various eras of history including Iron Age, Bronze Age, Copper Age, and Neolithic era, were discovered in another stratigraphy study conducted in Neka's Touq Tepe.

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Morales victoriously returns from exile

Tens of thousands of jubilant followers in Bolivia have welcomed Evo Morales back to the coca-growing region from which he fled into exile exactly a year ago.

After he went into exile in Mexico last November following disputed presidential elections, many thought his political life stood at the precipice.

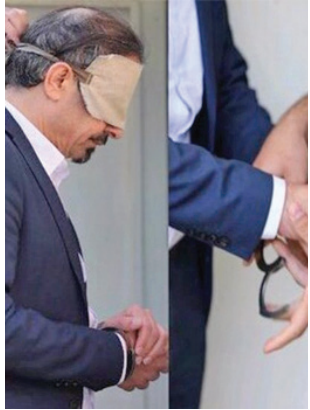
Former Bolivian President Evo Morales, a native son of the country's long repressed Indigenous community, was forced into exile last November following a turbulent presidential election, TRT reported.

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Ringleader of the group behind Ahvaz terror attack arrested

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's intelligence forces have arrested the ringleader of a separatist militant group behind the 2018 deadly terror attack in the southwestern city of Ahvaz, Press TV reported.

In a statement released on Thursday, the Intelligence Ministry said Farajollah Chaab, also known as Habib Asyud, the ringleader of the so-called Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahvaz (SMLA), had been identified and arrested on the back of a set of "specialized and combined measures" by Iranian intelligence forces.



Chaab had planned several abortive terrorist operations in Tehran and Khuzestan in recent years, the statement read, adding that he was planning a new assault when he was taken into custody.

The militant group is directly supported by the intelligence agencies of Saudi Arabia and Israel. It managed terrorist operations inside Iran despite international arrest warrants against its ringleaders, according to the statement.

"The main perpetrator of the bloody terrorist attack on

September 22, 2018 in Ahvaz is now in the hands of the Intelligence Ministry," it added.

In September 2018, the terror outfit claimed responsibility for the attack on military parade in Ahvaz, Khuzestan's provincial capital. The assault killed 25 people, including members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and civilian bystanders, and injured 70 others.

■ Cooperation with Saudi intelligence

After his arrest, the terrorist admitted to cooperation with the Saudi intelligence service.

"At that juncture, we started the job together with the Saudi intelligence chief, and we had several sessions with them (the Saudis)," Chaab said.

Chaab further confessed to other crimes as well, including the armed robberies of a contracting company and a bank in Ahvaz.

Elsewhere in his comments, Chaab said the regime in Riyadh spent €30 million for the establishment of Iran International, a London-based anti-Iran TV channel, which raised controversy on the day of the Ahvaz attack by allowing a spokesman of Al-Ahwaziya terrorist group — a faction of the SMLA — to go live on air to defend the bloodshed.

Iran to hold webinar on Nagorno-Karabakh

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Guardian Council is scheduled to host a webinar on the recent Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The webinar will be co-hosted by the Guardian Council and the Institute of Public Law Studies of the University of Tehran on Tuesday, Tasnim reported.

Guardian Council spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei and Iranian Ambassador to Baku Abbas Mousavi will be among the speakers at the webinar.

Tehran says Saudi, Israeli nuclear activities must be 'transparent'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to the United Nations said on Thursday that nuclear activities of Saudi Arabia and the Israeli regime must be "transparent".

Noting that International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should maintain its independence, neutrality and professionalism, Majid Takht-Ravanchi said, "If Saudi Arabia is seeking a peaceful atomic program, it should act transparently and allow IAEA inspectors to verify its nuclear work."



Speaking at a meeting of the UN General Assembly on the annual report of the IAEA, Takht-Ravanchi also said the Israel has not yet joined the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has not allowed verification of its nuclear activities.

The IAEA should adopt an independent and professional approach to settle the issue, the Iranian top diplomat at the UN insisted.

Israel, which is widely believed to have stockpiled several dozens of nuclear weapons, has followed a vague policy on its nuclear program.

The Iranian ambassador also rejected any restrictions on peaceful uses of nuclear energy, highlighting the important role of nuclear energy in promoting countries' economic and social development.

Takht-Ravanchi said the importance of nuclear energy is stipulated in the NPT and the Statute of the IAEA. He said one of the duties of the IAEA is to promote the civilian use of nuclear energy and boost international cooperation among member states in that regard.

"By making a lot of efforts and investment in this field, the Islamic Republic of Iran has secured significant achievements and, at the moment, uses nuclear energy in the domains of power generation, medicine, agriculture and industry," said Iran's UN envoy.

"From the Islamic Republic of Iran's standpoint, the IAEA's verification duty, as stipulated in the agency's statute, should be fulfilled in such a way that it does not eclipse member states' inalienable right to promote peaceful use of nuclear energy," the diplomat stated.

He underscored even proliferation concerns should not restrict member states' entitlement to peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Rouhani: World realizing 'maximum pressure' won't work

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani has said the world has realized that the "maximum pressure" policy does not work, emphasizing that the U.S.-adopted policy is coming to an end.

"All the signs in today's world show the world has realized that 'maximum pressure' does not work and maximum pressure is coming to an end," Rouhani said on Thursday.

He said Iran will triumph over the coronavirus pandemic as well as sanctions with God's grace and the Leader's guidance.

"People will soon enjoy the outcome of their resistance and perseverance," the president added.

The outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump has pursued the "maximum pressure" policy against Iran in order to force Tehran to succumb to its demands. The policy was implemented after Trump unilaterally pulled Washington out of a historic nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers.

Washington then slapped several rounds of harsh sanctions on Iran, claiming it was pursuing to negotiate a better deal with Iran than the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was clinched under



his predecessor Barack Obama.

Meanwhile, U.S. President-elect Joe Biden has voiced support for the JCPOA, saying his administration will rejoin the deal.

In remarks on Wednesday, Rouhani said his administration will make use of every opportunity in order to lift the U.S. sanctions.

"Whenever we see that there's a situation for the lifting of sanctions, we will make use of that," he said at a cabinet meeting. "Our goal is that cruel sanctions would be lifted."

He also said the world is faced with new conditions with the defeat of Donald Trump, adding that it would enable the

Islamic Republic to strengthen relations with friends and neighbors.

Iran's foreign relations are based upon ties with neighbors and friends, he added, noting that the termination of Trump's administration, which was an obstacle to Iran's relations with other countries, would pave the way for the Iranian relations.

"We established good relations with certain neighbors such as Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Azerbaijan over the past years, as well as with other friendly countries like Russia, China and others. I feel that the atmosphere for closer relations with all of our friends is more prepared."

Rouhani also said the Trump administration that sought the fall of the Iranian establishment has faced a "humiliating" defeat itself.

Last month, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called U.S. efforts and sanctions against Iran as a manifestation of atrocity, underlining that the Islamic Republic will continue to resist until it brings as much disgrace upon Washington as is possible.

"Concerning the economic problems, we do not factor out the Americans' evil role and their sanctions that are truly criminal," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Trump extends state of emergency with Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump notified Congress on Thursday that he was extending the state of national emergency with Iran that has been in place since 1979.

"Our relations with Iran have not yet normalized, and the process of implementing the agreements with Iran, dated January 19, 1981, is ongoing. For this reason, the national emergency declared on November 14, 1979, and the measures adopted on that date to deal with that emergency, must continue in effect beyond November 14, 2020," Trump wrote in a letter to Congress.

"Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency with respect to Iran declared in Executive Order 12170," he added.

A state of emergency gives a U.S. president extraordinary powers, including the ability to seize property, summon the National Guard and hire and fire military officers at will.

The state of emergency also forms the basis for most U.S. sanctions against other countries.

Tensions soared between Tehran and Washington after the Trump administration unilaterally walked away from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018.

Under the JCPOA, which was also signed by Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the European Union, Iran agreed to curb its nuclear program in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

Trump's withdrawal came while Iran was in full compliance with the treaty. He then reimplemented stringent sanctions against Iran. All other parties to the deal have repeatedly criticized the Trump administration's policy toward Iran.

Ever since Trump's defeat was projected by the U.S. media, the lame-duck president's administration has accelerated its efforts to slap more sanctions on Iran in order to create more obstacles in the path of Washington's return to the nuclear agreement.

On Tuesday, the U.S. government imposed Iran-related sanctions on six companies and four people, accusing the network of supplying sensitive goods to an Iranian military firm.

In a statement, the U.S. Treasury Department accused the companies and individuals of facilitating the procurement of sensitive goods, including U.S.-origin electronic components, for Iran Communication Industries, an Iranian military firm blacklisted by Washington and the European Union.

"The Iranian regime utilizes a global network of companies to advance its destabilizing military capabilities," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in the statement.

"The United States will continue to take action against those who help to support the regime's militarization and proliferation efforts," he added.

■ Pompeo terms U.S. return to JCPOA as 'crazy idea'

On Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said a possible Washington's reentry to the 2015 nuclear deal under the incoming Biden administration a "crazy idea".



"This is — it's a crazy idea to think that you're going to get back into a deal that permitted a clean pathway for the Iranians to have a nuclear weapon by which they could terrorize the entire world," Pompeo said on The Hugh Hewitt Show.

Pompeo said it was not right to normalize with Iran. "Today, they continue to build out their missile program, to extend their capacity to wreak terror across the world," claimed Pompeo whom Iranian Foreign Minister called "secretary of hate".

Pompeo further accused Iran of behaving in ways that are inconsistent with the commitments "even that they made under the JCPOA itself, as crazy as that was. This is a theocracy, a kleptocracy."

MP mocks threats of Israeli war on Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A member of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has dismissed as a joke the threats of an Israeli war against Iran, saying the hegemony has realized that the Islamic Republic is dead serious when it comes to its security.

"The claim of war from the rulers of the Zionist regime is a joke, because that regime has even failed to stand up against small resistance groups in the past few years," Ebrahim Rezaee told ISNA on Thursday.

The Israeli regime warned last week that there could be an Israel-Iran war if Joe 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 earlier this month, reported



The Jerusalem Post. "I see that as something that will lead to a confrontation between Israel and Iran."

The remarks came before the historic defeat of incumbent U.S. President Donald Trump in the November 3 presidential election against Democratic candidate Biden. So far, Trump has refused to concede,

claiming extensive voter fraud in the swing states that decided the election's outcome.

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.

Iran has urged Biden to abandon the disastrous, lawless bullying of the outgoing regime, and to respect multilateralism and rule of law.

Pakistan's Imran Khan welcomes possible U.S. return to Iran deal

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan has said if U.S. President-elect Joe Biden decides to return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, it would be in Pakistan's interest.

In an interview with a Pakistani news channel GNN, Imran Khan said he strongly believed that a U.S. return to the Iran nuclear deal would open new opportunities for enhancing trade between Iran and Pakistan, IRNA reported on Friday.

Biden has recently told France's President Emmanuel Macron that he would like the U.S. to once again work with its European ally on Iran nuclear policy.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the JCPOA in May 2018 and imposed the "toughest ever" economic sanctions on Iran. Trump's Iran policy has been described by observers as an abject failure.

"The American society is divided and we have to see how their politicians handle this situation in the post-election period," Khan said.

The prime minister said what is important for Pakistan is the future U.S. administration's policy towards the developments in the subcontinent, Kashmir issues, Iran and the Zionist regime.

The Pakistani prime minister described the policies adopted by Trump's administration on West Asia issues, including Iran and the Zionist regime, as controversial.

"Trump's opposition to the outcome of the presidential election and his support for the people clearly shows the



division in American society," he remarked. "It remains to be seen what the future policy of the United States will be, whether they will be inclined towards the Zionist regime, this is the main issue."

The remarks came after Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif visited Islamabad to discuss regional issues, the Muslim world, international affairs, and the promotion of bilateral relations.

During his visit, Zarif met with Chief of Pakistan's Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi. He also met with Prime Minister Khan.

In his meeting with the prime minister, Zarif thanked Pakistan for supporting Iran's bid to join the Shanghai Co-

operation Organization (SCO).

Zarif and Khan also exchanged views about international and regional developments, especially issues related to Afghanistan and the broader Islamic world.

The Pakistani leader said his country is interested to develop economic and political ties with Iran. The two sides also expressed hope to strengthen ties between the two neighboring countries.

Iran's chief diplomat also praised the Pakistani prime minister's stance on the issue of normalizing ties with the Zionist regime of Israel.

Prime Minister Khan said in September that normalization with Israel is "pointless".

In his interview, the prime minister also tacitly did not reject efforts by certain non-Muslim and Muslim countries pressuring Islamabad to normalize ties with Israel, saying his country has good relations with some of these countries.

"Some remarks cannot be uttered and we should ignore them. We have good relations with some of these countries. We don't want to upset them."

Days after a ceremony that was held at the White House, during which the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed agreements to fully normalize ties with Israel, Khan told reporters, "We can't make a decision on a matter that has been rejected by its owners, the Palestinian people." He added, "The Palestinians, the owners of the cause, were deprived from their lands and rights."

SPORTS

Iran defeat Bosnia in friendly

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team defeated Bosnia and Herzegovina 2-0 in a friendly match on Thursday.

Kaveh Rezaei found the back of the net just seconds into the second half at the Asim Ferhatovic-Hase Stadium.

Substitute Mehdi Ghaedi scored Iran's second goal in the injury time.

The Bosnian team had managed their last victory against Liechtenstein in the UEFA Euro qualifiers dating a year back.

It was Dragan Skocic's second match in charge. Iran had defeated Uzbekistan 2-1 on Oct. 8 under the Croat's tutelage.

The 'Persian Leopards' prepare for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers, where they sit third in Group C behind Iraq and Bahrain.

The 2022 World Cup qualifiers scheduled this year were postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Iran, BiH football federations to strengthen cooperation

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran and Bosnia and Herzegovina football federations will strengthen football development cooperation.

FFIRI secretary general Mehdi Mohammad Nabi met with his Bosnian counterpart Adnan Dzemicic at the NFSBiH headquarters on Thursday.

"We have good memories of Bosnia and Herzegovina country since 90s when they traveled to Iran for a friendly match. We also traveled to Sarajevo to play Bosnia. Iran and BiH will sign the joint cooperation document soon," Nabi said.

Dzemicic also praised Iran football and said he attended the match between Iran and Bosnia in the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil.

"We defeated Iran 3-1 but at the end of the match I told our captain how did it happen. Iran played very well until the end of the match. You had to beat Nigeria but the game ended in a draw," Dzemicic said.

At the end of the meeting, Mohammad Nabi handed Iran No.8 jersey to Dzemicic.

Iran defeated Bosnia and Herzegovina football team 2-0 in a friendly match Thursday night as part of preparation for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

20 Iranian players invited for FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Mehran Shahintab has invited 20 players to Iran basketball team for Window 2 of FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers.

Iran are scheduled to meet Saudi Arabia and Syria on Nov. 27 and 30 in Doha, Qatar.

Iran squad:
Rouzbeh Arghavan, Mohammad Torabi, Mohammad Jamshidi, Hamed Haddadi, Mohammad Hassanzadeh, Hamed Hosseinzadeh, Saeid Davarpanah, Mike Rostampour, Arman Zanganeh, Emad Salmani, Masoud Soleimani, Amir Sedighi, Aaron Geramipoor, Sajad Mashayekhi, Rasoul Mozaffari, Meysam Mirzaei, Aliar Najafi, Samad Nikkhah Bahrami, Behnam Yakhchali and Sina Vahedi

There are 24 teams competing in the FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers. Once the three windows of the Qualifiers conclude, the top two teams in each group will qualify directly to Asia Cup 2021. The six last-placed teams in each group are eliminated.

Meanwhile, the six third-placed teams in each group will then play in a separate qualifying tournament. Teams will be placed into two different groups of three teams. The top two teams of those respective groups will then lock in their spots at Asia Cup 2021, completing the 16-team roster who will also compete in the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 Asian Qualifiers.

Geramipoor looks forward to clinching FIBA Asia Cup 2021 berth

Iran national basketball team center Aaron Geramipoor is looking forward to clinching FIBA Asia Cup 2021 berth.

Iran will meet Saudi Arabia and Syria on November 27 and 30 in Doha, Qatar in the Window 2 of FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers.

"As a team, we are confident and we are looking forward to this next window to play against international competition once again," Aaron Geramipoor, Iran's up-and-coming big man said.

"Since COVID-19 struck, many sporting events and games worldwide have been paused, so it's great that this event is safely going ahead," he added.

Geramipoor did not play with his fellow countrymen in the first window, but is expected to make his Qualifiers debut in the upcoming games in Doha. He is among one of the 20 players named to Iran's preliminary roster, a list which also includes some of the best Team Melli has to offer.

Though they have the expected upper hand with the highly touted names on their roster, Iran will not be heading into these next two games against Saudi Arabia and Syria with a sense of complacency.

Geramipoor might have yet to play in the Qualifiers with this team, but his experience playing in the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 with the squad is all he needs to know that they will always put in their best effort no matter who they face.

"Every game we enter as a team, we are sure to take it seriously and are always focused on the task at hand. We respect our opponents and do our best on the day. I don't believe we will enter with a mindset of complacency," he said.

"We respect every team we face and we will focus on playing our team style of basketball and focus on our strengths under the guidance of Coach Shahintab."

If Iran can stay undefeated and secure both wins in this next window, it will automatically qualifies for FIBA Asia Cup 2021. As the owner of the most Asia Cup titles (3) since 2007 and Asia Cup 2017 runner-up, it wouldn't be much of a surprise if Iran would be the first team to officially lock up a ticket back to Asia's premier competition.

That's why fans can expect to see them put on a show in the upcoming games.

"I'd say, there will be some great basketball being played during this window, and you don't want to miss out on it," Geramipoor said.

"So stream the games and support us from the safety of your homes."

(Source: FIBA.com)

Bolivia restores diplomatic relations with Iran

1→ The restoration of diplomatic ties between Tehran and La Paz came two days after Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif attended Arce's swearing-in ceremony as part of a tour of several Latin American nations that included Venezuela and Cuba.

The chief Iranian diplomat visited Bolivia on Saturday night last week and was received by the speaker of the Bolivian parliament. He met with Luis Arce and later participated in his swearing-in ceremony.

"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.

During the meeting, Zarif congratulated Arce 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 the Iranian Foreign ministry.

The election of Arce, a candidate of former President Evo Morales' Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party, has given the Iran-Bolivia relations great boost. Arce expressed willingness to resume ties with Iran shortly after securing a landslide victory in Bolivia's recent presidential election.



"We are going to re-establish all relations. This government has acted very ideologically, depriving the Bolivian people of access to Cuban medicine, Russian medicine, and advances in China. For a purely ideological issue, it has exposed the population in a way unnecessary and harmful," Arce said.

He underlined that his government will open the door to all countries based on mutual respect and sovereignty, according to the Telesur, adding that he would carry out a foreign policy of restoration of relationships

with Venezuela, Cuba, and Iran.

The Bolivian president kept his promise on Wednesday by receiving the credentials of Morteza Tafreshi, the Iranian ambassador to Bolivia.

The ground for restoring relations between Iran and Bolivia was laid immediately after the Arce win in the presidential election. Following the election of Arce, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani sent a congratulatory message to Arce, congratulating him on his election as Bolivia's president. Rouhani said

the "decisive victory" of Arce "was not only a strengthening of the foundations of democracy but also a glorious demonstration of the administration of justice by the great nation of Bolivia."

"In the new era of returning power to the people's representatives, I express support for the Your Excellency's elected government, and express the readiness of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to revive bilateral relations and expand cooperation with the friendly country of Bolivia in all fields," the Iranian president pointed out.

Iran's Foreign Ministry also said in the time that Iran has seen a good omen in the election of Arce.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran sees a good omen in the restoration of democracy and power to the real representatives of (Bolivian) people after a year of tensions, congratulates the elected president of that country Mr. Luis Arce, and expresses full support for the elected government and readiness to revive cooperation and strengthen friendship bonds with that country (Bolivia)," Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said in a statement on October 20.

Zarif has also held phone talks with Morales, the former president of Bolivia and the leader of the party that won the country's recent election, expressing Iran's preparedness to promote bilateral relations with Bolivia's new legitimate government.

Iran calls on 'new White House officials' to unconditionally return to commitments

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ali Rabiei, the Iranian government spokesman, said on Thursday that Iran expects the incoming White House leader to unconditionally return to Washington's obligations, according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) news agency.

"We expect the new White House officials to unconditionally return to all their previous obligations and commitments," Rabiei said in an interview with the IRIB news agency. "In the first step, sanctions and barriers to the transfer of Iranian money must be lifted and the U.S. administration must be held accountable for the damage it has done to the Iranian people during this period."

The spokesman said Iran is dealing with White House policies, not politicians.

He added, "Basically, when we were negotiating with the Obama administration, we were not actually negotiating with the Democratic Party, we were negotiating with the U.S. government, but it was Trump who pushed back his rival party policies and replaced them with hostile policies. Therefore, we will follow the policies, behaviors, and actions of the other party and adopt the necessary policies accordingly."

Rabiei also pointed to the U.S. presidential election, noting that the American people said no to "racism and bullying".

"In the U.S. election, the American people have said no to the racist, bullying, and interventionist policies of their statesmen around the world. We believe that the next administration of the United States of America must respect

and abide by this popular vote," said Rabiei, adding that the Donald Trump administration has created a lot of troubles around the world and at home.

"The future administration of this country [U.S.] should be the representative of the American people in saying no to the Trump policies," the spokesman said.

In an apparent reference to a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers that Trump abandoned more than two years ago, Rabiei also called on the new U.S. administration to return to agreements that the Trump administration left.

Trump pulled the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), on May 8, 2018, reimposing sweeping economic sanctions on Iran in a bid to force the country into signing what Trump called "better deal." Iran has refused to renegotiate with the U.S. over past few years, saying it will not hold talks with the White House under the sanctions pressure.

"The future administration of this country must pay attention to all the treaties that the previous U.S. administration has violated and abandoned, and return to these treaties," noted Rabiei, adding, "Our clear expectation from the new White House officials is an unconditional return to all previous obligations and commitments."

The spokesman said Iran would closely watch the statements and actions of the White House's new officials and will make a judgment at a later time.

"We will continue our national policy regardless of U.S. elections," Rabiei asserted.

According to Rabiei, Iran has devised at least two plans for the coming months.

The first plan is a 70-day strategy that will last until January 20 and the second plan will start by January, noted Rabiei, adding that these plans were devised in accordance with internal issues and foreign policy.

Trump's presidency will come to an end on January 20, 2021.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has recently called on the new U.S. leadership to change tack and reconsider Trump's policies toward Iran, saying that "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."

Last Week, Rouhani also said that his government will take advantage of every opportunity to lift the U.S. sanctions on Iran.

"Whenever we see that there's a situation for the lifting of sanctions, we will make use of that," Rouhani said at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday. "Our goal is that cruel sanctions would be lifted."

One day later, the president said the world has realized that the "maximum pressure" policy does not work, underlining that the U.S.-adopted policy is coming to an end.

"All the signs in today's world show the world has realized that 'maximum pressure' does not work and maximum pressure is coming to an end," Rouhani said on Thursday.

Saudi king has no right to accuse Iran: aide

Amir-Abdollahian says "it's better for Riyadh to stop serving Israel and respect the neighbors"

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special aide to the speaker of the Iranian Parliament on international affairs, responded on Thursday to the remarks by Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, who has recently called for a decisive stance against Iran.

"The Saudi King, invading Yemen & aiding the DAESH's American terrorism in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon & Yemen, has no right to accuse Iran," the special aide said in a tweet on Thursday.

Abdollahian was responding to the recent remarks by King Salman against Iran.

In his first public remarks since he addressed the United Nations General Assembly in September via videolink, the 84-year-old Saudi ruler accused Iran of interfering in other countries' internal affairs, sponsoring terrorism, and pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

"The Kingdom affirms the seriousness of the Iranian regime's regional project, and rejects its interventions in internal affairs of

other countries and its sponsorship of terrorism. The Kingdom calls [on] the international community to take a firm stance towards the Iranian regime, as this firm stance must guarantee that Iranian regime is prevented from obtaining weapons of mass destruction, the development of its ballistic missile program and threatening peace and security," King Salman said.

He added, "We condemn the Iran-backed terrorist Houthi militia for violating international laws and customary rules by launching bomb-laden UAVs and ballistic missiles towards civilians in the Kingdom."

The Saudi King made the remarks during an inauguration session of the works of the 1st year of the 8th session of the Saudi Shura Council.

Abdollahian said these remarks were made to serve the interests of Israel.

"It's better for Riyadh to stop serving Israel & respect the neighbors. Iran has always

been advocate of the neighbors' & region's peace/security," pointed out the special aide.

In October, Amir-Abdollahian said Saudi Arabia is pushing the United States into going to war with Iran.

"The Persian Gulf littoral states have always welcomed Iranian initiatives on regional cooperation. But, KSA & one other state have repeatedly provoked the US to wage war against Iran. Iran is a reliable and stable state. Israel and America HAVE NO ROOM in the future of the region," Abdollahian said in a tweet on October 21.

Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic relations with Iran in 2016, after a group of angry protesters stormed the Saudi embassy in Tehran in protest over the execution of a prominent Shia dissident in Saudi Arabia. Since then, tensions have been on the rise between Tehran and Riyadh, with the Saudi leadership leveling criticism against Iran from time to time.

Lavrov expects Biden to replicate Obama's policy on Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In his first comment on what a Biden administration's policy on Iran would look like, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expected that the United States foreign policy under Joe Biden would be similar to that seen under President Barack Obama, especially on Iran and climate change, according to a Reuters report.

Joe Biden is yet to be officially declared U.S. president as the results of the November presidential election are not finalized. However, Biden is widely projected to be the next U.S. president due to the electoral votes he has secured so far, which stand far above the number needed to win the election.

As Biden made his way to the White House, analysts put the spotlight on the policy that he would likely adopt toward Iran, with most experts predicting that he will rejoin the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

U.S. President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, reimposing sweeping economic sanctions on Iran in a bid to reach what he called a better

deal with Iran. To this end, Trump pursued the policy of exerting "maximum pressure" on Iran, a campaign that further dissuaded Iran from resuming talks with the U.S. because Iranian officials have repeatedly said they will not negotiate with the U.S. under pressure.

Biden said he would take a "smarter way" to put pressure on Iran. This strategy, Biden said, requires the U.S. to rejoin the JCPOA.

In an opinion piece published by CNN on September 13 then-candidate Biden said he will reenter the Iran nuclear deal if he wins the U.S. presidential election.

"I will offer Tehran a credible path back to diplomacy. If Iran returns to strict compliance with the nuclear deal, the United States would rejoin the agreement as a starting point for follow-on negotiations. With our allies, we will work to strengthen and extend the nuclear deal's provisions, while also addressing other issues of concern," Biden said.

Biden has refused to articulate his policy toward Iran in recent weeks, especially after he was projected to win the presidential election, leaving pundits speculating over how

he will deal with Iran should he moves into the White House.

Biden's team has recently discussed with French President Emanuel Macron the situation around the Iran nuclear deal, expressing the U.S. willingness to once again work with its European ally on Iran nuclear policy.

Biden "expressed his readiness to work together on global challenges, including security and development in Africa, the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, and Iran's nuclear program," Biden's transition team said, according to Newsweek.

On the other hand, Iran has called on the U.S. to change tack and reconsider its "inhumane behaviors" toward other countries.

"The new U.S. administration should reconsider its inhumane behaviors toward other countries in the first place in order to repair the country's tarnished image in the international community," Rouhani said on Tuesday.

On Sunday, the Iranian president also said, "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."

Alumina powder production rises 4%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of alumina powder in Iran increased four percent during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Production of alumina powder in the only production unit of the country (Iran Alumina Company in the northeastern province of North Khorasan) reached 139,307 tons during the seven-month period.

Meanwhile, the monthly alumina powder output hit 17,616 tons in the seventh month of this year, rising six percent from the figure of the same month in the previous year.

Aluminum oxide, which is commonly called alumina, is an inert, odorless, white amorphous material often used in industrial ceramics.

TSE's main index drops 5.5% in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 5.5 percent in the previous Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The index lost 69,000 points to 1.221 million during the past week, while it had finally experienced a slight weekly growth (2,000 points, or less than one percent) in its preceding week.

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Group, Saipa Group, Bank Saderat Iran, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Bandar-Abbas Oil Refinery, Tamin Cement Investment Company, and Abadan Power Generation Company were the most traded indices.



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 and the week ended on November 6.

TEDPIX had hit the record high of two million points on August 2, and while it had been experiencing an unprecedented trend of rising for some months, it has witnessed several weekly drops since mid-August.

Tehran, Kharkiv ready for conducting barter trade

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) hosted a webinar with the representatives of the private sector from Ukraine's Kharkiv city in which the two sides expressed readiness for expanding trade through barter trade.

As reported by the TCCIMA portal, in this event which was organized by the TCCIMA in collaboration with the Kharkiv Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), the two sides discussed expansion of mutual economic relations and mulled over ways of boosting the trade exchange between the two countries, which is currently less than one billion dollars, to over \$5 billion a year.

In this regard, Hesamedin Hallaj, TCCIMA deputy head for international affairs, referred to the close relations between Iran and Ukraine over the past decades and stressed the need for the development of economic relations between the two sides.

The official emphasized that the private sectors of the two countries can use each other's shared capacities and experiences to improve the current business relationships.

He mentioned the barter trade of minerals and mining products along with oil and gas products as well as the trade of industrial equipment as great opportunities for companies in the two countries to boost trade exchanges.

He further underlined the potentials and capacities of Iranian and Ukrainian companies in the fields of aerospace, industrial automation, mining, agricultural machinery, as well as urban transportation, and invited the private sectors of the two sides to cooperate in these areas.

After the officials of the two countries delivered their speeches, businessmen, and representatives of companies from the two countries talked about their business activities and expressed readiness for joint cooperation.

Some B2B talks were also held between the companies of the two sides.

Following the outbreak of coronavirus in the world, the TCCIMA has planned to hold business webinars to maintain the close relationship between the Iranian private sector and those of the target countries including India, Russia, and Turkey.

Commodities worth \$26.8m exported from Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari Province, in southwest of Iran, has exported 20,000 tons of commodities valued at \$26.8 million during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), according to a provincial official.

Siavash Nazari, the director of foreign trade office of the province' Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said the province's exports included a variety of home appliances, plastic and metal products, dairy products, carpets and porcelain products.

The province's goods have been exported to 15 countries, including Turkey, Iraq, Armenia, India, China, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan, he added.

This year, the target for the province's non-oil exports is \$40 million, the official added.

Iran has exported 65.5 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$18.2 billion during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year, registering a 17.5-percent fall in terms of weight and a 23-percent decline in terms of value compared to the figures for the previous year's same period, according to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Iraq with \$4.8 billion, China with \$4.4 billion, the UAE with \$2.2 billion, Turkey with \$1.4 billion, and Afghanistan with \$1.3 billion of imports from Iran were among the country's top export destinations during this period.

Iran's energy industry progresses significantly despite challenges: Zanganeh

1 → The unilateral withdrawal of the United States from many treaties and agreements, such as the JCPOA, which was the result of years of multilateral negotiations, all reflect a paradigm shift in international relations, he said.

"Despite all these challenges, we have made significant progress in the energy sector; by relying on our human resources, technology and investment, we have achieved the sustainable production of one billion cubic meters of gas per day," he stressed.

The official noted that over 95 percent of the country's 80 million population have access to natural gas through pipelines in their houses, and the oil and petrochemical industries have made great strides in domestic technology in the production chain.

He further underlined the significant role that the GECF is playing in managing the global gas market and said: "Iran, as one of the founders of GECF, is proud to see that the forum is strong, efficient and credible."



All of this has happened in less than two decades since May 2001; GECF has

taken great steps to pave the way for specialized and purposeful dialogue among

gas producing and consuming countries, institutions, and international organizations, Zanganeh added.

Elsewhere in his remarks Zanganeh mentioned the upward trend of natural gas consumption across the world and said the long-term forecasts for natural gas demand indicate that by 2050, the share of natural gas in the global energy basket will increase from the current 23 percent to 28 percent.

However, the share is not enough to help achieve the global goals of sustainable development and climate change, especially over a long period of 30 years. As suggested before, for gas to achieve a 30 percent share in the world energy basket by 2050, the GECF should seek new approaches to induce global gas value, he added.

The 22nd annual ministerial meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) was launched on Thursday in Doha, the State of Qatar.

Stored natural gas reaches new record high

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The volume of natural gas stored in Iran's storage facilities since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) has 2.87 billion cubic meters (bcm), the managing director of Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC) said.

"This year, 1.856 billion cubic meters of gas has been injected into Shourijeh storage, while 1.014 billion cubic meters has also been injected into Sarajeh storage, which is a new record," Shana quoted Ramin Hatami as saying.

According to the official, the volume in the current year has increased 28 percent compared to the same period last year, which is an indication of the company's capability for sustained supply of natural gas to the north and northeastern provinces during the cold season.

Sustainable energy supply in the north and northeast regions which are significantly far from the main centers of gas production in the south of the country and the need to reduce dependence on gas imports has always been one of the main concerns of ICOFC as the only gas producer in these areas.

Meanwhile, the development and expansion of the national gas network and increasing gas consumption

in the country has doubled the importance of storage facilities, according to Hatami.

Last year, 869 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas was stored in Sarajeh facility, and during the current year, this figure has reached 1014 mcm, which is a record since the beginning of storage in this facility, the official said.

With the addition of about 150 million cubic meters of gas to this storage facility, its reproduction capacity is expected to reach more than one billion cubic meters in the current year, Hatami added.

Iran has two major natural gas storage facilities in Sarajeh and Shourijeh, in which every year the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) stores the gas received from gas refineries all over the country to be used in the colder months of the year.

As the first natural gas storage facility in Iran and West Asia, Sarajeh storage facility was officially inaugurated in January 2014 near Qom, 124km south of Tehran.

Back in November 2019, NIGC awarded the development project of the Shourijeh gas storage facility in the northeastern Khorasan Razavi Province to an Iranian company based on a build-operate-transfer



(BOT) contract.

As one of the world's top gas producers, Iran is planning to expand its underground natural gas storage capacity to ensure that enough natural gas is available during peak demand periods to avoid electricity supply shortfalls in the future.

According to NIGC plans, the capacity of the two storage facilities, Sarajeh and Shourijeh, is planned to be increased to over seven bcm in near future.

Steel products output up 4% in 7 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of steel products in Iran hit over 8.439 million tons during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), which was four percent higher than the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

Production of the mentioned products also rose nine percent in the seventh month of this year, from that of the previous year.

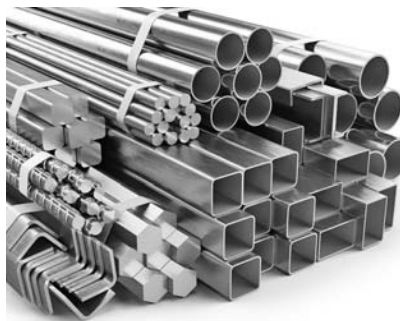
Over 1.173 million tons of steel products were produced in the seventh month of the present year.

In a bid to prevent the exports of unprocessed minerals, creating more value-added and meeting the requirements of domestic producers for the raw materials, Iran has levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) since late September 2019.

Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry believes that the duty is going to encourage the production of more processed minerals such as pellets and concentrate instead of selling the raw minerals.

The ministry has announced that production of iron ore concentrate in Iran reached 47,306 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, registering a four-percent rise compared to the preceding year.

Iran's export of steel products in



the past Iranian calendar year rose 27 percent compared to its preceding year.

As reported, the country's major steel producers managed to export about 7.33 million tons of the products in the previous year.

Some 10 years ago Iran exported more than 20 million tons of unprocessed iron ore and the figure fell to a maximum of six million tons last year.

As the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has announced, Iran's annual steel ingot production is planned to increase 3.2 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

The country has defined 16 development projects in the steel sector to boost the output of steel products by 17.3 million tons in five years.

Iran, Syria explore avenues of cooperation in water sector

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Deputy Energy Minister Ghasem Taghizadeh Khamesi and his Syrian counterpart held talks through video conference on Wednesday to discuss expansion of cooperation and implementation of previously reached agreements in the water sector, IRNA reported.

In this meeting, Taghizadeh Khamesi introduced the capacities and capabilities of the Iranian water industry in implementing major projects including supply, transfer, and treatment of water and wastewater, construction of pumping equipment, desalination plants, seawater transfer, and water recycling.

Meanwhile, the Syrian Deputy Minister of Water Resources Nabil al-Hassan underlined his country's willingness to use Iran's capacities and experiences in the water and wastewater industry.

The two sides also discussed some of the problems that Iranian contractors working on Syria's water and wastewater projects are currently facing.

Based on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between the two sides, solving the problems of the Iranian companies active in Syria's water and wastewater fields is a top priority for cooperation between the two sides.

According to al-Hassan, Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous who had earlier been the Water Resources Minister of

the country has followed up the issue.

He vowed that the Syrian side will take serious measures for removing impediments.

Cooperation in designing and implementing dam projects, irrigation and drainage networks, construction of water transmission lines in Syria by using the capacity of the private and public sectors, designing and constructing sewage treatment plants and water transmission and distribution networks and desalination plants, implementation research projects, sharing experiences in water resources management are among the most important areas for cooperation underlined in the mentioned MOU.

The two sides will follow up and evaluate the progress of the provisions of this memorandum by forming a joint committee chaired by the deputy ministers of the two countries that would hold meetings once every three months.

Iran and Syria signed an MOU in December 2019 for cooperation in the water and wastewater sectors and for renovating Syria's water and wastewater networks.

The MOU was signed by Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Syria's former Water Resources Minister Hussein Arnous on the sidelines of the 10th meeting of the UNESCO Regional Centre on Urban Water Management (RCUWM)'s governing board in Tehran.

Tehran to host next meeting of Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Committee

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum met with Pakistan's deputy economic affairs minister to discuss holding the two countries' 9th Joint Economic Committee meeting.

In the meeting, the officials reviewed important axes of trade, investment, and transportation between the two countries, and decided that the next meeting of the Joint Economic Committee of the two countries will be held in Tehran next month.

Hosted by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, the fifth meeting of the two countries Free Trade Committee was also decided to be held on the sidelines of the joint economic committee meeting.

Further in the meeting, representatives of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, and the Energy Ministry held talks with their Pakistani counterparts to discuss a variety of issues including electricity exports, and maritime, road, and rail transportation cooperation.



Zadboum visited Pakistan along with a high-ranking delegation headed by the Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

The delegation visited Islamabad on Tuesday to discuss regional issues, the Muslim world, international affairs, and the promotion of bilateral relations.

On the Iranian side, the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development is in charge of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Committee, while on the Pakistani side the Ministry of Economic Affairs is chairing this committee.

The 8th meeting of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Committee was held in Islamabad back in July 2019.

In that meeting, the two sides signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for strengthening bilateral trade and economic ties and vowed to remove potential barriers in the way of mutual trade.

The MOU was signed by Iran's former Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Reza Rahmani and Pakistan Prime Minister's Adviser on Commerce, Textile, Industries, Production, and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood.

Riyadh, Abu Dhabi lost a valuable ally: American journalist

➔ A: Biden supported the JCPOA and is likely to seek a U.S. reentry to the agreement alongside the removal of many of the sanctions imposed by Donald Trump's administration. Without a doubt, Biden's presidency will seek to engage in greater diplomacy with Iran than that undertaken under Trump's "maximum pressure" policy. That said, promoters of a hawkish U.S. foreign policy will not disappear, particularly in the Middle East. Many Washington think tanks and the U.S. Congress will remain areas where hawkish influencers can still gain sympathetic audiences, and donors supporting U.S. military primacy in the Middle East (West Asia) will continue to provide funding generously.

■ Do you think the policy of exporting democracy by force like what we saw in Iraq is still popular among American politicians, both Democrats and Republicans?

A: No, it is unpopular across both parties. Both parties' presidential candidates offered their visions about how to end the U.S. military roles in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. The American public is tired of bearing the costs of military interventions around the world. That said, there



is still widespread support for keeping U.S. forces based in Iraq and Kuwait. As long as there is a considerable U.S. military presence based in the Middle East (West Asia), policymakers will be

under pressure from other countries in the region as well as domestic U.S. interest groups to intervene militarily to resolve regional disputes.

■ How do you see the future of rela-

tions between the U.S. and Persian Gulf Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia?

A: UAE and Saudi Arabia's warm relationship with the Trump administration put both countries in a difficult position following the election. In a debate last November, Biden pledged to make Saudi Arabia a "pariah," and said he would not sell them weapons, and promised to make them "pay the price" for the murder of Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi. What all that looks like in practice is a very different matter. Saudi Arabia and the UAE run effective P.R. and lobbying campaigns in Washington and have persuaded many policymakers that their national interests are synonymous with U.S. interests in the Middle East (West Asia). No doubt, various forms of intelligence sharing will continue between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, and cutting off arms sales is easier said than done when there are billions of dollars in signed contracts. But there's no doubt that the UAE and Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman lost a valuable ally with Donald Trump's electoral loss and will be working hard to mend fences in Washington.

Macron wants to identify himself with the American Zionism: Lebanese cleric

➔ This president takes this stance as if he is an ordinary person in the street. I think the motive that drove him to make such a remark is that he wants to identify himself with the American Zionism, which bears arrogant hostility to Mohammad as the Messenger of God and his message.

The message of Prophet Mohammad has become today worldwide despite all attempts to distort the true image of the Messenger and Islam.

Macron wants to show his loyalty to global Zionism and the new Freemasonry to gain their green light for his second presidential bid.

Otherwise, why should someone on the level of the president of the French Republic, who represents France in the world, take such a position?

France is an important member of the (UN) Security Council and has a key role in resolving disputes in the region, especially in Lebanon.

Therefore, he wants to make propaganda against Islam and its Prophet in order to use it as a trump card in the upcoming French election.

■ What are the definitions and limits of freedom in Islam?

A: Islamic education came to found basic principles of human societies' lives; tolerant religion focuses on permanent principles, namely freedom, justice, and equality that never change, whether for Muslims or non-Muslims. Perhaps these principles are consistent with the slogans of the French Revolution. For example, about "freedom," God said, "There shall be no compulsion in religion" (Al-Baqarah -256), and in Surah Yunus Ayah 99, it is said that "Had your Lord willed, everyone on earth would have believed. Will you compel people to become believers?" God also said, "The truth is from your Lord. Whoever wills—let him believe. And whoever wills—let him disbelieve." (Al-Kahf -30).

That is why Almighty God said in his holy book, "You have no control over them." (Al-Ghashiyah - 22)

Hence we understand that Islamic educations endorse the concept of freedom: freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of belief, freedom of worship, and freedom of thought. Therefore, the Islamic source mentioned the second caliphate asked person, "Why did you enslave people when their mothers gave birth to them free?"

The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said, "All of you are Adam's sons, and Adam was created out of the dust of the ground. Therefore, from the standpoint of equality in Islamic educations, all people have equal rights, and duties at all levels, the rich and the poor, men and women, young and old, Arab and non-Arab, all people in the eyes of Islam are equal.

This freedom, which Islam affirmed, does not give the

right to attack others and violate others' rights. Therefore, according to Islamic law, our freedom ends when the rights of others begin. In Islam, we do not have the right to assault the beliefs of others.

God asks us, "Do not insult those they call upon besides God, lest they insult God out of hostility and ignorance" (Al-An'am -108).

That is why the Messenger of God forbade us from humiliating others' dignity or insulting them, even in times of war. Prophet asked us not to scorn people who believe in a different way and those who are out of Islam. Therefore, freedom in this peaceful religion has limits, and we have not right to assault the sanctities and beliefs of others.

■ What is the right way to respond to the West's provocative moves against Islam?

A: First of all, I emphasize that calling Islam and spreading its message among people needs a peaceful atmosphere as societies should be open to each other and cherish dialogue and communication.

The first step is to open doors and bridge divides so that people will be aware of their bonds, gather them, and communicate and debate for what is beneficial for humanity and human society.

Therefore, these provocative moves and actions in France undoubtedly lead to undermining relations between people, cutting off communication, and further strife, and this does not serve the interests of peace and Muslims.

In our relations with people, we need to address them calmly, within a reasonable argument, and with sound logic.

Our position should be strong, and with a bright thought, we can defend Islam. Therefore, the repercussions of the attack on others' sanctities and beliefs will trigger the hatred and reaction of others against all Muslims as a whole.

This is harmful to Islam and Muslims as the number of Muslims is increasing drastically in the West. This is what worries Muslims' enemies in those societies and frightens those who see that the spread of Islam as a threat to their future.

Violent reactions do not serve the relationships between people and also the peaceful coexistence between Muslims and others.

■ How do you assess the reaction of Islamic countries and their leaders to Macron's statements?

A: What we noticed in the recent period after re-infusion of the poisons of insulting the Messenger of God and supported by the French president, showed that the Islamic states and regimes, except a few of them, went into a deep coma or took sleeping pills as if what happened does not concern them, especially those who consider themselves

Democrat, but Biden called -- and this was last June -- Biden called him a "dictator".

Well, there may be dictators in the U.S. in the West, but there are no dictators in Venezuela, non in Cuba, none in Iran, none in Russia, and on and on - all the countries on the U.S. target list for regime change, and they aren't dictators. "Illegitimate" governments are at war with anybody. The U.S. is at war with everybody it doesn't control, either by hot or other means.

The possibility of improved relations with sovereign independent countries the U.S. does not control if Biden replaces Trump in January is virtually nil. It will not happen. It should happen, but it will not. Policies

will stay the same.

As imperialism, U.S. policy throughout the post-World War Two era is imperialism against nations it doesn't control to gain control over them by whatever means it takes wars by hot means, by other means, by sanctions, anything it takes. The rule of law is irrelevant. The U.S. doesn't care about the rule of law. The U.S. wants to dominate other nations, their resources, and populations by hardwired U.S. policy. It will be the same under Biden as it is under Trump, as it was under Obama, as it was under the Bush-Cheney, as it was under the Clintons, they'll be exactly the same.

(Source: press TV)



Biden has made very hostile comments in the past about various countries. In an article I'm working on now, they include Venezuela. I call Nicolas Maduro a model



the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

We have not heard a position or condemnation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, neither at the official level nor from its nation. Unfortunately, this is what hurts us and grieves us and makes us feel that the Arab regimes do not care about Islamic causes and issues: peace, mercy, and blessings of God.

■ Do you confirm violence in response to insult to the Prophet of Islam?

A: As Muslims, we have our way of defending Islamic sanctity; we have to deal with this issue differently. As long as the issue was in this context, we avoid insulting others' sanctuaries, greatness, and prophets, whether he is Jesus, peace be upon him, or his mother Virgin Mary, peace be upon her, or Prophet Moses, peace be upon him.

If others offend Muslims, we are forbidden from insulting any prophet on earth. God says, "The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, as did the believers. They all have believed in God and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers. The believers make no distinction between any of His messengers" (Al-Baqarah - 285).

Therefore our reaction is to argue with them in the best manner as God said, "Do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in the best manner possible, except those who do wrong among them. And say, 'We believe in what was revealed to us, and in what was revealed to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him we are submissive.'"

We have in Quran that God made a covenant with the Children of Israel to worship none but God and be good to parents, and relatives, and orphans, and the needy; and speak nicely to people.

But beheading of a teacher in France in response to insulting Islam and its Prophet is not acceptable. Any attack against Christians and churches is condemned in Islam, according to Prophet Muhammad's educations.

Fire erupts at Saudi Arabia's Jizan petroleum products platform after Yemeni boat attack

A fire has broken out near a floating platform of an oil distribution station in Saudi Arabia's southern region of Jizan, after Saudi forces purportedly destroyed two explosive-laden boats believed to have been launched by Yemeni fighters.

The Saudi Ministry of Energy, in a statement carried by the state-run Saudi Press Agency (SPA), said on Friday it dealt with the blaze.

Other than the damage caused by the fire to the floating hoses in the platform, no injuries were reported, the statement added.

The purported bomb-laden boat attack came as the Saudi-led coalition involved in a devastating military campaign against Yemen claimed on Thursday that it had thwarted a Yemeni drone strike, Press Tv reported.

The coalition's spokesperson, Brigadier General Turki al-Malki, said a bomb-laden drone launched by Yemeni Houthis Ansarullah fighters toward the kingdom's southern region was intercepted and destroyed.

The Saudi-led coalition alleged earlier in the day that it had destroyed a Yemeni bomb-laden drone before it could reach its target in Saudi Arabia.

Yemeni drones have previously targeted oil facilities in Saudi Arabia's city of Jazan in response to the kingdom's relentless bombardment of the impoverished nation.

U.S. election officials say 'no evidence' of compromised votes

There is no evidence of compromised ballots or corrupt voting systems in the U.S. election, officials said Thursday, as a top Democrat accused Republicans who refuse to accept President-elect Joe Biden's win of "poisoning" democracy.

Their messages came hours after President Donald Trump once again cried foul, retweeting a baseless claim that an election equipment maker "deleted" 2.7 million votes for him nationwide, AFP reported.

Biden, who leads by more than five million in the popular vote, cemented his victory late Thursday by winning Arizona, U.S. networks said, flipping the state Democratic for the first time since 1996.

Arizona gives Biden a 290-217 lead over Trump in the Electoral College, with 270 needed to win the White House.

With most Republican lawmakers having yet to acknowledge Biden's win, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, the chamber's top Democrat, accused them Thursday of "denying reality" and "auditioning for profiles in cowardice."

Russia set to open naval base for nuclear warships in Sudan

Russia has signed a draft deal to build a naval logistics base in Sudan, where it will station up to four nuclear warships on the Red Sea coast.

Russia's Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin approved the draft agreement on establishing a naval base in the Red Sea and will submit the proposal to President Vladimir Putin in due course.

"The project stems from a mutual desire of Moscow and Khartoum to strengthen and develop military cooperation to increase the defense capacity of both states," Mishustin said in a statement.

"The presence of the Russian naval logistics base in Sudan, which is set for defense purposes, meets with goals of maintaining peace and stability in the region, and not to pose any threat to other countries."

Once endorsed, the agreement will allow Moscow to station up to four warships, including those with nuclear capabilities, and up to 300 service members in a Sudanese port at any one time.

China warns of action after Pompeo says Taiwan not part of China

China will strike back against any moves that undermine its core interests, its foreign ministry said on Friday, after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that Taiwan "has not been a part of China".

China calls Taiwan the most sensitive and important issue in its ties with the United States, and has been angered by the Trump administration's stepped up support for the Chinese-claimed yet democratically ruled island, such as arms sales, Reuters reported.

Speaking in a U.S. radio interview on Thursday, Pompeo said: "Taiwan has not been a part of China".

Resistance News

Palestinian rights groups call for halt to Israeli military incursions into Gaza

Palestinian human rights groups have called on the Israeli regime to cease its military incursions into the besieged Gaza Strip, demanding compensation for farmers for their agricultural losses.

In identical letters, the al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Adalah -- the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel -- and Israeli human rights organization Gisha asked for an immediate halt to the Israeli military's destruction of farming lands in the Gaza Strip, an investigation into recent incursions, and indemnities for Gaza-based Palestinian farmers.

The letters were reportedly addressed to Israeli minister of military affairs Benny Gantz, Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit as well as the Military Advocate General Major General Sharon Afek, Press TV reported.

"On October 13, 2020, Israeli military bulldozers crossed some 300 meters into the Gaza Strip, severely damaging dozens of dunums of agricultural land and destroying crops in addition to irrigation systems... This is the heaviest damage to Gaza farmlands by an Israeli military incursion since 2014," the rights groups said.

They added, "The Gaza Ministry of Agriculture reported that sources of income for at least 10 farmers were harmed as a result of the Israeli incursion, and damage to agricultural lands and crops are estimated to stand at over \$32,000."

On Tuesday, several Israeli tanks and bulldozers rolled into Palestinian farmlands east of Deir al-Balah city, located over 14 kilometers (8.7 miles) south of Gaza City, and leveled a vast area.

Results of U.S. presidential election are 'dubious at best'

By Stephen Lendman

The results of the U.S. presidential election held on November 3 are dubious at best. I have written a great deal about them. I'll continue writing about them.

On the one hand, they are being challenged by Trump. I disagree with both everything he does and says, but I agree with him on this. There is hard evidence of voter fraud, not a little bit of voter fraud, a great deal of voter fraud, that's one issue.

And the idea of whether a new incoming government will operate differently from an outgoing one on relations with nations who are independent of U.S. control is virtually nil.

Morales victoriously returns from exile

➔ In January, Jeanine Anez, the leader of the right-wing interim government, urged Bolivians not to allow Morales and his socialist party to make a comeback, describing them as "the savages".

But much to the dismay of Anez, who is infamous for her anti-Indigenous statements, and the white establishment, Morales' protege, Luis Arce, was elected to the presidency in a landslide victory last month.

With the shifting political winds, Morales returned to his home country from exile in jubilant fashion.

"The Bolivian right and the global right should know: the savages are back in government," Morales said, while addressing tens of thousands of his supporters on Wednesday.

"We're in power now," said the former union leader, who began his career as a simple coca farmer, rising to the top echelons of power in 2006. Until October 2019, he had won

back-to-back elections, boasting the longest election winning streak across South America.

Last year after the October presidential elections, Morales claimed victory again while his opponents and a prominent US-based election monitoring group alleged fraud in the first run-off of the polls.

Morales and his supporters deny any wrongdoing in the elections.

Many cultural sites, museums equipped with e-ticket systems

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A large number of cultural sites and museums nationwide have so far been equipped with e-ticket sale systems, a tourism official announced on Thursday.

“So far 230 cultural sites and heritage museums have been equipped with e-ticket issuing systems across the country and the rest, which add up to 12, will be equipped in the next week.” CHTN quoted Khashayar Nikzadfar as saying on Thursday.

Financial transparency, prevention of tax fraud and misuse of paper, the possibility of easy online shopping via mobile phones, and the reduction of controlling manpower are amongst the advantages of the e-ticket sales system in cultural and historical centers, Nikzadfar said.



Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025. So it will undeniably try its best to achieve a relatively ambitious goal but when that happens the travel industry is likely to look more altered.

12th-century Shebeli Tower still stands tall

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The city of Damavand, in the northeast of Tehran, has always been famous for its pleasant climate and hot springs, but the city has more to offer.

The city also houses several historical buildings and monuments, among which Shebeli Tower has survived several earthquakes in the region and still stands tall.



The mausoleum of Sheikh Abubakr Shebeli also known as Sheikh Shebeli dates back to the Seljuk era (1037–1194). With 10 meters height and an octagon plan, the structure is made of a mixture of limestone and brick and is considered one of the architectural masterpieces of its time.

The monument also includes a deeper cellar space called the sardab (meaning ‘cold water’ in Farsi), however, there is no trace of the tomb inside the building and local people believe that the tower was built in memory of Sheikh Shebeli.

A Sufi mystic, Sheikh Shebeli was one of the rulers of Damavand. During his rule, people experienced justice, prosperity, and security, which made him very popular in the region.

When he died in Baghdad, local people of Damavand decided to keep his memory alive by constructing a memorial monument in the city.

5-star hotel inaugurated in Kish Island

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A newly constructed five-star hotel has been inaugurated in the Persian Gulf island of Kish, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

With about 15,000 square meters built-up area, the 12-story hotel has 171 rooms and enjoys several facilities



such as sports fields, conference halls, and restaurants.

Having almost 50 hotels with more than 13,000 beds and no need to get a visa for foreigners makes Kish Island a luring destination for domestic and foreign tourists.

Having different flights from the Persian Gulf littoral states to the island as well as having sea transportation, while the island enjoys the best tourism infrastructures, also helps to boost tourism on the island.

Over the past couple of decades, the coral Kish Island has become a beach resort where visitors can swim, shop, and sample a laid-back and relatively liberated local lifestyle. It is home to free-trade-zone status, with ever-growing hotels, shopping centers, apartment blocks, and retail complexes.

Remains of Stone Age artifacts unearthed in northern Iran

➔ **1** According to experts, the discovery of more than one meter of Neolithic-era layers in that excavation was a very important event in shedding new light on the history of the region in the Neolithic period.

Such finding is said to have been made for the first time in the plains of eastern Mazandaran in general and in the plain of Neka in particular.

Soaked in a vibrant history, Mazandaran (also known as Tabarestan) was a cradle of civilization since the beginning of the first millennium BC. According to Britannica Encyclopedia, it was almost overrun in about 720 CE by the Arab raiders.

Its insecure eastern and southeastern borders were crossed by Mongol invaders in the 13th and 14th centuries. Cossacks attacked the region in 1668 but were repulsed. It was



ceded to the Russian Empire by a treaty in 1723, but the Russians were never secure in their occupation. The area was restored to Iran under the Qajar dynasty. The northern section of the region consists of a lowland alongside the Caspian and an upland along the northern slopes of the Alborz Mountains.

Neolithic, also called the New Stone Age, the final stage of cultural evolution or technological development among prehistoric humans. It was characterized by stone tools shaped by polishing or grinding, dependence on domesticated plants or animals, settlement in permanent villages, and the appearance of such crafts as pottery and weaving. The Neolithic followed the Paleolithic Period, or the age of chipped-stone tools, and preceded the Bronze Age, or early period of metal tools.

Russian Airlines to resume flights to Tehran after COVID-19 halt

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Russia’s flag carrier Russian Airlines, commonly known as Aeroflot, is scheduled to resume flights to the Iranian capital, Tehran, following months of suspension over the coronavirus outbreak.

As of November 18, Aeroflot plans to operate two weekly flights on Sundays and Wednesdays between Moscow’s Sheremetyevo Airport and Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Airport (IKA).

However, only passengers with a passport or residence in Russia are allowed to travel on these flights. They also need to carry a health certificate with a negative coronavirus PCR test result, issued at most 72 hours before the flights.

Over the past couple of months, many countries, including the Islamic Republic, imposed travel restrictions to help curb the spread of novel coronavirus. In this line, incoming and outgoing flights have been suspended, and road travels restricted to a great extent.

The pandemic has taken a huge toll on Iran’s civil aviation sector with reports showing that airlines lost hundreds of millions of dollars because of flight cancellations during the busy New Year travel season in late March.

■ **Visa waiver for group travelers at final stage**
In 2017, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his

Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin inked a visa-free agreement for tourist groups.

The action plan for the previously-reached visa-free travel for group tours between the two countries was finalized after Iranian, Russian experts exchanged views in a virtual meeting in early September.

Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts also announced that an Iranian delegation will soon visit Russia to ink the action plan.

Last February, Iran’s tourism ministry announced that it would follow up on the agreement at the [27th edition] Moscow International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (MITT), which was scheduled to be held from March 17 to 19.

Based on the 2017 agreement tour groups of 5 to 50 people heading to [easternmost parts of] Russia from Iran or vice versa are granted a visa-free stay of up to 15 days.

Maya Lomidze, executive director of the Association of Tour Operators of Russia, had told Sputnik that the visa agreement may significantly surge the tourist flows between the two countries, just like it happened when a similar deal was signed between Russia and China. The flow of Iranian tourists to Russia increased by 50-70 percent following the operation of direct flights that connect Iran to St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Sochi, she said.

Head of the Iranian Tour Operators Association Ibra-



him Pourfaraj said last year that a majority of potential Russian travelers are unaware of vast tourist attractions that exist in every corner of Iran. “The fact is that Iran’s political and economic relations with Russia are considered as good, but this has nothing to do with attracting tourists because it is directly connected with the Russian people. It is the Russian people who must choose Iran as their destination,” he explained.

Iran is taking proactive measures in line with the long-term goal of 20 million tourists by 2025. However, some officials believe the country is nowhere close to the point of reaching its full tourism potential and lagging far behind neighboring countries like Turkey.

Tourism projects to get off the ground in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Ten tourism-related projects, running by the private sector, are currently underway across the scenic and lesser-known province of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, southwest of the country.

The presence of private investors is a need for tourism development in the province, IRNA quoted provincial tourism chief Mehrdad Javadi as saying on Friday.

“A tourist village, a hotel, sport complexes, accommodation and hospitality units, eco-tourism residences, and a museum con-



stitute the development projects which are estimated to worth 5,727,800 billion rials

(about \$136 million), of which 654.8 billion rials (about \$15 million) has been spent so far,” the official noted.

“A minimum of 528 job opportunities will be directly generated when the cited project is fully implemented,” he said, adding that it adds at least 306 suites and rooms with 716 beds to the hospitality sector of the province.

Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari has various unique traditions and rituals relative to the ‘tribal’ lifestyles. Special forms of music, dance, and clothing are noteworthy. It has considerable potential to become a vibrant tourist

attraction because of its changing natural landscape. The province is also a hub for making wool felt products, majorly of which exported abroad. It is home to some 500 crafters, in over 250 workshops, making handmade felt products.

Currently, about 40 tons of felt are yearly being made in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari through traditional and modern manners, which could be increased to 50 tons, according to official data. Experts believe that Shahr-e Kord has the potential to be a world city for felt products.

800-year-old qanat to turn into national museum

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The 800-year-old Bahaeddin qanat (underground aqueduct) in the central city of Ardakan is planned to be repurposed into a national museum.

The project also aims at promoting water and qanat tourism as one of the main tourism branches in the region as well as transferring the knowledge of building qanats to the next generations, CHTN quoted Mohsen Mirjani, Ardakan’s tourism chief, as saying on Thursday.

For thousands of years, qanat systems have supplied water to agricultural and permanent settlements in arid regions of Iran, tapping alluvial aquifers at the heads of valleys and conducting the water along underground tunnels by gravity, often over many kilometers.

According to UNESCO, qanats provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas



with an arid climate.

The qanat system relies on snow-fed streams, which flow

down the foothills of surrounding mountains channeling through sloping aqueducts, often over far distances to discharge into the city’s underground reservoirs or ab-anbars. Such constructions are still in practice, many of which were made from the 13th century onwards.

The concept of “Persian Qanat” was registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2016, representing eleven aqueducts across Iran. According to the UN cultural body, the qanat provides exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.

Some 120,000 qanats are documented across Iran and nearly 37,000 of which are still in use in the country.

Ardakan lies on the margins of the central desert in Yazd province. Historical structures such as qanats, windmills, badgirs (wind towers), caravanserais, mosques, and mansions constitute parts of its attractions.

A brief history of Persian pottery

(Part 7/8)

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – The decorative scheme is reversed when the decoration is painted in white or light colors over a manganese-purple or tomato-red ground. Quite a number of these vessels are known today. They were excavated at several sites in Central Asia, Afghanistan, at Nishapur (modern Neyshabur, northeast Iran), Jorjan and even at Ghubayra in Kerman province.

Quite a different type, but an important group is the polychrome buff ware, decorated with human and animal figures, or rarely only with geometrical forms. The late Arthur Lane called this type of pottery “peasant ware” of Nishapur. This type of pottery was only produced in Nishapur, and was never imitated anywhere else in the world.

The decoration may give some indication of Samanid painting, of which we have only a few examples, namely the excavated wall frescoes of Nishapur. A sub-group of this polychrome buff ware was until recently known as “Sari ware”. This is decorated with walking birds, large flowers, and occasionally with Kufic epigraphic characters. The term “Sari” cannot be really accepted, since there is no evidence

of manufacture of such pottery in the city of Sari, but recently such wares and kilns have been excavated at Jorjan.

■ **Seljuq era (1037–1194)**

At the beginning of the 11th century CE a new dynasty, the Seljuqs came to Iran and unified the country under their rule. This period under Seljuq rule in Iran lasted for hardly more than one and a half centuries, yet it witnessed great progress in literature, philosophy, in architecture and in all fields of the Iranian arts. The Seljuqs became great patrons of the arts and their patronage made it possible for Iranian artists to revive their pre-Islamic traditions and develop new techniques in metalwork and in pottery.

The most important achievement in pottery production was the introduction of a new composite white frit material. This new white body made the application of alkaline glaze easier; the actual body of the vessels was considerably thinner, almost translucent. Thus potters had nearly achieved the fineness of imported Chinese Song porcelain which potters of the Near East greatly admired.

Another type, which has to be added to these, is the unglazed ware, which has also gone through considerable changes and re-

finement. It should also be noted, that while the Seljuqs were actually replaced by the Khwarizmshahian Dynasty towards the second half of the 12th century, artistically the same trend continued in the Greater Iran right up to the Mongol invasion.

■ **Il-Khanid period (1258-1334 CE)**

The Mongol invasions of 1220 and 1221 CE devastated large parts of Iran and in particular destroyed cities like Ray, Nishapur and Jorjan (old Gorgan), which previously were the most important centers of Iranian pottery. Kashan, although likewise destroyed by the Mongols, seemed to have quickly recovered and pottery production continued.

The Mongol governors, the Il-Khans, who ruled Iran on behalf of the Great Khan in Mongolia, soon separated themselves from the rest of the Empire and set up an independent dynasty. Their new capital was first at Maragheh and later at Tabriz in northwest Iran. They embraced Islam and assumed Iranian customs, culture and language.

However, recovery from the great devastation was rather slow. It was not until the end of the 13th century that new building projects were started. Rashid-al-Din Hamadani, the Persian prime minister of the Mongol Il-Khans

at the beginning of the 14th century, and also a scholar, was responsible among other cultural activities for the compilation of the famous Jami’ al-Tawarikh (Universal History) manuscript which was richly illustrated with miniature paintings and written in Persian and Arabic.

As far as known today, it was mainly Kashan that continued manufacturing lustre, underglaze and overglaze-painted wares, as has already been mentioned. Towards the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th century CE, however, new pottery centres emerged. One of these was in the northwest, probably at Takht-i Sulayman, where the Mongol Abaqa Khan (1265-1281 CE) built a palace for himself which as we have already seen was decorated with lustre and lajvardina tiles. Takht-i Sulayman, however, must have been connected with another major pottery producing area, namely the Soltanabad district (modern Arak), which included not only the town itself, but at least another twenty or thirty villages. Further south, Kerman became another centre and soon Mashhad pottery appears as well. Apart from these main centres there were several other, less significant, pottery producing areas, most of which haven’t yet been located.

40,000 foreign nationals are studying in 43 Iranian universities

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — While the issue of brain drain and academic migration has raised controversy within and outside Iran, it is undeniable that universities of the country are also host to many foreign national talents from the top universities worldwide.

Abdol-Hamid Alizadeh, deputy minister of science said that 40,000 foreign nationals are studying in 43 Iranian universities, 22,000 of whom are studying at the universities affiliated to the Ministry of Science, 8,000 at the Azad University, 3,000 at the Ministry of Health, and the rest at other universities.

So far, foreign students from 129 countries have come to Iran to study, he noted.

In Qom province, over 7,000 non-Iranian students are studying in 23 universities, institutes, and colleges.

Some 50 percent of these students are studying for a bachelor's degree and 16 percent of whom are educating to receive a Ph.D.

Iranian universities among world's top universities

In October, the Islamic World Science Citation Database (ISC) published the results of the ISC World University Rankings 2019, ranking 35 Iranian universities among the world's top 2,000 in various subjects.

Also, in September, Times Higher Education has published its annual ranking of the world's top universities for 2021, listing 47 Iranian universities, which shows an increase of 7 universities compared to the last year.

With a scientific growth rate of 10.4 percent in 2019, Iran ranked second among the



Some 40,000 foreign nationals are studying in 43 Iranian universities, 22,000 of whom are studying at the universities affiliated to the Ministry of Science, 8,000 at the Azad University, 3,000 at medical universities run by the Ministry of Health, and the rest at other universities.

top 25 countries in the world, next to China with a growth rate of 12.9 percent, according to the Web of Science website.

In 2000, Iran's share of scientific produc-

tivity was about 0.1 percent, which reached about 2 percent with a 20-fold increase in both Scopus and WoS citation databases.

According to statistics released by the

International Web of Science Database, Iran's citation rank has always been on the rise over the last eight years, from 24 in 2012 to 16 in 2019.

Iran ranks first in terms of the number of universities in the region and among Islamic countries, according to Shanghai Ranking's Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2020.

Two Iranian universities have been ranked among the top 100 universities in Asia, according to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities for July 2020.

Moreover, 7 Iranian universities have been listed among the best 1000 worldwide; including, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, Tarbiat Modares University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Isfahan University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology, came in 539th, 656th, 826th, 908th, 915th, 916th places, respectively, according to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities.

In June, THE Asia University Rankings 2020 ranked five Iranian universities among the top 100 universities worldwide.

The Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking has placed 36 Iranian universities in the list of over 1,000 major universities worldwide in 2020 compared with 26 universities in 2019.

Also, five Iranian universities have been placed among the world's top 1,000 universities announced by the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021.

Injecting homegrown COVID-19 vaccine to start by mid-June 2021

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The human injection of homegrown COVID-19 vaccine will be started in the Iranian calendar month of Khordad (May 22-June 21, 2021).

It is scheduled to start third phase of human injection in the Iranian calendar month of Ordibehst (April 21-May 21, 2021), and we will probably start phases one and two before the end of this [Iranian calendar] year (March 21, 2021), he stated.

Once the vaccine is made, it can be used by everyone, but it is noteworthy that no vaccine is 100 percent effective, as the flu vaccine is 60 percent effective or the tuberculosis vaccine is much less effective, he noted.

Referring to the price of the vaccine for Iranians, he said that "Chinese vaccine with the lowest price will be about \$12, but the homegrown vaccine will cost about \$7."

Iraj Harirchi, the deputy minister of health said that in Iran, 12 groups are making efforts to develop coronavirus

vaccine, three of which have passed the animal testing.

Last week, Health Minister Saeed Namaki expressed hope that the country will introduce the home-grown COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2021).

Due to the high prevalence of the disease, the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control has approved to impose strict restrictions for 10 days as of Wednesday in 46 cities that have the highest rate of COVID-19 infection in the country.

Officials at the Medical Council have written a letter to President Hassan Rouhani that the deplorable condition of the pandemic in the country, and rising number of mortalities and new cases, requires a more serious review of the management methods of this crisis.

COVID-19 cases, toll at high record

In a press briefing on Friday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 11,737 new cases of

COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 738,322. She added that 546,642 patients have so far recovered, but 5,630 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, coronavirus daily deaths and new cases hit the record high, as 461 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 40,582, she added.

Lari noted that so far 5,424,479 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-Boyerahmad, 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.

\$2m spent daily for school renovation over 3 years

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Some 85 billion rials (nearly \$2 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been spent on average per day for renovating schools nationwide over the past three years, Education Minister Mohsen Haji Mirzaei has said.

Referring to the opening of educational, and welfare projects in 31 provinces and 338 cities, he announced that by the next seven months, 2,000 classrooms will be launched across the country.

President Hassan Rouhani officially inaugurated some 1,550 educational, training, and welfare projects across the country on Thursday via video conferencing.

The projects include 1,422 educational places with 8,051 classrooms, 124 training centers, and 4 welfare centers, measuring a

total of 1.1 million square meters.

A sum of 360 trillion rials (nearly \$8.5 billion) have been spent in this regard, the report added, highlighting that about 70 percent of the funds have been provided by the school renovation organization and the rest by school-building benefactors.

Some 500,000 students and 30,000 teachers will benefit from newly built educational spaces, he highlighted.

More than 15,000 educational, training, and sports spaces with 74,000 classrooms equivalent to 10 million square meters have been put into operation over the past eight years, he noted, adding, over the same period, 230,000 classrooms have been secured by replacing standard systems.

Mehroллаh Rakhshanimehr, director of the Organization for Development, Reno-

vation, and Equipping, said in August that some 30 percent of the country's schools have been constructed by school-building benefactors; there are 450 school-building charities in Iran.

In line with the education reform plan, people who have a popular reputation are being invited as ambassadors to attract public participation for school construction even by buying a brick.

Iran has many school-building benefactors amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country.

There are some 107,000 schools nationwide with 530,000 classes, 160,000 of which are dilapidated, not meeting safety standards. Some 30 percent of the schools nationwide are old, of which some 12 percent must be completely rebuilt and 18



percent must be retrofitted.

The organization for renovation, development, and equipment of schools started operating in the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), which received a budget of 8.5 trillion rials (about \$200 million).

Ultimate altruism: Iranian teacher fighting COVID-19 passes away while teaching on hospital bed

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Maryam Arbabi, one of the committed teachers of Garmeh city in North Khorasan province, who was teaching on the hospital bed passed away after days of fighting coronavirus.



Worked for 22 years, Arbabi was a primary school teacher in Garmeh, who despite her illness and hospitalization in the intensive care unit and acute respiratory condition, did not stop teaching the students even in the last moments of her life.

A photo of this compassionate teacher on a hospital bed while teaching has become viral among social media users in the country these days.

All educational centers in Iran were closed in late February due to the coronavirus pandemic, but for students to keep in touch with their studies, the Ministry of Education launched a homegrown mobile application on April 9, called SHAD, providing students with distance learning programs.

Meanwhile, the third wave of the pandemic has just flared up in the country, as the new cases of coronavirus in Iran hit an all-time high. So, the officials decided to increase the restrictions and stick to e-learning schools.

COVID-19 toll surpasses 40,000

In a press briefing on Friday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 11,737 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 738,322. She added that 546,642 patients have so far recovered, but 5,630 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, coronavirus daily deaths and new cases hit the record high, as 461 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 40,582, she added.

Lari noted that so far 5,424,479 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-Boyerahmad, 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.

Tehran to celebrate Global Entrepreneurship Week 2020

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The largest coordinated event to promote entrepreneurship in the world, Global Entrepreneurship week, will be held in Tehran on November 16-22 for the seventh consecutive year.

Launched in 2008, Global Entrepreneurship Week is a collection of tens of thousands of activities, competitions, and events in over 170 countries each November aimed at making it easier for anyone, anywhere to start and scale a company.

Due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and the "change in human habits and lifestyles" this year, digital and online activities have become increasingly important and have led many businesses to invest more in this area.

Therefore, these conditions can be seen as a platform for the development of communication and cooperation of all entrepreneurs in addition to promoting entrepreneurship on a global scale.

Iran also joined the global event by holding six successful courses, 400 programs, and 12 participants.

This year, the University of Tehran Kish International Campus and the Iran Entrepreneurship Clinic will host the event for the seventh year under the slogan "learning during the coronavirus pandemic" with a focus on internationalizing businesses.

The event includes specialized webinars on business and entrepreneurship, online interviews with influential smart business owners, specialized panels with managers and entrepreneurs of the country and famous and prominent figures (in the economy and digital transformation, medicine, biotechnology, tourism, social responsibility, art, etc.), Entrepreneurship Olympiad (among students).

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 56)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

■ جمع اسم (۲) ← کتاب کار ■

جمع با "ان": پدران، مادران، آقایان، دانشجویان ← ص ۱۰۵

جمع با "ها": مادها، کتابها، پدرها، مادرها ← ص ۱۰۵

Names of relatives and some others take only ها for the plural:

عموها، عمّها، دایها، خاله‌ها، پسرعموها، پدربزرگ‌ها، خانه‌دارها

Arabic plurals ending in ات /āt/ and Arabic broken plurals

are common in Persian. Many of them have Persian plurals, too:

حال ← آحوال

تمرین ← تمرین‌ها، تمرینات

کلمه ← کلمه‌ها، کلمات

● تمرین ۱. جمع‌های کلمات زیر را بنویسید:

۱. استاد کلاس

۲. زبان پسر

۳. درس دختر

۴. خانه‌دار خانه

۵. کشور غلط

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ج

Education, labor ministries ink MOU on out-of-school children

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare have signed a memorandum of understanding aiming to bring out-of-school children back to school.

The memorandum of understanding will pave the way for future steps, ISNA news agency quoted Education Minister Mohammad Bat'haei as saying on Sunday.

He made the remarks over the 8th session of council meeting for improving educational standards in underprivileged and underdeveloped areas at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. "The meeting is aiming to live up to educational standards, however, the current conditions are unjustifiable, and we should move faster," he added.

تفاهم وزراء برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل به مدارس

وزارت آموزش و پرورش تفاهم نامه مشترکی با وزارت رفاه برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل امضا کردند. به گزارش روز یکشنبه ایسنا، محمد بطحایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش گفت: امروز تفاهم نامه‌ای امضا می‌شود که نقشه کار برای ادامه مسیر کاملاً مشخص شود.

بطحایی در هشتمین جلسه شورای هماهنگی بهبود و ارتقای شاخص‌های آموزشی و پرورشی مناطق محروم و کمتر توسعه یافته که در وزارت رفاه برگزار شد گفت: هدف اصلی این برنامه و شورای هماهنگی ارتقای شاخص‌ها بود، هرچند این روند قابل قبول نیست و باید با سرعت بیشتری حرکت کنیم.

Book on characteristics of Commander Soleimani published

CULTURE TEHRAN — A book giving a brief analysis of the personal characteristics of Commander Qassem Soleimani through his discourses and memories has recently been published. The book titled "Characteristics of the School of Martyr Soleimani" was introduced during a meeting at the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO) on Wednesday evening.

Writer Hojjatollesalm Ali Shirazi, the officials of Khate Moqaddam Publications, IIDO director Hojjatollesalm Mohammad Qomi and several number cultural and military figures attended the ceremony.

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

Shirazi was a close friend of Soleimani and has tried to write the book based on words, memoirs and thoughts of the commander.



IIDO director Hojjatollesalm Mohammad Qomi (L), IRGC deputy commander Ali Fadavi (C) and writer Hojjatollesalm Ali Shirazi attend the unveiling ceremony of the book "Characteristics of the School of Martyr Soleimani" at the Art Bureau in Tehran on November 11, 2020. (Mehr/Pantea Nikzad)

"To explain about the school of Martyr Soleimani, we need to know the school of Islam first," Shirazi wrote in a preface to the book.

"Next, we should go after the school of the Prophet Muhammad (S) and the Imams and learn more about the school of Imam Hussein (AS). That is the time the characteristics of school of Imam Khomeini are clarified, and with the knowledge about the school of Imam Khomeini, the characteristics of the school of Martyr Soleimani are explained," he added.

However, to explain all these are not possible in the book, and the writer has tried to give a glance at the school of Islam and Imam Hussein (AS), and explain more about the school of Imam Khomeini, and compare them with those of Martyr Soleimani.

The book contains only part of the characteristics of the school of Soleimani followed by the words of the martyr and others' points of views.

Cultural center to run panel discussions for Iran Book Week online



A poster for the 28th Iran Book Week.

→1 "Women's Role in Producing Books and Promoting Reading" is another important meeting, which will be held by experts Elham Malekzadeh and Mahtab Mardfard.

The development of the Persian language in the world and ways to better introduce Iran will be discussed in a session on Monday by Rezamorad Sahrai, Ayyub Dehqankar, Shahrzad Falahatpisheh and Masud Hassani in collaboration with the Sadi Foundation, Iran's organization that promotes the Persian language abroad.

Mohammad Samiei, Ruhollah Hosseini and Ahmad Shakeri of the Faculty of World Studies at the University of Tehran will scrutinize the reading culture in Iran in a comparative study.

On Tuesday, a collection of the latest offerings by writers from Iran's religious minorities will be unveiled in an online live program. Artuit Zahraian, Behnam Mobarakeh, Farzaneh Goshtasb, Dinaz Dehadi and Arsh Abai will review a number of books.

Another significant meeting set for the last day of the Iran Book Week will study the socio-cultural impacts of the

COVID-19 pandemic.

The Iran Book Week begins every year on the 24th of Aban, which has been designated as the Book and Reading Day on the Iranian calendar.

Earlier last week, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance announced seven themes to be discussed during the 28th Iran Book Week, which will be held from November 14 to 20 with the motto "Knowledge; Eternity".

Among the themes are "Books, Library, Librarian, Book Capital", "Books, Socialization with Reading Promoters" and "Books, Knowledge and Ability".

"Books, Lifestyle and Safe Society", "Books, Social Asset and Virtual Space", "Dynamism with Books and Bookstores" and "Books, Religious Belief and Self-Improvement" are other themes of the book week.

The 7th edition of the Reading Promoters Awards is part of the programs arranged to be implemented during the event.

In addition, top Iranian translators will be awarded during the National Celebration of Translators.

Resistance festival announces lineup for Basiji Filmmakers competition

A R T TEHRAN — The 16th Resistance International Film Festival on Thursday announced the lineup for the Basiji Filmmakers competition.

Dozens of telefilms, music videos, and short, animated and documentary films will be screened in this section dedicated to Basij (mobilized volunteers) forces.

"Let's Stay at Home" by Ramin Mollamohammadi, "The Last Soldier" by Mohammad-Hassan Mortazavi, "The Divine Father" by Davud Heidari are among the animated movies selected to be screened in the section.

Among the telefilms are "Songs of the Wind" by



A poster for the Basiji Filmmakers competition at the 16th Resistance International Film Festival.

Resistance Theater Festival unveils official lineup

A R T TEHRAN — Twenty-five plays will be performed during the 17th Resistance Theater Festival in Tehran as the organizers unveiled the official lineup on Thursday.

One of the highlights of the lineup is "The Memories of the House that No Longer Exists" that Amin Ashrafi will direct based on a play by Kamran Shahlaei.

"We Had Come Here to Die" will be staged by Maryam Mansuri, and Manuchahr Akbarlu will direct "One Frame, Thousand Memories".

"The Song of the Sad Stone" by Pedram Rahmani, "Standing like a Cypress to Watch the Sun" written by Hashem Purmohammadi and "The Place Where the Wind Carries Us" by Mohammad-Sadeq Alipour will be staged.

Due to a spike in the number of coronavirus cases, the 17th Resistance Theater Festival will go online during December, the director of the festival, Hamid Nili, said earlier last week.

The street theater performances will



A poster for the 17th Resistance Theater Festival.

be held in open spaces with the audiences observing health protocols, he said.

The Association of the Revolution and Sacred Defense Theater organizes the festival every year in collaboration with several other institutions.

The organizers have established an award named after Commander Qassem Soleimani.

Ten children's plays have also been selected to be staged during the festival in a special program.

"Botox", "Extra Sauce" to compete in Torino Film Festival

A R T TEHRAN — "Botox" and "Extra Sauce", two films by Iranian directors, will go on screen at the 38th edition of the Torino Film Festival, which will take place in the Italian city of Turin from November 20 to 28.

"Botox", a co-production between Iran and Canada, by Kaveh Mazaheri is about sisters Akram and Azar. Both lie about their brother's disappearance, telling everyone he fled to Germany. Day after day, the lie becomes bigger and more unmanageable, leading everyone to a dark and mysterious destiny.

Mazaheri is the director of "Funfair", a short film that won the Best Non-European Independent Dramatic Short Award at the 15th edition of the European Independent Film Festival (ECU) in April.

"Funfair" is about Majid, a young, financially struggling man who comes up with a ploy in order to better the life of his wife Sarah.

Directed by Alireza Qasemi, the short "Extra Sauce" is a

co-production between Iran and Germany. It is about Hans, a mediocre, heartbroken actor, who is greeted by an Angel of Death after attempting suicide an hour before his play's premiere. A sarcastic conversation begins as Hans tries to convince the angel that he should be brought back to the world of the living while the angel enjoys delicious cheeseburgers and lemonade, and gives the actor relationship advice.

The film won the best screenplay award at the 23rd Canberra Short Film Festival last year. German actors Antonio Lallo and Ben Janssen shared the best actor award for their roles in the movie.

Qasemi is also the director of "Better than Neil Armstrong", which scored a big success at the Southport International Short Film Festival in England in June.

The awards for best film and best drama went to the movie. The film also brought Qasemi the Best Live Action Short Film Director's Award at the 18th Pune International Film Festival in India during January.

The sci-fi "Better than Neil Armstrong" is about four



A scene from "Botox" by Kaveh Mazaheri.

kids who start their journey to the Moon with the mission of finding a mysterious place called "Redland", but the gates of the place are being guarded by a mischievous snake.

Iranian movies honored at Milano Intl. FICTS Festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian movies "Beyond the Fence", "Tsunami" and "My Dear Bahman" were honored at the 38th Milano International FICTS Festival, which is dedicated to sports movies.

"Beyond the Fence" by Arman Qolipour received the Guirlande d'Honneur, while "Tsunami" by Milad Sadr-Ameli and "My Dear Bahman" by Mostafa Purmohammadi received honorable mentions, the organizers have announced.

"Beyond the Fence" by Arman Qolipour is about Behnaz who is a really talented football player. Her dream is to play for the Iranian football team and play in the best European leagues.

"Tsunami" is about Iranian taekwondo competitor Morteza Nejadi who agrees to be defeated in the 2002 Olympics due to some political reasons, and then he loses everything in his personal and professional life. After eight years, he is called back for another try on the national team, but

he must face a stubborn, young world champion named Behdad Moqimi who is also known as "Tsunami". But there is turmoil in his personal life, too.

"My Dear Bahman" is a portrait of the life and death of Iranian Paralympic cyclist Bahman Golbarnejad, who lost his life in an accident during the tournament in the Paralympic Rio 2016.

In the first part of the documentary, Ali imitates his father and narrates Bahman's early life in Abadan and Shiraz, where they moved after the

Iran-Iraq war. Later on, he refuses to act as his father and narrates his father's life as his son.

Several Iranian movies were screened during the festival, which took place in the Italian city of Milan from November 7 to 11.

The Federation Internationale Cinema Television Sportifs (FICTS) is the organizer of the event, which was the final phase of the World FICTS Challenge that runs in 16 countries around the world including Iran.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The best among you is the one who doesn't harm others with his tongue and hands.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

■ Yalda Jamali is displaying her latest paintings in an exhibition titled "Meliorism" at Shirin Gallery 2.

Shirin Gallery 1 is also hanging paintings by Marzieh Qasempur in an exhibition named "Revolving Play".

Both exhibits will run until November 24 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ Paintings by Marzieh Baqeri are currently on view in an exhibition at the Tarrahan-e Azad Gallery. The exhibition entitled "Middle of Common Gathering" will continue until November 24 at the gallery located at No. 41 Salmas Square off Fatemi St.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Javad Modarresi is currently underway at Asar Gallery. The exhibit named "Paradox III" will run until December 11 at the gallery located at No. 16 Barforushan St., Iranshahr St.

■ Shokuh Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Reyahaneh Bolandqbal. The exhibit will continue until November 25 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. near Andarzgu Blvd.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Zahra Qiasi is currently underway at Mohsen Gallery. The exhibit named "Locus" will be running until December 2 at the gallery located at 42 East Mina Blvd., Naji St., off Zafar St.

■ Saye Gallery is currently hosting an exhibition of paintings by M. H. Novin named "Textural". The exhibit will continue until November 25 at the gallery that can be found at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.

Watercolor

■ An exhibition of watercolors by Leila Bakhtiarirad is currently underway at the Atashzad Gallery. The exhibit titled "The Colors Are Beyond the Nature" will run until November 17 at the gallery located at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

Sculpture

■ Shahrokh Faryusefi is showcasing his latest collection of sculptures in an exhibition at Negar Gallery. The exhibition named "Shahrokh & Shakho" will continue until November 24 at the gallery located at 154 near Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Blvd.

Drawing/collage

■ Maryam Majd is displaying her latest drawings and collages in an exhibition at O Gallery. The exhibit will run until November 30 at the gallery located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.

Calligraphic painting

■ Gholam-Hossein Farrokhnasab is hanging his latest collection of calligraphic paintings in an exhibition at Seyhun Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Read as You Know" runs until November 24 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.

Multimedia

■ An exhibition of artworks in various media by Mojtaba Yadollahi, Marjan Nikjah, Maedeh Fekri, Mahmud Rezaei and several other artists is underway at Ehsan Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Fusion" will run until November 17 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

