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‘Majlis focusing on 20% uranium, expelling IAEA inspectors, leaving JCPOA’

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian lawmaker has vowed to significantly raise uranium enrichment level and cease Iran’s cooperation with the United Nations’ nuclear watchdog in response to the assassination of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, 59, was killed on Friday in a terrorist attack involving at least one explosion and small fire by a number of assailants in Absard city of Damavand County, Tehran Province. Several Iranian officials called for an end to Iran’s cooperation with the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Fereydoun Abbasidavani, the head of the Parliament Energy Committee, said in a tweet that the martyrdom of Fakhrizadeh will change the Parliament’s approach toward the nuclear issue.

Abbasidavani, who was chief of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) from February 2011 to August 2013, narrowly survived an assassination attempt in northern Tehran in November 2010. He holds PhD in nuclear physics.

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Monthly non-oil trade balance of \$118m achieved

TEHRAN – Iran’s non-oil trade balance was \$118 million during the eighth Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 22-November 20), the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Ruhollah Latifi put the country’s non-oil trade at \$6.302 billion during the eighth month, of which \$3.21 billion was the share of exports, while imports stood at \$3.092 billion.

He said 10.248 million tons of commodities have been exported from Iran, and 2.549 million tons of goods have been imported to the country in the mentioned month.

As announced by the IRICA head, the value of Iran’s non-oil trade during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20) reached \$44.6 billion.

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National Commission for UNESCO to organize Afghan art festival in December

TEHRAN – The Iranian National Commission for UNESCO plans to organize an Afghan art festival during December.

The Afghan Art Week will be held on the theme of “My Beloved, Where Are You?”

The commission will organize the virtual exhibit, which will open on December 12, to express its sympathy with

the victims of the ISIS terrorist attack on Kabul University in early November.

The showcase will put on view paintings, miniatures, photos, graphic designs, calligraphy works, traditional musical instruments and artworks in other media.

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COVID-19 control in Iran better than expected

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI

TEHRAN – Health Minister Saeed Namaki has said that the situation of coronavirus containment in the country is better than expected contrary to forecasts, and fortunately, new cases and deaths are declining.

The coronavirus control in the country, especially in the cities where restrictions were imposed, is improving, Namaki noted.

Although it was predicted that this [Iranian calendar] month (November 21-December 20), mortality will reach 800 to 1,000 per day, fortunately, it is facing a downward trend falling below 400, which is a great and honorable achievement, he emphasized.

However, for the quarantine of patients who are financially struggling, over 40,000 beds in hotels, and guesthouses are needed, he stated.

Lockdown moves cities out of “red” zone

Strict COVID-19 restrictions which took effect on October 26 have caused 87 out of 89 infected cities to get out of the high-risk “red” zone.

The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control started strict restrictions in 43 cities that had the highest rate of infection in the country. Ten days later, decisions were made to set new limitations on highly-affected areas for another 10 days, through which 46 cities undergone restrictions.

The plan divided cities into three levels of alert, namely red, orange, and yellow.

All of the cities, except for two, are now out of the red condition and have turned orange or yellow so that the hospitalization rate has decreased, said Alireza Raeisi, the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control spokesman, expressing hope that the death toll will also drop within two to three weeks.

In some 160 cities and towns that were on the highest alert, the disease prevalence has begun to decrease in about 145 cities. And the remaining 15 cities will also experience a downward trend this week, he explained.

Due to the high prevalence of the disease, a plan also went into effect on November 21, according to which all occupations, except for emergency services and basic food suppliers, get closed for two weeks in high-risk cities.

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An assassination has made a dark Mideast darker than ever...

BY MARTIN LOVE

Joe Biden’s up and coming “climate” czar John Kerry has claimed the reason Russia came to Syria’s aid several years ago was because ISIS was threatening Damascus. And he also more or less admitted to the U.S. role assisting ISIS because the U.S. thought Syria might thus be brought to the negotiating table. But what has been most elusive in this carnage, a decade long in Syria that continues with Zionist strikes on Syria that have gone unchallenged by the U.S. and the EU, is an adequate explanation as to why Syria under popular Assad ever constituted a real threat to anyone in the Middle East (West Asia). Was it a threat because Syria has long hoped that the Golan would be returned to Syria? Not likely. Or that Syria has long condemned Israeli apartheid and land theft? Not likely.

The answer actually is quite simple. The U.S. and the Zionists want to remain dominant in the

Mideast (West Asia), and so the aim is to reduce sovereign countries to vassalage and penury. Already the world in this century has seen millions of innocents murdered in the region. And the assassination on November 27 of one of Iran’s top nuclear scientists, almost certainly by Mossad or its proxies, really has very little to do with a nuclear weapons program in Iran that in fact does not exist.

Here’s the problem: expertise with nuclear science and even its use for energy and medicine, even when it’s not directed to weapons specifically, gives a country like Iran the potential nuclear weapons. The JCPOA was and remains, if only it would be resurrected by a U.S. return to the deal and the elimination of sanctions, an effective bar to a shift of Iranian nuclear expertise to weapons. The mere fact that the U.S. scuttled the deal bares the Trumpist aims: incite Iran to respond as a pretext for a U.S./Israel/Saudi/UAE war on Iran.

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Professor Falk: Fakhrizadeh assassination ‘is an outrageous act of state terrorism’

BY M.A. SAKI

TEHRAN – Richard Anderson Falk, an American professor of international law at Princeton University, says the assassination of Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh “is an outrageous act of state terrorism”.

Fakhrizadeh was assassinated in a complicated terrorist attack in a small city 40 kilometers northeast of Tehran on Friday, Nov. 27.

Israel is the prime suspect for the assassination of the scientist.

“This act can be viewed as a provocation of sufficient magnitude, to push tensions toward a regional war,” Falk tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

Professor Falk, who also served as the UN Special Rapporteur on “the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967”, says U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited the occupied West

Bank on November 19 to present himself as “the most ardent champion of Israel” as he intends to run for president in 2024.

Following is the text of the interview:

On November 19, Mike Pompeo toured the West Bank and the Golan Heights. How do you analyze the visits to these two occupied lands in terms of international law?

A: Given the timing of Pompeo visit, so shortly followed by the shocking assassination of the leading nuclear scientific figure, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, makes one whether the real strategic purpose of the visit was either to be told about the planned attack or to encourage it. We have no way of knowing beyond the circumstantial evidence suggesting some level of linkage between the visit and the assassination.

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Saudi Arabia’s abominable human rights record

BY STEPHEN LENDMAN

Like the U.S., Israel and other rogue states, the Saudis operate by their own rules in flagrant violation of international laws, norms and standards. It’s the world’s head-chopping/public whippings capital. Anyone can be targeted for exercising free expression, human rights activism, or other forms of dissent against despotic rule. They’re also vulnerable for not praying at designated times, improper dress code, non-observance of gender segregation, and other nonconformity with Wahhabi extremism.

Its documented high crimes include state-sponsored murder, torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions, supporting ISIS and other terrorist groups, partnering in U.S. regional wars, banning free elections, denying due process and judicial fairness, prohibiting religious freedom, human trafficking, kidnappings, committing crimes of war and against humanity, along with virtually every other rule of law breach imaginable.

In mid-November, the London Daily Mail reported the following: “Saudi interrogators

forced jailed women’s rights activists to perform sex acts, hung them from ceilings and ‘tortured’ them with electric shocks,” citing a report, titled: “A Stain on World Leaders and the G20 Summit in Saudi Arabia: The shameful detention and torture of Saudi women.”

The report explained that in May 2018, “10 human rights defenders who had successfully campaigned” to end the prohibition against women driving were arrested and detained.

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Fakhrizadeh’s funeral held in Mashhad

The body of senior Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh arrived in the northeastern city of Mashhad on Saturday night for a funeral procession, Tasnim reported.

During the funeral, his body was marched through the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) and was later returned to Tehran.

Fakhrizadeh was assassinated by unknown gunmen in a small city 40 kilometers northeast of Tehran on Friday evening.

According to the Defense Ministry, his burial will be held in Tehran on Monday.

Tel Aviv concerned that Yemeni missiles may target Israel: Yemeni analyst

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – A Yemeni analyst says that the missile strike on Aramco by Yemenis is meant to send a signal that Ansarullah can hit targets inside Israel.

Hamid Rizq, a Yemeni journalist and analyst based in Lebanon, tells the Tehran Times that Tel Aviv considers the Saudi-led aggression on Yemen a “preemptive war”.

According to Rizq, Israelis have “serious concerns about the possibility of the Yemeni army carrying out ballistic strikes that hit important areas within the Zionist regime.”

The following is the text of the interview:

How do you see the repercussions of the recent missile attack on the Saudi Aramco in Jeddah? What does this mean for Saudi Arabia?

A: The missile strike on the Aramco site in the city of Jeddah represents a painful blow to the Saudi regime. The target and timing were chosen with high accuracy. In fact, Jeddah is the economic and commercial capital of Saudi Arabia.

The Quds 2 missile could target its specified goals which highlight the Saudi military and security deficit and failure in providing the protection needed for the most important vital facilities, especially after the Yemeni strikes on Abqaiq and Khurais last year.

The Saudi regime was supposed to have learned the lesson and succeeded at the minimum in securing Aramco and its branches within the Saudi territory.

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MPs pass plan to nullify sanctions, boost nuclear capabilities

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian lawmakers on Sunday **d e s k** passed the double-urgency of a strategic action plan aimed at lifting of the sanctions on Iran and reinforcing the country's nuclear capabilities.

Of the 246 MPs present in Sunday's session, 232 voted in favor of the plan, Mehr reported.

It came two days after Iran's top nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, was assassinated near Tehran, in what appeared to be a plot by the U.S. and Israeli regimes.

After the plan was approved, lawmakers shouted "Down with America" and "Down with Israel".

"The plan will in fact strengthen the capabilities of the country's nuclear industry," Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said.

"God willing, this plan will be mulled in the next session of the Majlis in order to strengthen the country in terms of the facilities of the nuclear industry as well as to prevent the nonsensical words and terrorist acts of the enemies," Ghalibaf added.

Iranian lawmakers have angrily and strongly condemned the assassination of Fakhrizadeh.

Chairman of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Mojtaba Zonnour said the Islamic Republic will definitely take revenge from the criminal Zionists.

"The cowardly assassination of martyr Fakhrizadeh will not go unanswered," Zonnour said in a tweet on Saturday.

Abbas Moghtadaie, who is the deputy chairman of the committee, said, "Now the entire Iran says tough revenge for terror. Tough revenge will be taken. Do not doubt it."

Homayoun Sameyah Najafabadi, who represents the Jewish community in Iran, said Iran's scientific progress cannot be thwarted with the assassination of individuals.

"The enemy thinks that science and knowledge in the Islamic Republic of Iran depend on the individual and they can stop the progress of science and knowledge in Iran by assassinating individuals," Sameyah Najafabadi told Fars news agency on Saturday.

Meanwhile, MP Nasrollah Pezhmanfar has said the Parliament seeks to mandate the government to end the inspections of Iranian nuclear and military installations by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"A statement condemning the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh will be read out in an open session of the Majlis tomorrow, mandating the government to retaliate quickly against U.S. and Israeli terrorist leaders and to reduce the level of the Agency's inspections of nuclear and military facilities to zero," Nasrollah Pezhmanfar said in a tweet on Saturday.

An assassination has made a dark Mideast darker than ever...

1 → As to who was behind the killing of one of Iran's top scientists (again), one highly respected writer, who before retirement worked at the CIA for over two decades wrote a private message to a friend on the 27th: "Yes this is one instance where it (the assassination) begs to be credited to Israel, but in reality I am sure it is Trump/Pompeo who ordered it...and more is coming."

If this ex-CIA employee is correct about "more is coming" between now and Biden's inauguration, one can only literally pray that Iran's leadership has the resolve and strength not to respond to the provocation of November 27 or any other provocation that would be used as pretext for war, at least not between now and January 20 when Biden is supposed to become President based on his apparent, resounding election win.

Iran has shown remarkable restraint, and the world knows it, for a very long time, a time measured in decades. In the U.S., too, one also must wonder if Trump's aggressions, if they do result in a war, might be a war staged as a ploy by Trump to declare a "national emergency" and suspend Biden's move into the White House come January 20th. This is a question that must be asked, since Trump and his gangster administration seem hell-bent with trying to nullify the election by any means possible.

It has been said that it is "always darkest before the dawn". It's hard to imagine a darker moment in the Middle East (West Asia) than now. Netanyahu and the Zionists are doing more damage than ever in the West Bank, planning more settlement expansion and destroying Palestinian property with extreme prejudice. The faux "peace deals" with the corrupted Arabs along the Persian Gulf have nothing to do with peace, but largely involve arms sales to frightened Arab regimes whose economies are not doing well. The Nobel Peace Prize is even begging to be abolished what with the nomination of Netanyahu and the UAE's despot for the prize.

It is almost unreal, or surreal, how dark things have suddenly become. It would be strongly in Iran's favor if the Islamic Republic does not overreact to the provocations at this time and save their responses for a day when the U.S. and its horrific allies have been badly weakened by their ignorance and spite. That day is coming, someday.

Duma Foreign Affairs Committee chairman says Fakhrizadeh assassination intended to provoke Iran

MOSCOW (TASS) — The killing of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh is a terror attack aimed at provoking Iran and Russia condemns this crime, Chairman of the State Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee Leonid Slutsky said on Sunday.

"The murder of Iranian physicist Fakhrizadeh is a terrorist attack aimed at new provocation against Tehran. It's important to prevent the escalation of tensions in the region," the lawmaker wrote on his Twitter account.

"Russia condemns this killing, no matter who carried it out, and expresses deep condolences to Iran and Fakhrizadeh's close ones," Slutsky said.

On Friday, the Fars news agency reported an attempt on the nuclear scientist's life near the city of Damavand in Tehran province. Later on, the Iranian Defense Ministry confirmed that he had been wounded and died in hospital.

According to ISNA news agency, Iranian Army's Commander-in-Chief Sayyed Abdolrahim Mousavi claimed that Israel and the United States were behind the assassination. President Hassan Rouhani vowed on Saturday that the murder would not go unanswered.

Same elements behind Fakhrizadeh assassination, Natanz attack: Kamalvandi

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Spokesman **d e s k** for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has said the elements behind the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and the act of sabotage at the Natanz nuclear facility are the same.

"Their footprint is clearly seen in different incidents," Behrooz Kamalvandi said on Saturday, Tasnim reported.

Fakhrizadeh, who headed the research and innovation wing at Iran's Defense Ministry, was assassinated on Friday on the outskirts of the capital Tehran.

It was the second high-profile assassination since January, when Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was killed by a U.S. airstrike. The assassination of Fakhrizadeh has drawn outrage and anger in Tehran.

"In the Natanz incident, it can be said that their elements are the same as the recent incident, and it seems that the Zionist regime is involved in these cases," Kamalvandi said.

Kamalvandi said the enemy has targeted Iran's strength to hamper its progress.

"In the industrial sector, we must double our work, and in the security sectors, we must give a decisive response to these



"In the industrial sector, we must double our work, and in the security sectors, we must give a decisive response to these measures," nuclear official says.

Zarif urges world to condemn Fakhrizadeh assassination

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has urged the international community, especially the European Union, to abandon its double standard and condemn the state-sponsored assassination of Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

"Terrorists murdered an excellent Iranian scientist. This cowardice, which gives serious indications of Israel's role, is an expression of the desperate warmongering of the perpetrators," Zarif said via Twitter on Sunday.

"Iran appeals to the international community, particularly the EU, to abandon its shameful double standards and condemn this act of state terror," he added.

Fakhrizadeh, who headed the Defense Ministry's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research, was assassinated in a multi-pronged attack involving at least one explosion and machinegun fire by a number of assailants in Absard city of Tehran Province's Damavand County.

The expert was murdered in his car by terrorists, who blew up a pickup — a Nissan sedan — laden with explosives and fuel on the way of the car carrying Fakhrizadeh and then started shooting at his car and security guards.

Iranian officials have voiced suspicion that the Israeli regime might be behind the assassination. Israel has

carried out a number of assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade.

"Terrorists murdered an eminent Iranian scientist today. This cowardice—with serious indications of Israeli role—shows desperate warmongering of perpetrators. Iran calls on int'l community—and especially EU—to end their shameful double standards & condemn this act of state terror," Zarif said in a tweet, hours after the Friday attack.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had mentioned Fakhrizadeh in a 2018 presentation on the alleged atomic archive of Iran that Israel claims it stole from a warehouse in southern Tehran.

Netanyahu said at the time that he identified Fakhrizadeh as the head scientist in Iran's nuclear program, and asked people to "remember that name".

Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has said the U.S. and Israeli regimes are responsible for the assassination.

"The cowardly assassination of Martyr Fakhrizadeh — with serious indications of Israeli responsibility in it — is another desperate attempt to wreak havoc on our region as well as to disrupt Iran's scientific and technological development," Takht Ravanchi wrote in a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and President of the



UN Security Council Inga Rhonda King on Friday.

The envoy warned against any adventurist moves by the United States and Israel against Iran, particularly during the remaining period of the current administration of Donald Trump, saying the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its rights to take all necessary measures to defend its people and secure its interests.

Sanders slams Fakhrizadeh assassination as reckless, provocative

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders has condemned the assassination of Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh as a "reckless, provocative, and illegal" act intended to undermine diplomacy between Tehran and Washington.

"The assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was reckless, provocative, and illegal," Sanders wrote in a tweet on Sunday.

He added: "As a new administration takes power, it was clearly intended to undermine U.S.-Iran diplomacy. We must not allow that to happen. Diplomacy, not murder, is the best path forward."

Fakhrizadeh, a senior nuclear and defense scientist, was assassinated by unknown gunmen in a small city northeast of Tehran on Friday evening. After sustaining injuries from a car explosion and bullets, he was taken to the hospital with a helicopter, but died a few hours later.

Iran has suggested that Israel was involved in the assassination, partly due to a speech Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made two years ago.

In a presentation in April 2018, Netanyahu repeated baseless claims about the Iranian nuclear program and called Fakhrizadeh as the captain of Iran's nuclear program. "Remember that name," he said.



Other American figures also reacted to the assassination.

Chris Murphy, a senator from Connecticut, said on Friday that every time "America or an ally assassinates a foreign leader outside a declaration of war, we normalize the tactic as a tool of statecraft. The risk is that the security benefit can be very short lived."

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Iran slams normalization with Israel as betrayal of Muslims

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran on Saturday condemned the normalization of relations between certain members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Zionist regime as a betrayal of Muslims.

Reza Najafi, the Foreign Ministry director general for International Peace and Security, said the move was a violation of the 57-nation body's principles.

Najafi made the remarks at the 47th session of the OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers in Niger's capital, Niamey.

"Any interaction with the fake and illegal Zionist regime, whose life involves 60 years of crime, murder, torture and displacement of thousands of Palestinians, is considered a betrayal of Muslims and a violation of the fundamental principles of the OIC and will deal a serious blow to the unity of the organization's member states and the Muslim Ummah," he said, Press TV reported.

"A few members of the organization betrayed the Muslim Ummah by revealing their secret relations with the Zionist regime," he added.



During an official ceremony hosted by U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House in mid-September, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signed normalization pacts with Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdullatif Al Zayani.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, in an October meeting with his Saudi counterpart, called on Saudi Arabia to normalize relations with Israel. "We hope Saudi

measures," he remarked.

Natanz is a uranium enrichment center located in the city of the same name in central Isfahan Province. On July 2, Iran announced an incident affected a shed under construction at the Natanz complex, but it caused no casualties and failed to stop the enrichment work at the facility.

Kamalvandi said on September 6 that the elements and reasons behind the blast have been identified, but he did provide further details.

"The elements and reasons behind the act of sabotage at the Natanz facility have been identified, but it's not possible to give out further information since the issue is under investigation," he said.

In the aftermath of the Friday assassination, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called on Iranian experts to preserve the scientific and technical legacy of the nuclear physicist, and ordered punishment of Fakhrizadeh's assassins.

President Hassan Rouhani also warned of a conspiracy hatched by the Zionist regime to incite chaos in the region, vowing that the Islamic Republic would respond to the assassination at the proper time.

‘Majlis focusing on 20% uranium, expelling IAEA inspectors, leaving JCPOA’

Senior MP says Fakhrizadeh assassination will change nuclear policy

1 → “Right now, the Majlis will focus on four issues, which I will personally pursue: 1- starting 20-percent [uranium] enrichment, 2- expelling all Agency’s inspectors, 3- ending cooperation with the Agency, 4- withdrawing from the JCPOA,” the senior lawmaker said, referring to an acronym for the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

The Parliament has been reviewing a plan called “strategic action to lift sanctions” since at least early November. The plan is part of a broader strategy that aims to lift the United States sanctions on Iran. Iranian lawmakers had put forward a “strategic bill to lift sanctions” in early November that aims to force the U.S. into lifting sanctions on Iran through doubling down on nuclear activities. The Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee held two meetings last week to discuss the bill. During the meetings, the lawmakers approved some of the bill’s articles requiring the government to raise uranium enrichment levels to 20%.

Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the parliamentary committee, said the committee discussed the bill on Monday and approved three articles of it.



“Despite Corona restrictions in Majlis (Parliament), the meeting was attended by two-thirds of the members. Discussing articles of the Strategic Action Plan for the

lifting of sanctions was on the agenda. In today’s meeting, three articles of this plan were reviewed and the opinions of the representatives were obtained and amendments

were made to the clauses. Representatives from the Foreign Ministry, the Central Bank, and the Parliamentary Research Center also attended the meeting,” Amouei told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA) on Monday. According to Amouei, the three articles that were discussed on Monday include measures that, if adopted, would significantly increase Iran’s nuclear activities.

The spokesman said the first article of the bill is about obliging the government to raise the uranium enrichment level to 20%. The second article is about increasing Iran’s stockpile of low-enriched uranium. And the third article stipulates that the government and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) must use IR-2M and IR-6 advanced centrifuges. These three articles were all approved by the lawmakers, according to Amouei.

The 9-article bill compels the government to jump-start Iran’s nuclear program by increasing the country’s nuclear activities such as producing at least 120 kilograms of enriched uranium with 20 percent purity at the Fordow nuclear facility every year and using more advanced centrifuges.

There will be no JCPOA 2: lawmaker

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Fada Hossein Maleki, a member of the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, responded on Sunday to recent remarks by Saudi Arabia’s top diplomat, saying Riyadh is not in a position to call for another nuclear deal on Iran’s nuclear program.

Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud has recently called for a new nuclear deal with Iran to replace the existing one, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“Riyadh is not in a position to address international issues especially the JCPOA,” Maleki told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA) on Sunday.

According to the lawmaker, the outcome of the United States presidential election has dealt a severe blow to the Saudis.

“In fact, Trump was feeding on various countries such as Saudi Arabia and has pursued the warmongering policies of Riyadh in the region,” he added.

The lawmaker’s remarks came in response to bin Farhan’s interview with CNBC in which he claimed that President Donald Trump’s “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran has set the groundwork for a new agreement with Iran and that Saudi Arabia should be a part of any potential negotiations between the incoming U.S. administration and Iran on a new nuclear deal. The chief Saudi diplomat said Riyadh 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 its “regional malign activity.”

Such an accord could be labeled the “JCPOA++,” he added. The JCPOA is a 2015 agreement between Iran and world powers that limited the country’s nuclear activities in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. The original agreement was signed between Iran, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — China, France, Russia, the U.K., and the U.S. — Germany and the European Union.

But Trump withdrew the United States from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, calling it the “worst deal in history.” Since then, the White House has imposed sweeping economic sanctions on Iran under the “maximum pressure” policy in a bid to reach what he called a better deal with Iran.

Other signatories remain committed to the nuclear deal and refrained from going with Trump, but now that Trump seems to be losing the U.S. presidential election, there is talk that a renegotiated pact could be on the cards, with more pressure on Iran over its missile program and other regional issues. A new agreement has been touted as a “JCPOA+” — that is, like the original deal but with more conditions attached according to CNBC.

The Saudi foreign minister believes such an agreement could go even further, claiming that a “JCPOA++” deal could also seek to address Iran’s missile program and its regional

activities.

But Maleki said there would be no such deal as JCPOA++, adding that the Saudis’ offer in this regard is not important.

“In fact, the Saudis’ proposal to hold negotiations on missiles and other issues is not important at all,” remarked Maleki, a former diplomat.

The lawmaker pointed out that the next U.S. administration should take action to repair Trump’s sabotage and build trust and credibility for the United States in the international arena.

He added, “In other words, Trump’s renegade in the JCPOA should be removed by Biden.”

Last week, Mojtaba Zolnouri, the head of the parliamentary committee, also rejected bin Farhan’s remarks, saying, “These remarks indicate three things: First, the United States, the Zionist regime, and Saudi Arabia are alone, and none of them see themselves as capable enough to confront the Islamic Republic of Iran. They need the help of others. Second, the remarks of the Saudi foreign minister show the hostile ties of Saudi Arabia with the Zionist regime and the United States. [Third], neither the U.S., nor Israel, or Saudi Arabia have the right to interfere in Iran’s decisions. And Iran is free to negotiate with any country it wants.”

In addition to Zolnouri, many other Iranian officials have ruled out any prospect of a new round of talks between Tehran and Washington due to the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal.

Kharrazi: Iran to give ‘measured, decisive’ response to Fakhrizadeh assassination

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Kamal Kharrazi, the head of Iran’s Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, has said that Iran will decisively respond to the assassination of prominent nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Karrazi issued a statement on Sunday, expressing sympathy over the assassination of the nuclear scientist.

“Undoubtedly, the Islamic Republic of Iran will give a measured and decisive response to the criminals who took Martyr Fakhrizadeh from the Iranian nation.



Is it not that the morning is near?” the statement said.

The statement also showered the late scientist with praise, calling him “a general of science and technology” who has never stopped short of pursuing his scientific goals to defend and maintain the country’s security.

On Friday at 14:30, nearly 10 people attacked the convoy of Fakhrizadeh on a highway in the small city of Absard in Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of the capital Tehran. The scientist lost his life during the attack while his bodyguards were severely injured.

Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel, which has carried out many assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade.

“Terrorists murdered an eminent Iranian scientist today. This cowardice—with serious indications of Israeli role—shows desperate warmongering of perpetrators. Iran calls on int’l community—and especially EU—to end their shameful double standards & condemn this act of state terror,” Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet, hours after the Friday attack.

Implementation of Additional Protocol on the line

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — As the nation mourned the assassination of prominent nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, Iranian lawmakers made major strides toward halting the implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Although putting an end to the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol has now been under consideration for nearly a month, but the Friday attack on the nuclear scientist has given special momentum to the Iranian Parliament’s efforts to significantly resume the nuclear activities most of which were put on hold after the implementation of the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

On Friday at 14:30, nearly 10 people attacked the convoy of Fakhrizadeh on a highway in the small city of Absard in Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of the capital Tehran. The scientist lost his life during the attack while his bodyguards were severely injured. Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel, which has carried out many assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on Friday that the attack was carried out with “serious indications of Israeli role”.

This attack raised hackles in Tehran, prompting lawmakers to expedite the legal process of passing a bill that would remarkably increase Iran’s nuclear activities and strictly restrict its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Last week, the Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee discussed the detail of the bill, which is called “strategic action to lift sanctions.”

The bill is part of a broader strategy that aims to lift the United States sanctions on Iran and was put forward by the lawmakers in early November. It aims to force the United States into lifting sanctions on Iran by doubling down on

nuclear activities.

If passed, the bill would compel the government to considerably increase nuclear activities such as increasing uranium enrichment level to 20% and employing more advanced centrifuges.

The bill also requires the government to suspend the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) three months after the ratification of it if the parties to the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers failed to uphold their obligations under the JCPOA.

Over the last few weeks, the lawmakers have been regularly holding meetings to discuss the details of the bill. The martyrdom of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh has only intensified these meetings, especially after the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei called on all authorities to continue the scientific works of the late scientist.

“All authorities should put two things seriously on agenda, first investigate the crime and decisively punish the perpetrators and those who ordered it, and then continue scientific and technical efforts of the martyr in all sectors in which he was involved,” the Leader said in a statement Saturday, a day after Fakhrizadeh was assassinated in Absard.

In line with the leader’s directive, the Parliament held a session behind closed doors on Sunday to discuss the assassination of the scientist and the bill to lift sanctions. Following the session, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said the lawmakers have discussed the bill and that it will be finalized this week. He referred to the bill as a response to the killing of Fakhrizadeh.

“This plan will strengthen the industry and the practical achievements of nuclear scientists and pave the way for Iran to overcome sanctions. This law, along with the reactions of other relevant agencies, in addition to reviving Iran’s nuclear industry, creates deterrence against the enemy and

security for the people,” Ghalibaf said.

The bill provides a step by step process for the government to halt the implementation of the Additional Protocol. According to the bill, the government would be obliged to prevent any foreign access and monitoring beyond the Additional Protocol within two months after the enactment of the bill. And if oil exports and banking ties between Iran and Europe were not normalized within three months after the enactment of the bill, the government would be obliged to halt the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol.

This strategy has gained steam in recent days, with some officials even calling on the government to reconsider co-operation with IAEA.

“The least slap that we can give to the perpetrators of this terrorist crime is that our government should stop the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol and that the Nuclear Energy Organization should reconsider the inspection regime and immediately put on the agenda minimal measures such as suspending the online broadcasting of cameras, reducing or suspending inspectors, and imposing restrictions on inspectors’ access to Iranian nuclear sites and scientists,” Mohsen Rezaee, the secretary of the Expediency Discernment Council, said in a meeting with the family of the late scientist.

The assassination of Fakhrizadeh once again raised questions on the logic of Iran’s compliance with the Additional Protocol, with some pundits asking why Iran should abide by the provisions of the Additional Protocol while other parties to the JCPOA don’t keep up their end of the bargain. How did the Additional Protocol benefit Iran over the past few years? Why should Iran keep abiding by the Additional protocol while its nuclear scientists are being targeted before and after the signing of the JCPOA? Did international inspectors pass information of Iranian scientists and nuclear sites on to Western intelligence agencies? Do these inspectors spy on Iran’s nuclear program?

S P O R T S

Persepolis coach Golmohammadi extends contract

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Persepolis coach Yahya Golmohammadi signed a new two-year deal that will keep him in the team until 2023.

Golmohammadi had one year left on his previous deal. He led Persepolis to their fourth Iran league title in July and also helped the Reds reach 2020 AFC Champions final.

Golmohammadi, former Iran national football team defender, says there are obstacles ahead but they’ve got one aim and that’s to win the ACL title.



“We will fight until the end to win the title,” Golmohammadi said. “There is no way but to concentrate on the future since we want to win the trophies. Persepolis are determined to win both Iran league and ACL.”

Persepolis can win AFC Champions League as the first-ever Iran team in a match which is scheduled for Dec. 19 in Doha, Qatar.

Persepolis have already extended three players’ contract. Siamak Nemat, Kamal Kamyabinia and Mehdi Abdi have signed contract extension in the previous days.

Woman weightlifter Hosseini undergoes surgery

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Elham Hosseini, who became the first Iranian woman to win a medal in an international weightlifting tournament, underwent successful knee surgery.

Hosseini underwent surgery to repair a torn meniscus. Iran Weightlifting Federation vice-president Maryam Monazami said that Hosseini will be sidelined for around six weeks.

Hosseini claimed a bronze medal at the 2019 Weightlifting IWF Naim Suleymanoglu Tournament and made history as the first-ever Iranian woman who won a medal.

Hosseini lifted 88kg in the snatch and 110kg in clean and jerk and won the bronze for a total of 198kg in the 74kg weight class.

Esteghlal coach Fekri handed one-match suspension

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal football team head coach Mahmoud Fekri has been suspended for one game due to using bad language in front of the TV camera.

He has been handed a one-match suspension by disciplinary committee of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI).

He will be suspended for Tuesday’s match against Paykan. At the end of the match against Foolad in Iran Professional League on Nov. 20, Fekri used improper language in Ahvaz.

Esteghlal suffered a 2-1 defeat in the final minutes of the match and it made the coach angry.

After the final whistle of the match, Fekri made comments as he walked along the touchline toward the tunnel at the Foolad Arena.

FIBA lauds Behnam Yakhchali

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Rising star Behnam Yakhchali stole the show in the match against Saudi Arabia in the second window of Asia Cup qualifiers.

Iran defeated their opponent 71-64 at Al-Gharafa Sports Club Multi-Purpose Hall in Doha, Qatar on Saturday.

It took a bit more effort than expected for Iran to claim the win over Saudi Arabia and they were able to do so on the brilliance of play from Yakhchali, fiba.basketball reported.

The 25-year-old has recently been playing professionally in Germany and there was interest in seeing how much he had improved from the experience. The rising star responded with a statement game to keep Iran undefeated in the Qualifiers.

Yakhchali scored half of Iran’s fourth quarter points which helped keep Team Melli up ahead of a tough Saudi Arabia team. His efficiency in scoring (50 percent from the field) and handling the ball (9 assists, 2 turnovers) is a good sign for Iran’s future as they transition from their golden generation.

Hossein Vafaei into UK Championship Snooker 2020 Round 3

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Hossein Vafaei advanced to Round 3 of the UK Championship Snooker 2020.

The Iranian snooker player beat Englishman Michael Holt 6-4 in Round 2.

Vafaei has defeated Billy Joe Castle from England 6-3 in Round 1.

He will play the winner of Mark Selby and Liam Highfield in Round 3 on Monday.

Ronnie O’sullivan, who has won the tournament seven times, more than any other player, is participating in the event.

Sahraei reinstated as head of TSE

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Ali Sahraei was reinstated as the head of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is Iran’s major stock exchange, IRIB reported on Sunday.

The board of directors of the Tehran Stock Exchange decided in a meeting that Sahraei, who was the head of TSE for two years, will be reinstated in his position for the second term.

TEDPIX hits 1.4m points on Sunday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 36,425 points to hit 1.427 million points on Sunday.

Over 16.476 billion securities worth 160.193 trillion rials (about \$3.814 billion) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.

The first market’s index rose 21,884 points, and the second market’s index increased 91,037 points.

TEDPIX gained 22,000 points, or 1.6 percent, in the previous Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The index stood at 1.345 million points at the end of the week.

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Group, Saipa Group, Social Security Investment Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Tejarat Bank, and Esfahan Oil Refining Company were the most widely followed indices.

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

Drinking water supplied to 805 villages since late March

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Drinking water has been supplied to 805 villages across Iran since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), the secretary of the national taskforce for water, wastewater information dissemination has announced.

Ali Seyedzadeh said that drinking water has been supplied for over 553,000 persons in these villages.

He said the targeted figure for this year is to supply drinking water to 1,638 villages with a total population of 979,000 persons.

Drinking water is supplied to 30 villages every week on average in the framework of the Energy Ministry’s A-B-Iran program.

Since the beginning of the first phase of the A-B-Iran scheme [the acronyms A and B stand for water, electricity in Persian] in the previous Iranian calendar year, every week several energy projects have been inaugurated across the country.



Villages are often mentioned as some keys to the development of countries, and the allocation of a proper amount of budget to rural development always brings fruitful economic results.

In Iran, where villages account for generating 20-23 percent of the value added in the country, development of rural areas has been always a top agenda of the governments’ activities.

The sustainable economic, social, and cultural development of the villages is one of the major priorities of the current government, and many projects implemented and underway in this regard have led to outstanding development in the rural regions.

It is while the sanctions have created many limitations and difficulties for the Iranian economy in recent years.

One of the sectors with noticeable achievements in this field is gas supplying, while the number of villages supplied with natural gas has doubled during the past seven years since the current government started its activity.

Based on the statistics, 18,000 villages (each week 50 villages on average) have been connected to the national gas network over the past seven years, and now about 4.8 million families in 32,000 villages enjoy natural gas in the country. It means that 82 percent of the villages are connected to the gas network.

The current government has paid 290 trillion rials (about \$6.904 billion) for supplying gas to the rural areas.

It should be noted that supplying gas to the villages has been a big help for the development of infrastructures, the establishment of complementary industries, and job creation in these areas.

While rural development has been always attached priority among the government’s projects, launching and inaugurating gas-supply projects in the rural areas has been expedited since the beginning of the sixth month of the current Iranian calendar year (August 22).

Of course, the development of the South Pars giant gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, has played a significant role in supplying gas to the villages.

The supply of drinking water to the villages has been also expedited by the current government, especially since the last Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020).

Under the framework of a program titled A-B-Iran, the Energy Ministry has inaugurated many projects to supply drinking water to the rural areas.

A-B-Iran program (the acronyms A and B stand for water and electricity in Persian) was initiated in the previous Iranian year, during which the energy minister made 31 trips to various provinces for inaugurating over 220 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion).

This program has supplied drinking water to 1.7 million people in rural areas.

The government has also initiated a plan for constructing and renovating roads in the rural areas, through which 3,000 kilometers of roads have been built, and 4,000 kilometers have been renovated in the villages with over 20 families in the past two years.

As planned, 2,500 kilometers of roads will be built or renovated in the mentioned areas by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2021).

All such programs and projects are hoped to bring sustainable development to the country’s villages and lead to boosting production, which is now seriously pursued in the country.

Monthly non-oil trade balance of \$118m achieved

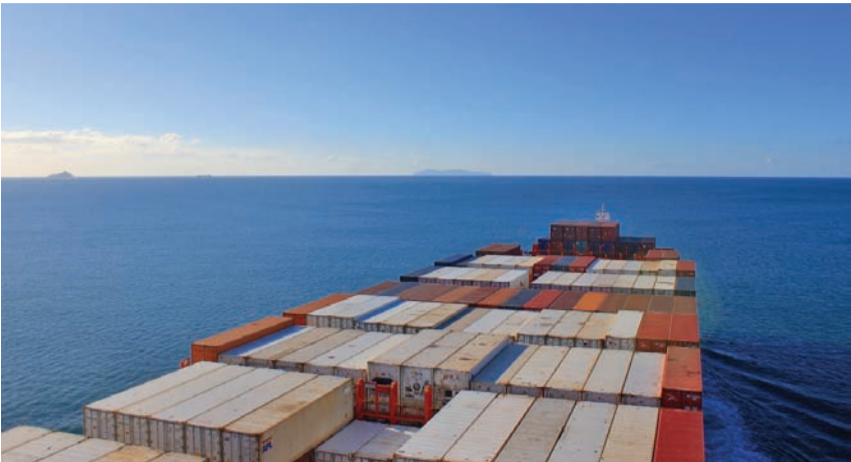
1 → Mehdi Mirashrafi has said that in the mentioned eight months, Iran imported \$23.1 billion worth of goods, while the exports stood at \$21.5 billion.

The total volume of traded goods was estimated at about 97.7 million tons, of which over 75 million tons were related to exports and about 21.8 million tons were imported goods.

According to Mirashrafi, the imports in the said period declined one percent and 18 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.

The exports also experienced a fall of 14 percent and 19 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.

Noting the downward trend of the country’s foreign trade is ending and the trade is getting back to normal, the official said: “As we announced in previous months, fortunately, the downward trend of our



country’s exports is approaching normal conditions month by month, and we hope

to have better conditions in terms of exports by the end of the year.”

NDF allocates \$238m to stabilize stock market

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s National Development Fund (NDF) has paid 10 trillion rials (about \$238.09 million) for the stabilization of the country’s stock exchange market, the board chairman of the Capital Market Stabilization Fund told IRNA on Sunday.

Mohammad-Ebrahim Agha-Babaei said that 10 trillion rials was transferred from the National Development Fund to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund on Thursday, November 26.

It was previously announced that one percent of the National Development Fund’s reserves was supposed to be transferred to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund, to stabilize the stock market, and bring growth back to this market.

The agreement that had been raised for some time on the issue of depositing some reserves of the National Development Fund in the Capital Market Stabilization Fund was accompanied by some problems and ambiguities

on the part of the National Development Fund, which led to delays in its implementation, Agha-Babaei noted.

He said that the National Development Fund was set to allocate resources to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund in several sections, adding that the resources allocated to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund are a kind of facility that is repaid annually at an interest rate of 12 percent.

In the first part, the National Development Fund has deposited 10 trillion rials with the Capital Market Stabilization Fund at an interest rate of 12 percent for a period of five years, which can be extended, he added.

According to Agha-Babaei, this can be positive for the capital market and, if necessary, can be used to increase liquidity in the stock market.

He went on to say that the Capital Market Stabilization Fund has requested a higher amount from the National Development Fund, and new funds will be deposited



soon if agreed.

These resources were deposited in the Capital Market Stabilization Fund on Thursday, December 26, and have not yet played a role in the growth of the capital market, he stated.

Over half a million tons of commodities traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Over 504,700 tons of commodities were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), which was 10 percent higher than the figure of its preceding week.

As reported by IME Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the value of traded commodities was over 47 trillion rials (about \$1.119 billion).

In the past week, the IME’s metal and mineral trading floor witnessed trading of 65,574 tons of commodities worth 11.163 trillion rials (about \$265.7 million), and more than 437,953 tons of commodi-



ties valued at 36.262 trillion rials (about \$863.3 million) were traded at the oil and petrochemical trading floor.

As previously reported, over 1.918 million tons of commodities worth 200

trillion rials (about \$4.761 billion) were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange in the eight Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 22-November 20).

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.

Garments output up 70% in 8 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of garments in Iran increased 70 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to the vice chairman of Iran Textile Exporters and Manufacturers Association (ITEMA).

Majid Nami said the ban on foreign brands import and the closure of borders due to the spread of the coronavirus and the reduction of smuggled garments have contributed to this success.

Since the beginning of this year, garment production has fluctuated, but in general the production situation has been satisfactory for the producers, he stated.

Today, the share of Iranian brands in the market has increased significantly compared to the last year, Nami underscored.

According to the last data released by the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iranian garment manufacturers exported \$35.19 million worth of clothing items to 29 foreign destinations



in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21).

“Iran exported 4,527 tons of clothing to 29 countries in the mentioned period, while last year the destination countries for the Iranian clothing were only Afghanistan, Russia, Iraq, and Yemen,” Ruhollah Latifi has

announced.

According to Latifi, Iranian garments are exported to Iraq, Kuwait, Australia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Germany, Korea, Japan, UAE, UK, Venezuela, Ivory Coast, Italy, Turkey, Canada, Qatar, Oman, Nigeria, Switzerland, Pakistan, Georgia, Spain, and Denmark.

As reported, during this period less than 2.5 tons of the said products worth \$514,441 were imported into the country which were mostly entered the country by passengers or via mail since the import of clothing is banned.

According to the chairman of Tehran’s Union of Garments Manufacturers and Sellers, domestic units are supplying 70-80 percent of the requirement for clothing inside the country.

“After the ban imposed on the imports of clothing, domestic units are taking all endeavors to boost the quality and quantity of their products in a way that we saw no shortage in clothing market before the new year holiday (early March),” Abolqasem Shirazi said.

2nd ETF to start trade soon if government accepts our proposal: SEO head

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The head of Iran’s Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) announced that the units of the second exchange-traded fund (ETF) will be traded soon if the government accepts this organization’s proposal.

“A few days ago, a proposal was submitted to the government, and if this proposal is accepted, the second ETF will start trade soon”, Hasan Qalibaf-Asl said on Sunday.

The second ETF’s director had announced in late October that the time when the fund’s units would be tradable was unclear.

Davoud Razaqi said, “As two of the four refineries, whose shares are due to be offered via this fund, have increased their capital, but the capital boosting has not been considered in the ETF’s asset, the fund’s index cannot be opened yet.”

As he said, the capital boosting has occurred at Tehran Oil Refining Compa-

ny and Isfahan Oil Refining Company.

In May, the Iranian government sold shares in three banks and two insurance companies via the first exchange-traded fund (dubbed Dara First).

The bank-based ETF holds 17 percent of government stake in Tejarat Bank, 17 percent in Bank Mellat, 18.32 percent in Bank Saderat Iran, 17.34 percent in Alborz Insurance Company and 11.44 percent in Amin Reinsurance Company.

Dara First, listed on Tehran Stock Exchange, which is Iran’s major stock exchange, was the first fund from a series of three ETFs, through them shares of some state-owned organizations and companies are planned to be offered.

The shares to be offered via the mentioned Iranian ETFs belong to those governmental bodies defined in Iran’s privatization program, a comprehensive plan seriously followed up by the government to downsize and reduce its role



in the economy.

The second ETF (dubbed First Refinery, or Dara Second), which holds government shares in four major oil refining companies, namely Tehran Oil Refining Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, Tabriz Oil Refining Company and Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, was offered on August 26.

The government owns 20 percent of shares in each refinery.

It has also a plan to divest shares in giant auto and metal companies through a third ETF (dubbed Dara Third). The third fund is expected to hold 12.05 percent of government stakes in the National Iranian Copper Industry Company, 17.2 percent in Mobarakeh Steel Company, 14.04 percent in Iran Khodro, and 23 percent in SAIPA (the two main domestic carmakers).

Meanwhile, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand said on September 7 that the government’s remaining shares in three aforementioned banks will be offered via the third ETF.

An ETF is an investment fund traded on stock exchanges, much like stocks. An ETF holds assets such as stocks, commodities, or bonds and generally operates with an arbitrage mechanism designed to keep it trading close to its net asset value, although deviations can occasionally occur.

Tel Aviv concerned that Yemeni missiles may target Israel: Yemeni analyst

➡ So, the Yemeni strike in Jeddah revealed Saudi Arabia's failure in terms of military and security protection. The strike also confirmed the lies of the Saudi media when it claims the ability of Saudi air defense to counter Yemeni missiles and drones.

Politically, the strike on Aramco in Jeddah undermined the results of the G20 summit hosted by Saudi Arabia. While it was hoped Saudi Arabia would invest in media to cover the summit, the Yemeni strike changed the balance against bin Salman and became the most important and prominent event in the international media.

The ballistic strike also conveyed the message of the Yemeni people to the Israeli enemy, since the timing coincided with the conclusion of the summit that brought together the Israeli prime minister, Netanyahu, with Muhammad bin Salman, and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

■ What are the achievements of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen?

A: The Saudi-American coalition has failed miserably in Yemen, and what it has achieved is nothing but the systematic destruction of the infrastructure and killing civilians and committing massacres against them over a period of six years.

The coalition was a treacherous stab in



the back of the Yemenis. However, the coalition just occupied a few parts of Yemen. But this does not mean that they succeeded in presenting a model or establishing a successful experience in the occupied territories.

The Saudi-led coalition, which is supported by Israel and the U.S., opened the door of the hell to itself which cannot avoid its consequences, and this will affect the Saudi regime in the future.

■ How do you assess the power of the Yemeni resistance movement?

A: The Yemeni resistance, besides its army and the popular committees, continues to accumulate factors of strength and teach the enemy harsh lessons.

The steady progress in manufacturing ballistic missiles and drones, that constantly target Saudi Arabia, are just the beginning.

■ What is your analysis of the human

rights record of the Saudis in Yemen?

A: A dark and criminal record that is shedding the blood of children and women and besieges more than twenty million Yemenis and denies them the right to medicine and healthcare.

■ What is the role of the U.S. in undermining the efforts to establish peace in Yemen?

A: For us in Yemen what is happening is American-Israeli aggression in the first place; and the Saudi and Emirati regimes are just Arab tools that aim to push them to be at the forefront of the aggression, while the actual and fundamental agenda and goals are to confront and undermine the Yemeni revolution led by Mr. Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi.

American experts as well as the Zionists participate in the operation rooms of the Saudi-led coalition. The Israeli weapons are used to kill the sons of Yemen while the Zionist leaders have more than once expressed their concern that Ansarullah will not be defeated in Yemen.

The Israelis consider the Saudi aggression (on Yemen) a preemptive war, as they have serious concerns about the possibility of the Yemeni army carrying out ballistic strikes that hit important areas within the Zionist regime.

Professor Falk: Fakhrizadeh assassination 'is an outrageous act of state terrorism'

“We should keep in mind that Pompeo is a devout member of the Christian evangelist movement that has been fanatically pro-Israeli and pro-Trump”

➡ As far as the secondary goals of the Pompeo visit are concerned, I would suggest the effort to reinforce the pro-Israeli legacy of the Trump presidency with the added goal of inhibiting the efforts of Biden's presidency to undo any of the U.S. support for these unlawful territorial expansionist moves made by Israel since 2016. It also seems that Pompeo seeks to be the Republican nominee for president in 2024, and apparently supposes that acquiring credentials as the most ardent champion of Israel will attract Zionist money and backing in the U.S.

■ Pompeo said the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, which is only aimed at pressuring Israel to stop settlements of Palestinian lands, as “anti-Semitic” and as “cancer”. How do you interpret these remarks?

A: Such unacceptable efforts to brand BDS as anti-Semitic is a further effort by Pompeo to appease the most militant Zionist elements in the United States, and should be understood in the context of my response to the prior question. During the BDS Campaign directed at South African apartheid 30 years ago there was controversy about whether this form of global solidarity was helpful to the anti-apartheid struggle, but there was never any suggestion that the advocacy of BDS was other than a constitutionally protected form of nonviolent protest. To make BDS in the context of Israel a type of hate speech or even a crime is a means to discourage a rising tide of solidarity, including in the United States with the Palestinian struggle for basic rights, including the right of self-determination.

■ Pompeo also called settlements “part of Israel” and “a recognition of the reality”. While in the Golan Heights, Pompeo also said, “This is a part of Israel and a central part of Israel.” What is the ulterior motives behind such remarks?

A: Such language, which overlooks and defies the UN consensus concerning the settlements and Syrian territory, is a further expression of the unconditional support of the Trump presidency for the most controversial encroachments on Palestinian territorial rights. Prior American leaders have more cautiously adopted similar kinds of position by speaking approvingly of recognizing ‘the facts on the ground’ but refrained from claiming that these settlements were established in a manner consistent with international law, which is the salient feature of the Pompeo declarations.

■ Don't you think that Pompeo's remarks about the occupied Palestinian and Syrian lands are an example of a Machiavellian approach toward issues?

A: Such affirmations of territorial aggression are a reversion to the worst readings of cynical realism attributed to Machiavelli's The Prince, and in a context where intervening legal and moral developments have made respect for the

sovereign rights of both a foreign country (Syria) and of an Occupied Nation (Palestine) foundational principles of peace and security in our world of the 21st Century. Such remarks should be viewed as expressions by Pompeo of complicity with the commission of Israeli international crimes.

■ What is your opinion of his statement that “settlements can be done in a way that are lawful and appropriate and proper?”

A: This kind of opinion presupposes and necessitates Palestinian consent by a political body legitimately representing the Palestinian people. It is difficult to imagine such consent being given unless there is established one democratic state for both peoples on the basis of complete equality between Jews and Palestinians (including Christians, Druse, Bedouin minorities), which means the abandonment of the Zionist project to establish ‘a Jewish state.’

■ Some view Pompeo as the ideologist who manipulates Trump and shapes his approach toward international issues such as the occupied lands, the Paris climate accord or the 2015 Iran nuclear accord. What do you think?

A: It may be that Pompeo is entrusted with the implementation of the Trump approach to the Middle East, but I am not aware of any evidence that he exerts the kind of influence that his son in law, Jared Kushner, exerted on Trump during recent years. Pompeo is a bureaucrat with his own ambitions, and an outlook, especially on Israel, that resembles that of Trump. We should keep in mind that Pompeo is a devout member of the Christian evangelist movement that has been fanatically pro-Israeli and pro-Trump.

■ Are not Pompeo's visits to the occupied lands viewed as a revitalization of colonialism?

A: To the extent that Israel is itself properly perceived as a product of late settler colonialism, which has been long delegitimized, Pompeo's visits and shows of support are an anachronistic endorsement of colonialism. I would regard Israel as a remnant of colonialism rather than part of any wider political process of ‘revitalization.’ The remarkable achievement of the Zionist movement was to establish and legitimize, with geopolitical help from the West, a colonial state at a historical time when colonialism was in its death throes elsewhere, that is, contrary to the flow of history. I believe that we are living in a post-colonial world order, and this struggle around the future of Israel is the last major battlefield.

■ Some believe that an inaction by the international community emboldened the Trump administration to go ahead with manipulation of facts and replace international law with violation of international law. What is your view?



A: There is no doubt in my mind that the weak responses to such prior unlawful Trump moves as moving the American Embassy to Jerusalem, validating Israeli sovereign rights to the Golan Heights, and greenlighting the annexation of portions of the West Bank gave Netanyahu the backing he wanted to go further and further, including in this connection the assassination of Mr. Fakhrizadeh, which is an outrageous act of state terrorism. This act can be viewed as a provocation of sufficient magnitude, to push tensions toward a regional war. There may well be the belief in Israel that Netanyahu should take advantage of these last days of the Trump presidency as he may not enjoy the same level of geopolitical support from Washington during the Biden presidency.

■ Such things are being done in 2020. The way the Trump administration treats the occupied lands reminds us of colonialist era. How do the current and next generations will look into such illegal acts?

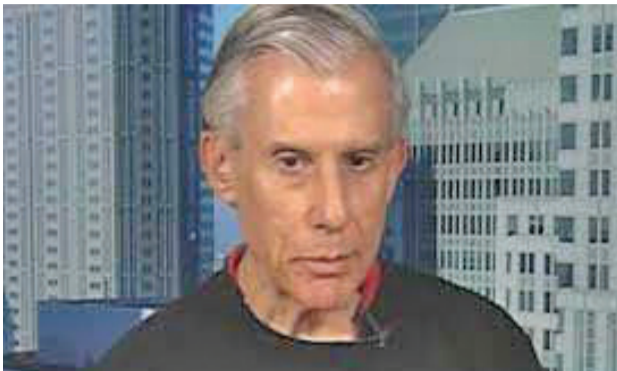
A: I believe more and more people in the West are viewing Israeli behavior as a toxic combination of settler colonialism and apartheid racism, and within that frame of reference are becoming more aware that Israel is setting a dangerous example of the persistence of colonial excesses, which have produced decades of suffering for the Palestinian people dispossessed from or victimized in their own society. Europe, too, has been complicit, less actively engaged than the U.S., but still complacent in not accepting their responsibility for leaving this legacy of colonialism insufficiently attended.

■ Don't you think that Trump's and Pompeo's records have been a great blow to the Republicans?

A: Unfortunately, not if the reference of your question is to the Middle East where Trump and to a lesser extent Pompeo are appreciated by both political parties in the U.S. for achieving normalization agreements with several Arab states, thereby weakening the effort to isolate Israel diplomatically and economically in the region until a genuine peace with the Palestinians is reached. Many Republicans, mostly privately, are critical of Trump for his mismanagement of domestic issues, especially the COVID pandemic, and for his unwillingness to concede defeat in the recent election, posing a serious constitutional crisis. There is also some muted concerns about stumbling into an unwanted war with Iran, but for most Republicans the bipartisan consensus favorable to Israel remains unquestioned national policy.

Saudi Arabia's abominable human rights record

➡ Weeks later, nine more arrests and detentions followed. Targeted individuals were activists for women's rights in the kingdom. A few are males who support gender equality were also arrested. Most individuals targeted remain detained. It was learned that they were “subjected to torture, inhuman and degrading conditions of detention, solitary confinement, and unfair trial processes.”



In the report, human rights lawyer Baroness Helena Kennedy called on G20 nations to boycott the virtual November 21-22 Riyadh summit until wrongfully detained women are free. Other charges included forcing them to watch pornography, along with performing other sexual acts on interrogators.

One detained woman was reportedly told: “I'll do whatever I like to you, and then I'll dissolve you and flush you down the toilet.” Another woman said Saudi king Salman's younger brother, prince Khalid bin Salman, oversaw what went on, at one point saying: “I can do anything I like to you.”

Commenting on her report, Baroness Kennedy said horrendous abuses endured by detained women in the kingdom wouldn't be tolerated in “decent nation(s),” adding: “Being expected to deliver for interrogators, what that has done to the soul of a woman is so terrible.”

Saudi abuses against nonviolent activist women are typical of how their ruling authorities always operate — showing contempt for the rights of ordinary people, tolerating no dissent.

Crown prince Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) is the kingdom's torturer assassin-in-chief. He personally signed off on the October 2018 brutal murder and dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi in the kingdom's Istanbul consulate. In 2017, he arrested and detained hundreds of royal family members and Saudi businessmen. Held under house arrest at Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton hotel, they were forced to pay tens or hundreds of billions of dollars in cash and assets to the regime for release — MBS grand theft on the phony pretext of rooting out corruption.

He consolidated power by eliminating rivals and terrorizing potential ones. Royal family members, Saudi businessmen, and others in the kingdom not willing to affirm loyalty to his rule risk arrest, detention, torture and elimination.

Since appointed crown prince in June 2017 — gaining power because his father's mental and physical deterioration — he's ruthlessly gone all-out to solidify it unchallenged. He likely OK's sexual and other torture of detained women activists.

UN secretary general Guterres is largely silent about Western, Israeli and Saudi high crimes, serving their interests instead of condemning them. As long as Saudi Arabia is oil rich, its wealth used to invest in Western countries and buy their weapons, as well as partnering in their regional wars, their ruling authorities will turn a blind eye to the worst of kingdom high crimes.

Stephen Lendman is an American award-winning author, syndicated columnist and Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG).

Saudi-led coalition targets areas near Sana'a airport

Yemen's Ansarullah accused the Saudi-led Arab coalition on Sunday of targeting areas under their control in capital Sana'a.

The coalition launched two airstrikes near the Sana'a International Airport, the Yemeni broadcaster al-Masira reported.

The Saudi-led coalition has not yet issued a response.

Yemen has been beset by violence since 2015, when a Saudi-led military coalition launched a devastating air campaign aimed at rolling back Ansarullah and Yemeni resistance forces.

Thousands of people have been killed in the Saudi-Emirati attacks on Yemen.

Yemen is facing “the world's worst humanitarian crisis,” according to the UN, and many people do not have the essentials they need to survive such as food and water.

The UNICEF has said that millions of children's lives are at “high risk” as the country moves closer to famine.

(Source: al-masira)

Resistance News

Israeli settler runs over Palestinian woman, two children

An Israeli settler in a speeding car ran over two children and a woman near the Ibrahim Mosque in al-Khalil on Sunday morning



Local sources said that the children and the woman were taken to hospital for treatment following the incident.

Al-Khalil city and its villages are always targeted by Jewish settlers under protection of the Israeli army. It is the second most targeted Palestinian city after Jerusalem.

There are more than fifty Israeli settlement outposts in the province with 30,000 Jewish settlers who exert all possible efforts to tighten their grips on the city and its environs.

Afghanistan: 34 people killed in two suicide bombings

At least 34 people have been killed in two separate suicide bombings that targeted a military base and a provincial chief.

In eastern Ghazni province, 31 soldiers were killed and 24 others wounded on Sunday when an attacker drove a military vehicle full of explosives onto an army command base before detonating it, according to an official in Afghanistan's national security council, who spoke anonymously because he was not permitted to speak directly to the media.

The attack was also confirmed by interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian, though he did not provide details on casualties.



Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, when contacted by Reuters news agency, did not confirm or deny responsibility.

Afghanistan has seen a spate of car bombings over the last few months, despite peace talks currently under way between the Kabul government and the Taliban in Qatar.

This is the first time the two sides hold face-to-face talks to try to end the country's decades-long war.

Taliban talks

In southern Afghanistan, a suicide bomber targeted the convoy of provincial council chief Attajan Haqbayat in Zubal, killing at least three people and wounding 12 others, including children.

Haqbayat survived the Sunday attack

with minor injuries, though one of his bodyguards was among those killed, said provincial police spokesman Hikmatullah Kochai.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility.

Attacks have killed more than 50 people in the capital Kabul in recent weeks, including two assaults on educational centres and a rocket attack.

The three Kabul attacks were claimed by the armed group ISIL (ISIS), but Afghan officials blamed the Taliban — which has denied any involvement.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Iran considering to waive visas for D8 countries

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran is considering abolishing visa rules for passport holders from the group of Developing Eight (D8) countries.

D8 citizens will not need visas for trade or medical purposes, Iran's deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri has said, ISNA reported on Saturday.

The official, however, did not provide more detail on further proceedings, while he was addressing an online conference attended by the member states.



D8, also known as Developing-8, is an organization for development cooperation among the following countries: Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey.

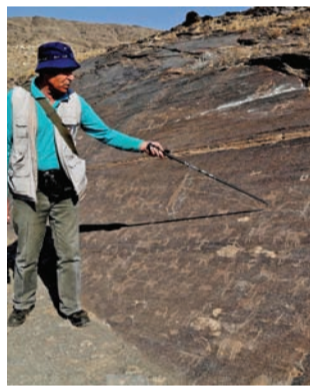
The establishment of D-8 was announced officially through the Istanbul Declaration of Summit of Heads of State/Government on June 15, 1997. The objectives of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation are to improve member states' position in the global economy, diversify and create new opportunities in trade relations, enhance participation in decision-making at the international level, and improve standards of living.

Iranian, Japanese archaeologists hold conference online

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The 20th Iran-Japan archaeological conference has been held online with over 100 experts, students and researchers were in attendance.

The webinar was held on Saturday in close collaboration with the Iranian embassy in Tokyo, the Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism, and Kanazawa University.

The objectives of the conference, according to organizers, were to help archaeologists and students gain a deeper and more balanced understanding of Iranian archaeological and historical research.



It also aimed to give them a better grasp of the corporate activities of Iran and Japan.

A history of Iran-Japan archaeological research; southern Iran (Fars region) during the Neolithic period; excavations at Kale Kub in South Khorasan, eastern Iran; and bronze working technology in transitional Iron Age; and excavation at Aliabad (A Bronze Age site in Boukan area, northwest Iran) were among topics discussed in the event.

The early history of Iran may be divided into three phases: the prehistoric period, beginning with the earliest evidence of humans on the Iranian plateau (c. 100,000 BC) and ending roughly at the start of the 1st millennium BC; the protohistoric period, covering approximately the first half of the 1st millennium BC; and the period of the Achaemenian dynasty (6th to 4th century BC), when Iran entered the full light of written history.

Some experts say that the civilization of Elam, centered off the plateau in lowland Khuzestan, is an exception, for written history began there as early as it did in neighboring Mesopotamia (c. 3000 BC).

Majestic Si-o-Se-Pol to be brighter by new lighting system

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A new lighting system will be installed at Si-o-Se-Pol, the 17th-century arch-bridge widely known as a masterpiece of Persian architecture in Isfahan, central Iran.

Some reports were noting some citizens and tourists were electrocuted last summer, and it turned out that that the lighting installations of Si-o-Se-Pol are gradually depreciating and they need restoration and improvement, an official with Isfahan Municipality has announced.



Since then, due to the risk of electrocution, citizens and tourists were not allowed to enter surrounding areas of the bridge in Zayandeh Rood, Hossein Amiri said on Sunday.

The same situation has been reported for 17th-century Pol-e Khaju, which stands tall nearby, the official added.

Over the drying up of the river and also the restrictions following the outbreak of the coronavirus, this is the appropriate time to carry out the lighting project, the official added.

He also noted that the lighting installations of the lower floors of the bridge is planned to be collected new lights and system will be installed.

Si-o-Se-Pol, also known as Allahverdi Khan, was completed in the very early 17th century. It is one of a small number of Safavid-era bridges that span the Zayanderud River.

The 298m-long monument has been served as both bridge and dam. It is a popular meeting place when the locals and travelers gather to watch the sunset and catch the moment alongside the arches.

Nine Iranian places where the slopes are less skied

By Afshin Majlesi

For most powder chasers and snowboarders the idea of an off-piste paradise normally conjures up thoughts of the Alps, Alaska peaks, or those in Japan.

Many would not consider looking to the Iranian mountainous resorts, which their altitudes overshadow those of even the highest ones in the Alps.

Amongst uppermost are Dizin, Tochal, Shemshak and Darbandsar, all situated within some 100 kilometers of the capital city and up to international standards.

● Below-the-radar resorts?

Experienced skiers and snowboarders recognize the clear benefits of below-the-radar resorts which could be cozier with fewer powder-chasers, shorter lift lines, and more reasonable tickets and lodging.

Fear of robust coronavirus pandemic has made us more cautious and isolated than before with dictations of strict lockdown and social distancing. For some, this is the winter to heat a pot of soup and play a board game by the fireplace to elude the public!

Here are nine under-the-radar resorts that offer plenty of challenge amid a winter of social distancing; a good time to avoid crowds and hang with the family when there is not a wealth of other amenities or activities attracting avid skiers off-slope:

● Pooladkaf

Surrounded by amazing landscapes and natural sceneries, Pooladkaf is Iran's south-most ski resort. It is located near Sepidan, a leisure place for wealthy families from Shiraz. Imagine that it's only 300km away from Kuwait which has a subtropical desert climate; mild winters and very hot summers.

Created during the sixties, an industrial group 'Pooladkaf' manages the resort since 2000. The group invested a lot to develop the resort and attract more tourists. Even though Pooladkaf stays relatively small, it offers a large choice of activities: skiing, snowmobile riding, restaurant, horse riding, après-ski, hotel, mountain bike, and hiking. Pooladkaf is the fifth biggest ski resort



in Iran, after the famed Dizin, Shemshak, Darbandsar, and Tochal ski resorts.

● Chelgerd

At the heart of Zagros mountain range, 200km away from Isfahan, the village of Chelgerd, home of the Bakhtiari tribe, has a lot to show.

Chelgerd ski resort is a popular destination for skiers and tourists from Isfahan and Share Kord. The ski area is tiny and at the snow front, small slopes give easy access to beginners. An old snow groomer is driven by the manager who does its best for grooming the slope. The main building located at the snow front hosts a gym with: Wrestling mat, fitness machines, a ping pong table, and showers.

● Fereydunshahr

This ski resort is named after a nearby city of the same name which is located at an elevation of 2500m in the Zagros mountain range. The city is renowned for its tough winter and heavy snowfalls.

Expert skiers from Isfahan come here to practice when they don't compete in bigger ski resorts of Shemshak, Darbandsar, or Dizin.

The resort is equipped with a rope tow for beginners, a ski lift, and two-seat chairlifts which gives you access to a hipline. From the summit, you can reach numerous off-pistes trails.

● Sahand

This ski resort is situated in northwest Iran in the Sahand mountain some 50km away from Tabriz.

According to locals, you can sometimes ski until June in this freezing resort. For beginners, a rope tow and a green slope are located just a few meters away from the main building. For expert skiers, two ski lifts give fast access to the summit.

The vertical drop and steepness of the slope are good reasons for visiting this small ski resort. In the main building, you will find a restaurant and a rental ski shop.

● Khoshakoo

Khoshakoo ski resort is situated in northwest Iran with Urmia as the nearest city. The resort is equipped with two ski-lifts. Khoshakoo is a haven for paragliding as well.

The resort is a famous spot for "Tubing", using old inner trucks' tubes. Surely one of the most dangerous sport on earth.

● Alvares

Located in Ardabil province, northwest of Iran, Alvares ski resort is well-known for its tough winters, "cool" summers, beautiful landscapes, the quality of its dairy products (butter, doogh, ashe, honey...), and its numerous hot springs.

The small town of Sareyn (8,000 inhabitants), located 20km away from the resort, is famous across Iran for its spas where travelers come from all over the country to relax. The resort is equipped with a two-seat chairlift, a rope tow for beginners, and a "Pisten Bully" snow groomer.

● Bijar

The specificity of this resort is its proximity to the cities of Zanjan and Hamedan.

Kids, elders, women, men... Everyone comes with enthusiasm to gather and ski together. Bijar ski resort is equipped with a ski lift and a snow groomer.

Nestled at 2,000m above sea level, the nearby town of Bijar, located in Kurdistan province, is famous worldwide for the quality and the beauty of its handmade Persian carpets.

● Tarik Dareh

Tarik Dareh ski resort, which is known for being windy, is situated some 10km away from Hamedan.

The resort is equipped with a ski-lift, and a two-seat chairlift, serving both sides of the valley. Its slope is also served during summer for grass skiing.

Though it bears a great potential for ski touring and off-piste skiing, the staff are reluctant to let skiers going off the trails following a huge avalanche a few years ago.

● Kakan

In southwest Iran, about a hundred kilometers north of Shiraz, stands the small ski resort of Kakan. It can be reached within 20 minutes drive from the city of Yasujm, and the resort is settled next to the protected area of Dena, which concentrates more than 40 summits higher than 4000m!

The ski area can be summarized as having two ski lifts (one is out of order) and two rope tows. The surrounding area is a heaven for ski touring as well.

Saffron farming lifting agritourism in central Iran

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Over the past couple of years, saffron farming has dramatically been developed in lands encircling Natanz, a phenomenon that local tourism officials believe could help develop agritourism across the central Iranian town.

Saffron production and harvest has increased significantly during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20 - September 20), Natanz tourism chief, Hossein Yazdanmehr announced on Sunday.

Saffron festivals were held in Natanz in the past two years, attracting hundreds of domestic and foreign holidaymakers, which helped the oasis town win fame as an agritourism hub.

However, this year's edition of the festival is still up on the air due to the coronavirus outbreak, he said.

As the region has a proper climate, saffron cultivation has scheduled to be implemented near the two cities of Natanz and Badrud over more than two months, the official added.

So far saffron bulbs have been harvested from 332 hectares of farms across Natanz, he said.

"Considering that saffron is the most valuable plant in Iran and it has special characteristics in prevention and treatment of some diseases, farming it by the means of proper planning and investment holds a significant potential to attract many domestic and foreign visitors,"

the official explained.

Back in August, the official announced that a case study is being carried out on Natanz to find out how saffron farming may contribute to the development of agritourism in the region.

Iranian saffron is known as the "red gold". Saffron is a magical ingredient in Persian culture, from aromatic foods and colorful desserts to the physical and spiritual medicine. Every year, the saffron harvest season begins in early November. While most other vegetation is gone, the bright purple flowers cover the fields and create an outstanding landscape in dry regions in Iran.

Major saffron producers of Iran are located on the east side of the country. If you would like to see the biggest market, head to Mashhad, which is also known for its religious importance.

Agritourism and nature-tourism enterprises might also include outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, wildlife study, horseback riding), educational experiences (cannery tours, cooking classes, or tea or coffee tasting), entertainment (harvest festivals or barn dances), hospitality services (farm stays, guided tours, or outfitter services), and on-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands).

Today, agritourism is regarded as a stimulus to the imbalanced economy of agriculture sectors and the tendency



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

The ancient city of Natanz is home to several historical structures and monuments such as a 1000-year-old mosque. Located 120 kilometers northeast of the city of Isfahan, the city enjoys a beautiful landscape and a pleasant climate, which made it a summer capital during the Safavid era (1501-1736). The town is also associated with pottery making and tile production.

‘Pearl’ Palace to undergo urgent restoration

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Kakh-e-d-e-s-k Morvarid ("Pearl Palace"), once a summer royal residence in Karaj, some 30 km westward Tehran, is scheduled to undergo some rehabilitation works, a provincial tourism chief has said.

A budget of 9 billion rials (about \$215,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to the project; IRNA quoted Abbas Nuri as saying on Sunday.

In collaboration with Karaj Municipality, the project will be involving repairing the

palace's dome to prevent it from further damages, the official added.

Also known as Shams Palace, the monument was constructed from 1966 to 1968 under the administration of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, by American architect William Wesley Peters as a residence for princess Shams Pahlavi, elder sister of Mohammadreza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran.

The expense of building this palace that is located in the popular region of Mehrshahr, which is famous for its pleasant

climate, summed up to one million dollars at the time.

The palace covers an area of one hundred and eleven hectares. The structure of the building is made from cement and the sky; it looks like a flounder fish that is holding a pearl. All architectural spaces are built under a spiral roof with various skylights in the shape of pearl beads. In the northern corner of the palace and the outer area of its lake, it has been designed and built in the shape of flounder fins.

Intl. webinar resonates Kerman's handicrafts, tourism attractions

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — An international webinar has recently put the spotlight on the wide-ranging handicrafts, tourist attractions, and cultural heritage existing across Iran's Kerman province, a local official announced on Saturday.

Participants from India, Brunei, Indonesia, and the Islamic Republic exchanged their views during the webinar, which was organized by Kerman Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Representative Office and Iranian embassies in the mentioned countries, CHTN quoted Kazem Hosseinzadeh, the deputy provincial tourism chief, as saying.

Pateh, hand-woven kilim carpets, coppersmithing, precious and semi-precious gemstones, hand-made knives, and potteries were among handicrafts discussed in the session, the official added.

Invitees also exchanged views on Shazdeh Garden in Mahan, Shahdad- a major part of the UNESCO-registered



Lut desert, Meymand Village, and Bam Citadel as well as an array of historical qanats dotted across the semi-arid region.

The UNESCO-tagged Bam and its Cultural Landscape is located on the southern edge of the Iranian high plateau, in Kerman Province, close to the Pakistan border. It's highly regarded as an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement.

According to UNESCO, the origins of the 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. The massive fortress and its environs were almost completely brought down to earth due to a devastating earthquake on December 26, 2003.

The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

Iran leading the world in 'science diplomacy'

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — The rate of scientific contributions of Iranian researchers to the world increased from 17 percent in 2011 to 31 percent in 2020, becoming the world's leading country in science diplomacy with 14 percent growth, according to scientific studies and analyses extracted from the Scopus International Citation Database.

Launched in 2004, Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books, and conference proceedings. Delivering a comprehensive overview of the world's research output in the fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences, and arts and humanities, Scopus features smart tools to track, analyze and visualize research.

The development of international scientific partnerships and diplomacy is one of the main policies of Iran, which is also emphasized by the country's higher education system, Mohammad Javad Dehghani, head of the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC), said.

"One of the most important indicators of scientific participation is the share of the latest joint international scientific findings in the total scientific publications of the country," he noted.

In 2016, the share of articles with international participation in total science production of the country was 20 percent, which reached 22-24-27-31 over the past 4 years, respectively, he stated.

After Iran, Poland, the United Kingdom, and Taiwan each had the highest growth in science diplomacy with 6 percent," he said, adding, among Islamic countries, Malaysia



had the highest growth after Iran, which was 5 percent.

The share of articles with international participation has accelerated from the total number of articles produced in all subject areas. But comparing 2019 with 2018, the fields of humanities and basic sciences have had the highest growth rate, he explained.

Dehghani went on to note that in 2019, about 30 percent of the scientific publications in the field of basic sciences with the participation of international researchers held the highest share among other fields.

After that, the articles of two fields of technology, engineering, and agricultural sciences are in the next position with 29 percent publications, then comes social science and medical science, he concluded.

Iranian universities on world ranking lists

Most recently, the Islamic World Science Citation Database (ISC) published the results of the ISC World University Rankings 2019, according to which 35 Iranian universities were listed among the world's top 2,000 in various subjects.

Also, forty-three Iranian universities were placed in the Islamic World University Rankings 2019 announced by the ISC.

With a scientific growth rate of 10.4 percent in 2019, Iran ranked second among the top 25 countries in the world, next to China with a growth rate of 12.9 percent, according to the Web of Science website.

In 2000, Iran's share of scientific productivity was about 0.1 percent, which reached

about 2 percent with a 20-fold increase in both Scopus and WoS citation databases.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

National AIDS week to be held amid pandemic

SOCIETY d e s k TEHRAN — The national AIDS week will be held on December 1-5 in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and with a focus on "Global Solidarity, Common Responsibility".

The health ministry has assigned each day of the week with a special theme as follows:

Tuesday, December 1: Increasing organizational resilience and access to services in crises

Wednesday, December 2: Family and HIV

Thursday, December 3: Media and HIV

Friday, December 4: Youth, adolescents, and HIV

Friday, December 5: Social responsibility and HIV

HIV and the importance of preventing it, the importance of attracting the support of policymakers, officials and organizations, HIV information and control programs and increasing inter-sectoral cooperation, introducing measures, achievements and challenges in the field of AIDS, attracting the participation of associations, NGOs and the public are among the goals of this year's slogan.

World AIDS Day

Annually observed on December 1, World AIDS Day is an important opportunity to recognize the essential role that communities have played and continue to play in the AIDS response at the international, national, and local levels.

The theme of this year is "Global Solidarity".

The world has made significant progress since the late 1990s, but HIV remains a major global public health issue.



And like many other major health issues, it faces additional challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

HIV prevention, testing, treatment, and care services are all being disrupted particularly in countries with fragile health systems. Nevertheless, all over the world, health workers and community representatives are doing their utmost to keep services going.

Over 40,000 people diagnosed with HIV

Parvin Afsar Kazerouni head of AIDS and sexual disease control department at the Ministry of Health said in December 2019 that since the beginning of the epidemic, a total of 40,735 cases of HIV have been registered in the country, 60.1

percent of which were infected with drug injection equipment and 22.2 percent due to high-risk sexual behavior.

Men held a share of 82 percent and women 18 percent among people infected with HIV, she lamented, adding, 50 percent of the patients age 20-35.

Referring to the newly diagnosed cases of HIV in the first six months of this year, she said that about a thousand people have been diagnosed during this period, 31 percent of whom were women and 69 percent were men.

HIV prevalence in the world

The human immunodeficiency viruses are two species of Lentivirus that cause HIV infection and over time acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is a condition in humans in which progressive failure of the immune system allows life-threatening opportunistic infections and cancers to thrive.

Since the beginning of the epidemic, 75 million people have been infected with the HIV virus and about 32 million people have died of HIV.

Globally, 37.9 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2018. An estimated 0.8% [0.6-0.9%] of adults aged 15-49 years worldwide are living with HIV, although the burden of the epidemic continues to vary considerably between countries and regions.

The WHO African region remains most severely affected, with nearly 1 in every 25 adults (3.9%) living with HIV and accounting for more than two-thirds of the people living with HIV worldwide.

Climate change making winter ice more dangerous

New research on the connection between climate change and winter drownings has found that reported drowning deaths are increasing exponentially in areas with warmer winters.

The study, published on Wednesday in the journal PLoS One, looked at drownings in 10 countries in the Northern Hemisphere. The largest number of drownings occurred when

air temperatures were just below the freezing point, between minus 5 degrees Celsius and 0 Celsius (between 23 degrees Fahrenheit and 32 Fahrenheit).

Some of the sharpest increases were in areas where Indigenous customs and livelihood require extended time on ice. Across the countries studied, children under the age of 9 and teenagers and adults between 15 and 39

were the most vulnerable to winter drowning accidents.

Dr. Sapna Sharma, an associate professor of biology at York University in Toronto and a lead author of the study, said that people did not always realize how global warming is increasing the risks that come with winter traditions like skating, ice fishing and snowmobiling.

"I think there's a disconnect between climate change and the local, everyday impacts," Dr. Sharma said. "If you think about climate change in winter, you're thinking about polar bears and ice sheets, but not about these activities that are just ingrained in our culture."

Those ingrained habits can lead to a false sense of security, Dr. Sharma said, the New York Times reported.

ENGLISH IN USE

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50bcm of groundwater withdrawn annually in Iran

An annual amount of 50 billion cubic meters of groundwater resources are withdrawn to supply agricultural, industrial as well as drinking water in Iran, a researcher in the field of water resources has stated.

The amount is 10 times greater than the water covering Lake Urmia, amounting to 5 billion cubic meters, ISNA news agency quoted Mohammad Reza Goldansaz as saying on Sunday.

About 60 percent of drinking water and the water used in industrial sector and 50 percent of the water consumed in agriculture sector is pumped from aquifers, he noted.

Referring to the country being highly dependent on underground water, Goldansaz said that if the resource runs out, we will face serious problems.

سالی ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از آب‌های زیرزمینی برداشت می‌شود

یک پژوهشگر حوزه منابع آب با اشاره به اینکه سالانه ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از منابع آب زیرزمینی برای مصارف خانگی، صنعت و مصارف کشاورزی برداشت می‌شود.

محمدرضا گلدانساز در گفت و گو با ایسنا اظهار داشت: سالانه حدود ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از منابع آب زیرزمینی برداشت می‌شود که این مقدار به اندازه حجم ۱۰ دریاچه ارومیه است. وی با بیان اینکه وابستگی ما به آب زیرزمینی بسیار زیاد است و اگر روزی این منبع تمام شود با مشکلات زیادی روبرو می‌شویم، اظهار کرد: در کشور ما به دلیل وجود شرایط اقلیمی خشک و نیمه خشک، وابستگی به منابع آب زیرزمینی قابل توجه است و حدود ۶۰ درصد مصارف خانگی و صنعت و حدود ۵۰ درصد مصارف کشاورزی توسط آب زیرزمینی تأمین می‌شود.

Places in Tehran province named after martyr Fakhrizadeh

SOCIETY d e s k TEHRAN — The city council of Tehran approved on Sunday a proposal to name a street in the city after martyr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Fakhrizadeh, a senior expert specialized in nuclear technology, was assassinated in a terrorist attack on Friday afternoon.



The assassination against Fakhrizadeh took place in the Absard region of Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of Tehran.

The street, previously named "Sanaye", literally meaning industries, was renamed, an area near the Ministry of Defense, as Fakhrizadeh was the head of the Defense Ministry's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND).

On Saturday, the Absard city council changed the name of city's main square, which was previously named the Municipality Square, to Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

COVID-19 control in Iran better than expected

Hotels ready to accommodate coronavirus patients

In the health system, there are two sections of hoteling and treatment; so that hotels, if being well equipped in terms of medical needs and instruments, can also house both patients and health care staff.

Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced in November that his ministry is ready to help turn certain hotels into shelters for coronavirus patients based on a plan proposed by the health ministry.

The hotel space allows patients to recover from the virus and self-isolate appropriately, minimizing the risk of transmission to others without compromising the quality of patient care.

Mostafa Ghane'i, an official with the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, said that the domestically produced COVID-19 vaccine will probably be injected into the whole population in the [next Iranian calendar year] month of Mehr (starting September 23, 2021).



All vaccines are in the pre-clinical stage and it is hoped that at least 4 vaccines to start phase 3 of the human trial in September 2021, he highlighted.

Iraj Harirchi, the deputy minister of health, has said that in Iran, 12 groups are making efforts to develop coronavirus vaccine, three of which have passed the animal testing.

Two weeks ago, Namaki expressed hope that the country will introduce the home-grown COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2021).

COVID-19 new cases, death toll

In a press briefing on Sunday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 12,950 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 948,749. She added that 658,292 patients have so far recovered, but 5,859 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 389 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 47,874, she added.

Lari noted that so far 6,081,952 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 70)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

● تمرین ۴. به سؤالات زیر جواب دهید:

۱. روز اول هفته چه روزی است؟
۲. چه روزی تعطیل است؟
۳. روز کار چه روزهایی است؟
۴. امروز چند شنبه است؟ (پنجشنبه)
۵. فردا چند شنبه است؟
۶. دیروز چند شنبه بود؟

درک

← کتاب کار

● تمرین ۱. "هن" یا "خ" بگذارید و غلط‌ها را درست بنویسید:

۱. () خوابگاه پسران در جنوب خیابان کارگر است.
۲. () دانشگاه تهران از میدان انقلاب دور است.
۳. () محمّد با منی‌بوس به دانشگاه می‌رود.
۴. () او معمولاً پیاده به دانشگاه نمی‌رود.
۵. () مردم تهران فقط سوار مترو می‌شوند.
۶. () خیابان‌های تهران معمولاً خلوتند.

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Allah will cover up on the day of resurrection the defects (faults) of the one who covers up the faults of the others in this world.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

National Commission for UNESCO to organize Afghan art festival in December

→ The victims of the ISIS terrorist attack inspired the theme of the art exhibition.
 Several gunmen attacked Kabul University, shooting at students



A poster for the Afghan Art Week at the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO in Tehran.

in their classrooms and clashing with security forces for hours.
 At least 22 people were killed and 22 others wounded when gunmen stormed the university in a brutal assault.
 Some of the students had calls from their mothers and fathers. One of the victims had 142 missed calls, and there was a final message that read, “My beloved, where are you?”
 The brutal attack has been strongly condemned around the world.
 Interested applicants are asked to submit their artworks to the organizers of the exhibition before December 5.
 The director of the commission, Hojjatollah Ayyubi, the Afghan ambassador to Iran, and a number of Afghan cultural figures will be making speeches during the opening ceremony, which will go online on the Instagram page of the commission.

“Botox” picked as best at Torino Film Festival

TEHRAN – “Botox”, a co-production between Iran and Canada directed by Kaveh Mazaheri, has been named the best feature at the 38th Torino Film Festival.



A scene from “Botox” by Kaveh Mazaheri.

The film co-written by Mazaheri and Sepinud Najian also won the award for best screenplay at the Italian festival, which took place in Turin from November 20 to 28.
 The movie is about sisters Akram and Azar. Both lie about their brother’s disappearance, telling everyone he fled to Germany. Day after day, the lie becomes bigger and more unmanageable, leading everyone to a dark and mysterious destiny.
 The award for the best short film went to “A Better You” by Eamonn Murphy from Ireland, while “The Last Hillbilly” by Diane Sara Bouzgarrou and Thomas Jenkoe from France was selected as best documentary.
 The special jury award was given to Fernanda Valadez’s “Sin Senas Particulares”, a co-production between Mexico and Spain while Mercedes Hernandez was named the best actress for her role in the film.
 Conrad Mericoffier was named the best actor for his role in “Camp de Maci” from Romania.
 A lineup of 133 films were presented during the festival.
 “Extra Sauce”, a short film co-produced by Iran and Germany, was also screened at the festival.
 Directed by Alireza Qasemi, the movie is about Hans, a mediocre, heartbroken actor, who is greeted by an Angel of Death after attempting suicide an hour before his play’s premiere. A sarcastic conversation begins as Hans tries to convince the angel that he should be brought back to the world of the living while the angel enjoys delicious cheeseburgers and lemonade, and gives the actor relationship advice.

7 research books shortlisted in documentation category of Jalal awards

TEHRAN — Seven research books will be competing during the 13th edition of the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards as the organizers announced the nominees in the documentation category on Sunday.

“From Rey to Damascus” is one of the nominees. It is IRGC senior commander Ahmad Gholami’s account of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and his fight against the ISIS terrorists in Syria.

The book is the outcome of an interview scholar Ali Mojdehi conducted in 18 sessions with Gholami. The book remained unfinished due to his death in a battle in Syria in 2016.

Another nominee is “From Sharif to Los Angeles”, in which Seyyed Mojtaba Atarodi, an Iranian professor and a suspect in a case of circumvention of the U.S. sanctions on Iran, tells his memories of a 16-month detention in a federal prison in San Francisco.

The book has been published by Sureh-Mehr based on information scholar Parviz Saadati gathered and some interviews he conducted with Atarodi.

“Ten-Eighty”, an account of the devastating floods that struck Khuzestan Province in 2019, has also received a nomination in



This photo shows the books shortlisted in the documentation category of the 13th Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards.

this category. Meisam Amiri is the author of the book.

Fazlollah Saberi’s book “Frequency 1160”

published Sureh-Mehr is also competing in this category. The book covers over one hundred interviews with the hosts of Frequency 1160, a local

radio station broadcasting in the southwestern Iranian city of Abadan in the early days of the Iran-Iraq war to encourage civilians in their resistance against the Iraqi invaders.

“Absolute Value of a Conspiracy” is a survey of the Nojeh Coup, which was attempted on July 9, 1980 by several hundred nationalist Iranian high ranking officers and paratroopers who made their way to the Nojeh air-force base near the city of Hamadan to lead a military revolt against the newly-established Islamic Republic.

The study has been carried out by Shadab Asgari and Esmaeil Qamarian Moammareh.

“Gem of Patience” (“Gohar of Patience”) is a memoir of Gohar ash-Sharieh Dastgheib, a political activist and a former reformist MP of the Iranian parliament after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. Tayyeb Pazuki is the author of the book.

“My Poor Beloved Country” is top Iranian doctor Ali Shamsa’s travelogue of England, Poland, Cyprus, France, Lebanon, South Africa and several other countries.

The nominees have been selected by a jury composed of Golali Babai, Mostafa Rahimi and Saied Allamian.

“Acasa, My Home” in World’s Best of Cinéma Vérité

TEHRAN — Romanian filmmaker Radu Ciorniciuc’s acclaimed documentary “Acasa, My Home” will be reviewed in the World’s Best section of the 14th edition of the Cinéma Vérité festival.

The World’s Best of the major Iranian documentary festival will feature a selection of documentaries acclaimed at 2020 international events across the world.

“Acasa, My Home” is about the Enache family, nine kids and their parents, who has been living for two decades in a shack in the wilderness of the Bucharest Delta: an abandoned water reservoir, one of the largest urban natural preserves in the world, with lakes and hundreds of species of animals and rare plants.

When the authorities decide to reclaim this rare urban ecosystem, the Enache family is evicted and told to resettle in the city — a reality they know nothing about. Kids that used to spend their days in nature have to learn about city life, go to school instead of swimming in the lake, and swap their fishing rods for mobile phones. Their identity has been questioned and transformed, along with their sense of freedom and family ties.

The film has been screened in numerous international events and won some awards.

The Sundance Film Festival honored the film with the World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award for Cinematography.

The documentary also was selected as best film in the Regional Competition of the 16th International Documentary Film Festival ZagrebDox by winning the Big Stamp of the Croatian event.

The Young Jury of the festival also awarded its Small Stamp to “Acasa, My Home”, which is a co-production of Romania, Finland and Germany.

The documentary is Ciorniciuc’s debut made in 2019. He co-founded the first independent media organization in Romania, Casa Jurnalistului. He works as a long-form writer and undercover investigative reporter, focusing on human rights, animal welfare and environmental issues across the globe. His work has been published on Channel 4 News, the Guardian and Al Jazeera, and has received numerous international awards, including from Amnesty International, the Royal Television Society and the Wincott Foundation.

Due to the pandemic, this year’s Cinéma Vérité will be held entirely online from December 8 to 15.

In addition, 25 films on COVID-19 by Iranian filmmakers will be competing in the festival as the organizers intend to



A poster for Romanian filmmaker Radu Ciorniciuc’s documentary “Acasa, My Home”.

attract attention to this disastrous disease by this special category.

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

The Documentary and Experimental Film Center is the main organizer of the event.

“Closed for the Season” comes into Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Mary Downing Hahn’s novel “Closed for the Season” has recently been published by the Peydayesh Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Elahesh Moradi and Milad Babanejad.

Two friends set out to solve the years-old mystery of a murder, testing their friendship and placing them in danger, in this creepy thriller by suspense master Downing Hahn.

A pair of 13-year-old boys investigate the unsolved theft and murder that took place in the old house one boy’s family has just moved into. Their quest takes them to the highest and lowest levels of society in their



Front cover of the Persian translation of Mary Downing Hahn’s “Closed for the Season”.

small Maryland town, and eventually to a dark and derelict amusement park where someone will go to any length to shut down

their investigation for good. Themes of adjusting to a new town, navigating complex friendships, and resisting a bully are deftly explored in this eerie page-turner.

Downing Hahn’s many acclaimed novels include such beloved ghost stories as “Wait Till Helen Comes”, “Deep and Dark and Dangerous”, and “Took”. A former librarian, she has received more than fifty child-voted state awards for her work. She lives in Columbia, Maryland.

“By the time my first novel was published, I was 41 years old. That’s how long it took me to get serious about writing. “The Sara Summer” took me a year to write, another year to find a publisher, and yet another year

of revisions before Clarion accepted it,” the writer has once said.

“Since Sara appeared in 1979, I’ve written an average of one book a year. If I have a plot firmly in mind when I begin, the writing goes fairly quickly. More typically, I start with a character or a situation and only a vague idea of what’s going to happen. Therefore, I spend a lot of time revising and thinking things out. If I’d paid more attention to the craft of outlining back in elementary school, I might be a faster writer, but, on the other hand, if I knew everything that was going to happen in a story, I might be too bored to write it down. Writing is a journey of discovery. That’s what makes it so exciting,” she says.

IRIB reviews “Zero Days” U.S., Israel cyber-attack on Iranian nuclear facility

TEHRAN — Channel 4 of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) reviews American filmmaker Alex Gibney’s documentary “Zero Days” on a black ops cyber-attack launched by the U.S. and Israel on an Iranian nuclear facility by means of the Stuxnet virus.



A scene from Alex Gibney’s 2016 documentary “Zero Days”.

The Stuxnet virus infiltrated its pre-determined target only to spread its infection outward, ultimately exposing systemic vulnerabilities that threatened the very safety of the planet.

The channel reviews the documentary in two episodes, one of which was broadcast on Sunday evening, and the second part will be aired Monday evening.

The documentary details claim that the American-Israeli jointly developed malware Stuxnet was deployed not only to destroy Iranian enrichment centrifuges, but also to threaten attacks against Iranian civilian infrastructure. It addresses the obvious potential blowback of this virus in possibly being deployed against the U.S. by Iran in retaliation.

The 2016 documentary was selected to compete for the Golden Bear at the 66th Berlin International Film Festival.

He is alive in our hearts and minds forever



Mohsen Fakhrizadeh
IRANIAN HERO
 A man of science

TEHRANTIMES