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Biden could face a bumpy road toward reviving the Iran deal

Certain countries undermined political settlement of Syria, Zarif laments

TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that some countries made efforts to undermine the political settlement of Syria’s crisis without naming them.

The foreign minister made the remarks during a meeting with United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen on the latest developments related to the Syria crisis.

In a statement on Sunday, Iran’s Foreign Ministry said that in the meeting the top Iranian diplomat touched upon attempts by certain countries to undermine the trend of the political settlement of Syria issues.

“Good opportunities emerged in recent years to end the Syria crisis, but each time we saw some countries try to neutralize the attempts made and to ruin those chances,” the statement quoted Zarif as saying.

The Iranian foreign minister also highlighted the necessity of lifting cruel and unfair sanctions against the Syrian government and people, particularly amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Pedersen, in turn, presented a report on the latest status of the Syrian Constitutional Committee as well as his efforts for the committee to hold its next meeting.

According to the statement, Pederson referred to Iran-UN cooperation in resolving the decade-long Syria crisis, stressing the importance of Iran’s role in that trend.

The UN Syria envoy has held extensive talks with many countries in recent weeks. In a briefing to the UN Security Council in late October, Pederson vowed to deepen his dialogue with Syrian opposing sides and key players in the region.

“I will seek to deepen my dialogue with the Syria parties and key players in the months ahead in reviewing where we stand on resolution 2254, seeking to identify how best to develop a wider process,” the UN envoy told the Security Council on October 27. In the ensuing weeks, he traveled to Turkey, Egypt, and Russia.

Pederson described his talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov as “constructive and comprehensive.”

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COVID-19 takes lowest toll on foreign nationals in Iran: official

TEHRAN – Iran had the lowest coronavirus cases and mortality among refugees and foreign nationals compared to the population it is hosting. Mehdi Mahmoudi, the director for foreign nationals and immigrants at the Ministry of Interior, has said.

Referring to the measures taken for non-Iranian citizens during the pandemic, he said that since the very beginning, when the country became infected with the disease, the community of foreign nationals in our country was no exception to this issue, and prevention programs and necessary measures have been taken for this group.

“We identified foreign nationals in need and tried to provide them with livelihood assistance, as well as health packages and self-protective items needed to prevent the infection,” he explained.

He added that every year about 800,000 illegal foreign nationals are arrested and deported.

Hossein Zolfaghari, deputy minister of interior for security and law enforcement, announced in September that some 672,000 foreign nationals illegally residing in Iran are expelled annually from the country in the interest of national security.

“We provide various services to foreign nationals in the country, especially in the field of healthcare and medical services, skills training, employment, livelihood, and unexpected events,” he stated.

He went on to highlight that about 850,000 of them are allowed to reside in Iran as displaced, however, the average annual international aid is \$30 million, which is less than 10 percent of the expenses of this number of people.

There are 40,000 Afghan students in the country, according to the official report, 17,000 of them are graduated, he explained.

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U.S. protests: Militia activists march armed through Richmond, Virginia

Militia activists held an armed march throughout Richmond, Virginia to defy new local laws that ban firearms at protests and magazines holding 20 rounds or more.

Many demonstrators, opposed to proposed gun restrictions, openly displayed military-style semiautomatic rifles. Other wore orange “Guns save lives” stickers as the crowd chanted “USA” and sang the national anthem. Signs read “Come and take it” and “Second Amendment Sanctuary.”

But despite warnings from Gov. Ralph Northam and law enforcement that out-of-state hate groups and militias may incite violence, the protest did not grow heated. Police estimated the size of the crowd at 22,000 – including 6,000 people inside Capitol Square – and only one arrest was reported.

Police said Mikaela E. Beschler, 21, of Richmond, was charged with one felony count of wearing a mask in public after being warned

twice before against wearing a bandanna covering her face. Beschler was released on her recognizance, USA Today reported.

Earlier, a heavy police presence greeted rally goers calmly lining up to enter the state Capitol, where they had to pass through a security checkpoint.

Connie Stanley, 58, from Aylett, came to the rally with a group of women. She sees owning a gun and the Second Amendment as a security issue. She said where she lives, it could take police too long to respond if she calls 911.

“As a woman, I feel like it’s about protection,” she said.

Northam declared a state of emergency Friday through Tuesday, banning all weapons, including firearms, in the square around the Capitol building. He said law enforcement received “credible” threats of violence from out-of-state hate groups and militias.

Missile program is not negotiable: MP

TEHRAN – Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, a member of the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on Saturday that Iran’s missile capability is not negotiable.

“Iran’s missile and defense capability are not negotiable at all,” Abbaszadeh Meshkini told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA).

The lawmaker added that Tehran will never allow new issues to be included in the 2015

nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Abbaszadeh Meshkini was responding to Elliott Abrams, the U.S. special representative for Iran, who recently said that Washington’s European allies are willing to go beyond the JCPOA and address Iran’s missile program as well as its regional influence.

Abrams has told Asharq Al-Awsat that Washington’s European allies may want the United

States to return to the JCPOA, but they themselves want to go beyond this deal. He claimed that it is clear that the Europeans want to address Iran’s missile program and its regional influence, and they also want to extend the JCPOA’s sunset clauses for more years.

Abbaszadeh Meshkini pointed out that the Europeans signed eleven commitments under the terms of the JCPOA, but did not fulfill any of them.

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UNESCO-registered Persepolis digitizing documents

TEHRAN – Thousands of historical documents of the UNESCO-tagged site of Persepolis, dating back from the 1930s to the present day, are being classified and digitized.

Also known as Takht-e Jamshid, Persepolis in southern Fars province, was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC).

The documents include administrative correspondence, maps, photos, slides, reports, and videos of several excavations, preservation and restoration projects as well as scientific researches being held in the site for over 90 years, CHTN quoted Hamid Fadaei, the director of the site, as saying on Saturday.

The project aims at maintaining and protecting documents, providing easy access to documents for scientists, scholars, students, and history buffs as well as passing this important cultural heritage to the next generations, the official added.

He also noted that due to the need to classify and store this vital information in a data bank, digitizing the documents has been a project pursued for many years, and now most of the paper maps are scanned and digitized and are ready to be submitted in the data bank.

In October, a center for paleography and studying historical inscriptions with the aim of continuing current studies and researches as well as obtaining important and effective information from various historical eras was launched at the site.

Back in July, a documentation project was commenced on the inscriptions in Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam, aimed at documenting all the written works from the Achaemenid-era to the contemporary era, which are unique in terms of linguistics.

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Iranian voice actor Changiz Jalilvand dies of COVID-19

TEHRAN – Changiz Jalilvand, the Iranian voice actor who lent his voice to Marlon Brando and Paul Newman in many acclaimed movies dubbed for Persian audiences, died of COVID-19 in a Tehran hospital on Sunday.

He tested positive and was hospitalized on Friday, his close friend Abbas Yari, who is an editor of the Film Monthly magazine, said after announcing the death of the artist on his Instagram.

The 80-year-old voice actor began his artistic career with theater along with Abolhassan Tahami, who is also famous for his long career in voice acting.

He left the country after the Islamic Revolution and lived in America for about 20 years, however, he returned home and began his voice acting career in 1999.

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Envoy pledges Iran's full support for Yemeni people

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ambassador to Sana'a, Hassan Irlou, has highlighted the Islamic Republic's full support for the Yemeni people, saying Iran is determined to develop its ties with the Arab country.

Iran will spare no effort to support the Yemeni people and transfer experiences in all fields, Irlou said on Saturday, Fars reported.

The ambassador made the remarks in a meeting with Speaker of the House of Representatives of Yemen Yahya Ali al-Raei.



He pointed to granting of more scholarship to Yemeni students in all fields and promised to develop bilateral relations in various fields.

Yahya Ali al-Raei, for his part, appreciated Iran's role in supporting the Yemeni people and standing by the country against the aggressors, stressing that his nation will never forget Iran's honorable position.

In a tweet on Thursday, Irlou had strongly deplored the Saudi regime for 6 years of aggression against the Yemeni people and destruction of the infrastructures of the country, emphasizing that

the country's people will stand steadfastly against the aggressive and criminal Saudi regime till gaining victory.

Irlou has recently been appointed as Iran's ambassador to Yemen. On November 4, he submitted his credentials to Mahdi al-Mashat, the president of the Supreme Political Council of Yemen.

The appointment of Irlou sparked a wave of speculation among some regional players who have seen the appointment of the new ambassador as a step toward strengthening ties between Tehran and Sana'a.

"The [Iranian] ambassador's return [to Yemen] posed a strong challenge to them that they could not justify, but rather failed to do so," the ambassador said of these players without naming them.

He added, "They are trying, through their media, to strip the ambassador of his diplomatic status. They use disinformation and lies, and they say that Sana'a is Iran's tool."

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has elaborated on the appointment of Irlou, saying Iran has already had an embassy in the Yemeni capital, and Iran has appointed a new ambassador to Yemen because Iran's former ambassador there had become sick.

"Relations between Iran and Yemen are good and strategic. The Iranian embassy was located in Sana'a, although it was not possible to travel for a while, but we had an ambassador in Sana'a," the chief Iranian diplomat said on November 3.

S. Arabia says should be 'partner' on any nuclear deal with Iran

Saudi Arabia says it should be a part of any potential negotiations between the incoming U.S. administration and Iran on a new nuclear deal, Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud told CNBC on Saturday.

Al-Saud says Saudi Arabia seeks to partner with the U.S. administration on a potential new agreement, which would not only limit Iran's nuclear activities but also seek to address what he called "regional malign activity".

Iran's Foreign Minister Zarif has insisted that "under no circumstances" would Tehran consider renegotiating the terms of the nuclear deal which was adopted as a UN Security Council resolution.

"If we wanted to do that [renegotiate], we would have done it with President Trump four years ago," Zarif told CBS News earlier this month.

Al-Saud added such an accord could be labeled the "JCPOA++".

The JCPOA, or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is a 2015 agreement between Iran and world powers which limited the country's nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. The original agreement was signed by the five permanent members of the United Nations' Security Council — China, France, Russia, the U.K. and the U.S., plus Germany.

President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the JCPOA in 2018, calling it the "worst deal in history." Since then, his administration has placed crushing sanctions on Iran, dubbed the "maximum pressure campaign."

Other signatories to the 2015 accord have stood by the agreement, but there is talk that a renegotiated pact could be on the cards, with more pressure on Iran over missile programs and other regional issues. A new agreement has been touted as a "JCPOA+" — that is, like the original deal but with more conditions attached.

Such an agreement could go even further, Al-Saud says, saying that a "JCPOA++" deal could also seek to address Iran's reported "arming of militias, whether it's the Houthis in Yemen, or certain groups in Iraq or in Syria, or Lebanon, and even beyond."

"And, of course, its ballistic missile programs and other arms programs, which (it) continues to use to spread havoc around the region," Al-Saud added.

Saudi's foreign minister emphasized the long-standing partnership his country has with the United States and that he would work with any administration. Al-Saud reiterated, however, that should the incoming president wish to re-engage with Iran, Saudi Arabia should be a "partner in those discussions."

"The issue with Iran is the fact that it continues to believe in imposing its will in the region on exporting its revolution to its neighbors and beyond, and we need to address that," he claimed, speaking to CNBC from NEOM, a megaproject and new planned city on Saudi Arabia's northwest Red Sea coast. Saudi Arabia is hosting world leaders, virtually, at the Group of 20 (G-20) summit in Riyadh this weekend.

Trump leaned into Persian Gulf Arab allies Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates during his tenure, while his predecessor, Barack Obama, sought to normalize relations with Iran and create the nuclear deal. Trump's exit from the JCPOA was applauded by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and was widely seen as a shift in U.S. policy in the region.

The U.S. attitude toward Iran could change with an incoming administration, however. President-elect Joe Biden hopes to re-engage with Iran once in the White House and rejoining the nuclear agreement is a top priority for his incoming administration. The Trump administration is set to sanction Iran further as his presidency comes to an end, which could make Biden's rapprochement with Iran more challenging.

Meanwhile, the new administration's relationship with Saudi Arabia could be harder to predict.

Biden has criticized human rights violations by Saudi Arabia and has said he would re-assess ties with the kingdom, having threatened in 2019 to stop arms sales to the nation and to make them, what he described, "the pariah that they are."

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

Top MP warns against 'rolling out red carpet' for Biden

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Head of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has lamented the Rouhani administration's joyfulness over the victory of Joe Biden in the U.S. presidential election.

"Unfortunately, some government officials are rolling out the red carpet for the enemy, while they should focus on receiving concessions from the other side," Mojtaba Zonnour said in an open session of the parliament on Sunday, Mehr reported.

Addressing President Hassan Rouhani, Zonnour said the outcome of the U.S. presidential election is not finalized yet.

He warned Rouhani that showing weakness against the enemy would pave the way for them to push for concessions.

"No one in this Majlis (parliament) is against the lifting of sanctions but the issue is that you should engage from a position of power, so that the people's rights would not be undermined," said the senior MP.

Tensions soared between Tehran and Washington since U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal on May 8, 2018. The U.S. president not only exited the deal but has since targeted Iran with a series of harsh economic bans. Trump has called the sanctions his "maximum pressure" campaign aimed at forcing Iran to renegotiate the nuclear deal.

Biden has signaled that if he becomes president his administration would try to renegotiate the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was struck when he was vice president.



Zarif, on the other hand, has insisted that "under no circumstances" would Tehran consider renegotiating the terms of the deal which was adopted as a UN Security Council Resolution.

"If we wanted to do that [renegotiate], we would have done it with President Trump four years ago," Zarif told CBS News earlier this month.

In its latest round of sanctions, the U.S.

Treasury Department blacklisted the Mostafazan Foundation of Islamic Revolution, a large charitable organization for the poor and the disabled.

The sanctions, announced on Wednesday, also target Parviz Fattah, the head of the foundation, and 50 of its subsidiaries in sectors such as energy, mining, logistics, information technology, and financial services.

"No one in this Majlis (parliament) is against the lifting of sanctions but the issue is that you should engage from a position of power, so that the people's rights would not be undermined."

Tehran slams Germany for warning dual citizens against traveling to Iran

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has criticized Germany for advising dual citizens to avoid traveling to Iran as the country does not recognize dual citizenship.

"All Iranian citizens enjoy the same immunities, rights and responsibilities," Khatibzadeh said on Sunday at a press conference.

"The fact that the German government has been involved in taking Iranian citizens as hostage and has arrested Iranian individuals at that country's airports on bogus excuses cannot be a basis to level such accusations against Iran," he said.

The Foreign Ministry of Germany has recently advised Iranian-German citizens to avoid unnecessary travel to Iran. According to reports, the ministry's statement has mentioned the arrests of dual citizens and the coronavirus situation in Iran as the reason for this warning.

Mentioning the arrested Iranian-German dual citizens in Iran, the ministry reminded citizens that the Islamic Republic does not recognize dual citizenship.

Spokesman Khatibzadeh said, "In spite of all of the commitments of that country, the government that has violated diplomatic treaties is the German government."

"They have played an effective role in the arrest of an Iranian diplomat in violation of all international treaties," the spokesman added.

Assadollah Assadi, an Iranian diplomat in Austria, was arrested in Germany in June 2018 on the false charges of

being linked to a bomb attack plot in the French capital, Paris.

Belgian authorities said that Assadi had been arrested along with a 38-year-old man and a 33-year-old woman, suspected of plotting a bomb attack on a meeting of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) in Paris, which was attended by the U.S. president's lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, and several former European and Arab ministers.

Khatibzadeh reminded German authorities that they should pay attention to their responsibilities instead of accusing others.

"Annually, millions of Iranians who reside in other countries travel to Iran and return to those countries without facing any problems," Khatibzadeh explained.

"Of course, all Iranians are responsible in the face of law and the crocodile tears of some European governments, which are involved in many human rights violations and are accomplices, are not acceptable for us," the spokesman added.

Earlier this month, a group of Iranian lawyers gathered in front of the UN office in Tehran in support of Assadi.

They also issued a statement, which was signed by at least 1,842 lawyers, law experts, and university professors, according to IRNA.

In their statement, Iranian lawyers protested against the measure taken by Germany and Belgium which was against diplomatic norms.

They urged the UN to hold responsible the countries involved with regard to violating the Vienna Convention



on diplomatic immunity.

Khatibzadeh has categorically ruled out the unfounded allegations against the Iranian diplomat.

He has stated that the countries involved in the case are accountable for violating the diplomatic rights of Iran's diplomat.

Iran regards the detention of Assadi as an unlawful act and a violation of international law and the provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention.

Tehran has formally protested to the authorities of the relevant European governments over the unlawful act against the Iranian diplomat.

Rouhani reaffirms Iran's support for Lebanon

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Sunday congratulated the Lebanese people and government on their country's Independence Day, reaffirming the Islamic Republic's support for Lebanon.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will stand beside the people and government of Lebanon like before," Rouhani said in a message to Lebanon's President



Michel Aoun, IRNA reported.

He referred to the tough days that Lebanon experienced in 2020, saying the Lebanese people emerged victorious through perseverance and resistance and under the guidance of their wise leaders.

The president added Lebanon proved to the world that it keeps to the path to dignity, independence and progress

under the leadership of President Aoun and that rapport and cooperation among various political groups would go on.

He further underlined that the Islamic Republic is prepared for the promotion of cooperation in all fields.

November 22 marks the Lebanese Independence Day and is celebrated in remembrance of the liberation from the French Mandate.

Zarif's trip to Moscow, Baku postponed

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's planned trips to Russia and the Azerbaijan Republic have been postponed to a later date, according to Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman.

In a statement on Saturday, Saeed Khatibzadeh said the trips, which were planned for the coming days, have been postponed because of the Iranian cabinet's extraordinary plan to hold meetings both in the morning and in the afternoon within the coming days to discuss the country's budget.

According to the spokesman, all cabinet members and ministers must attend these meetings and sessions.

Khatibzadeh announced in a tweet on Thursday that Zarif will be visiting Moscow and Baku on Monday and Tuesday to discuss a variety of bilateral and regional issues such as the crisis in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

"The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran will pay a visit to Russia and Azerbaijan on Monday and Tuesday next week, November 23-24, with the aim of holding talks with the regional parties. Nagorno-Karabakh and the latest developments in the region, as well as bilateral issues, are on the agenda," he wrote.

Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova



va also announced on Thursday that Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was scheduled to have a meeting with his Iranian counterpart in Moscow on November 23.

It came after the outbreak of the war in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh in late September. The 44-day war was brought to an end on November 10 when Baku and Yerevan signed a Russian-brokered ceasefire deal that entailed the return of occupied territories to Azerbaijan and the establishment of "transport links" between the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia as well as between the landlocked Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan and mainland Azerbaijan.

Tehran has welcomed the ceasefire agreement while underlining that the current international borders in the region should not be changed.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the agreement reached among the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation, which led to a ceasefire and a cessation of hostilities, and hopes that this agreement, the principles of which were included in the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, will lead to the establishment of lasting peace in the Caucasus region in such a way that includes peace and prosperity for the people in all countries of the region and removes existing concerns," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement following the signing of the ceasefire agreement.

Khatibzadeh also said at a press conference on Sunday that Foreign Minister Zarif's trip will be rescheduled in the future.

"The foreign minister's trip, given that the Armenian government was experiencing changes at the foreign minister level, was scheduled to be made only to Moscow and Baku, but it was postponed due to the [Rouhani] administration's announcement that all cabinet members must attend a meeting of the cabinet," he said.

"The trip will be rescheduled and its focus is the Karabakh conflict," he added.

Near to impossible

Biden could face a bumpy road toward reviving the Iran deal

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Joe Biden, who is widely projected to win the United States presidential election, has vowed to rejoin a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers that President Donald Trump vociferously quit nearly two and a half years ago, but Biden has been very tight-lipped about how he would rejoin the nuclear deal or approach Iran in general.

His hitherto suspected silence about the deal could be indicative of his perception of the difficulties he would likely face in the coming months.

“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 in a September op-ed for CNN.

Since then, Biden has refrained from making any remarks concerning the nuclear deal, and journalists have stopped short of asking him questions on his potential Iran policy in case he moved into the White House.

In the September op-ed, Biden did not elaborate on his plan to revive the deal, a move that prompted many pundits and news media outlets to speculate over Biden’s next move in relation to Iran. NBC News has introduced a step-by-step plan that could lead to Biden and Iran resolving differences over the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – within few months.

Citing former U.S. officials and European diplomats, NBC reported on Saturday that rather than removing sanctions all at once or Iran returning immediately to full compliance, a more likely scenario could see an incremental approach over a period of three or four months. It also said that a first step could have Iran freeze its nuclear work, in return for some level of sanctions relief. Further steps could see Iran eventually return to compliance and all the nuclear-related sanctions lifted.

But this step by step plan is easier said than done because the Trump administration has chipped away at nuclear-related sanctions in such a way that makes efforts to lift them irrelevant because most of these sanctions were reimposed under counterterrorism



authority. The Trump administration did so mainly to make it difficult for a Biden administration to go soft on Iran.

But some believe that Biden still has the authority to lift all nuclear related sanctions. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has recently said that Biden still can remove these sanctions with few executive orders.

“If Mr. Biden becomes president of the United States and moves into the White House, he can repeal all of them with three executive orders. It is just a rumor that the next U.S. president will not be able to lift some of the U.S. JCPOA-related sanctions,” Zarif told the Iran newspaper last week.

The foreign minister was responding to claims that Biden would not be able to lift the sanctions imposed by the Trump administration.

He added, “The United States cannot use domestic law to justify its non-fulfillment of its international obligations. No country in the world can use domestic tools to not fulfill its international obligations.”

Apart from sanctions, Biden would likely face pressure from many foreign leaders to include some thorny issues such as Iran’s ballistic missile program and its influence in the region. These pressures are not only coming from leaders such as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Zayed, but also from Washington’s European allies, particularly France which has called for

negotiations over Iran’s missile program and its regional activities on many occasions.

On Thursday, the French presidency called for broader negotiation with Iran that includes Iran’s regional role and its missiles, according to an Asharq Al-Aawsat report. According to the report, a French official pointed out in a press briefing on Thursday that the Iranian nuclear program has reached a dangerous stage, and that would not be the case if Iran continued to respect its obligations stipulated in the 2015 nuclear agreement. The official also said any subsequent negotiations with Tehran should expand to include the ballistic missile program, regional policy, and what he called “interference in the affairs of other countries.”

On the other hand, Iran has strongly rejected the calls for negotiations over its missiles. Alireza Salimi, a member of the Iranian Parliament’s presiding board, said on Saturday that the missile program and regional issues are Iran’s red line that will not be included in the JCPOA.

“The JCPOA is not going to change, but there are requirements that must be considered because the deal cannot be changed and the negotiations on the JCPOA are over,” the lawmaker told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA).

Sohrab Gilani, another Iranian lawmaker, also echoed the same red line, saying it is impossible to negotiate over Iran’s missile. He even warned that the Iranian Parliament will dismiss Zarif if he “makes a new com-

mitment for” Iran.

Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, a member of the Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, also struck a defiant tone, saying that “Iran’s missile and defense capability are not negotiable at all.”

“When the Americans equip illegitimate regimes with nuclear weapons, sell unconventional weapons to countries in the region, and ignore some countries’ suspicious nuclear activities, they can no longer ban Iran from having conventional weapons. This is impossible,” Abbaszadeh Meshkini asserted.

Of course, Biden is yet to call for negotiations over Iran’s missile program but he implied in the mid-September op-ed that he will rejoin the nuclear deal as “a starting point for follow-on negotiations.” These “follow-on” negotiations could well be intended to pave the way for broader talks over Iran’s missiles.

U.S. Senator Chris Coons, a possible secretary of state in a Biden administration, said on Friday he would only support returning to the nuclear deal if there were a path to limit Tehran’s missile program and support for regional proxies, according to Reuters.

Asked if he would support a return to the JCPOA, Coons told Reuters: “not without some clear path towards addressing the missile program and support for proxies.”

Regardless of how he might approach the Iranian missiles, Biden will likely face a bumpy road or one full of potholes if he decides to reengage Iran, given America’s internal political and social divides.

Trump still refuses to accept the election results and keeps insisting that he has won the election despite Biden being widely touted as the winner.

Democrats have lost some seats in the House of Representatives and are about to become a minority in the Senate. The outcome of two runoff races in Georgia on January 5 will decide whether Republicans retain their majority in the Senate.

In light of these facts, if Biden moves to rejoin the JCPOA or negotiate a new one with Iran, he will need the support of a skeptical U.S. Congress. Therefore, it is very that Biden would put the Iran issue on hold at least for a while to address more urgent internal issues such as combating the coronavirus pandemic and drawing up plans for economic recovery.

U.S., Europe should pay Iran \$200 billion in compensation over JCPOA failure: senior MP

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Alireza Salimi, a member of the Iranian Parliament’s presiding board, has urged the United States and Europe to compensate Iran for the losses it incurred following Washington’s withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal and a failure by Europeans to honor their commitments as well.

“The withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the non-fulfillment of JCPOA commitments by the Europeans have caused damage of between 150 and 200 billion dollars to our country,” the lawmaker told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA) on Saturday.

Salimi was responding to Elliott Abrams, the U.S. special representative for Iran, who recently said that Washington’s European allies are willing to go beyond the JCPOA and address Iran’s missile program and its regional influence.

“Our European allies may want us to return to the JCPOA, but they themselves want to go beyond this agreement,” Abrams told Asharq Al-Awsat. “It is clear that they also want to address Iran’s missile program, or the export of terrorism by Iran, and they also want to extend the JCPOA’s sunset clauses for more years.”

Salimi said the U.S. and Europe have created a kind of division of labor not to implement the nuclear deal. “And now, if the U.S. wants to rejoin the JCPOA, it should compensate Iran,” he said.

The lawmaker added, “All sanctions should be removed.



And excuses such as human rights should not be exploited against our country.” He also called for the so-called trigger mechanism to be removed from the JCPOA.

“In the meantime, the issue of trigger mechanism stipulated in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action should also be removed because the Europeans have exploited it,” the senior lawmaker noted.

The mechanism, also known as the snapback process, stipulates that a “JCPOA participant state” can trigger the return of all UN sanctions on Iran in case Iran failed to uphold its obligations under the nuclear deal.

The U.S. triggered the snapback process in August and ultimately announced the return of all UN sanctions on Iran on September 19, a move that was widely rejected by

the remaining parties to the JCPOA as well as almost all members of the Security Council. They said the U.S. had no legal authority to restore the international sanctions on Iran because it was no longer considered as a “JCPOA participant state” after it formally announced its withdrawal from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018.

Joe Biden, who is widely seen as president-elect, has said that he will rejoin the JCPOA if he won the November 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 in a September op-ed for CNN.

But Biden did not make any remarks about his Iran policy since the election. He did not say how he would rejoin the JCPOA or approach the Trump decision to trigger the snapback process.

On the other hand, Iran has urged the U.S. to unconditionally return to the JCPOA.

According to Salimi, the missile program and regional issues are Iran’s red line that will not be included in the JCPOA.

“In fact, the JCPOA is not going to change, but there are requirements that must be considered because the deal cannot be changed and the negotiations on the JCPOA are over,” Salimi asserted.

Missile program is not negotiable: MP

1→ “It seems that now is not the time to raise new issues, and the Europeans must live up to their commitments to lift sanctions,” the lawmaker said, adding that the Islamic Republic of Iran has implemented most of its commitments to prove its goodwill and show respect for international law.

“This is while the European countries that are party to the JCPOA and the United States have not taken any steps to maintain this agreement,” Abbaszadeh Meshkini regretted.

According to the lawmaker, the Iranian people will never accept new issues in the JCPO and that there will be no negotiations over Iran’s missile program.

“When the Americans arm illegitimate regimes with nuclear weapons, sell unconventional weapons to countries in the region, and ignore some countries’ suspicious nuclear activities, they can no longer ban Iran from having conventional weapons. This is impossible,” Abbaszadeh Meshkini asserted.

Sohrab Gilani, another Iranian lawmaker, also responded to Abrams’s remarks, saying the JCPOA cannot be reopened.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has fulfilled its obligations under the JCPOA, while the Europeans and the Americans did not fulfill their obligations, so no new negotiations are going to take place. Rather, the Westerners must implement their obligations,” Gilani told ICANA on Sunday.

“In fact, now, the issue is not whether to hold new negotiations, because now it’s time

action and implementation by the countries that are signatory to the JCPOA,” he added.

Gilani also warned the Iranian Foreign Ministry against talking with the U.S., saying the ministry is not authorized to hold negotiations over the JCPOA.

“Undoubtedly, if the foreign minister makes a new commitment for our country, he will be dismissed because the Islamic Consultative Assembly will not allow the diplomatic apparatus to renegotiate the JCPOA,” the lawmaker said.

Certain countries undermined political settlement of Syria, Zarif laments

1→ “Constructive and comprehensive meeting with Russia FM Lavrov. Strong engagement of key international stakeholders remains essential to move political process forward. Build on relative calm, move Constitutional Committee forward, and promote international cooperation in line with Security Council Resolution 2254,” the UN envoy said in a tweet following the meeting with the chief Russian diplomat.

During the October Security Council briefing on the situation in Syria, Pederson expressed hope that the Syrian Constitutional Committee Meetings would be resumed in November. To this end, the UN envoy held discussions with the Syrian government and opposition groups, which resulted in “some valuable narrowing of the differences.”

“If we are able to find an agreement within the next two

days, it should be possible to meet in Geneva sometime during the month of November this year,” Pederson pointed out.

At the end of the October briefing, Pederson underlined the need to launch a “credible” process to help end the crisis in Syria.

“In short, a wider and more credible and effective process is plainly needed. Relative progress in establishing the building blocks of a ceasefire came about because of the concerted efforts of some key international stakeholders, demonstrating that reaching compromises is indeed possible. We need a process that extends this cooperation and is inclusive of all issues, and all players a process that can address the range of elements contained in 2254. This needs to be underpinned by mutual and reciprocal measures, pursued and supported meaningfully by all,” the UN envoy said.



SPORTS

IPL most decorated coach Amir Ghalenoei turns 57

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Amir Ghalenoei, who turned 57 on Saturday, may not be the biggest coach in Iran, but his importance in the football cannot be ignored.

As an 18-year-old player, Tehran-born Ghalenoei started his career in Rah Ahan in 1981 and joined Shahin just after a year to pave the way for his future successes.



After five years, he was transferred to Qatari club Al Sadd and returned to his homeland in 1989 to join Esteghlal. He became a legendary player after helping the Blues win Iranian league in 1990 and Asian Club Championships in 1991. Ghalenoei’s successes continued as a coach in domestic football.

The title “General” was bestowed upon him by the Esteghlal fans due to his outstanding skills in leading their team during his career at the club.

He started his coaching career with Keshavarz in 1999 and took four years to be appointed as head coach of his most coveted team Esteghlal.

He led Esteghlal to three Iran leagues (2006, 2006 and 2013). He also won Iran league twice with Sepahan in 2010 and 2011.

Ghalenoei was appointed as Iran national team coach in July 2006 as Branko Ivankovic’s successor and coached the Persians in the 2007 Asian Cup with a golden generation of the Iranian players like Mehdi Mahdavi Kia, Javad Nekounam, Fereydoon Zandi, Ali Karimi, Andranik Teymourian and Jalal Hosseini but lost to South Korea in penalty shootout in the quarterfinals. It could be a turning point for Ghalenoei but the coach missed the golden chance.

Ghalenoei was sacked following the poor performance in Asia and took charge of Mes Kerman.

He has also coached Tractor and Zob Ahan and currently leads Gol Gohar in Iran league. However, Ghalenoei, as the most decorated coach in Iran Professional League, has not won a cup since 2013.

Ghalenoei could have achieved more but for the General it’s never too late.

In the recent years he has made controversial comments which damaged his reputation BUT Ghalenoei was born to win.

Yazdani not to participate at Individual World Cup

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian freestyler Hassan Yazdani will not participate at the Individual World Cup in Serbia.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Wrestling Federation (IRIWF) will send four wrestlers to the tournament.

IRIWF president Alireza Dabir has said two freestyle and two Greco-Roman wrestlers will participate in the competition.

Hassan Yazdani, who was chosen as the world’s most popular freestyle wrestler according to a poll by United World Wrestling (UWW) on Thursday, was supposed to represent Iran at the 86kg category but the federation has changed its mind and will send a young wrestler to the competition.

The federation will also send a young wrestler as 92kg Kamran Ghasempour’s replacement.

Yazdani and Ghasempour will not take part at the Individual World Cup for injury prevention.

Greco-Roman wrestlers Hossein Nouri (87kg) and Mohamadhadhi Saravi (97kg) are to represent Iran in the event.

The “Individual World Cup” will be held in Belgrade, Serbia from Dec 12 to 18.

The event will include a prize pool of 300,000 CHF spread evenly across the 30 weight categories.

Paykan edge Shahr Khodro in IPL

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Paykan football team edged past Shahr Khodro 1-0 in Matchday 2 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Sunday.

Arash Ghaderi scored the only goal of the match three minutes before the hour mark.

The match remained unfinished after 24 minutes on Saturday due to the heavy rainfall and the Tehran-based football team emerged victorious on Sunday.

At the end of IPL Matchday 2, Gol Gohar lead the table with six points out of two matches.

Iran female weightlifters go to training camp in pandemic era

IRNA — Members of national weightlifting team of Iranian women started training camp under the health protocols due to the pandemic.

The national team members are present in the camp at an open area, according to Weightlifting Federation of Iran.

They have already undergone corona tests and all tests have been negative.

It was in 2017 that the Iranian Weightlifting Federation announced officially that female athletes are allowed to compete in the world contests.

In 2019, Poupak Basami, Iranian woman took part in the 2019 IWF World Championships in Pattaya, Thailand, broke her national records and stood at the sixth place.

Participation of Iran’s female weightlifters in the world competitions had international reactions as International Weightlifting Federation congratulated Iran for sending four female weightlifters to world stage.

\$3.8b of foreign investment attracted in 7 months

➔ Dejjasand had earlier said that materializing the motto of “Surge in Production” requires an investment of 7-10 quadrillion rials (about \$166.6-\$238 billion), and the attraction of foreign investment can play a significant part in this regard.



He also said that Finance and Economic Ministry has outlined a plan for facilitating and expediting the attraction of Iranian expatriates' investment, based on which some incentives and guarantees will be allocated to those investors.

Emphasizing that attracting investment is definitely better than receiving loans, Dejjasand said in early October that foreign investment acts as a window through which technology, employment, and production enter into the country, so the executive bodies should make

their most effort to attract foreign investment.

“The other advantage of foreign investment attraction is that the investor becomes a supporter of our country's interests in his/her country, and in this way, the relations between the two countries will be strengthened”, the official added.

He also mentioned attracting Iranian expatriates' investment making in Iran and stressed the necessity for removing the problems in this due and facilitating the processes for those investors.

Khuzestan pays \$38m of facilities to production projects with over 60% progress

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Facilities worth 1.6 trillion rials (about \$38.09 million) have been paid to the production projects with the physical progress of over 60 percent in Khuzestan Province, southwest of Iran, during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), according to a provincial official.

Amir-Hossein Nazari, the head of Khuzestan Province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, also put the total allocated fund for the whole year at four trillion rials (about \$95.23 million), and expressed hope that the remaining fund will be paid to the production units through cooperation of the banks and related organizations.



Following a program to support domestic production in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) which was called the year of “Pick-up in Production” by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei, over 15 months from February 20, 2019, to May 20, 2020, a total of 2,500 production units were referred to the country's acting banks, of which 737 units have received facilities amounted at 40.4 trillion rials (about \$961.9 million).

According to the data provided by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the Iranian banking system paid 9,749 quadrillion rials (over \$232 billion) of facilities to domestic economic sectors in the past Iranian calendar year, 26 percent more than the preceding year.

Last year, the Industry Ministry implemented several programs for promoting domestic production and increasing exports which included supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and reviving the country's idle production units.

The ministry is continuing to pursue the mentioned programs in the current Iranian calendar year which is called the year of “Surge in Production by the leader.

In this regard, CBI has been supporting the ministry by offering facilities to the production sectors.

Back in May, CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati said promoting domestic production is the main priority of the country's banking system in the current Iranian calendar year.

Hemmati mentioned the CBI strategies for supporting domestic production, saying: “The Central Bank has taken effective measures, including granting facilities to production companies, small and medium enterprises, and knowledge-based companies to support this sector.”

Commodities worth over \$4.7b traded at IME in a month

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Over 1.918 million tons of commodities worth 200 trillion rials (about \$4.761 billion) were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) in the eight Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 22-November 21).

In the past month, the IME's metal and mineral trading floor witnessed trading of 703,529 tons of commodities worth 89.345 trillion rials (about \$2.127 billion).

More than 1.212 million tons of commodities valued at 110.675 trillion rials (about \$2.635 billion) were traded at the oil and petrochemical trading floor of the IME during the previous month.

Furthermore, 1,736 tons of commodities were traded in the side market of the IME.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

In late April, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad unveiled the market's new outlook plan, which depicts IME's development roadmap until the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (March 20205-March 2026). Materializing the slogan of this Iranian year, which is “Surge in Production” is seriously considered in the mentioned plan and it is, in fact, the strategic approach of the outlook plan.

Iran's 9-month exports to EU up 13% yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran exported 563 million euros worth of commodities to the European Union states in the nine-month period from January to September 2020, registering a 13-percent rise compared to the same period in 2019.

The trade between Iran and European Union countries during the said period stood at €3.345 billion, 11 percent less than the figure in the previous year's same nine months, data released by Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) showed.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic imported €2.783 billion worth of goods in the mentioned time span, a 15-percent decline compared to the corresponding period in 2019.

As reported, Iranian exports to the EU stood at €81 million in September to register a 94-percent increase compared to the previous month.

Imports in the mentioned month reached €322 million, 28 percent more than August.

Valued at €222 million, foodstuff and livestock groups had the biggest share of the



Iranian exports to the EU during the period under review, followed by chemicals and related products with about €110 million of exports.

Meanwhile, the highest value of Iran's imports from the EU during the said nine months was related to machinery and transportation

equipment with €887 million of imports.

Among the European countries, Germany was the top destination for Iranian commodities during the first 9 months of 2020, accounting for about 36 percent of the total value of Iran's exports to the EU.

The Netherlands, Italy, and Spain were

other top destinations for Iranian exports.

Germany and Italy were also among the top exporters of goods to Iran in the mentioned period.

The trade between Iran and the EU nations has decreased in the current Iranian calendar year due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and also as a result of the U.S. sanctions.

The data provided by Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) indicate that in January 2020, when the coronavirus had not been widespread in different parts of the world, trade between Iran and Europe grew by more than 17 percent, but this figure decreased in the next month and fell to negative since March.

According to the mentioned data, the biggest drop in the trade between the two sides was reported for July when the trade fell by about 20 percent.

As reported, Iran's exports to the EU increased by 45 percent and 42 percent in the first two months of 2020, respectively, however, the trend became negative in the following months.

Iran-Pakistan online business forum to be held on Dec. 8

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — In a bid to expand cooperation between Iranian and Pakistani traders and businessmen, Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) and Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) will hold an Iran-Pakistan business forum online on December 8.

The conference will hold bilateral talks on cooperation in energy, tourism, transportation, food, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, health, clothing, textiles and leather fields.

Expansion of trade with Pakistan, and boosting exports to this neighbor is one of Iran's priorities.

In a recent visit to Pakistan, Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum met with Pakistan's deputy economic affairs minister to discuss the expansion of trade ties with the neighboring country.

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.

To be 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.

Iran's exports to Pakistan in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) was \$1.18 billion, but in the meantime, financial and banking problems have still created obstacles in the way of trade relations with this country.

And although due to the banking and financial problems, barter trade with Pakistan is still emphasized by Iran; experts and those active in the economic fields believe that Iran should seriously pursue the idea of a bilateral joint bank with Pakistan, while taking trade facilitation measures in line with signing agreements.

Last month, in a meeting with the Pakistani ambassador to Tehran, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization stressed his country's desire to have a free trade agreement with Pakistan.

Referring to the existence of a preferential trade agreement between the two sides, Hamid Zadboum stressed Iran's willingness for a free trade agreement with this country.

Emphasizing the need for Iranian and Pakistani officials to pay serious attention to removing obstacles to expanding trade relations between the two countries, the official said: “According to the studies, Pakistan has the highest potential among Iran's 15 neighbors and is the first country with which



Iran is willing to develop trade.”

Expansion of border trade between the two countries is another issue that Iran is seriously pursued.

The value of Iran's exports to Pakistan through the border in the southeast of the country has risen 26 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), compared to the same period of time in the previous year.

More activities of Iran-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce especially in the border areas is the other important approach to be adopted in line with the expansion of bilateral ties.

Necessary infrastructure to be provided for 30 mines by Mar. 2021

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Director of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO)'s Plan for building necessary infrastructure in large mines and mining areas, said the necessary infrastructure will be provided for 30 mines across the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2021).

“The program for building the necessary infrastructure for the country's mines, including electricity supply and constructing access roads, has been defined in the form of six projects and will be implemented this year and the next year,” Darioush Divdideh told IRNA on Sunday.

According to Divdideh, the mentioned mines are located in South Khorasan, Yazd, Semnan, West Azarbaijan, Zanjan, and Qazvin provinces.

With the implementation of this plan, the necessary infrastructure will be provided for the development of 70 mines in the country, he said.

As reported by IRNA, the government plans to spend seven trillion rials (about \$167 million) for providing mining infrastructure by the end of the next Iranian calendar year (March 2022).

In the past few years with new resilient economy strategies coming into play, the mining sector has become a major point



of focus for the Iranian government and various organizations and bodies active in this sector have been tasked to implement new programs for developing this sector.

As a major state-owned holding company active in the mining sector in the country IMIDRO has been playing a significant part in the mentioned planning.

The organization has been implementing several new programs in all the main fields of the mining industry including exploration, machinery development, extraction and also reviving the country's idle mines.

According to the IMIDRO Head Khodadad Gharibpour, IMIDRO has put the development of mines and mining industries on the agenda with three main strategies: increasing exploration operations, developing infrastructure, and reviving the country's idle small-scale mines.

Eastern neighbors boost transit through Iran's Chabahar port

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) deputy head for ports and economic affairs said transit of goods through southeastern Chabahar port has increased significantly in recent years due to offered incentives and the development of the port's infrastructure.

“A 70-percent discount on tariffs and lowering transit costs through Chabahar Port have been so effective that Chabahar loading and unloading figure has reached to two million tons while it was merely 200,000 tons just a few years ago,” Farhad Montaser Kouhsari told IRNA on Sunday.

According to Kouhsari, many of the country's neighbors are currently choosing Chabahar Port as the main route to ship their imported and exported goods, as well as raw material.

He emphasized that the goal of the port is now to attract regional markets including India and Afghanistan which are Iran's big trade partners, and also the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) which can use Chabahar Port to transit their goods with an average of 70 percent discount.

Montaser Kouhsari went on to say that the costs of commodity transit through Chabahar have been lowered and at the same time the infrastructure of the port has been improved so that it could load and unload all varieties of goods in a rea-



sonable time.

Although Chabahar is not directly on the U.S. list of sanctions, it has been affected by them, he said adding that however, the PMO has identified potential customers and various incentives are offered so that they choose Chabahar as their main base.

Chabahar is Iran's only ocean port, which is located in the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province near the Indian Ocean. The port provides unique opportunities for investment of the private sectors of Iran and other regional countries.

In line with the development of the port, five big projects were recently started. The projects include petrochemical storage reservoirs, a goods warehouse, two oil products tanks, a decontamination terminal of trucks. Implementation of eight other big projects in the port is in progress as well.

Cabinet holds extraordinary meeting to review next year's budget bill

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani's cabinet gathered on Sunday in their first extraordinary meeting for reviewing the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21, 2021), IRIB reported.

At the meeting, which was held in full compliance with health and safety protocols, after outlining general strategies and policies by the president, the cabinet began reviewing the national budget bill for the year 1400.

As reported, 15 cabinet members were attending the meeting while the rest followed through video conference.

President Rouhani had previously said that the main goal of the national budget bill for the next year is to downsize the government and cut the direct dependence on oil incomes.

Speaking in a session of the Resistance Economy Headquarters earlier this month, the president said that the next year's budget bill will be drafted within the framework of the general program of reforming the budget structure and general policies of the resistance economy.

Last week, the Head of Iran's Planning and Budget



Organization (PBO) Mohammad-Baqer Nobakht said his organization was considering \$40 oil for preparing the national budget bill for the next year.

“We have not yet determined the oil price based on which the budget will be set, but the initial estimation

is around \$40 a barrel,” he said.

Addressing the press after a cabinet meeting, Nobakht had announced the approval of the budget for the next Iranian calendar year 1400 by the government and added the budget bill will be submitted to the parliament within the legal deadline and before December 5.

The bill will be prepared based on the U.S. dollar exchange rate at 110,000-115,000 rials, he said.

The budget resources for the next year will be supplied from oil, taxation, and issuance of government bonds, Nobakht explained.

“Regarding the oil revenues, the ceiling will be set considering the amounts that we will be able to export in optimal circumstances and also considering the amount of exports we have had in the current year,” he said.

According to the official, any surplus revenues earned in this area will not be spent on current expenses but will be used for development projects, urban transportation, e-government development, strengthening knowledge-based companies, and strengthening the health transformation plan.

Trump sending message to EU, opponents via threatening Iran

By Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

TEHRAN — Commenting on recent psychological warfare against Iran, Shireen Hunter says Trump might be sending a message to his opponents and EU about increasing costs of his removal from power.

Recently there are some contradictory reports on possible U.S. President Donald Trump's military action against Iran before leaving the office on Jan 20, 2021.

"President Trump asked senior advisers in an Oval Office meeting on Thursday whether he had options to take action against Iran's main nuclear site in the coming weeks," the New York Times wrote.

"A range of senior advisers dissuaded the president from moving ahead with a military strike. The advisers — including Vice President Mike Pence; Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; Christopher C. Miller, the acting defense secretary; and Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — warned that a strike against Iran's facilities could easily escalate into a broader conflict in the last weeks of Mr. Trump's presidency."

While New York Times says Trump was the initiator of this plan, some other sources say the plan was initiated by other officials of the White House but Trump was not interested in it.

To know more about the issue and the motives behind such psychological warfare, we reached out to Shireen Tahmaash Hunter Professor of Political Science at



Georgetown University in the U.S.

■ Some believe that this is psychological warfare orchestrated against Iran by some U.S. Media. What is your opinion about this viewpoint?

A: It is hard to say. It could be psychological pressure and most probably is. However, given the serious repercussions for Iran, should such an attack take place, the threat should be taken seriously, even if it is unlikely to happen. The risks could increase should there be attacks by Iran or its regional allies on U.S. targets, such as the recent attack

on the U.S. embassy in Iraq.

■ Some say resorting to such psychological warfare after his defeat in the election, Trump tries to send a message to his opponents inside the country and Europe that he will increase the costs of his removal from power while his supporters are in the streets. What do you think of this?

A: Certainly, Trump might be sending such a message. However, I doubt that such a message would be taken seriously by U.S. allies. At any rate, they have little influence on U.S.' domestic politics.

■ Why has Trump revealed its plan if he really intends to attack? Why doesn't he want to attack Iran or its allies unexpectedly like what Washington did during the assassination of Lt. Gen. Soleimani?

A: I don't think that there is actually a serious plan to attack Iran. Trump was asking his advisers to offer him possible options, should he decide to attack. His advisers, including the Vice President, Mike Pence, pointed out the risks of such an action and advised him against it.

■ It is said that by resorting to such measures, the White House wants to create a balance of horror to prevent Iran's revenge on the eve of Lt. Gen. Soleimanis assassination anniversary. Do you agree with this viewpoint?

A: I doubt that this was the main reason for Trump's inquiry about targets to attack in Iran. It is clear that if Iran launches a significant attack on U.S. assets in the region, Washington will retaliate.

■ Many believe that such a dangerous decision that can lead to an all-out regional war cannot be made by Trump himself and it needs confirmation of both U.S. Republicans and Democrats. What do you think of these points of view?

A: The limited targeted attack does not need Congressional agreement as provided in the War Power Act. But there would be pressure from Congress, and the military to prevent such an act. Furthermore, such an attack would be unpopular with the American people struggling with COVID-19 and its economic fallout.

Canada, U.S. have 'selective' approach toward human rights: lawyer

➔ Canada claims a global reputation as a human rights defender, while the Ottawa government has a bad record when it comes to the rights of the indigenous peoples. According to reports revealed by the Human Rights Watch, the Natives are deprived of the right to safe drinking water and police mistreat and abuse indigenous women and girls.

Bashi also says the U.S. is misusing its influence to allow its allies such as Israel to commit crimes.

The following is the text of the interview:

■ Certain Western states have a bad record in view of human rights, so are these countries entitled to condemn other countries?

A: I think the fact that all authorities abuse human rights does not disqualify any particular government from raising human rights issues with others. Certainly, the best way to encourage respect for human rights is to lead by example and every government in the world that has invested more energy in improving its own human rights record could be more credible to criticize other government who may not be; but at the same time I think it is always legitimate to raise the issue of human rights abuses and we should make sure that we are holding our governments accountable to universal standards of human rights as articulated by international instruments.

■ When it comes to Israeli crimes against Palestinians, why do countries like Canada and U.S. give a full support to Tel-Aviv? How is it possible that Israel win such a support?

A: I think lack of accountability for Israeli violations of human rights and international law against Palestinians reflects a weakness in accountability of the international system.

Unfortunately the UN Security Council cannot act in the Israel-Palestine case because of the veto power of powerful members, especially the United States, while other mechanisms of accountability such as the International Criminal Court are struggling to have jurisdiction over war crimes

committed in Palestine. So we have a lot of work to do in obtaining stronger mechanism of accountability and the fact that Israel enjoys such a strong military and financial support from the United States reflects a distorted political system in which the U.S. as a superpower is using its significant influence to allow its allies to commit abuses.

■ Why is Canada not really concerned about human rights violations when it clinches arms deals with a value of 15 billion dollars with Saudi Arabia? Is it justifiable to say that Canada is not aware that these weapons are used against children and women in Yemen?

A: Canada like all countries has a responsibility to ensure that it does not violate human rights or international humanitarian law including in its military deals; so selling weapons to actors who are committing war crimes in Yemen will be a violation of Canada's obligations and certainly the Canadian government and the Canadian people have responsibility to ensure that their foreign policy respects human rights and does not contribute to war crimes.

■ Washington has imposed harsh sanctions on Iran that are hampering Iran's access to medicine. At such a hard time, countries like Canada have been cooperating with Washington in pushing ahead with its unilateral sanctions by refusing to sell humanitarian goods to Iran. What is your comment?

A: Unfortunately the United States and Canada support human rights selectively, and the United States in particular has not done nearly enough to call out its allies for human right abuses. At DAWN we believe that U.S. policy should be consistent. So the same standard in terms of respecting human rights that is applied towards Iran should also be applied towards Israel and every other country because these are universal standards of how government should treat the people under their control.

■ Why have Western countries, especially Canada and the U.S., preferred to turn a blind eye to Khashoggi's murder



while they knew that Mohammed bin Salman was directly responsible of that crime? How could Saudis distract attention away from their crimes and influence human right bodies in the UN?

I think lack of accountability for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi reflects a weakness in the system of international politics and especially the United States which is selling Saudi Arabia billions of dollars in arms trade and providing diplomatic cover that allow the Saudi government to act with impunity. The lack of accountability for Jamal Khashoggi's murder regarding the role of Mohammad Bin Salman indicates that real change is needed. What is encouraging is that in the United States there is a pressure not just from the American people but also in the American Congress seeking accountability, and I remind that the U.S. Congress has required the federal government to provide information about those responsible for Jamal khashoggi's murder in the form of a DNI (Director of National Intelligence) report that was to be published last year. Unfortunately, the Trump administration has ignored that mandate and refused to release the report. The refusal is the subject to litigation in U.S. courts and we hope that the incoming administration will follow the law and do what Congress has required which is to reveal what American intelligence services know about the murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

"We should make sure that we are holding our governments accountable to universal standards of human rights as articulated by international instruments," the consultant for Democracy in the Arab World Now (DAWN) says.

After 9/11, U.S. military should have invaded Saudi Arabia

By Tony Gosling

So it's very interesting that Donald Trump is using his last month or so in power to do this drawdown of troops, 2,000 from Afghanistan, which is about 40% of the contingent there, and 500 from Iraq, which is 20% of the troops in Iraq.

I mean, he's had to replace his defense secretary to do this, replacing him with Chris Miller which is interesting because it shows that the previous defense secretary basically wasn't cooperating with the president, even though he chooses these people.

He's given often in this sort of situation, the President is given a choice of people, none of whom agree with him, but he's now in his last month asserting himself a bit more. Now, what Chris Miller has said the new defense secretary is that he doesn't want this perpetual war, which is great news.

Although it's I'm afraid it's 19 years, which is too late. You know, it's 19 years to 2001 when the Americans went into Afghanistan under George Bush Jr., and under what pretext? Under the pretext of these 9/11 attacks which are actually carried out by Saudi Arabia.

So maybe back in 2001, the U.S. military should have been going into Saudi Arabia, to occupy Saudi Arabia instead.



I mean it was just an excuse to go into Afghanistan at the time. It was media hype around bin Laden, hiding in these fictitious caves in Afghanistan, and it's about time that these troops were withdrawn, absolutely right.

But the other thing to look at here is this perpetual war is also what we're getting now is it's being replaced, or in fact added to domestically with the perpetual war on the virus, so that this perpetual war idea seems to be spreading like a virus itself within the deep state in the United States.

Also worth mentioning that you've got to look at individual presidents as individuals, like for example, President John F Kennedy was very much... he was in

charge; he wanted to be in charge. He wasn't co-opted by the deep state or the CIA to be their little poodle president.

And what we saw with Trump was somebody that they were having to manage him right the way through. They would have to push him, cajole him, etc. into doing what they wanted. And he kept his promise at no big new wars. He was making all sorts of threats against North Korea, but then he went and made friends with Kim Jong-un.

So it's very interesting that I think we're going back now to a George Bush Jr., an Obama-type president, with Biden, somebody who the deep state know they can just write a script for him and he'll read it out for them.

So the end of the Trump era I think people are going to be a little bit looking back with nostalgia towards President Trump - somebody that when he was stood in front of the podium and the microphone was actually speaking his mind and actually kept his promise not to start new wars.

*Beginning his working life in the aviation industry and trained by the BBC, Tony Gosling is a British land rights activist, historian, and investigative radio journalist. For 20 years he has been exposing the secret power of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and elite Bilderberg Conferences where the dark forces of corporations, media, banks, and royalty conspire to accumulate wealth and power through extortion and war.

(Source: Press TV)

Faisal Mekdad appointed new Syrian foreign minister

Faisal Mekdad has been appointed Syrian new Foreign Minister, the country's presidential office said.

Syrian envoy to the UN, Bashar Jaafari, has been appointed deputy foreign minister and Bassam Sabbagh will replace Jaafari as new UN envoy, the office added.

This comes after the country's long-time Foreign Minister, Walid Muallem, died on 16 November at the age of 79. He was appointed to the top diplomatic post in 2006 and had served as Deputy Prime Minister since 2012.

ISIL attack hits Afghan capital as Pompeo joins peace talks

Mortar shells slammed into a residential area of Afghanistan's capital and killed eight people Saturday, hours before outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo held what are likely his last meetings with the Taliban and Afghan government negotiators trying to hammer out a peace deal.

The attack in Kabul, claimed by ISIL terrorists, also wounded 31 people.

The assault came as peace talks were underway in Qatar, where Pompeo told Afghan government negotiators that the U.S. will "sit on the side and help where we can" in the negotiations with Taliban militants. Meanwhile, the U.S. military announced a sudden visit to the Mideast by long-range, nuclear-capable B-52H bombers, underlining America's continuing presence in the region.

Two Taliban officials told The Associated Press that the warring sides have found common ground on which to move forward the stalled talks. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak to journalists, did not elaborate.

U.S. blacklisting of Houthis will worsen Yemen humanitarian crisis, experts warn

Political analysts and American lawmakers have warned about a U.S. plan to label the Houthi Ansarullah movement a "foreign terrorist organization," saying it would aggravate the already dire humanitarian situation in Yemen caused by years of a Saudi-led war and blockade.

Earlier this week, news magazine Foreign Policy reported that the U.S. State Department was considering the designation as part of President Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran. The announcement, the Washington Post said, is expected to come in December.

Speaking to the Doha-based Al Jazeera broadcaster on Saturday, Hassan el-Tayyab, a Middle East policy lobbyist at the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), said the designation would make it increasingly difficult for aid organizations to deliver much-needed aid to the Yemenis living in northern areas controlled by the Houthis.

"It's a very scary prospect as the country teeters on the edge of famine," he said. "They would risk being hit with secondary sanctions and other penalties. It's going to make delivering critical humanitarian assistance nearly impossible."

Tayyab also warned that the blacklisting of the Houthis could embolden Saudi Arabia and impede international efforts towards resolving the Yemen conflict.

Resistance News

Hamas: Raids reflect persistent Israeli aggression

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN**—The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, said, "The Zionist bombing of the Gaza Strip at dawn Sunday and terrorizing the peaceful population reflect the unstoppable Zionist aggression on our Palestinian people."

Hazem Qassem, Hamas's spokesman, stated in a press statement on Sunday morning that this continuous "Zionist campaign of terror" against the Palestinian people is a stupid attempt to claim victory. "This will not happen because our people will continue their struggle until they recover their full rights", he emphasized.

The Israeli occupation army at dawn Sunday launched aerial attacks on various targets in the besieged Gaza Strip.

A local source stated that "the planes launched several airstrikes targeting 5 Hamas sites and monitoring points in different areas in the Gaza Strip," stressing that "the bombing caused damage, but no injuries were recorded."

Local sources reported that warplanes targeted five military and observation posts belonging to al-Qassam Brigades of Hamas. The places which were targeted are in the Sheikh Ajlin area in the west of Gaza, a monitoring point in the Al-Shujaia area (east), another location south of the city, as well as two Qassam sites in Khan Yunis and Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, without any causality reported.

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UNESCO-registered Persepolis digitizing documents

➔ 1 The experts expected that the documentation of the inscriptions would put the restoration projects of the sites on the right track and would help archeology studies and even tourism in these areas.

The royal city of Persepolis, which ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art, was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.



The city's immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire's king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall ("Hundred-Column Hall").

This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world's greatest archaeological sites.

Persepolis was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showplace and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire.

Coronavirus costs Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari's handicraft sector \$3.5m

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The handicraft sector of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province has suffered 150 billion rials (over \$3.5 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) from the coronavirus pandemic over the previous months.

Crafters in the south western province are facing several issues including a severe recession, escalation prices of raw materials, and missing traditional sales markets, deputy provincial tourism chief Mehrdad Reisi said on Saturday.

Currently, 52 fields of handicrafts such as kilim carpets, traditional locks, and givhe shoes - a traditional, lightweight footwear - are practiced in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, the official added.

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.



Back in May, the deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian noted that due to the outbreak of coronavirus, suitcase exports of handicrafts were completely stopped since the month of Esfand (the last month of the year), and official exports of handicrafts experienced a steep decline.

"Some 295 fields of handicrafts are currently practiced across Iran with more than two million people engaging, majority of whom are women... Handicrafts also play an important role in the economy in our rural villages," she said.

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

Support package approved for corona-affected tourism businesses

The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control has recently approved a new support package to pay loans to businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Depending on the type and activity of the businesses, they could benefit from at least 160 million rials (\$3,800 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to nine billion rials (\$214,000) of bank loans with a 12-percent interest rate, deputy tourism chief Vali Teymouri announced on late in October.

The loans are planned to be allocated to tourist guides, travel agencies, tourism transport companies, tourism educational institutions, eco-lodges and traditional accommodations, hotels, apartment hotels, motels, and guesthouses as well as traditional accommodation centers, tourism complexes, and recreational centers.

In September, Teymouri pointed to the 1.3 million tourism workers in the country, who are facing several issues due to the coronavirus crisis and said "This number, in addition to their households, includes a significant population that makes a living through tourism, who are needed to be considered in ministry's decisions."

Back in April, the government announced it will support those which are grappling with fiscal problems by offering loans with a 12-percent interest rate. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts also suggested a rescue package for tourism businesses. The government has also allocated a 750-trillion-rial (about \$18 billion) package to help low-income households and small- and medium-sized enterprises suffered by the coronavirus concerns.

By Afshin Mojlesi

TEHRAN – Since antiquity, mankind has assumed the need to fortify properties to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest.

Commencing from simple earthworks and wooden walls, fortifications were gradually evolved into complex, unconquerable imposing citadels.

They were normally erected and maintained along significant routes or cities, particularly in heights overlooking steep slopes or cliffs.

Many of the fortifications of the ancient world were built using mud brick so that often leaving them no more than mounds of dirt for today's archaeologists.

Here, we will look at 14 fantastic examples of castles, fortresses, and citadels in the country. This list is not exhaustive and is in no particular order.

Qa'eh Dokhtar

Situated on a mountain slope neighboring the Firouzabad-Kavar road in southeastern Kerman province, Qal'eh Dokhtar (literally meaning the Maiden Castle) was made by Ardashir I, the founder of the Sasanian Empire (224–651) in 209 CE.

Based on narratives, the monument is named after the ancient Iranian goddess Anahita, to whom the term "Maiden" refers.

The entrance to the castle is through a tall gateway within a large, rectangular tower. Inside, a broad stairway leads up to a rectangular hall, with blind niches on either side of two large buttresses at the east end.

The fortified palace contains many of the recurring features of Sasanian architecture such as long halls, arches, domes, recessed windows, and stairways.

Falak-ol-Aflak Castle

Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, the unmissable eight-towered monument dominates the skyline of Khorramabad, the capital of Lorestan province.

The fortress dates from the Sassanid era (224–651). It seems particularly imposing and dramatic when floodlit at night, offering picturesque views of its encircling crenelated battlements.

Qaleh Babak

Qaleh Babak is a ruined fortress nestled atop a pick in northwest Iran. Ascending the mount to set foot on the ancient fort seems somewhat arduous for many visitors but in most cases proves to be a considerable and gratifying experience.

The fort is named after Babak Khorramdin, an Iranian national hero, warlord, and revolutionary leader who fought against Arab invaders until he died in 838 CE.

The fort consists of several stone towers and lodging areas stretched in a space of nearly ten thousand square meters and the origins of the monument are said to date from the Sassanid era (224–651).

The crumbling ramparts of the fortress loom while one approaches the village of Kaleybar in East Azarbaijan province.

Izadkhash Castle

Izadkhash fortress, a Sassanid era fortification in the southern province of Fars, was built on the ancient Silk Road between Isfahan and Shiraz, is reportedly the first fortress in the world that is made of adobe. It is also the second-largest adobe building in the world after Arg-e Bam (Bam Citadel) in the southeastern province of Kerman.

The castle and surrounding landscape has been nominated to the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List since 2007 in the cultural category.

Alamut Castle

Nested on top of a hill in a relatively remote village amidst the northern Iran's Alborz Mountains, a well-fortified castle was sheltering the followers of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070–1124), spiritual leader of Islam's heretical Ismaili sect, known as 'Assassins'.

In popular myth, Sabbah led a bizarre, much-feared mercenary organization whose members were dispatched to murder or kidnap leading political and religious figures of the day.

In the early 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book "The



A view of Narin Castle with a scenic vista of Meybod in the background

14 of the greatest castles, fortresses, and citadels in Iran

Valleys of the Assassins".

Nowadays, the ruined castle, which is also known as Alamut Castle, is a top travel destination in the northeastern side of Gazor Khan Village in the environs of Mo'aleh Kalayeh, from the environs of Roudbar of Alamut, Qazvin province.

Shush Castle

Situated in the ruins of the ancient city of Shush in Khuzestan province, southern Iran, this gorgeous castle resembles medieval monuments in France.

The construction of the Shush Castle was started in 1897 by the French civil engineer, geologist, and archaeologist Jacques Jean-Marie de Morgan (1857–1924), who had come to Iran to carry out excavations in the region.

Bricks dating back to various historical eras, which had been scattered at the Susa region's ancient sites of Haft-Tappeh and Chogha Zanbil, were used in building the castle.

De Morgan managed to convince the French government of the time of the necessity of sponsoring the construction of the stronghold, which was used as a haven for his team and a place to carry out their studies.

Rudkhan Castle

Occupying an area of about 50,000 square meters, this medieval structure is located 25 km southwest of Foman in Gilan province. The castle, which is made of brick and stone, has been built on two sides of a jagged rocky region so its architecture benefits from natural mountainous features.

Preliminary evidence, uncovered by digging, indicates the foundation of the structure was built in the Sasanian era (224–651) and rebuilt in the Seljuks reign (ca. 1040–1157).

To access the castle one has to go through a hilly winding route in a dense forest. Upon arrival a big entrance gate flanked by relatively tall towers welcomes visitors.

Seb Castle

The historical Seb Castle stands tall in



The eight-towered Falak-ol-Aflak Castle is an unmissable monument in Khorramabad, the capital of Lorestan province

a village of the same name in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province. It was extensively used during the Qajar era (1789–1925) as a borderline surveillance base. However, narratives say that its heyday dates back to the time of the Safavids (1501–1736).

Seb Castle is constructed of clay and mortar blend with loads of sticky plant seeds. In some parts wooden slabs cut from palm trees have been used to strengthen the overall layout, enabling it to withstand natural disasters in particular mellow seismic vibrations.

Arg-e Bam

The Bam citadel (locally called "Arg-e Bam") and its cultural landscape, located on the southern edge of the Iranian high plateau, in Kerman province, is highly regarded as an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement built in vernacular technique using mud layers.

The massive fortress and its environs were almost completely brought down to earth due to a devastating earthquake on December 26, 2003. Most of what visitors now see at the site is restored and replicas of the original structure being restored from 2004 onwards.

The origins of the adobe citadel can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th centuries BC) and even beyond. The ensemble was on crossroads of important trade routes as well in its heyday sometime between the 7th to 11th centuries.

Arg-e Rayen

Under the glare of the blazing sun and on the margins of a harsh desert lies the ancient city of Rayen, which is home to an ancient mudbrick castle of the same name: Arg-e Rayen

The adobe fort stands tall despite several earthquakes and other natural disasters, which have been flattened similar nearby structures.

Covering an area of about 20,000 square meters, the castle was inhabited until 150 years ago and some experts believe it is at

least 1,000 years old. The history of life in Rayen goes back to the times of the Sasanian dynasty and even deeper.

Portuguese Castle of Hormuz

The crumbling Portuguese Castle of Hormuz Island, built in the early 16th century, is one of the last surviving monuments of the colonial rule in the Persian Gulf. It is now a tourist attraction where you can soak up the silence while traveling through time. For visitors, it seems to be easy to imagine the hustle and bustle of Portuguese military forces five centuries ago!

History of the Portuguese Castle of Hormuz Island goes down in time when Commander Afonso de Albuquerque ordered the construction of a fortress in 1507 after his troops capture the island in the early 16th century.

Made from reddish stones on a rocky promontory at the north end of the island, the castle was cut off from the rest of the island by a moat, traces of which remain. The stronghold involves an arms depot, water reservoir, barrack, prison, church, command center, and central hall.

Muscular-looking walls, chambers, and archways as well as sets of rusting cannons in the courtyard still give the area a scenic beauty. A subterranean church featuring vaulted ceilings, a watchtower, and a submerged cistern are amongst other attractions of the site.

Besides, the upper levels of the fort offer wonderful views of the island, its village, rugged mountains all surrounded by the blue waters of the Persian Gulf.

Narin Castle

The crumbling Narin Castle rises imposingly above the historical core of Meybod in central Iran. Local legend has it that the castle belonged to King Solomon and was built by jinns (spirits), but whatever the original provenance of the castle's foundations, most of what can be seen today dates from the Sassanian era.

Lying on the silk route, the castle was used by soldiers who provided an armed escort for passing caravans, charging a tax for their services, historical sources say.

Iraj Fortress

Some estimate that the crumbling Iraj fortress dates from the Sassanid era (224–651), however, some experts believe that it belongs to the Kayanian dynasty era, a semi-mythological dynasty, which is mentioned in the Persian poet Ferdowsi's magnum opus, the Shahnameh.

Located in Pishva near the gates of the old city of Rey, southeast of Tehran, Iraj fortress (also known as Gabri fort by the locals) was once one of the largest military fortresses of the time.

Measuring about 3,000 square meters in area, the fortress has lost its towers some centuries ago – maybe by erosion, and only lengthy and tall clay ramparts have been left. Based on evidence from excavations in 2008, archaeologists believe that the Iraj fortress was likely abandoned shortly after construction.

Zahhak Castle

Built around 2000 BC, Zahhak Castle served as a government building and a fire temple during the later Parthian era (247 BC – 224 CE).

Located in northwest Iran, near Hasht-roud, the castle contains depictions of animals and symbols that show what life was like for the royalty in ancient Iran. It includes a square-shaped hall made of bricks built during the Parthia period. During this time, Zoroastrianism was the religion of the ruling kings, who likely used part of the castle for a fire temple.

It is unknown why this particular castle was named Zahhak but in Persian legend, Zahhak is the name of an Arab king who conquered and ruled over ancient Iran. The story is recounted in the Shahnameh, or Book of Kings, written by Ferdowsi. Kawa is the hero in this particular story, who rescues his Kurdish people in Iran from Zahhak's control.

Zahhak castle also served as a military defense during the Parthian era given its position close to the Iranian border with other nations in the northwest, including Turkey and Armenia.

Enigmatic salt men to receive extra purification, restoration

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A project for purifying, cleansing, and restoring three ancient salt men, found in Iran's Chehrabad Salt Mine, will be commenced in the near future, Zanjan's provincial tourism chief has announced.

The salt men number three, four and five, their belongings and some ancient relics discovered from the mine will be restored in collaboration with Iran's Research Center for Conservation of Cultural Relics and Zanjan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department in close collaboration with the research institute for the protection and restoration of historical relics from the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, and the Archaeological Museum Frankfurt, Amir Arjmand said on Saturday.

The first step before any rehabilitation works will be accurate documentation of the initial status of the salt men, which are being kept in Zanjan Saltmen Museum, the official added.

Back in May, the official announced that a team of experts from Iran and Germany has started a project for cleansing and restoring garments and personal belongings of ancient salt mummies.

In 1993, miners in the Douzklakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages in Zanjan Province, accidentally came across a mummified head, dated to 300 CE. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and the mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot, according to the

Ancient History Encyclopedia.

However, in 2004, the miners discovered yet another "saltman", which was followed by further excavation unearthing remains of a human body along with a large number of artifacts made of wood, metal tools, clothing, and pottery.

In 2005, a systematic excavation began, three more mummies were excavated, and a sixth remained in situ, due to lack of funds for its storage. The context of the remains suggested that a collapse in the mine had caused the death of the miners in question.

The first mummy, dubbed the "Saltman", is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive.

This particular "saltman" was originally dated based on the archaeological material found with him. Later, the mummy was carbon dated, which placed him in 500 CE (1750 BP, that is, "before present" or 1750 years ago), the height of the Sasanian Empire. The second "saltman" was carbon-dated to 1554 BP, which placed him in the same era as the first "saltman", the Sasanian era.

The third, fourth, and fifth "saltmen" were also carbon dated. The third body was dated and placed in 2337 BP, the fourth body in 2301 BP, and the fifth mummy was dated to 2286 BP, placing them all in the Achaemenid period.

The individual "Saltmen" have a few secrets of their own, for instance, the first "saltman" that was discovered had the blood type B+, and 3D imaging of his skull revealed fractures around his eye and other damage that occurred



before death by a hard blow to the head. His clothing (the impressive leather boot) and his gold earring, show a person of some rank; the reason for his presence in the mine still remains a mystery.

Saltman No. 5 had tapeworm eggs from the Taenia sp. genus in his system. These were identified during the study of his remains. The find indicates the consumption of raw or undercooked meat, and this is the first case of this parasite in ancient Iran and the earliest evidence of ancient intestinal parasites in the area. The best preserved and probably the most harrowing of the saltmen is Saltman No. 4. A sixteen-year-old miner, caught in the moment of death, crushed by a cave-in.

Iran ranks third for top researchers in Islamic world 2020

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran ranked third for the highly cited researchers in the world among Islamic countries in 2020, according to the recently published report of Highly Cited Researchers by Web of Science.

Among the world's top researchers, 13 Islamic countries are listed, which hold a share of 3 percent (2.85%) among the world's top researchers.

Saudi Arabia with 120 researchers, Malaysia with 17, Iran with 12, and Turkey with 11 researchers have the highest number of highly cited researchers among Islamic countries.

To be included in the list of top researchers, all scientific activities over the last 10 years are evaluated at the international level, including the number of articles, number of citations, number of highly cited articles, number of citations to highly cited articles, as well as issues such as observing ethical principles in research.

So, approximately 6,389 researchers have been selected as highly cited researchers in 2020.

From Iran in 2020, similar to 2019,



12 top researchers have been included in the list of 6,389 top-cited researchers in the world.

The country's top researchers have been in the cross-field (6 people), agricultural sciences (2 people), mathematics (2 people), and engineering (2 people), respectively.

The United States is home to the highest number of Highly Cited Researchers, with 2,650 authors, representing 41.5 percent

of the researchers on the list. China, home to 770 researchers is the second country has the highest concentration of Highly Cited Researchers in the world. The United Kingdom is also a hotbed of talent, with 514 authors, and Germany, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, and France are all home to over 150 researchers each.

■ Top scientific articles

Iran's share of the world's top scientific

articles is 3 percent, Gholam Hossein Rahimi She'erbaf, the deputy science minister, said in October.

The country's share in the whole publications worldwide is 2 percent, he noted, highlighting, for the first three consecutive years, Iran has been ranked first in terms of quantity and quality of articles among Islamic countries.

Iranian articles rank 16 and 15 in Web of Science and Scopus, respectively.

The Journal Citation Reports 2019 ranking includes 42 journals from Iran, including the Journal of Nanostructure in Chemistry with an impact factor of 4.077.

Iranian scientific journals such as the Journal of Nanostructures (affiliated to Kashan University), Nanomedicine Journal (Mashhad University of Medical Sciences), Journal of Nanoanalysis (Tehran University of Medical Sciences) were listed in the ESCI index of WOS database.

Moreover, the Journal of Water and Environmental Nanotechnology, Nanomedicine Research Journal, and International Nanoscience and Nanotechnology were also listed in the Scopus Index.

Wetlands facing debilitation

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Satellite monitoring of 13 main lakes and wetlands of the country shows that the water volume of 10 of them has remained constant or decreased over the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2019-March 2020).

Lakes and natural wetlands are among the most important ecosystems on the planet that play a vital role in the survival of various plant and animal species. Due to this issue, the Iranian Space Agency periodically and regularly monitors the important wetlands and lakes.

In this regard, 13 lakes and wetlands in the country were monitored in the Iranian calendar month of Mehr (September 23- October 22), which includes Alagol, Ajigol, Almagol and Gomishan wetlands in Golestan province, Choghakhor wetland in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province, Parishan lakes, Arjan, Tashk, Bakhtegan and Maharloo in Fars province, Ghouri Gol wetland in East Azerbaijan, Lake Urmia in East and West Azerbaijan provinces and Hamouns in Sistan and Baluchestan province.

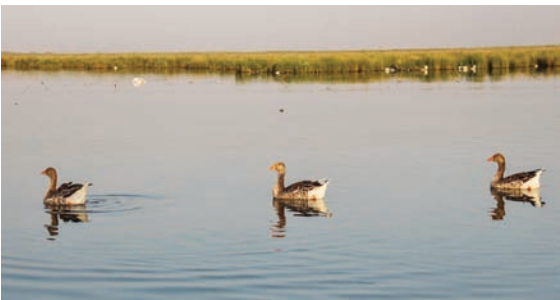
The data shows that lakes and wetlands such as Aji Gol, Almagol, Choghakhor, Tashk, and Maharloo wetlands and Urmia lake shrank during the aforesaid period compared to the same period last year, water. Also, some wetlands completely dried up due to the decreased rainfall during summer.

The highest decrease in water level is related to the Choghakhor wetland in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province.

Also, Bakhtegan wetland, Parishan, and Arjan lakes have completely dried up, while Ajigol and Almagol wetlands are drying up. Unlike these lakes, the water level of Alagol, Gomishan, and Ghouri Gol lakes increased.

The water surface of Lake Urmia was about 3,060 square kilometers, which, compared to the same period a year ago, dropped by 2 percent (reported 3,120 square kilometers).

Earlier in November, Ali Arvahi, the director of the Con-



servation of Iranian Wetlands Project, said that a comprehensive management program is now being implemented for 18 wetlands of the country.

The comprehensive program for the protection of Parishan, Shadegan, Urmia, Qara Gheslugh, Qourigol, Miqan, Choghakhor, Zarivar, Hamoon, Bakhtegan, Alagol, Gavkhoni, Noruzlu, Soldoz, Kani Barazan, Haray Minab, Ne'or, and Gandoman wetlands has been approved and is being implemented, he added.

The project aims to focus on better management of wetlands in accordance with climate change, improving the management of natural resources, and emphasizing the role of public participation and raising awareness, Arvahi stated.

In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value with an area of over 3 million hectares have been identified, of which 25 wetlands are designated as wetlands of international importance (registered in the Ramsar Convention) covering more than 1.4 million hectares and four sites are biosphere reserves.

Of Iran's 25 Ramsar sites about one-third are under pressure or in critical condition.

Chief of the Department of Environment (DOE) Issa Kalantari has said in order to restore wetlands in the country a budget of 600 trillion rials (nearly \$14 billion) is required.

■ Wetlands are important features in landscape

Wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They store water and ensure its quality, providing resilience against drought. They play a central role in sustainable development by supplying all our freshwater.

Natural wetlands are a variety of habitats such as rivers, lakes, coastlines, mangrove forests, and even coral reefs. An immense variety of species of microbes, plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish, and mammals can be part of a wetland ecosystem.

They are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs.

The functions of a wetland and the values of these functions to humans depend on a complex set of relationships between the wetland and the other ecosystems in the watershed. A watershed is a geographic area in which water, sediments, and dissolved materials drain from higher elevations to a common low-lying outlet or basin at a point on a larger stream, lake, underlying aquifer, or estuary.

Wetlands play an integral role in the ecology of the watershed. The combination of shallow water, high levels of nutrients and primary productivity is ideal for the development of organisms that form the base of the food web and feed many species of fish, amphibians, shellfish, and insects. Many species of birds and mammals rely on wetlands for food, water, and shelter, especially during migration and breeding.

About 20,000 different species of fish found worldwide live in freshwater (natural wetlands).

Wetlands' microbes, plants, and wildlife are part of global cycles for water, nitrogen, and sulfur. Scientists now know that atmospheric maintenance may be an additional wetlands function. Wetlands store carbon within their plant communities and soil instead of releasing it to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide. Thus wetlands help to moderate global climate conditions.

Iran receives new equipment to fight desert locust

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has delivered the fourth shipment of equipment to Iran's Plant Protection Organization to support the locust control operations in the country.

According to a press release published by the FAO Representation in Iran, this consignment includes 28 units of vehicle-mounted Ultra Low Volume (ULV) sprayers, worth around \$81,000.

Funded by the Government of China, this delivery is part of the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme Support to FAO's Global Action on the Control of the Desert Locust Project, which aims to curb the spread of the desert locust in the focus countries by sharing modern technologies, applying

effective techniques and proved solutions to control the locusts in the five countries of Pakistan, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Iran.

Together with the previous three shipments, so far FAO has provided 110 ULV sprayers and 10.4 metric tonnes of ULV Deltamethrin pesticides, amount over \$305,000, to support the national capacity.

FAO, also, is implementing an emergency Technical Cooperation Programme project in the country to assist the Plant Protection Organization to combat this migratory pest by providing requisite technical knowledge and skills and equipment to detect, track, monitor, report on, and rapidly respond to the desert locust infestations in the country.

Following the influx of locusts into southern parts of the country this [Iranian calendar]

year (beginning on March 21), a total budget of 200 billion rials (nearly \$4.7 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to fight desert locust swarms.

Last [Iranian calendar] year (March 21, 2019), desert locusts penetrated the provinces of Bushehr, Fars, Hormozgan, Kerman, Khuzestan, and Sistan-Baluchestan, which resulted in major losses on over 500,000 hectares of farmlands and gardens.

FAO explains that desert locust infestations are normally present in southeast Iran during the spring. Local breeding coincides with seasonal rains that often occur from about February or March until April or May. In warmer years, rains that occur during the winter can lead to late winter and early spring breeding.

By June, vegetation is usually dry again

and any adults that were produced during the spring move east towards the Indo-Pakistan summer breeding areas. Most of the spring breeding occurs along a 450 km stretch of coastal plains on the Arabian Sea from Jask (Hormozgan) and the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman in the west to Chabahar and Gwadar (Sistan-Baluchestan) near the Pakistan border in the east.

The most important area along the coast is the Vashnum Plains near Chabahar. If rains fall and temperatures are warm, breeding may also occur in the interior, namely the Jaz Murian Basin from Kahnij to Iranshahr, and in the Zaboli, Suran, and Saravan valleys that lead to Panjgur, Pakistan. Desert Locust adults rarely cross the mountains to the north of these areas.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

Relief foundation creates over 1.5m jobs for the deprived

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has generated over 1.5m job opportunities for those financially struggling since the past 7 years, Hojatollah Abdolmaleki, the Foundation's deputy director has announced. Job generation for the underprivileged is among the most important and tough responsibilities of the Foundation, he stated, YJC reported on Monday.

Since Iranian calendar year of 1390 (March 2011– March 2012) to 1396 (March 2017- March 2018), the Foundation has earmarked 100 trillion rials (nearly \$2.4 billion) to open up over 1.4 million job opportunities in order to facilitate income generation for the deprived, he explained. He went on to add that last year (March 2018-March 2019), a total of 148,000 jobs were created by the Foundation's budget of 23 trillion rials (around \$547 million).

ایجاد بیش از یک میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار شغل برای محرومان در کشور

کمیته امداد امام (ره) از سال ۹۰ تاکنون بیش از یک میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار شغل برای محرومان کشور ایجاد کرده است.

به گزارش خبرنگار باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان، حجت الله عبدالملکی معاون کمیته امداد امام خمینی (ره) اظهار کرد: ایجاد اشتغال امری سخت است، تولید اشتغال برای محرومان سخت‌ترین اقدام برای کمیته امداد است که در حال انجام است.

وی افزود: از سال ۹۰، یک میلیون و ۴۰۰ هزار شغل با تسهیلات ۱۰ هزار میلیاردی برای محرومان ایجاد شده است، در سال گذشته نیز برای ۱۴۸ هزار نفر با ۲ هزار و ۳۰۰ میلیارد تومان تسهیلات توسط کمیته امداد شغل ایجاد شده است.

COVID-19 takes lowest toll on foreign nationals in Iran: official

1 → He added that 47,000 people were trained and 10 percent of legal refugees were covered by insurance with the help of the UNHCR, and other foreign nationals can pay for health insurance like Iranians.

The issue of granting citizenship to children born to foreign men was also approved as a law so that so far 1,290 children of Iranian women who married foreign men have received Iranian citizenship, he emphasized.



Some 2,852 foreign nationals were infected with COVID-19, of which 294 died and the rest recovered, which was far less than the Iranian population, he concluded.

Iran ramped up its production of essential medical equipment, and independent entrepreneurs – refugees included – have redirected their efforts towards contributing to the national COVID-19 response.

Undocumented Afghans who have access to free primary health services and similarly free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like nationals.

■ Situation of foreign nationals

Iran is host to one of the largest and most protracted urban refugee situations in the world and has provided asylum to refugees for four decades.

The latest official government statistics in 2014, there are 951,142 Afghan refugees and 28,268 Iraqi refugees living in Iran. Many of the refugees living in Iran are the second and third generation, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

About 97 percent of refugees live in urban and semi-urban areas, while 3 percent are residing in 20 refugee resorts run by the UNHCR's main government counterpart.

In addition to Afghan refugees, there are about 2.5 million Afghans living in Iran, including those having a passport and undocumented Afghans. 450,000 Afghan who did not have identity cards or birth certificates have received Iranian visas that allow them to live, work or study in the country.

In Iran, UNHCR is seeking \$16.2 million for its COVID-19 emergency, while requires an additional \$98.7 million to support Iran in maintaining and sustaining its commendable inclusive refugee policies, under the umbrella of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).

Shahnam Arshi, deputy director for the infectious diseases management department of the Ministry of Health said in late August that all foreign nationals infected with coronavirus receive medical treatment free of charge in Iran.

So far, at least 4 trillion rials (nearly \$95 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) have been spent only for the treatment of registered foreign nationals, he stated.

■ COVID-19 new cases, death toll

In a press briefing on Sunday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 13,053 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 854,361. She added that 603,445 patients have so far recovered, but 5,796 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 475 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 44,802, she added.

Lari noted that so far 5,788,016 COVID-19 tests have been conducted across the country.

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

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

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 64)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

In general, the present subjunctive expresses uncertainty as to the future. Also the verb following a main verb or depending on t is put in the subjunctive:

من دوست دارم بخوابم.

● تمرین ۲. مصدرها را به حال اِترْزَمی بنویسید:

۱. من می‌خواهم پنجره را (بستن)

۲. تو می‌خواهی درس (خواندن)

۳. او باید در خانه (خوابیدن)

۴. ما می‌توانیم لباس (خریدن)

۵. شما می‌توانید اینجا ؟ (نشستن)

۶. آنها باید انشا ؟ (نوشتن)

do not often take ې in compound verbs:

او باید بیدار شود. تو می‌توانی کار کنی.

● تمرین ۳. به حال اِترْزَمی بنویسید:

۱. او در اینجا زیاد کار می‌کند. و باید

۲. ما خانه را می‌فروشیم. ما می‌توانیم

۳. من اسم شما را می‌دانم. من باید

۴. پدرم با تو صحبت می‌کند. پدر می‌فواهد

۵. شما چقدر پول می‌دهید؟ چقدر می‌توانید

۶. آنها بیدار می‌شوند. آنها کی می‌فواهند

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

How wonderful is the situation of a believer. There is good for him in everything and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity comes to him, he expresses gratitude to God and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Graphics highlight self-sacrifice of health workers during coronavirus era

→1 "The series tries to introduce the martyred health defenders who have worked hard over the past nine months to save the lives of the patients despite all the shortages," he said.



A scene from the motion graphics series "Martyred Angels" made by Alireza Mohammadi.

He added that people try to avoid gatherings and public places but the health defenders are forced to take care of those individuals battling with the coronavirus, putting them in greater danger but they still carry out their missions with love.

"For example, Yusef Rahbari was an anesthesiologist, working in a hospital in the northwestern Iranian city of Maragheh in East Azarbaijan Province. He tested positive once, and recovered, but when he tried to save a patient with the COVID-19, he tested positive for the second time and died," he explained.

He added that when he was writing the biography of these martyrs for the series, he noticed that many of them had been unique in their jobs.

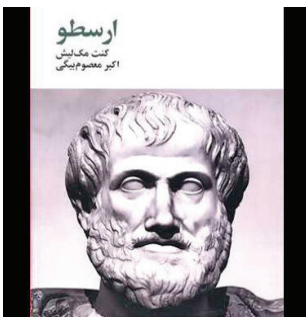
The series tries to show part of the lives of these dear ones, who have not been recognized by many people.

"We show that many of them were committed and religious people. This way, we try to show that judging people from their appearance is something prohibited," he mentioned.

"The life story and martyrdom of each one of these martyrs is a real drama, lovely and sweet," he concluded. "Martyred Angels" is scheduled to be shown on IRIB's various channels.

Iranian bookstores host "Aristotle"

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of British author Kenneth McLeish's "The Great Philosophers: Aristotle" has recently been published by Agah Publications in Tehran.



The book has been translated into Persian by Ali-Akbar Masum-Beigi.

The ideas Aristotle outlined in his "Poetics" have formed the foundation for the whole history of Western critical theory. No work has had a greater influence upon the literature of centuries - neither has any been so profoundly, so perversely misunderstood.

Mystified, moralized and recruited into the cause of this or that literary culture with all the interpretations, Aristotle has far too infrequently been permitted to speak for himself. If the prescriptive rigidities of the Renaissance went entirely against the grain of his open, accepting empiricism, the psychologizing mania of the modern age has yielded no truer a reflection of his thought.

McLeish's introduction cuts through centuries of accreted obscurity to reveal the forthright, astonishingly original book that Aristotle actually wrote. The philosopher who emerges proves more "modern" than any of his interpreters.

McLeish studied classics and music at Worcester College, Oxford. After starting as a schoolteacher, he became a full-time translator, author and dramatist, and in time the most widely respected and prolific translator of drama in Britain.

His output included all 47 of the surviving classical Greek plays, most of Ibsen and Feydeau, as well as individual plays by Plautus, Moliere, Jarry, Strindberg, Horvath and Labiche.

His original plays and translations have been widely performed, most notably by England's National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Webinar to discuss Arab writers' views on Jalal Al-e Ahmad

CULTURE TEHRAN — Arab writers' views about the renowned Iranian novelist and short story writer Jalal Al-e Ahmad will be discussed during a webinar on December 1.

The Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies in Tehran will organize the webinar in collaboration with the Simin and Jalal Museum House, the institute has announced.

Majed Merhej Rabat of Wasit University in Iraq and Ahmad Jad of the Suez Canal University in Egypt will deliver lectures during the webinar, which will begin at 3 pm on https://webinar.ihs.ac.ir/b/ihs-p3c-jmm.

Masumeh Nemat Qazvini of the Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies and Reza Tavassoli, the director of the Simin and Jalal Museum House, will also attend the online colloquium.

A live visit to the museum will also be arranged during the two-hour session, which will be organized to celebrate the birthday of the writer.

Born in 1923, Al-e-Ahmad was a prominent Iranian writer, scholar, and social and political critic.

Some of his works, including his most popular polemical essay "Plagued by the West" and his most popular novels "The



A poster for a webinar that the Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies will organize on Arab writers' views on the Iranian novelist and short story writer Jalal Al-e Ahmad.

School Principal", "By the Pen" and "Lost in the Crowd", have appeared in English translation.

An English translation of his story "A Stone on a Grave" by Azfar Moin was published by Mazda Publishing in the U.S. in 2008.

Iran's Mehdi Azadi wins Golden Frog at Poland Camerimage festival



Iranian cinematographer Mehdi Azadi in an undated photo.

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian cinematographer Mehdi Azadi won a Golden Frog of the 28th Energa Camerimage International Film Festival in Poland, the organizers announced on Saturday.

He received the award in the short documentary

competition of the festival, which is dedicated to the art of cinematography, for his work in "A Horse Has More Blood Than a Human" directed by Abolfazl Taluni.

The documentary revolves around an elderly Iranian couple, whose dreams of a quiet retirement are shattered by the realization that their hometown has become a smuggling gateway to Europe, and everyone they know is involved.

The festival was organized from November 14 to 21 in the city of Torun.

In the short documentary competition, David Bolen and Jon Kasbe won a special mention for the American film "Blood Rider" directed by Kasbe.

In the main competition, the Golden Frog went to Joshua James Richards for Chinese director Chloe Zhao's drama "Nomadland".

Rauno Ronkainen won the Silver Frog of the category for Finnish director Antti J. Jokinen's drama "Helene", while the Bronze Frog of this section was awarded to Nicolaj Brül for "Pinocchio" directed by Matteo Garrone from Italy.

In the student etudes competition, "A Rodeo Film"

Brought Erin G. Wesley the Laszlo Kovacs Student Award - Golden Tadpole. The story of deceit, crime and passion all set in the world of black cowboys in rural Oklahoma has been directed by Darius D. Dawson from the American Film Institute Conservatory.

The Silver Tadpole went to Nathalie Pitters for her collaboration in "Stratum Deep" directed by Lian Meng Rose from the National Film and Television School (NFTS) in Beaconsfield, England.

"The Dress" directed by Tadeusz Lysiak from the Warsaw Film School won Konrad Bloch the Bronze Tadpole.

The Golden Frog in the documentary features competition was awarded to Piotr Bernas for "The Whale from Lorino" directed by Maciej Cuske from Poland.

Alejandro Mejia received the Golden Frog in the docudrama section for "499" directed by Rodrigo Reyes from Mexico.

In 2011, Iranian cameraman Mahmud Kalari also won a Silver Frog from the Plus Camerimage for Asghar Farhadi's Oscar-winning drama "A Separation".

"Asak", "The American Bull" honored at Chilean festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian cinema took center stage at the Arica Nativa Rural Film Festival in Chile last week as "Asak" and "The American Bull" received the two main awards of the event.

"Asak" won the award for best feature documentary and "The American Bull" was awarded the special jury prize in the short competition.

Directed by Mehdi Zamanpur, "Asak", which means a small hand-mill in the local language of southern Iran, is about the life of a blind 80-year-old man who lives in that area.

He earns money by making handicrafts and utensils from stone. He chooses his required



A scene from Iranian director Mehdi Zamanpur's documentary "Asak".

stones from the mountains by touching and tasting them.

"The American Bull" by Fatemeh Tusi is set in a village between Iran and Iraq, where a group of inhabitants are involved in animal husbandry. Saheb, the adolescent owner of the only American bull, is very dependent on his bull and makes a living by making it available for breeding.

The special jury prize in the feature film competition went to "Frontera" by Paola Castillo from Chile.

"Then Comes the Evening" by Maja Novakovic from Serbia was picked as best short.

Arica Nativa aims to make children, youths and adults fall in love with the natural and cultural treasures that remain heroically in the rural and indigenous areas of the planet.

"Asak" was crowned best at the 20th International Golden Saffron Documentary Film Festival in the northern Turkish town of Safranbolu in 2019.

"The American Bull" was named best narrative short at the 10th Annual Arlington International Film Festival in the American city early November.

The film was earlier crowned best at the 33th International du Film Amateur de Kelibia in Tunisia in 2019.

"Wintopia" to be realized at Cinéma Vérité

A R T TEHRAN — "Wintopia", a documentary tracing the enigmatic footsteps of iconic Canadian documentary filmmaker Peter Wintonick through his daughter Mira's lens, will be screened at the 14th edition of Cinéma Vérité, Iran's major international festival for documentary films.

When Canadian documentary titan Peter Wintonick died in 2013, he left behind over three decades' worth of released work and 300 private videotapes. Shot over the last 15 years and labeled "Utopia", the private tapes documented Peter's quixotic and poetic quest to find a place on the earth where everyone is happy.

The result is a fascinating collage of footage from the "Utopia" collection, home movies from the family archive, scenes from earlier films, and telephone conversations with colleagues and family members.



"Wintopia" by Mira Burt-Wintonick.

In voice-over, Mira takes us along on her journey. She molds all these elements into a story about the grieving process, a daughter's attempt to understand the father she lost too soon, and a tribute to a restless and original spirit on a quest to find an ideal world.

The Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) as the main organizer of Cinéma Vérité has selected a variety of top documentaries to screen during the festival, which will be held totally online from December 8 to 15 due to a spike in the COVID-19 cases in the country.

"Kubrick by Kubrick", a documentary by the French filmmaker Gregory Monro, and "The Cordillera of Dreams", the winner of the 2019 Golden Eye Award for best documentary film at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival by Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzman has also been selected to go on screen at the festival.

Iranian voice actor Changiz Jalilvand dies of COVID-19

→1 He had also acted in several films and TV series.

Jalilvand had voiced Burt Lancaster, Richard Burton, Bruce Willis and Ed Harris, as well as some Iranian actors including Behruz Vosuqi, Mohammad-Ali Fardin

and Nasser Malak-Motiei.

He also lent his voice to most of the characters played by Jamshid Mashayekhi in the movies and TV series.

He had also narrated a Persian translation of the Holy Quran on a CD to

promote the reading of the Holy Book, which was released in 2009.

The early version of the CD, entitled "The Miracle" lacked a Persian translation.

The new version contains the recitation

of Saad al-Ghamdi from Saudi Arabia and a Persian translation, which was narrated by Jalilvand.

Some parts of the translation have also been read by Fariba Ramezanzpur, another Iranian dubber.

Jonathan Holslag's "Political History of the World" published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — Belgian author Jonathan Holslag's "A Political History of the World: Three Thousand Years of War and Peace" has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.

Negah is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Mohsen Askari.

In three thousand years of history, China has spent at least eleven centuries at war. The Roman Empire was in conflict for at least 50 percent of its lifetime. Since 1776, the United States has spent over one hundred years at war. The dream of peace has been universal in

the history of humanity. So why have we so rarely been able to achieve it?

In "A Political History of the World", Holslag has produced a sweeping history of the world, from the Iron Age to the present, that investigates the causes of conflict between empires, nations and peoples and the attempts at diplomacy and cosmopolitanism.

A birds-eye view of three thousand years of history, the book illuminates the forces shaping world politics from Ancient Egypt to the Han Dynasty, the Pax Romana to the rise of Islam, the Peace of Westphalia to the creation

of the United Nations.

This truly global approach enables Holslag to search for patterns across different eras and regions, and explore larger questions about war, diplomacy, and power. Has trade fostered peace? What are the limits of diplomacy? How does environmental change affect stability? Is war a universal sin of power?

At a time when the threat of nuclear war looms again, this is a much-needed history intended for students of international politics, and anyone looking for a background on current events.