

Iranian Parliament passes outlines of anti-sanction plan *Page 2*



Loss against Syria happened at right time: Nikkhah Bahrami *Page 3*



UN says 233,000 killed in Yemen war in last 6 years *Page 5*



Love for nature in Iranian baby names *Page 7*

Stakes high for UAE as regional tensions soar



See page 3

Iran, not Biden, will set the tone for nuclear-related issues: MP

BY MOHAMMAD HOMAEFAR
TEHRAN — An Iranian legislator said on Tuesday it will be Iran, not U.S. President-elect Joe Biden, who will be able to set the tone for the nuclear-related issues. Seyyed Ali Mousavi made the remarks after the Iranian parliament overwhelmingly voted for a draft bill, called “Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions”, to give leverage to Iran’s diplomatic apparatus to remove the anti-Iran sanction.

“The Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions is a very productive plan, and its approval in the Majlis (Parliament) was a slap in the face of the enemies of the Islamic Republic,” Mousavi said in an interview with the *Tehran Times*. Iran’s Parliament on Tuesday passed the outlines of the strategic action plan, which aims to counteract sanctions imposed on the Iranian nation and safeguard its interests.

Continued on page 2

Iran’s Zamaninia elected as chairman of OPEC executive board in 2021

TEHRAN - Iranian Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs and Trading Amir-Hossein Zamaninia who is the country’s governor at the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has been elected as the new chairman of the OPEC executive board for 2021. The decision was made during the 180th meeting of the OPEC Conference which was held on Monday.

The mentioned board is the executive body of OPEC which directs the Organization’s affairs, implements the decisions made at meetings, reviews and decides on the reports submitted by the Secretary General, submits reports and recommendations to the ministerial meetings, prepares the budget for each calendar year and submits it to the ministerial meetings for approval and etc.

Continued on page 4

“Characteristics of the School of Martyr Soleimani” published in Russian

TEHRAN – “Characteristics of the School of Martyr Soleimani” has recently been published in Russian. The book giving a brief analysis of the personal characteristics of Commander Qassem Soleimani through his discourses and memories has been written by Hojjatolislam Ali Shirazi in Persian. The Persian version published by Khate Moqaddam Publications was introduced during a meeting at the Art Bureau of the

Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO) on November 13. Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force, the overseas arm of IRGC, was martyred during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3. Shirazi was a close friend of Soleimani and has tried to write the book based on words, memoirs and thoughts of the commander.

Continued on page 8

Virtual, actual or in between: deputy minister briefs on Iranian tourism during pandemic

BY AFSHIN MAJLESI
For a long time, guided excursions have been at the heart of travel, but like everything else, the coronavirus pandemic has upset such events, and many starting to go online.

Socially-distanced craft workshops, virtual museum tours, city tours accompanied by avatar guides are amongst examples showing us how virtual realities are adapting to the pandemic era.

After months of shocking blow, travel begins to tick up once again as existing tour companies are adapting to social distancing in other ways. Some are complementing virtual experiences. Others are making groups smaller or private and moving outdoors for ecotourism, rural excursions, and birdwatching to name a few.

In an interview with the *Tehran Times*, Vali Teymouri, the deputy tourism minister, has made it more clear how traveling and hospitality sectors of the country are adopting to the virus-related limitations, he also explained how effective changes should be made.

Teymouri on Tuesday stressed the need to re-analyze target markets, re-define tourism products and improve the level of e-services.

“Defining new standards for e-services to tourists is very necessary due to the change in the general structure of travel during the coexistence with the coronavirus and post-corona world,” the official said.

He also pointed to measures the tourism ministry has so far been adapted such as broadening the support for tourism insiders offering them relief packages including debt deferrals and low-interest, long-term loans.

Detailed health protocols and criteria for smart, responsible travels were amongst other duties of the ministry to lessen risks of travels.

He called it significant and stressed the need for consensus and exchange of experiences between countries to curb the pandemic.

He underlined that a tight link exists between tourism and employment particularly in local communities.

Continued on page 6

Israeli blockade hindering COVID-19 fight in Gaza: ex-Palestinian health minister

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
TEHRAN – The former Palestinian health minister says the Israeli blockade against the Gaza Strip for more than fourteen years has affected all aspects of life in the coastal strip including health, educational, social and humanitarian aspects, especially as the enclave is facing the Coronavirus pandemic.

Basem Naim says many countries have failed to contain the epidemic let alone the Gazans who are under blockade.

“Gaza is facing an epidemic, many countries have failed to defeat until now, so the conditions are much more difficult in the Gaza Strip,” Naim tells the *Tehran Times*.

“The conditions are much more difficult in the Gaza Strip,” the former health chief says. The following is the text of the interview:

How do you evaluate the health conditions in the Gaza Strip in the light of

the spread of the Coronavirus?

A: Health conditions in the Gaza Strip are very poor due to the Corona pandemic. Before we talk about the details of the spread of Coronavirus in the Gaza Strip, we must remember that Gaza has been suffering from an Israeli blockade for more than fourteen years; a painful and unjust blockade which affected all aspects of life in the Strip including health, educational, social and humanitarian aspects.

Gaza is facing an epidemic, many countries have failed to defeat it until now, so the conditions are much more difficult in the Gaza Strip. We are talking about a shortage of medicine that meets about 42 percent (of the needs) and a shortage of laboratory supplies that meets about 62 percent, as well as a lack of protective equipment for the health staff, and this is in addition to the general factors that affect the health sector such as poverty, unemployment and overcrowding.

Continued on page 5

French government drops draft law curbing filming of police

The French government has dropped a controversial security bill that would have curbed the right to film police officers in action after growing opposition and mass protests against it.

“The bill will be completely rewritten and a new version will be submitted,” Christophe Castaner, head of President Emmanuel Macron’s governing party in the French parliament, told a news conference.

Tens of thousands of people in cities across France marched against the draft law on Saturday, with dozens wounded during clashes with police in Paris.

The proposed legislation was passed by the National Assembly earlier in November, though it still required approval from the Senate.

According to al Jazeera, one of its most controversial elements has been Article 24, which sought to criminalize the publication of images of on-duty police officers with the intent of harming their “physical or psychological integrity”.

G20 interests override Saudi rights violations: Canadian lawyer

BY MOHAMMAD ALI SAKI
TEHRAN - Edward C. Corrigan, a Canadian analyst and lawyer, believes that Baroness Kennedy’s report about the condition of women’s rights activists is a critical step in revealing “human rights violations and suppression of dissent” in Saudi Arabia.

British human rights lawyer Baroness Helena Kennedy released a report about the conditions of women’s rights activists in Saudi Arabia. According to the report, “Saudi interrogators forced

jailed women’s rights activists to perform sex acts, hung them from ceilings and ‘tortured’ them with electric shocks.”

To know more about different aspects of this story, we reached out to Edward C. Corrigan, who is the only lawyer certified by the Law Society of Upper Canada as a specialist in Citizenship and Immigration Law.

The following is the full text of interview with Corrigan:

What is your thought on Baroness Kenne-

dy’s report about the condition of women’s rights activists in the Saudi Kingdom?

A: Baroness Kennedy’s 40-page report, titled ‘A Stain on World Leaders and the G20 Summit in Saudi Arabia: The shameful detention and torture of Saudi women,’ documented numerous human rights violations in Saudi Arabia. She called on G20 states to boycott the 2020 summit, hosted by the Kingdom, unless the women human rights activists and other political detainees are set free.

Continued on page 5



© Mehr/ Reza Akbari

Feeding migratory birds at Anzali wetland

A man is spreading feed for birds at Anzali wetland, northern Gilan province, as low temperature over the past few days has made it difficult for migratory birds to search food.

Covering more than 19,000 hectares, Anzali wetland is located near the Caspian Sea. The wetland was designated as a Ramsar site on June 23, 1975.

Assassination is a barbaric form of politics: Anglican priest

BY AMIR MOHAMMAD ESMAEILI
TEHRAN - Father Dave Smith, an Anglican priest based in Sydney, tells the *Tehran Times* that the assassination of the Iranian nuclear scientist is a “barbaric form of politics” and Israel attempts to damage Iran by this barbaric manner.

The priest also censures the West for failing to condemn the terrorist attack, saying this is an indication of double-standards and hypocrisy.

“The Western world’s failure to condemn this assassination reflects a flagrant double-standard and base hypocrisy. I remain hopeful that some European countries will break ranks with Israel and the U.S. and condemn this assassination, but I’m not holding my breath,” notes Father Dave Smith, who is the author “Christians and Muslims can be friends”.

The following is the text of the interview: **Mohsen Fakhrazadeh, an Iranian nuclear scientist, was assassinated in a terrorist attack on Friday afternoon. What is your take on that?**

A: These extrajudicial killings carried out by rogue states are appalling, both as acts of violence and in the way these states flout international law. As we know, this latest targeted assassination is one in a long line of similar murders, aimed at crippling Iran’s nuclear program. It is a barbaric form of politics.

Iran holds Israel responsible for the terrorist act. Zarif says “serious indications of Israeli role” are seen in the terror. Israeli media had announced that the plan for the assassination had failed last year. What do you think?

Continued on page 5

Iran urges IAEA to clarify position on Fakhrizadeh assassination

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based International organizations has urged the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to clarify its position on the assassination of Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

"The IAEA is first expected to pronounce clearly its position in relation with the terrorist act and strongly condemn it in clear terms," Kazem Gharibabadi tweeted on Monday night.



"The Agency has a dire responsibility vis-a-vis a Member who is receiving the highest level of inspections of the Agency and having the most transparent nuclear program through implementing various commitments, but its scientists are assassinated or under threat of assassination, and its nuclear facilities are sabotaged or under threat of sabotage," Gharibabadi added.

It came after IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi said Iran has nothing to gain from ending inspections of its nuclear facilities.

In an interview with AFP on Sunday, Grossi made the remarks in response to calls by Iranian MPs to end inspections following the assassination.

"We understand the distress but at the same time it is clear that no-one, starting with Iran, would have anything to win from a decrease, limitation or interruption of the work we do together with them," he stated.

"This is not the first time that parliamentarians have expressed themselves in this way or in very similar ways," Grossi pointed out.

"We haven't received any indication of restriction or limitation of their cooperation with us," he said. "I do not see any reason to believe that this would be the case now."

Three days after he was assassinated on a major road outside Tehran, Fakhrizadeh was laid to rest on Monday. His assassination could further hamper diplomatic efforts to salvage the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which was abandoned by U.S. President Donald Trump in May 2018.

In a Monday letter to Ghada Fathy Ismail Waly, executive director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Gharibabadi urged the international community to condemn the assassination of the prominent Iranian scientist.

"The assassination of Dr. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh is the continuation of other terrorist measures [against the Iranian nation], which started a decade ago through the assassination of several Iranian nuclear scientists in 2010, 2011 and 2012, and calls for due attention from the international community and relevant international organizations," the diplomat stated.

The Iranian envoy pointed out that clear and concrete evidence shows Israel played a role and is responsible for the terrorist attack, particularly with regard to the fact that the regime's officials have repeatedly spoken about Fakhrizadeh and also hatched plots to assassinate him.

Gharibabadi added that the Zionist regime has committed numerous crimes over the past decades and has not only been involved in terrorist measures against Iranians, but also played a role in the assassination of a number of scientists in other countries as well.

Ghalibaf urges world to break silence against terrorist acts

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has urged the international community to break its silence over the assassination of Iran's senior nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, saying silence in the face of terrorist acts threatens peace and security in the region.



Ghalibaf made the remarks in a letter to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Monday.

Silence and indifference of international community in the face of terrorists' criminal acts will lead to more arrogance of perpetrators of crimes against humanity, he wrote, Mehr reported.

"The Iranian Parliament considers this criminal act as a clear example of organized terrorism, which is in conflict and in clear violation of the principle of national sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and strongly condemns it," he said.

Ghalibaf said the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has always sought to promote peace and security in the region and the world and has played a prominent role in the fight against terrorism, emphasizes its right to act within the framework of the principle of legitimate defense in countering the organized terrorist measures.

He also said such criminal acts of terrorism that endanger international peace and security will not go unpunished.

"While condemning this terrorist act, the United Nations, for its turn, is cordially requested to provide the necessary legal platforms to prevent occurrence of such terrorist catastrophes around the world," he added.

Iranian Parliament passes outlines of anti-sanction plan

"One-sided game is over," Parliament speaker tells the West

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Parliament on Tuesday passed the generalities of a plan aimed at lifting the anti-Iran sanctions and protecting the rights of the Iranian nation.

According to Mehr, 251 lawmakers voted in favor of the generalities of the double-urgency plan, which is dubbed "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions".

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

After the vote, the MPs shouted "Down with America" and "Down with Israel".

The development came four 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.

Speaking after the passing of the plan, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said the move's message to the enemies was that the "one-sided game is over."

The bill requires the government to raise uranium enrichment levels to 20% and install advanced centrifuges.

According to the 9-article bill, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) will be required to produce and store at least 120 kilograms of enriched uranium with 20 percent purity at the Fordow nuclear facility every year, and to fulfil the country's peaceful industrial demands with uranium enriched above 20%.

Once the bill becomes a law, it will oblige the AEOI to increase the monthly output of enriched uranium for various peaceful purposes with different purity levels by at least 500 kg.

The bill entails uranium enrichment



activities with at least 1,000 IR-2M centrifuge machines at Natanz within three months after the ratification of the law, and compels the AEOI to launch uranium enrichment as well as research and development activities with at least 164 IR-6 centrifuges and increase the number of centrifuge machines to 1,000 within a year after the ratification of the bill.

The new bill also necessitates the inauguration of a metallic uranium factory in Isfahan within 5 months and restoration of a 40-Megawatts heavy water reactor in Arak, which was supposed to be re-designed and optimized under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. The bill requires the government to prevent any foreign access and monitoring beyond the Additional Protocol.

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, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), failed to uphold their obligations under the JCPOA.

According to the double-urgency bill, the president and related officials in executive bodies are responsible to implement the law.

During the session, MPs spoke in favor of and against the plan.

Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy, said the Parliament is tasked with continuing the path of the martyrs in order to revive the country's nuclear program.

One of the goals of the strategic action is to counter the sanctions that were imposed by Western countries, Amouei said.

He also said, "We must proceed in such a way that destroying people's security and assassinating our country's scientists and imposing cruel sanctions against our country would not be cost-free for the enemies."

MP Rajab Rahmani, speaking in favor of the move, said Iran showed its goodwill

Judiciary says seriously pursuing the scientist's assassination

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Deputy Attorney General Saeed Omrani has said Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi has ordered all judicial bodies to get involved in pursuing the case of Iranian nuclear scientist's assassination.

"The head of the judiciary has firmly ordered all judicial forces to take action with all their tools and facilities to handle this case, so that a result will be achieved soon," Omrani told reporters on Tuesday, ISNA reported.

On Friday at 14:30, nearly 10 people attacked the convoy of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh on a highway in the small city of Absard in Damavand County, about 40 kilometers north-east 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 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".

In remarks on Monday, Defense Minister Amir Hatami warned that no atrocity, terror or stupid act will go unanswered.

"We will pursue the perpetrators till the end and we will follow the order of the Commander-in-Chief (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei)," Hatami said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh also told a press conference on Tuesday that Iran's response to the terror "will be of utmost pain for criminals."



Iran, not Biden, will set the tone for nuclear-related issues: MP

1 → The plan, if adopted, will require the administration to suspend more commitments under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. It will require the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) to produce at least 120 kg of 20-percent enriched uranium annually and store it inside the country within two months after the adoption of the law.

Mousavi, who represents the Malekan constituency, said the plan is composed of very good clauses, which will strengthen Iran's position when dealing with the enemy.

"The enemy won't be able to sense any weakness from our side," he said, emphasizing that the plan will revive the Islamic Republic's "great nuclear industry."

Mousavi, who criticized certain shortcomings of the strategic plan during the Tuesday session of the Parliament, told the Tehran Times that he is in favor of the outlines of the plan.

Speaking at the Parliament, he said he supported the plan but it needed to be referred to the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee so that further items be added to it to make it more decisive.

"We must deliver a hard slap on the enemy's face but this plan is not capable of this matter and it must become stronger," he added.

During the interview, the MP said the issue he raised about the plan during the parliament's session was related to the implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the safeguards as well as the issue of inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"One of the weaknesses is that the

Agency's inspectors come to Iran posing as inspectors but they are in fact spies of the CIA and Israel's Mossad," he stated.

"We must not hand them the list of our nuclear scientists, whose names they will leak and then assassinate our dear martyrs, including Dr. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who was a prominent nuclear scientist," he added.

Fakhrizadeh, the head of the Defense Ministry's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research, was assassinated in Absard city of Tehran Province's Damavand County on Friday.

Photos and footage shared online of the attack showed bullet holes on the windshield of Fakhrizadeh's car and a pool of blood on the road.

Iran has blamed Israel for the assassination and vowed to respond firmly at the right time.

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".

"As I said at the Majlis, a few years ago, Netanyahu had mentioned the name of our martyr," Mousavi said. "We should have been more vigilant and we shouldn't have let individuals like Dr. Fakhrizadeh be martyred by the enemy."

He reiterated that the parliamentary bill is a source of strength for the Islamic Republic. With the plan, he continued, "we sent a message of strength to the enemy."

The nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was reached in Vienna on 14 July 2015 between Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, and also the European Union. However, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018. The move was deplored by all other parties to the deal.

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

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

Mousavi said while Iran fulfilled its obligations under the JCPOA, the other side failed to meet its end of the bargain. "But today, we want to restore our great nuclear industry and we want to revive it," he said, explaining that the issue of enrichment of uranium at 20% and beyond will be actively pursued by Iran.

"God willing, I hope the plan's shortcomings, if there are any, will be remedied in the next sessions of the Majlis," he said, adding, "My sense is that the plan is a very decisive and firm plan against the enemies of the Revolution at this juncture."

but the U.S. and the other five signatories of the 2015 nuclear agreement did not fulfil their commitments.

Rahmani said the U.S. withdrew from the nuclear deal, and the other countries only paid lip service instead of meeting their obligations.

"This plan is for protecting national interests, lifting sanctions and solving the people's livelihood problems," he added.

Speaking against the strategic action, Ebrahim Azizi praised the plan but added that some of its items need to be reviewed.

"We gave the enemy a chance for seven years, during which we witnessed the intensification of sanctions and increased economic pressures," Azizi remarked. "Therefore, we should not give the enemies even one more day."

MP Ali Mousavi said he supported the plan but it needs to be referred to the national security committee so that further items be added to it to make it more decisive.

"We must deliver a hard slap on the enemy's face but this plan is not capable of this matter and it must become stronger," he added.

The Nov. 27 assassination of Fakhrizadeh has made the MPs more determined to accelerate Iran's nuclear activities slowed under the JCPOA.

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).

Writing on his Twitter account on Saturday, Pezhmanfar said the government will be tasked "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."

The timing for Fakhrizadeh assassination is not coincidental: security expert

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Seyed Hossein Mousavian, a Middle East security and nuclear policy specialist at Princeton University, says Mohsen says the timing for assassination of Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh "is not coincidental".

Writing in the Middle East Eye on Nov. 3, Mousavian says the assassination "was aimed at blocking Biden's intention of offering Iran 'a credible path back to diplomacy.'"

The senior analyst says, "While both the United States and Iran face tremendous domestic obstacles in reviving the JCPOA,

the 'return to Iran deal' policy as proposed by Biden has terrified both Netanyahu and MBS to the effect that they had to get together in an unprecedented meeting in Saudi Arabia. To be sure, they have done what they could and will continue to do so to prevent the Biden administration from re-joining the JCPOA."

Stakes high for UAE as regional tensions soar

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — As tensions run high in the region following the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, analysts warn that the United Arab Emirates is treading on dangerous ground by not distancing itself from Israel's provocative measures against Iran.

"Certainly, the Emirates will be harmed if tensions intensify. Why? First, because the UAE does not have the characteristics of a genuine player in the region. Second, the agenda that the UAE currently pursues in the region is not in the interest of the UAE and is incompatible with the UAE strategy. Rather, it serves the interests of the United States and the Zionist regime (Israel). This agenda has been dictated to the Emirates. Therefore, this agenda will not serve the interests of the UAE," Seyed Jafar Razavi, an expert on West Asia, told the Tehran Times.

According to the expert, the UAE has moved very closer to Israel and the U.S. since it took the controversial step of normalizing diplomatic relations with Israel in August. U.S. President Donald Trump announced on August 13 that he brokered a "historic deal" between the UAE and Israel to normalize their relations, the first such deal between Israel and an Arab country since 1994. The last time an Arab country signed a deal with Israel to normalize relations was on October 26, 1994, when Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel. U.S. officials hailed the deal as a "historic diplomatic breakthrough."

Under the deal, officially known as the Abraham Accords, Israel and the UAE "have committed to the exchange of embassies and ambassadors, and to begin cooperation in a broad range of fields including education, healthcare, trade, and security," according to a White House statement issued on August 13.

A few weeks later, the U.S. brokered a similar deal between Israel and Bahrain. President Trump organized, with great fanfare, a signing ceremony in mid-September. The U.S.-brokered normalization deals were signed on September 15 at a White House ceremony attended by high-ranking U.S. and



foreign officials including President Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Abdullah bin Zayed, the foreign minister of the UAE, and Abdullatif al-Zayani, the foreign minister of Bahrain.

Iran and other countries around the world condemned the UAE-Bahrain-Israel normalization deals and reaffirmed support for the Palestinian Cause. Iran also warned the UAE against giving Israel a foothold in the region after American and Israeli officials cast the normalization deals as a coalition against Iran.

"The UAE and Israel both recognize Iran as this great threat, so they have now found a way to build out a relationship which can build out a coalition to ultimately make sure that this threat [Iran] never reaches American shores or harms anyone in the Middle East," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in an interview with Fox News in the midst of the normalization hype in September.

In light of this kind of remarks, Iranian officials have warned the UAE against getting too closer to Israel, saying that the UAE has moved in the wrong direction by normalizing relations with Israel.

"The rulers of the United Arab Emirates should know that they have gone in the wrong direction if they think that they can buy security for themselves by getting closer to the enemies of Islam and Iran," Irani-

an President Hassan Rouhani said shortly after the announcement of the UAE-Israel normalization deal, warning that "unfortunately, the United Arab Emirates has made a big mistake and we hope it would change its wrong tack. We warn them against giving Israel a foothold in the region, then they will be treated differently."

Razavi said the UAE has turned into an "enforcer" of U.S. and Israeli policies in the region after it normalized relations with Israel.

"The Emirates can be considered a state in the region but we cannot consider it as a player in the region because it lacks the characteristics of a player. So, if the UAE takes a certain action, this means that it considers itself a player and speaks like a player. But this behavior is certainly not emanating from the Emirates itself. If history is any guide, the UAE is a client state enforcing American policies in the region. It has been enforcing the policies of the U.S., especially after normalizing relations with Israel," Razavi pointed out.

The expert also pointed out that this trajectory does not serve the UAE interests because the U.S. and the West, in general, have never been attaching importance to the interest of Muslim countries.

"The Westerners will secure their interests while those of the UAE would be harmed in

the process," Razavi remarked.

He also cautioned that the UAE is endangering its security, especially its economic security, by aligning itself with the U.S. and Israel.

"Within 5 to 10 years, the UAE will gradually lose its economic prosperity, which it brought about thanks to oil exports. It will turn into a completely dependent country," Razavi said.

The UAE seems to be changing tack, or at least it is pretending to do so. It remains to be seen whether the Emiratis are really distancing themselves from what is widely seen as Israeli provocative measures against Iran.

Following the assassination of Fakhri-zadeh, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation issued a statement condemning the assassination of the Iranian scientist. The statement said that "emanating from its deep conviction on the need to pursue all means for stability in the region, it condemns the heinous assassination of Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, which could further fuel conflict in the region," according to Emirati state news agency WAM.

"Given the current situation in the region, the UAE calls upon all parties to exercise maximum degrees of self-restraint to avoid dragging the region into new levels of instability and threat to peace," the statement added. But press reports suggested that this statement was issued only after Iran delivered a stern warning to Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Zayed, who is also known as MBZ.

"MBZ received a direct threat from Iran. It was not delivered through proxies," the London-based news website Middle East Eye quoted a "top-level UAE source" as saying November 30.

According to the source, Iran told Mohammed bin Zayed "We will hold you responsible for the assassination of Fakhri-zadeh."

The source also said that the UAE Foreign Ministry statement on Fakhri-zadeh came just hours after Iran's personal contact with Mohammed bin Zayed.

19 countries call for halt in UCMs amid Covid-19

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A number of countries, some of them under United States sanctions, issued a joint statement on Monday calling for the lifting or suspension of sanctions in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The statement was issued during the International Seminar on Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs) and their Impacts in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic. The statement was issued on behalf of Belarus, Bolivia, Burundi, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, Laos, China, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, South Africa, Syria, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

"Despite the fact that the response to and recovery from COVID-19 requires global solidarity and international cooperation, we continue to witness the use of unilateral coercive measures (UCMs), especially of secondary and extra-territorial implications, which are in flagrant breach of the basic purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, International Law, and International Human Rights Law as well as in absolute contradiction



with the established principles of multilateralism and the basic norms of international relations and diplomacy," the statement said, adding that the coronavirus pandemic has made the negative humanitarian effect of unilateral coercive measures more obvious.

The statement also welcomed the United Nations "Secretary-General's appeal of 26 March 2020 on the

waiving of sanctions that undermine countries' capacity to respond to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the statement made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 30 March on the need to ease or suspend sectoral sanctions in light of their debilitating impact on the health sector and human rights and the necessity to avoid the collapse of any country's medical system."

It also underlined the need to refrain from adopting unilateral coercive measures.

"States must refrain from adopting unilateral coercive measures that breach their human rights obligations under treaty or customary international law, and to adopt measures ensuring that essential supplies, such as medicines and food, are not used as tools for political pressure, which constitute crime against humanity," the joint statement stressed, calling on "all parties to put aside the differences and to concentrate on facing the emergency and its serious consequences in the immediate future."

Iranian diplomat blasts American newspaper for 'shameful' editorial

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In a letter to The Wall Street Journal, Alireza Miryousefi, spokesman for Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, strongly criticized the American newspaper for running an editorial expressing support for the assassination of distinguished nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh.

"Your editorial 'Biden, Iran and the Bomb' (Nov. 27) is shameful in its inhumanity," wrote Miryousefi.

The spokesman's letter came in response to a November 27 WSJ editorial that described the 2015 Iran nuclear deal as "deeply flawed" and "bad." The American newspaper even sought to use the alleged threat of Iran's nuclear program to justify the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh.

"The apparent assassination of a top Iranian nuclear scientist near Tehran on Friday shows that Iran's nuclear program remains a global security problem. No one took responsibility, but any number of countries have reason to act now in case the Biden Administration returns to a policy of appeasing Iran," the newspaper said, suggesting that the Biden administration should not return to the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Praising the Trump administration's Iran policy, The Wall Street Journal said, "To abandon sanctions again in return for more Iranian promises would be diplomatic and strategic malpractice. At the minimum, the Biden team can use the sanctions as leverage to close the loopholes in the 2015 accord. That should include no sunset, unlimited inspections of suspect sites, limits on ballistic missiles, and restraints on Iran's regional imperialism. If Iran refuses, then we'll know its goal continues to be regional domination rather than to become a normal country."

The newspaper accused Biden advisors such as Jake Sullivan of having emotional attachment for the Iran nuclear deal, adding

that "Mr. Biden's foreign policy team should be thankful for the stronger hand Mr. Trump is leaving them."

The editorial prompted Miryousefi to hit back at The Wall Street Journal in a letter to the newspaper. The Iranian diplomat called the newspaper's support for the assassination "unjustifiable," adding that this support will only encourage the perpetrators to commit more crimes which will have dangerous implications.

"The unjustifiable support for a brutal assassination of a prominent scientist does nothing more than encourage a few criminals, such as the Israeli regime and its allies, to commit more assassinations. The assassination of an official of a UN member state in its territory is a dangerous game, opening a Pandora's box; one whose consequences only reckless, apocalyptic people would ignore," Miryousefi said, adding, "Undoubtedly, the Israeli regime's involvement in this criminal act is designed to further disrupt the turbulent situation in the region and destroy the path for diplomacy."

The spokesman for Iran's mission to the UN also called Fakhri-zadeh a "national hero" whose health services to Iran helped the country better combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

Miryousefi stated, "Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh was an eminent scientist and national hero for all Iranians. His last service to the country was the production of a coronavirus diagnostic kit, as well as the management of a project to produce an Iranian Covid vaccine—one that had reached the human-testing stage."

The spokesman said the assassination of

Fakhri-zadeh will by no means affect Iran's nuclear program.

"Assassinating him will do nothing to Iran's completely peaceful nuclear program, as the assassinations of our nuclear scientists in the past few years have not affected the advancement in our peaceful nuclear activities," Miryousefi pointed out.

The Iranian nuclear scientist was assassinated in an attack that was widely attributed to Israel. The attack took place on Friday at 14:30 in the small city of Absard in Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of the capital Tehran. 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. They vowed to take revenge against it in due time. While Israeli officials kept silent about the assassination, President Hassan Rouhani said Tel Aviv was behind the assassination of Fakhri-zadeh.

"All think tanks and all enemies of Iran should know well that the Iranian nation and the country's authorities are more courageous and Zealous than to let this criminal act go unanswered. The relevant authorities will respond to this crime at the proper time," Rouhani was quoted by state news agency IRNA as saying on Saturday morning, a day after the assassination.

But Rouhani said Iran will not fall into the trap of Israel.

The Iranian president noted, "The Iranian nation is wiser and smarter than to fall in the trap of the Zionists (Israel). They are after

"The assassination of an official of a UN member state in its territory is a dangerous game, opening a Pandora's box; one whose consequences only reckless, apocalyptic people would ignore."

SPORTS

Loss against Syria happened at right time: Nikkhah Bahrami

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national basketball team captain Samad Nikkhah Bahrami believes that Iran's loss against Syria was shocking and he ensures that the same thing will not happen again in the near future.

Iran basketball team suffered an unbelievable blow against Syria in the second window of the FIBA Asia Cup 2021 qualifiers on Monday as they lost 77-70 to their rivals in Doha, Qatar.

Nikkhah, who has missed the recent games of the national team as he tested positive for COVID-19 last month, spoke about his current situation as well as Iran's performance against Syria in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

"For three to four weeks I was in poor condition as I spent the time in quarantine. Two weeks ago, my test was negative and I could train but I was not ready to compete. So, I asked Iran coach Mehran Shahintab not to invite me to the national team at this stage of competition and he agreed," he said.

Speaking about the loss against Syria, Nikkhah said: "There is nothing we can talk about. It was like an alarm for us to be careful about the next matches. This is basketball and even the greatest teams may experience some bad days. We've lost just a match in a long tournament. Of course, defeat is never a good thing in sport, but I think it happened at the right time for us to be watchful for the next games."

"The fact is that we never thought that we might lose against the Syrian team. Iran's basketball has been so strong in recent years and teams like Saudi Arabia and Syria are not as good as us. I believe that it was a special incident that may only happen once every few years. It cannot question the qualities of our players as they have proved their power during recent years. To say what went wrong with team is not to offer up excuses, but to give genuine reasons about why our campaign stalled at this stage. However, I repeat we have still a good situation in the competition and this defeat must not be considered as a disaster!" Samad added.

The Iranian legend, who has played in seven Asia Cups, also talked about the criticism against the national team that has been aroused after the defeat.

"It's normal and we should accept it. When we win, we are encouraged and appreciated by people, so when we lose and play badly, we have to tolerate criticism. If we don't accept our weakness we cannot improve and the next matches will regret more and more. I am sure the future is bright for Iran's national team and this defeat will not be repeated at least in near future," he concluded.



Lackluster Esteghlal held by Paykan: IPL

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal football team missed the chance to overtake Persepolis at the Iran Professional League (IPL) second place with a goalless draw against Paykan on Tuesday.

Esteghlal started the new season with the aim to end an eight-year title drought but the Blues have shown that there is still a lot of work to be done.

In Isfahan, visiting team Saipa battled back from a goal down to earn a point against Sepahan.

Sajjad Shahbazzadeh gave the visiting team an early lead and Majid Aliyari headed home Mohsen Mosalman's cross in the 83rd minute.

Nassaji defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman 1-0 in Ghaemshahr. Hamed Shiri scored the winning goal from the penalty spot in the 82nd minute.

In Abadan, Sanat Naft edged Zob Ahan 1-0 courtesy of Taleb Reykani's late penalty.

On Wednesday, Mes Rafsanjan will host Tractor. Gol Gohar lead the table with 10 points from four matches followed by Persepolis (eight points) and Nassaji (seven points).

We lost concentration against Iran: Mark Bosnich

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former Socceroos goalkeeper Mark Bosnich took a trip down memory lane about FIFA World Cup Qualifier against Iran at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on Nov. 29, 1997.

The Australia's footballing icon reminisced about one of the most difficult matches to stomach in the Socceroos' history, socceroos.com.au reported.

It all seemed to be going to script for the Socceroos as they raced to a 2-0 lead thanks to goals from Harry Kewell and Aurelio Vidmar. However, damage to the Iranian goal net caused the match to be delayed and ultimately swung momentum in the visitors' favor. Karim Bagheri halved the deficit and Khodadad Azizi leveled the score and the Persian booked a place in the FIFA World Cup on the away goals' rule.

"I think the bigger issue for me was that when we came back, I actually think the Iranian coach made some very good changes and they started to get on top of us in midfield because of the amount of energy," Bozza said.

"I thought that was the time that we needed to make some changes. I think Terry Venables is one of the greatest coaches I've played under but I think right at that time, it was easy to say in hindsight because the game should've been over right now but that was perhaps the time to make changes," the ex-Socceroos goalie added.

Bosnich, who played for Premier League sides Manchester United, Aston Villa and Chelsea, believed there was one crucial mistake which some of the Socceroos players made.

"Some players started thinking about France when there was still 15 minutes to go. The time to think about France is when you're celebrating afterwards."

"If God decides that you are ready for something, you will receive it and I think that night that wasn't the case," he concluded.

Iran’s Zamaninia elected as chairman of OPEC executive board in 2021

1 → In the meeting, extending the oil output cut of 7.7 million barrels per day was discussed. Although some OPEC members complained that some members had not complied with the previous decisions, there was a consensus that the organization’s complaint was not in a way that could prevent an extension of the existing deal.

OPEC members’ main concern was about how non-OPEC members would cooperate, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said in a press conference following the 180th OPEC meeting which was held through video conference on Monday.

The 12th meeting of the oil and energy ministers of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, a grouping known as OPEC+, was due to be held on Thursday in Vienna but it was postponed to Thursday December 3.

“What is important is that we negotiate and have the patience to reach a conclusion,” Zanganeh said announcing the adjournment of the ministerial meeting.

The OPEC meeting on Monday evening lasted more than four hours.

NIORDC ready for sustained supply of fuel in winter

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – Managing Director of National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) said his company is fully prepared for a sustained supply of oil products to households, industries, and power plants during the cold season.

“Like previous years, winter fuel storage in all thirty-seven areas under the supervision of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company has started since mid-summer this year, and now the fuel needed by the consumers in cold regions is sufficiently stored,” Ali Asghar Abbasi told Shana.



Referring to the forecasts of Iran Meteorological Organization for the drop in temperature and the possibility of heavy rains in some provinces, he added: “The National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company is fully prepared for providing fuel in the coming winter and fortunately there is no shortage in the country’s fuel storages.”

He noted that necessary storages have also been provisioned in areas with higher risks of flood and fuel supply to such areas is not expected to face any problem.

Referring to the preparedness of the company’s crisis headquarters to deal with floods and possible natural disasters, Abbasi said: “No fuel station in the country has faced any problems in the recent floods, and the stations are operating based on their routines.”

National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) is a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) which was established in 1991 and undertook to perform all operations relating to refining and distribution of oil products.

Although NIORDC was formed in the 1990s, the company has actually inherited 90 years of Iran’s oil industries’ experiences in the fields of refining, transfer, and distribution of oil products, as well as engineering and construction of installations of oil industries.

Secondary trades of 2nd ETF units begin

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The secondary trades of the units of the second exchange-traded fund (ETF) finally began in Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), on Tuesday. IRIB reported.

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 Dejpasand 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.

Foreign investment in Aras Free Zone rises 78% in H1

ECONOMY d e s k

TEHRAN — Foreign investment attracted in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone (AFZ) in Iran’s north-western province of East Azarbaijan has risen 78 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), compared to the first half of the past year, according to a provincial official.

Safar Shasfand, the deputy head of Aras Free Zone Organization’s for investment and economic affairs, announced that the zone attracted \$25 million of foreign investment in the six-month period of this year, while the figure was \$14 million in the same time span of the past year.

The official said that domestic investment has also risen 81 percent to 21.892 trillion rials (about \$521.2 million) in the zone during the first half of the present year, from 18.102 trillion rials (about \$431 million) in the first half of the previous year.

Reiterating that Aras Free Zone has been successful in attracting investment, and has a better performance in this due compared to the other free zones of the country, Shasfand said that the result is obvious in job creation and promotion of exports from the zone.

He further announced that 16 projects with the investment making of 8.97 trillion rials (about \$231.5 million) will be inaugurated in the zone in the eleventh month of Bahman (January 20-February 18, 2021), creating direct jobs



for 405 persons.

The official has previously announced that AFZ exported commodities valued at \$240 million to 10 countries during the first six months of the current year.

He mentioned dried fruits and nuts, plastic products, steel ingots, and production lines machinery as the main exported products and Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates, Armenia, Czech Republic, and Uzbekistan as the export destinations during the mentioned period of time.

Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone is located

in the northwest of Iran at the border point with neighboring Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

The establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country’s oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and

the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azarbaijan Province and Maku in West-Azarbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

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

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

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

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

Exports of cement chain products reach \$163.4m in 7 months

ECONOMY d e s k

TEHRAN — The value of Iran’s cement products exports in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21) reached more than \$163.4 million, which is an 11 percent decrease compared to the same period last year.

Iranian producers exported 7,630,428 tons of the mentioned commodities in the said seven months, registering a 24-percent decline compared to the same period last year, IRNA reported.

The total value of Iran’s exports from the mining industry stood at \$3.049 billion in the first seven months of the current fiscal year, according to the data released by the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

Imports of the cement chain in the seven-month period of the current year were more than 24,000 tons worth \$17.6 million, a decrease of 27 percent and 34 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.



Also, the total imports in the mining and mineral industries sector in the first seven months of this year was 2,280,312 tons valued at \$1.754 billion, an increase of 16

percent in terms of weight and a decrease of three percent in terms of value, compared to the first seven months of the previous year.

Iran exported over 5,847 million tons of cement worth \$127.99 million during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21), according to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan were the top importers of cement from Iran in the said five months.

India, Afghanistan, Russia, Iraq, Qatar, Kenya, Kuwait, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, China, and Oman are among the countries importing Iranian cement.

Iran’s annual cement production stands at 85 million tons, and the domestic need for the product is 65 million tons.

The country is among the seven large producers of cement in the world.

Kharg oil terminal infrastructure unharmed by storm

ECONOMY d e s k

TEHRAN — Managing Director of Iranian Oil Terminals Company (IOTC) said on Tuesday that the recent heavy rainfall and storm in the region has not caused any damage to the Kharg Island Oil Terminal infrastructures.

“Despite lightning, torrential rain, flooding, and severe storms in recent days, no damage has been done to the Kharg oil ter-

минаl infrastructures,” Abbas Asadrouz said.

With the coordination done in different parts of the company and the efforts of committed and hardworking employees of Iran Oil Terminals Company in different parts of operations, sensing and support, despite the

fact that we had more than 200 mm of rain at the same time with heavy thunderstorms, but the storage facilities and export docks

have not been damaged and there have not been any disruptions in the company’s operational processes, he explained.

Kharg Island is a continental island in the Persian Gulf south of Iran. The island is located 25 km (16 mi) off the coast of Iran and 483 km (300 mi) northwest of the Strait of Hormuz. Administered by the adjacent coastal Boushehr Province, Kharg Island

provides a seaport for the export of oil and extends Iranian territorial sea claims into the Persian Gulf oil fields.

Due to its close distance to oilfield regions, its good offshore position, and suitable depth for gigantic oil vessel berthing, Kharg Island oil terminal has been recognized as one of the country’s most suitable places for crude oil export and loading sites.

20 idle mines revived in Fars Province since late March

ECONOMY d e s k

TEHRAN — Davoud Hosseini, the head of Fars Province’s Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, announced that 20 idle mines have been revived in the province since the start of current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

In terms of the number of mines, Fars Province stands at the fourth place in the country.

The head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has announced that 157 idle small-scale mines have been revived throughout the country in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20).

Saying that the mentioned mines have been reactivated as part of a comprehensive program for reviving idle small mines across the country, Khodadad Gharibpour also announced that 200 mines are planned to be put back into operation by the end of the year.

As reported, under the framework of the mentioned program, 672 idle mines have been identified and prioritized in the current Iranian calendar year, and diagnostic procedures



have been performed on 194 mines to determine the reasons for the halt in their production.

According to Gharibpour, since the beginning of the pro-

gram in March 2019 up to date 303 mines have been revived.

The mentioned program, which has been at the forefront of IMIDRO’s missions over the past two years, is being pursued in several provinces.

The head of IMIDRO has mentioned this plan as one of the most significant plans of “Resistance Economy”, saying that IMIDRO is strongly determined to carry out it.

Reviving the small mines not only is a major step toward materializing “Surge in Production”, which is the motto of the current Iranian calendar year, it also plays a significant role in job creation throughout the country, Gharibpour said back in June.

As reported, reviving the small mines has created 300 job opportunities in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

Following this program, so far various small-scale mines including chromite, manganese, hematite, and dolomite, iron ore, copper, and construction stone mines have been surveyed by monitoring and diagnosing the problems of the mines and providing solutions for resolving their issues.

Commodities worth \$637m exported from Khorasan Razavi in 8 months

ECONOMY d e s k

TEHRAN — Commodities valued at \$637 million have been exported from Khorasan Razavi Province, in the northeast of Iran, during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), according to a provincial official.

Omid Jahankhah, an official with the province’s customs department, also announced that products worth \$236 million have been imported to the province in the eight-month period.

He mentioned saffron, pistachios with fresh or dried skin, metal sections, industrial tallow used in the soap industry, flooring and building materials as the major exported items, and Afghanistan, Iraq, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Hong Kong as the top destinations of the province’s exported products during the mentioned time span.

Unbleached cotton, raw materials for

production units, raw or unbleached silk, and machinery for production units were the main imported goods, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Uzbekistan, China, and Turkey were the top sources of imports, according to Jahankhah.

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

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.”

Iran’s top five non-oil export destinations during this period were Iraq with over \$5.3 billion worth of exports, China with the same amount, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$2.7 billion, and Turkey with \$1.6 billion as well as Afghanistan with \$1.5 billion.



According to the IRICA head, the top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$6 billion, the UAE with \$5.4 billion, Turkey with \$2.6 billion, India with \$1.4 billion, and Germany with \$1.1 billion worth of imports.

Most of the imported goods into the country in the mentioned time span were basic goods or raw materials, Mirashrafi stressed.

Israeli blockade hindering COVID-19 fight in Gaza: ex-Palestinian health minister

➔ Regarding the Corona outbreak in Gaza, the first cases were discovered about 3 months ago and since that time, the numbers are increasing exponentially and the ability to contain this epidemic is declining first because of the tough conditions in the Gaza Strip as a result of the blockade.

Gaza suffers from the lack of funding for the essential needs and because of the closure of the crossings by Israel.

Of course, in addition to the congestion problem, as Gaza is one of the most populated areas in the world, it is also facing a shortage of COVID-19 test kits, artificial ventilators, and medical oxygen generators for patients, and in general the conditions are catastrophic, and we may expect that it exacerbates in the coming days.

■ What is the impact of the Israeli restrictions on the livelihood and health of the Palestinians in Gaza?

The Israeli blockade has affected the health sector in particular and the humanitarian conditions in general, which is very catastrophic. People in the Gaza Strip have been living under Israel's barrier for more than 14 years, and there is severe difficulty in moving to and from the Gaza Strip. Even patients find it very challenging to leave the Strip to receive treatment in Egypt, Jordan, or the West Bank, and sometimes they need weeks of waiting, as Israel hinders the entry of any health equipment into the Gaza Strip, as well as it hampers the passage of healthcare personnel. This blockade also affected the educational, social and psychological aspects, and health aspects of life in the Gaza Strip, and today we are talking about unemployment of about 60 percent among the youth, while the poverty rate in the Gaza Strip reaches about 80 percent and more than 85 percent of the population of the Strip depend on food aid from international institutions and 75 percent of Gaza's water is not suitable for drinking, and also about 97 percent of the water from



the sea coast is not suitable for swimming and bathing.

Therefore, we are talking about catastrophic humanitarian conditions. Electricity does not reach Gaza about 8 hours a day at best, and sometimes it only reaches 4 hours on a 24-hour basis, and this affects all services that should be provided to people, whether health care services or other ones.

So, we are talking about a catastrophic humanitarian situation and a real human tragedy.

■ Do you think that Bahrain and UAE's normalization agreements with Israel will lead to improving the condition for Palestinians, as the leaders of these two Arab countries have claimed?

A: Certainly, this statement is not true. Normalization of relationship with Israel is a crime and betrayal, not only against the Palestinian cause, but also against the Arab and Islamic nation, and even against human values. This comes at a time that Israel is committing the most heinous crimes against the Palestinian people, threatens to annex the rest of the Palestinian territories and carries out a

systematic ethnic cleansing around the clock in the Gaza Strip.

These countries, especially the Emirates and Bahrain, normalize their ties and establish warm relations with the occupying entity. Of course, this means giving the Zionists the green light to continue their crimes, encouraging them to violate human right.

We have always warned against such normalization steps and we are sure that they will be tempted to further violate the rights of the Palestinians. We also warn that this normalization will not only harm the Palestinians, but harm the regimes that have signed the deal, according to the Arab countries' experience.

The states that normalized relations with Israel, such as Egypt and Jordan, or even the Palestinian Authority, which negotiated with Israel for 30 years, reaped nothing but destruction and corruption.

■ What is the role of Bahrain, the UAE and Saudi Arabia in supporting the Palestinian cause?

A: We cannot deny that Saudi Arabia, the Emirates and Bahrain over the decades have had positive positions, in support of the Pal-

estinian people at the political, diplomatic and financial levels, but in recent years this approach has greatly diminished. Today, those who support the resistance are considered terrorist and they pursue any one who collects financial aid for the resistance groups or supports them politically.

■ How do you assess the level of Iran's aid to Palestinian factions in Gaza? What is the most prominent aid by Iran?

A: Most of the national and Islamic factions in the Gaza Strip, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad, have had a distinguished relationship with Iran over the decades, and the Islamic Republic has provided a lot of assistance to the Palestinian people, especially political and diplomatic assistance, as well as support for the resistance, whether at financial or military level or training of cadres.

Palestinians appreciate Islamic Republic's stances, because Iran never gives up despite all the challenges and difficulties and all the pressures to dismantle its relationship with the resistance factions in Palestine, especially with the Gaza Strip.

■ Is there any coordination and cooperation between the Palestinian health sector and its counterparts in other countries?

A: The health sector in Palestine in general and the Gaza Strip in particular seeks to open relations with all health sectors in the Arab and Islamic world, and even around the world, either directly or through international organizations such as the World Health Organization, UNRWA, UNICEF and other organizations.

However, the volume of cooperation varies from one country to another, and there is close cooperation with countries in the region, but we are keen to ensure that our relations are always open, warm, positive and fruitful with everyone, as long as they support the Palestinian right and wish to help the Palestinian people in their steadfastness and their fight for freedom and independence.

G20 interests override Saudi rights violations: Canadian lawyer

➔ Unfortunately, the members of the G20 chose not to boycott the Summit which proceeded virtually due to COVID-19.

In my view Saudi Arabia has one of the worst human rights records in the World. In May 2018 Saudi Arabia's notorious prohibition on women driving was lifted by Royal Decree. Just weeks before the Decree no less than 10 human rights activists who had successfully campaigned for the change were detained by the Saudi authorities. In June and July 2018 another nine women were arrested. Most of the Women's Rights Activists are female, though some are male. All human rights activists had a longstanding commitment to improving the position of women in Saudi society through the exercise of their democratic rights.

Speaking at the launch of her report, Baroness Kennedy said: "None of these would amount to crimes in any decent nation, and that is the problem. This is an unacceptable abuse of human beings."

Baroness Kennedy said, Saudi Arabia was in breach of numerous human rights agreements and treaties it had signed up to by its treatment of women whose charges included driving cars, campaigning for a new political system in Saudi Arabia, talking to British journalists for a documentary. One of the charges included applying for a job at the UN.

Baroness Kennedy said the women were forced to kiss their captors, perform sex acts on their tormentors and forced to watch pornography.

The release of Baroness Kennedy's report is a major step

“Economic and strategic interests override concerns over human rights. If the country bows to Western demands human rights problems are usually ignored.”



in helping shine the spotlight on the human rights violations and suppression of dissent in the Kingdom.

■ How do you assess the reaction of international organizations to human rights violations by Saudi Arabia?

A: A UN women's rights committee has called for the release of the women detainees. Saudi Arabia also recently lost an election to the UN Human Rights Committee. Other organizations including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have strongly condemned Saudi Arabia for its flagrant human rights violations. However, much more needs to be done by international organizations.

■ Why did not the G20 countries boycott the Saudi hosting of the G20 summit?

A: There has been very little pressure put on Saudi Arabia to improve its human rights record. Baroness Kennedy called on the UK not to attend the G20. Ironically one of the Summit's themes was female empowerment. The Baroness said: 'Just because people are your trading partners should not permit this kind of license to abuse human beings.' She added, "I want to call upon those who are going to be participating in the G20 meeting to say: 'We will only participate in this meeting being hosted by the crown prince, on behalf of Saudi Arabia, it will only take place if you release these women.'"

Unfortunately, the G20 members did not heed this call. Financial and strategic interests trumped concern over human rights. The lack of serious consequences over the Saudi's brutal murder of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi is just one example.

■ Why do Western countries support monarchical Arab regimes?

A: Western countries support the conservative feudal Arab regimes because they are weak and are afraid of their own people. For this reason, the Arab monarchies are dependent on Western power and are subservient to Western demands. Many of the feudal regimes host American or British military bases which help the West dominate the region. Economic and strategic interests override concerns over human rights. If the country bows to Western demands human rights problems are usually ignored. However, if the country pursues an independent path then the West uses real, or even made up, violations of human rights as a pretext to subject it to sanctions and even to attack and invade the countries that do not submit to Western edicts.

Assassination is a barbaric form of politics: Anglican priest

➔ A: Israel is the obvious suspect, though I thought Ayatollah Khamenei was wise not to announce that they were responsible without proper evidence. Sadly, they are not the only country in the world who seem to be committed to Iran's demise, though Israel has always been particularly bellicose in denouncing Iran's peaceful nuclear ambitions.

My view is that Israel sees Iran as a threat to its economic hegemony in the region. Iran is an economic threat to Israel, I believe, but not an existential threat, despite the Israeli government's constant protestations to the contrary. Such rhetoric is simply their attempt

to legitimize their attempts to damage Iran as a regional power.

■ Iran calls on the international community to end their double standards and condemn this act of state terrorism. How do you think the international community should react to this crime?

A: Of course you are 100% correct that the Western world's failure to condemn this assassination reflects a flagrant double-standard and base hypocrisy. I remain hopeful that some European countries will break ranks with Israel and the U.S. and condemn this assassination, but I'm not holding my breath.

■ What appropriate response do you think Iran should make?

A: I believe Ayatollah Khamenei is showing admirable restraint by not responding in kind. Iran cannot be expected to endure repeated attacks like this and do nothing. Even so, as our spiritual leaders teach us, we cannot overcome evil with further acts of evil. We must find a way forward that harnesses the international justice system and work within the parameters of international law. This will require faith and humility on the part of the Iranian people and its leadership.



Dozens of human rights groups denounce U.S. arms sales to UAE

Twenty nine human rights groups and arms control organizations have denounced the U.S. arms sales to the United Arab Emirates, asking the Congress to block the mega deal.

The groups signed a letter opposing the sale of \$23 billion worth of missiles, fighter jets and drones, raising concern about the UAE's role in Saudi devastating war on Yemen and Libya conflict.

"The hope is to stop these sales altogether," said Seth Binder, advocacy officer at the Project on Middle East Democracy, who spearheaded the effort.

"But if that is not possible in the short term, this sends an important signal to the incoming Biden administration that there is a diverse group of organizations that oppose delivery of these weapons."

The letter, sent to U.S. lawmakers and the State Department, said the planned arms sale would fuel continued harm to civilians and exacerbate humanitarian crises due to conflicts in war-ravaged Yemen and Libya.

Signatories include human rights organizations from the region, including the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and Mwatana for Human Rights.

The U.S.-UAE arms deal includes F-35 fighter jets, Reaper drones, air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles and more than 14,000 bombs.

The sale was approved following a US-brokered agreement in September in which the UAE agreed to normalize relations with Israel.

Several U.S. senators, including Murphy, earlier this

month proposed legislation to halt the weapons sale to the UAE, setting up a showdown with President Donald Trump weeks before he is due to leave office.

Trump administration officials briefed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the deal on Monday evening.

Democratic Senator Chris Murphy, a sponsor of the resolutions of disapproval, responded later on Twitter: "Just a mind blowing number of unsettled issues and questions the Administration couldn't answer. Hard to overstate the danger of rushing this."

Murphy had said, "I support the normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, but nothing in that agreement requires us to flood the region with more weapons and facilitate a dangerous arms race."

UN says 233,000 killed in Yemen war in last 6 years

The UN Tuesday said the conflict in Yemen has claimed 233,000 lives over the last six years.

In a report, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the conflict in Yemen has so far claimed the lives of 233,000 people, adding that "this large number is unfortunate and unacceptable."

According to the OCHA, Yemen has reached a critical point and there is an urgent need for a cease-fire now.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing Hadi's government back to power and crushing the popular Ansarullah movement.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed more than 100,000 lives.

The Ansarullah movement, backed by armed forces, has been defending Yemen against the Saudi-led alliance, preventing the aggressors from fulfilling the objectives of the atrocious war.

Back in September, the United Nations said that critical aid was cut at 300 health centers in Yemen due to lack of funding.

Between April and August, more than one-third of the UN's important humanitarian programs in the strife-torn Arab country was reduced or shut down entirely, the UN said, warning of further drastic cuts.

French government drops draft law curbing filming of police

The French government has dropped a controversial security bill that would have curbed the right to film police officers in action after growing opposition and mass protests against it.

"The bill will be completely rewritten and a new version will be submitted," Christophe Castaner, head of President Emmanuel Macron's governing party in the French parliament, told a news conference.

Tens of thousands of people in cities across France marched against the draft law on Saturday, with dozens wounded during clashes with police in Paris.

The proposed legislation was passed by the National Assembly earlier in November, though it still required approval from the Senate.

According to al Jazeera, one of its most controversial elements has been Article 24, which sought to criminalize the publication of images of on-duty police officers with the intent of harming their "physical or psychological integrity".

Under the article, offenders faced sentences of up to a year in jail and fines of 45,000 euros (\$53,760) for sharing images of police officers.

Protesters called for the article to be withdrawn, claiming that it contradicts "the fundamental public freedoms of our Republic".

Media unions also said it could give police a green light to prevent journalists – and social media users – from documenting abuses.

The case of Michel Zecler shocked France, with celebrities and politicians alike condemning the officers' actions.

Macron on Friday called the incident an "unacceptable attack" and asked the government to come up with proposals to "fight against discrimination".

The images of the beating of Zecler emerged days after police were already under fire over the forcible removal of a migrant camp in central Paris, where journalists on the ground recorded police brutality.

On Monday, a Paris investigating magistrate charged four police officers with assault by a person holding public authority in connection to the assault on Zecler. Three were also charged with fabricating their statement on the incident.

Saudi Arabia allows Israeli commercial planes to use its airspace

Saudi Arabia agreed to let Israeli airliners cross its airspace en route to the United Arab Emirates after talks between Saudi officials and White House senior adviser Jared Kushner, news agency Reuters and Israeli media outlets have reported.

Kushner and Middle East envoys Avi Berkowitz and Brian Hook raised the issue shortly after they arrived in Saudi Arabia for talks. "We were able to reconcile the issue," an official from the administration of United States President Donald Trump told Reuters.

The agreement was hammered out just hours before Israel's first commercial flight to the UAE was planned on Tuesday morning. The Israil flight was at risk of being cancelled with no overflight agreement.

The direct flights are an offshoot of normalization deals Israel reached this year with the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan.

The UAE has already reaped benefits from normalization, including the White House pushing forward with arms sales, including an advanced fighter jet, to the Persian Gulf country.

Resistance News

Morocco reiterates firm support for Palestinian cause

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN — Morocco's King Mohammed VI says the North African country will keep up firm support for the Palestinian cause until the Palestinian people regain all their rights and establish an independent state with East Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital.

"We stand by the Palestinian people and continue to support their legitimate rights in order to establish an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital," he said in a message addressed to Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Cheikh Niang.

He made the comments on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which is marked on November 29 every year.

The monarch emphasized that Palestine is the central issue in the Middle East and will remain on top of Morocco's priorities.

"Regardless of the profound changes and developments that have taken place in the Middle East in recent years, I am convinced that the Palestinian question is the key to a permanent and comprehensive solution in the Middle East region," the king said.

He said a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be based on enabling all peoples of the region to live in peace and security in accordance with the principles of the so-called two-state solution.

"It is necessary to break the current impasse as far as the peace process is concerned," King Mohammed VI said, calling for the revival of talks between Palestinians and the Israeli regime to resolve all contentious issues.

The Moroccan king then denounced the Tel Aviv regime's settlement expansion activities, stressing the need "to refrain from any change that might affect the legal status of the occupied Palestinian territories, and to create right conditions for the resumption of meaningful and responsible negotiations."

Craftswomen plan to revive ancient water systems

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — An Iranian NGO, founded by a group of female Iranian crafters, has planned to financially support the revival of ancient qanats situated near the scorching Lut Desert in east-central Iran.

Some 150 female crafters, who are afflicted with the NGO, aim to donate 15 percent of their sales revenues to revive arrays of ancient aqueducts which are scattered in Shahdad region of Lut Desert in Kerman province, deputy provincial chief Kazem Hosseinzadeh announced on Tuesday.



“They, most of whom weaving handmade textiles, have so far assisted to bring five qanats back to their former glory through rounds of restoration work such as dredging,” the official noted.

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

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

The qanat system relies on snow-fed streams, which flow down the foothills of surrounding mountains channeling through sloping aqueducts, often over far distances to discharge into underground reservoirs or ab-anbars in urban areas.

Such constructions are still in practice, many of which were made from the 13th century onwards. Yazd is among ancient cities that have applied this concept to make urban settlements possible in central Iran.

The earliest water supply constructions in Yazd is believed to date from the Sassanid era (224 to 651 CE) while many others have been continually repaired and used over time, most surviving ab-anbars can be today traced to the late Safavid and Qajar periods. The oasis city of Yazd, which is a UNESCO World Heritage, is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains.

Archeological excavation to start on Yelsui Castle

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — An archeological excavation is scheduled to commence on the crumbling remnants of the Yelsui Castle and its surrounding areas in Germti county of the northwestern Ardebil province.

The project aims to help preserve and protect the historical site, which is located near Yelsui dam, provincial tourism chief said on Tuesday.

The deprived area near the dam is also planned to be developed by the implementation of several tourism-related projects, Nader Fallahi added.

The culturally-rich Germti and its surrounding lands have long been destinations for avid archaeology buffs and eco-travelers. Over the past couple of years, some seasons of excavation have been carried out in Germti and other villages nearby.



In November 2018, Iranian researchers discovered an Iron Age tomb in Germti, dating back to a time between 2500 to 3000 years ago, belonging to a child who was between 5 and 7 years old. It was unearthed in a survey aimed to probe the history of settlements in Yelsui, a ruined site majority of which is associated with the early Islamic era.

In December of the same year, several relics, dating back to Seljuk (1037–1194) and Il-Khanid (1256–1335/1353) eras, were unearthed in the vicinity of Alajouq fortress in Germti county.

Ardebil province is believed to be as old as the Achaemenid era (ca. 550–330 BC). Sources say that due to its proximity to the Caucasus, Ardabil was always vulnerable to invasions and attacks by the mountain peoples of the Caucasus as well as by the steppe dwellers of South Russia past the mountains.

During the Islamic conquest of Iran, Ardabil was the largest city in north-western Iran, ahead of Derbent, and remained so until the Mongol invasion period.

History’s first superpower sprang from ancient Iran

Part (2/5)

After Cyrus’s birth, the legend goes, Astyages ordered his general Harpagus to kill the baby. But instead of carrying out the murder himself, Harpagus handed over the newborn to a shepherd, asking him to abandon the baby in the mountains.

The shepherd’s wife was grieving, as she had just had a still-born child, so the shepherd brought the baby Cyrus home with him. The couple adopted him after placing the body of their own dead son on the mountainside instead.

Road to Sardis

Herodotus’s story clearly includes many mythical elements, but—as with many legends—contains a kernel of truth. Later in life, Cyrus did indeed threaten his powerful grandfather Astyages when he invaded Media in 550 BC. Astyages’s general, who really was called Harpagus, did betray his king, by defecting to Cyrus’s side, allowing the Persian king to seize the Median capital, Ecbatana.

Croatians fascinated by scorching deserts in Iran excursion

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN — Croatian musician and percussionist Hrvoje Rupcic and his wife, whose travelogue on Iran has been recently published in homeland, say they have been fascinated by the Iranian deserts.

“I am in love with the deserts, which constitute a large part of Iran. I was captivated by the beauty of the cities on the margin of the Iranian deserts such as Yazd, which is mentioned by the Venetian merchant and explorer Marco Polo as an important and beautiful city on the Silk Road,” he told the Vecernji List, the Croatian daily newspaper published in Zagreb on Sunday.

Rupcic, who is also a photographer and cinematographer, said that the central city of Isfahan is one of the most beautiful cities in the world in his eyes.

He noted that many questioned his motives for choosing such a place, which they considered dangerous, insecure, and unsafe.

“As far as I understood Iran is one of the safest countries in the world, I have never seen a feeling of calm and welcome anywhere in Europe and America, where I also traveled,” he answers.

The entire first edition of “In the Land of Noble People”, which describes Rupcic’s great motorcycle journey through the vastness of the ancient land of Iran, in which he questions the personal and collective values of the global world and calls it a spiritual journey, has sold out.

The traveler mentioned that he [and his wife] traveled freely by his motorcycle from west to east and from north to south of Iran, and also climbed the highest peak in Iran Mount Damavand.



“What excites you most in Iran is its people. The most hospitable, noble, kind, and educated people I have ever met on my travels around the world,” he said.

“It seems that the West’s behaviors and reactions against Iran are simply childish

acts.”

His book has been published by the V.B.Z. d.o.o., a Croatian publishing company including bookstores and online sales, and is available online.

Although the book is written in Croa-

What excites you most in Iran is its people. The most hospitable, noble, kind, and educated people I have ever met on my travels around the world. And it seems that the West’s behaviors and reactions against Iran are simply childish acts.

Virtual, actual or in between: deputy minister briefs on Iranian tourism during pandemic

→ 1 “Advancement of entrepreneurship, especially at the local levels and by the means of startups, is of very high importance for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, and it is on top of the list of our priorities.”

“Entrepreneurs also play a significant role in the increase of competitiveness between tourism businesses and destinations.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official attached great importance to sightseeing tours, which could be more beneficial to local communities and their economy.

“We need to revise marketing strategies, and to redefine tourism products by paying great attention to nature tours, rural tourism, ecotourism, agricultural tourism as a tool to empower local communities and travel businesses.”

Tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan publicized in November that mass, unplanned travels are not approved. “The outbreak of the coronavirus has caused damage to the tourism industry in Iran and [other parts of] the world in such a way that according to statistics, 50 million people are directly and indirectly exposed to unemployment due to the virus spread in the global scene.... yet, mass or unplanned and irresponsible travels are not approved to take place during the coronavirus era.”

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



of this trend.”

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

The minister also cited examples of similar models being practiced in other countries, saying “Some countries, including several neighboring ones, have activated their tourism sector..... In some countries, a label has been affixed to some hotels indicating which particular hotels are safe

and all health protocols are being strictly enforced.”

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

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

He said 8.7 million foreign nationals visited Iran during the past [Iranian] year (1398), adding that Iran was ranked as the second fastest-growing country in tourism based on data compiled by the World Tourism Organization. “On the onset of coronavirus, tourism faced a sharp decline in the world including our country. So that in the first three months of the current [Iranian] year the number of foreign tourists dropped to 74 --- it was reached almost zero!.”

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

Some \$1.7m paid to support tourism businesses in Hamedan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The Iranian government has paid 70 billion rials (about \$1.7 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) in loans to the tourism businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic in the west-central province of Hamedan.

The province’s tourism industry, mostly its accommodation centers, have taken 1.3 trillion rials (about \$31 million) hit from the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) over previous months, provincial tourism chief Ali Malmir said on Tuesday.

He also noted that there are 180 hotels, apartment hotels, eco-lodge units, and travel agencies across the province, which generate jobs for a total of 2,000 people.

In late October, deputy tourism chief Vali Teymouri said that a new support package to pay loans to businesses affected by the



coronavirus pandemic was approved by Iran’s National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control.

He also announced that depending on the type and activity of the businesses, they could benefit from at least 160 million rials (some \$3,800) to nine billion rials (some \$214,000) of bank loans with

a 12-percent interest rate.

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

In September, Teymouri said that around 1.3 million tourism workers in the country were facing problems due to the coronavirus crisis.

In October, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan warned that Iran’s cultural heritage and tourism will be in a critical situation if the crises caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus continue.

In August, Mounesan said that Iran’s tourism has suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

The government has allocated a 750-trillion-rial (about \$18 billion) package to help low-income households and small- and medium-sized enterprises suffered by the coronavirus concerns.

Optimistic forecasts, however, expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus is contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

Ancient gateway of Tus being restored to former grandeur

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Razan Gate, one of the four main gateways to the historical city of Tus, which is located in northeastern Iran, is being restored to its former splendor.

Situated some 100 meters north of the Mausoleum of Ferdowsi, the ruins of the gate can be seen with a length of seven kilometers inside the historical-cultural complex, the director of the complex announced on Monday.

The gateway is being restored and repaired using traditional materials of clay and mud, Ehsan Zohrevandi said on Monday.

Mausoleum of Ferdowsi, the illustrious Persian poet, in Tus is one of the tourist attractions of the region. Many Iranians regard Ferdowsi as the greatest of their poets. Down through the centuries they have continued to read and to listen to recitations from his masterwork,



the Shahnameh.

Located near the provincial capital of Mashhad, which is one of the top tourist attractions of the country, Tus has been the birthplace of some important cultural and scientific Iranian figures since the past centuries.

The city was captured by Alexander the Great in c. 330 BC and it was destroyed once during the Mongol invasion, and again by the Timurids, and many of its people were killed.

Besides Ferdowsi, the most famous person who has emerged from that area was the theologian, jurist, philosopher, and mystic al-Ghazali. Other notable residents of Tus include the early polymath Jaber ibn Hayyan, poet Asadi Tusi; polymath Nasser al-Din Tusi, and the prominent Islamic scholar Abu Jafar Tusi.

Tus and its historical gates, citadel, and ramparts were registered on the National Heritage list in 1996.

HIV control in Iran unfazed by COVID-19: minister

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Health Minister Saeed Namaki has said that the COVID-19 pandemic will not threaten under no circumstances the HIV control program in the country.

In a message on the occasion of World AIDS Day, December 1, the minister said: “The world health system today stands in an unpredictable, constant, and rapidly changing situation. On the one hand, the world’s attention has been drawn to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on people’s lives and livelihoods, and on the other hand, the rest of health services based on rights-based approaches have been affected by the pandemic. That the most sensible one is the HIV epidemic.”

HIV pandemic requires “global solidarity and shared responsibility” to be expanded day by day to ensure that health systems are strengthened enough to empower people with knowledge, increase fair access to diagnosis, treatment, medications, and other specialized needs for those living with HIV or at risk, he noted.

Although the efforts of the last forty years to fight this epidemic have achieved great successes and improvements, it should be confessed that still there are many challenges in the way of the global health system and human societies, he highlighted.

Forty years of responding to the HIV epidemic has taught us valuable lessons on ensuring an effective and appropriate response to the epidemic, if it is implemented based on justice-oriented approaches, community-oriented, knowledge-based, conscious approach, take into consideration the cultural and beliefs of society, trust, and prioritizing the people who are at most risk of affecting HIV/AIDS.

World AIDS Day is special to us. So, the bylaw on prevention of stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV has been prepared by the Ministry of Justice in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, he emphasized.

It is also planned to submit the bill on HIV



prevention and control to the parliament with the joint endorsement of the two government entities, Namaki added.

“Access to all preventive and treatment services including diagnostic tests, medications, prevention services, harm reduction services, mental health, and the most modern and specialized diagnostic laboratories is available for patients all over the country.

What we have done so far to end the AIDS epidemic not only has not demoted because of the COVID-19 but also is moving forward with full power and Iran has not given up on any of its wide efforts to eradicate the disease.”

HIV programs during pandemic “The HIV guidelines for the care and treatment and distribution of HIV medicines were reviewed and revised.

All effort has been made to replace as much as possible the online services instead of in-person services, subject to the point that the program does not harm and satisfaction of people living with HIV and their families is provided.

Educational materials entitled “What People Living with HIV Need to Know about COVID-19” were made available for them regularly through virtual networks.

An international assessment that was conducted at the peak of the COVID-19 crisis was found out that 98 percent of people living with HIV had access to medication for at least one month, 71 percent had access to mask, and 81 percent had access to disinfectant solutions and 91 percent had access to harm reduction packages.

A survey conducted in two cities including Tehran and Isfahan on 1276 PLHIVs, revealed that only 26 people were infected by COVID-19. Although this study is still ongoing, it shows how much awareness among people living with HIV, as well as their families about COVID-19 is high.

Fortunately, with all limitless efforts, HIV rapid diagnostic tests were made available throughout the country,” Namaki explained.

One of the most important pillars for the success of the HIV program in the country is extending cooperation and coordination with international organizations under the United Nations system and benefited from their scientific and technical capabilities over these years.

At the moment, the first challenging part in the way of the HIV control program is the COVID-19 epidemic and dramatic spread of

the virus in the world, which has inadvertently affected many areas of the fight against HIV in the country, he also stated.

World AIDS Day 2020

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 was “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.

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.

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.

Sustainable agriculture to be extended to wetlands

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — A model of sustainable agriculture previously implemented on the catchment area of Lake Urmia, will be extended to all wetlands in the country.

For seven consecutive years, the Department of Environment (DOE) and the agriculture organizations of West and East Azarbaijan provinces have implemented a project for encouraging local communities to participate in Lake Urmia restoration program and succeeded in expanding it to over 200 villages.

Sustainable agriculture has three main aspects, including income facilitation for the farmers, optimal utilization of water and soil resources, and ensuring food security, Ali Arvahi, the director of the Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project explained.

According to the model, with the cooperation of locals and observing these three components, the environment, and natural resources will be preserved despite agriculture prosperity, he added.

“After the plan was conducted on the catchment of Lake Urmia, we decided to expand it to the villages around it,” he explained, adding, now, it has been planned to implement the successful project on all the country’s wetlands.

So, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the related departments of DOE and the Ministry of Agriculture, he stated.

Important wetlands are in priority, such as those registered in the Ramsar Convention or have an ecological management program, but the plan will gradually extend to all wetlands over time, Arvahi said.

In the first stage, it will most likely be carried out in Bakhtegan wetland in Fars province and Shadegan in Khuzestan province, he concluded.

Valuable wetlands

Wetlands play a major role in protecting the land against floods and the impacts of storms. They provide food and diverse habitats which support genetic,

species, and ecosystem biodiversity. Wetlands play a key role in the life cycles of many species and in annual migration patterns.

Unfortunately, wetlands are being degraded and lost due to pollution, overexploitation, climate change, and human population growth. In recognition of these challenges, the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty, was adopted in 1971.

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

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

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

Afghan coach wins Nansen Award for empowering refugees in Iran

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Rozma Ghafouri, a 29-year-old sports coach, won the UNHCR’s annual Nansen Refugee Award, a prestigious annual prize that honors those who have gone to extraordinary lengths to help forcibly displaced or stateless people.

She is the co-founder of the Youth Initiative Fund project, a community-based initiative which seeks to get refugee children in Iran off the streets and into education.

The Nansen Refugee Award is named in honor of Norwegian explorer, humanitarian, and Nobel Peace Prize winner Fridtjof Nansen, the first High Commissioner for Refugees, who was appointed by the League of Nations in 1921. It aims to showcase his values of perseverance and commitment in the face of adversity.

Rozma and her family fled Afghanistan 23 years ago. After working as, a laborer for much of her childhood, she founded the Youth Initiative Fund in Iran’s southern city of Shiraz in 2015 to help at-risk children.

With the backing of UNHCR, and its Iranian government counterpart, the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants’ Affairs (BAFIA), the project now helps some 400 children a year, many of them out-of-school girls, through inclusion in sports and social activities, enrollment in literacy and numeracy courses and counseling with their families. Seeing what an impact the project has had on Afghan children’s lives in Shiraz, UNHCR and BAFIA are in the process of duplicating it in other provinces of Iran.

Every day, volunteers with the Youth Initiative – who include Afghans and Iranians – go door to door in the neighborhoods of Shiraz to talk to the parents of children who have either never gone to school or have had to drop out. Rozma and the team build a relationship with the parents and seek permission for their children to come to sports practice every week.

As the parents see the positive change that sports activities led by Rozma have on their children, they become more willing to listen to her pleas to let them go to school.

Rozma was nearly six years old when the Taliban overran her hometown in the northeast Afghan province of Kapisa and she fled the country with her parents and four siblings. In Iran, she was safe, but during her first years in exile, the family barely had enough to live on, let alone to cover school fees.

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

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

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

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

LET’S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 72)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

دانشجویان، بعد از کلاس‌های صبح، برای خوردن

ناهار به رستوران دانشگاه می‌روند. وقت ناهار از

ساعت دوازده تا دو نیم بعد از ظهر است.

دانشجویان اول سینی برمی‌دارند و در آن

قاشق، چنگال و لیوان می‌گذارند. بعد غذا، سوپ

و سالاد می‌گیرند. اگر بخواهند نوشابه هم

می‌خرند. غذای رستوران اغلب جلوه‌خوشت یا

جلوه‌کباب است.

ساتوشی و دوستانش معمولاً زود به رستوران

می‌روند. آنها دوست دارند آهسته و با لذت غذا

بخورند. بعد از ناهار هم بنشینند و صحبت کنند.

ساختار

Conjunction

حرف ربط کتاب کار

Conjunctions relate two words, phrases or sentences. The

following are examples of simple conjunctions:

و، یا، هم، اگر، اما، تا، چون

تمرین ۱. جمله‌ها را با حرف ربط کامل کنید:

۱. دکتر نامدار اهل ایران است در تهران زندگی می‌کند.

۲. من با تاکسی می‌روم زود به کلاس برسم.

۳. تهران مترو دارد مترو برای این شهر بزرگ کافی نیست.

۴. شب‌ها در رستوران خانه شام می‌خورند.

۵. فقط ساتوشی زود نمی‌آید؛ دانشجویان دیگر زود می‌آیند.

۶. دیر به رستوران برویم دوستان را نمی‌بینیم.

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Many Iranian names are derived from nature and are inspired by flowers and other elements. Being widespread and common in Iranian culture, this issue shows the importance of nature among Iranians.

Baby names with a compelling meaning are becoming ever so popular. Some of the most interesting ones can be nature-inspired baby names that have long been used among Iranians, which might be a sign of enthusiasm for nature.

The point is that the meaning of nature-inspired names is known to all and does not

need to be interpreted. They come from all sorts of elements like trees, flowers, stones, mountains, sky, and more.

Also, the majority of these names are girl names, because nature is characterized by tenderness and beauty, and this characteristic is more evident in girls.

Nature-inspired girl names are fresh and vibrant, combining organic roots with vivid imagery to create unforgettable monikers that are always recognizable.

Darya (literally meaning sea), Baran (rain), Berkeh (pond), Nasim (breeze), Asal (honey), Gandom (wheat), Sahra (desert), Nahal (seedling), Khorshid (sun), Sadaf (oysters),

Sahel (beach), Setareh (star), Bahar (spring), Melorin (a type of pearl), Toranj (bergamot orange) and Aseman (sky) are among the girl names rooted in natural elements.

Some flower names for girls include Nilofar (water lily), Laleh (tulip), Ladan (nasturtium), Kamelia (sasanqua camellia), Maryam (tuberose), Yas (Jasmine).

Boys also name after the natural elements in Iranian culture, but less than those for girls; some of which are Atash (literally meaning fire), Toofan (storm), Shahab (meteor), Alborz (high mountain, a mountain range in northern Iran), Sepand (an herbaceous plant called Peganum harmala), Davin (a

Kordish name literally meaning hillside), and Sahanad (name of a volcanic mountain in Azerbaijan province).

Although plenty of nature names for babies are not so much used as they were in the past, some natural names like Baran and Maryam enjoy widespread appeal and popularity.

Names coming from nature have been growing in use over the years with more and more unique options creeping up on the charts. Names like Niloufar and Toofan do not seem all that out there anymore, ushering in a new wave of options like Melorin and Davin, which work well with today’s styles.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → C

Tehran short of 12,000 classrooms

Considering the current population of students educating in Tehran, there is a shortage of 12,000 classrooms which will increase to 18,000 over the next few years, director of the organization for renovation of Tehran schools has stated.

Currently, 8,500 classrooms are beyond repair and must be reconstructed, while 14,500 others need retrofitting, ISNA quoted Ali Shahri as saying on Wednesday.

There is also a high density of students in the capital, and despite the average capacity of classrooms accommodating 24 students, the number of students in some areas is twice the average, he lamented. Referring to the current construction projects, he said that there are 110 projects under construction, half of which will be completed by the new school year (September 23).

کمبود ۱۲ هزار کلاس درس در پایتخت

مدیرکل نوسازی مدارس استان تهران اظهار کرد: با توجه به جمعیت فعلی دانش آموزی به ۱۲ هزار کلاس درس جدید نیاز داریم که البته با احتساب رشد جمعیت به ۱۸ هزار کلاس طی چندسال آینده می‌رسد.

علی شهری در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا، گفت: ۸۵۰۰ کلاس درس در تهران باید مورد تخریب و بازسازی قرار گرفته و ۱۴ هزار و ۵۰۰ کلاس درس مقاوم سازی شوند. همچنین با تراکم بالای جمعیت دانش‌آموزی در استان روبرویم و علیرغم آنکه تراکم میانگین در مدارس کشور ۲۴ نفر است، شاهد دوبرابر این میزان تراکم در برخی مناطق هستیم.

مدیرکل نوسازی مدارس استان تهران تاکید کرد که در حال حاضر ۱۱۰ پروژه نیمه تمام دیگر داریم که امیدواریم نیمی از آنها را تا مهر ماه به مرحله بهره‌برداری برسانیم.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY

www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian

■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895

info@tehrantimes.com

» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430

» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807

» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603

» Printed at: Jame Jam Barta Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79

Tehrantimes79

Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran

P.O. Box: 14155-4843

Zip Code: 1599814713

GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The people whom I hate the most and who are the farthest from me on the Day of Judgment are those who talk uselessly, and those who put down others, and those who show off when they talk.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Iranian graphic novel “Arshia” published in London

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The first volume of the Iranian graphic novel “Arshia” written by Ashkan Rahgozar has been published in English in London.

Markosia, a leading UK publisher of graphic novels and comic books, is the publisher of the book whose original Persian version was published by Hoorakhsh Studio, an animation studio in Tehran that produced the acclaimed movie “The Last Fiction”.

“Arshia 1” is the story of a mysterious character born completely out of the writer’s fiction. Nevertheless, the relation of this character with the Shahnameh (The Book of Kings) and ancient Iranian mythologies is quite notable as Arshia, along with the main characters, is one of the most influential and important characters in the graphic novel series “Jamshid” and the animated movie “The Last Fiction”, both of which are loose adaptations of stories from the Shahnameh.

The young protagonist starts his life during the rule of Tahmures, father of Jamshid, and his life comes to a close during the reign of Afaridun with the defeat of Zahak. Throughout this collection of graphic novels, the mystery around Arshia’s long life is uncovered, and the number of secrets that have turned him into a mysterious character are revealed.

“Arshia” is appropriate for all age groups, Hoorakhsh announced in 2019 when the Persian version of the book came out.

Markosia has earlier published Rahgozar’s graphic novel series “Jamshid”, which includes four books.

Opera adaptation of “The Doll Behind the Curtain” to go on stage in Denmark

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A modern opera adaptation of Sadeq Hedayat’s short story “The Doll Behind the Curtain” will go on stage at the Copenhagen Opera House, Denmark from December 8 to 13.

Iranian musician Amir Mahyar Tafreshipur is the composer of the opera, which will be directed by Danish artist Freja Friberg Lyne.

The scenario has been written by writer and dramatist for radio and theatre Dominic Power.

“The Doll Behind the Curtain” is an imaginative story of a young man’s fascination with a statue on display in a shop window. He finds the mysterious beauty of the statue so captivating that he takes it back to Iran with him. His infatuation and inner conflicts urge him to act in ways that not only ruin his own life but also that of his fiancé, who struggles to outshine her silent rival.

Tafreshipur’s music clearly reflects the dissonance between the modern and ancient worlds. The music effortlessly alternates between European modernism, Oriental folklore and classical traditions, painting a precise picture of the choices all individuals are forced to face in this “clash of the civilizations.”

Earlier in August 2015, opera singer Maya Sapone directed “The Doll Behind the Curtain” during the Tête à Tête Opera Festival in two performances at the Kings Place Hall in London.

Iran’s foremost short story writer Sadeq Hedayat was influenced by world literature, especially European literature, and read the works of Kafka, Poe and Dostoyevsky. He committed suicide in Paris.

His works have been translated into many languages and “The Blind Owl” is considered among the ten most important works in world surrealist literature.

“Characteristics of the School of Martyr Soleimani” published in Russian

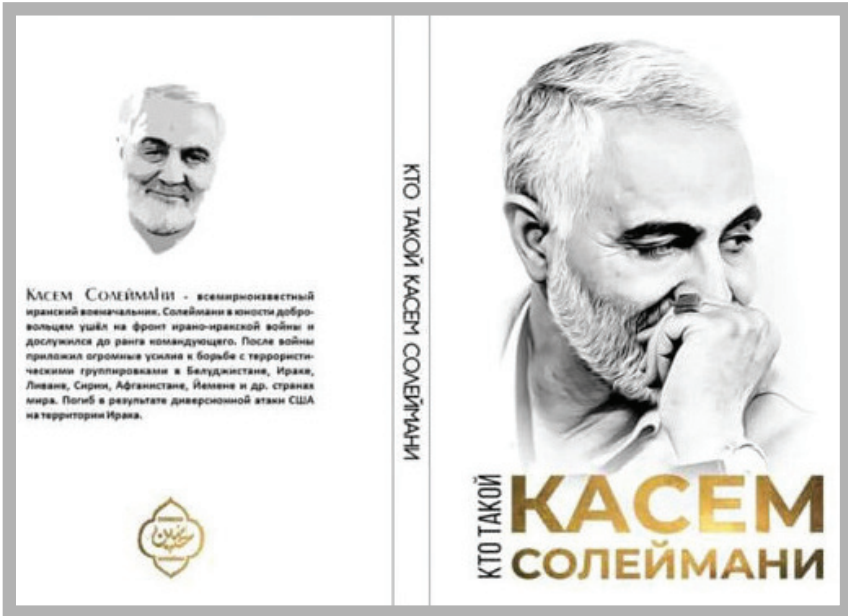
→1 “To explain about the school of Martyr Soleimani, we need to know the school of Islam first,” Shirazi wrote in a preface to the book.

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

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

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

After his assassination, books on Soleimani became bestsellers in the country, and numerous books have also arrived in the book market.



Cover of the Russian translation of “Characteristics of the School of Martyr Soleimani”.

A new book studying the moral principles of Commander Soleimani was published by the University of Imam Hussein (AS) in Tehran.

Entitled “Let Us Be This Way: Principles of Soleimani’s School”, the book has been written by Mohammad-Baqer Babai.

The book contains five chapters including a brief glance at the life of Soleimani, his school of thought and people’s viewpoints about him.

“The Motherland’s Borderless Commander”, a book that gives a deep insight into the life of Soleimani, is one of these books.

Zehtab Sohbatzadeh is the author of the book published by Bolur, a publishing house in the northern Iranian city of Rasht.

The Sebte Akbar Publications also published a book recounting Soleimani’s memories of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war after the end of the holy month of Ramadan this year.

The book named “Our Blessed Comrade” has been compiled by Asadollah Mohammadinia and Mohammad Mohammadinia.

Austrian company MED-EL sponsors Iranian movie “No Sound” on deaf people



Hanieh Tavassoli (L), Mehran Ahmadi (C) and Mohsen Kiai act in a scene from “No Sound” by Behrang Dezfulizadeh.

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — MED-EL, a global technology company that does research in the field of hearing loss, and develops and manufactures implantable hearing systems, has agreed to sponsor “No

Sound”, an Iranian film about people with hearing loss.

The movie was screened at the 43rd Sao Paulo International Film Festival in Brazil during October and November, and was acclaimed by filmgoers, producer Morteza Shayesteh said in a press release published on Tuesday.

Following the screening, the company announced its readiness to sponsor the movie, and it is now known as a co-production between Iran and Austria, he added.

Directed by Behrang Dezfulizadeh, “No Sound”, also known as “Silence, the Cochlea” and “Soundless”, a mother, who is hard of hearing, has separated from her deaf husband because of their disagreement over their son’s cochlear implant surgery that can enable the young child to hear. But the father tries to prevent the surgery because he wants his son to remain deaf like him.

Starring Hanieh Tavassoli and Mohsen Kiai, the film was produced in 2019 with support from Alltone Shenava, an Iranian company that provides implantable hearing systems.

“No Sound” had its Iranian premiere at the 38th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran during February.

Iranian National Commission for UNESCO honors actress Jaleh Olov

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian National Commission for UNESCO honored actress Jaleh Olov with a lifetime achievement award on the margins of the Selfie 20 Short Film Festival in Tehran on Monday.

The 93-year-old Olov expressed her thanks to the organizers in a video message screened during the closing ceremony of the festival, and said, “I am proud of working for the art of this land for 72 years in the different fields of theater, radio, dubbing and poetry.”

“I have always been praised by people, and this was a good reason for my stability. I



Actress Jaleh Olov in an undated photo.

hope festivals like Selfie 20 will help support and encourage the youth,” she added.

The festival screened a lineup of 420

short films, out of which 56 films have been shortlisted as finalists. Winners will be announced after the end of the pandemic.

Olov was selected the Cultural Eternal Figure of 2010. She has been honored with several lifetime achievement awards during her artistic career, including the award she received from the Iranian Theater Forum in May 2019.

She and Iranian animator Amin Haqshenas collaborated with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in the production of “Save the Earth”, an animation about climate change and its consequences for the earth in 2018.

The animated film has been directed by Haqshenas, and Olov worked as a narrator on the project, which has been financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

“Save the Earth” has been produced in line with UNIDO’s project “Industrial Energy Efficiency in Key Sectors”.

The project, which was implemented from August 2012 to July 2017, was intended to promote energy efficiency in five key sectors by adopting a national framework for Energy Management Standards (EnMS).

The animated movie implies that energy efficiency is one of the key solutions for combating climate change.

“Two Roads” at Cinéma Vérité to take filmgoers to world of disabled with lust for life

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Cinéma Vérité festival will screen Czech filmmaker Radovan Sibrt’s documentary “Two Roads” that explores the spirit of survival and wild lust for life against all odds.

The film poses this question: What would you do, if you knew that you had a limited time ahead of you, much shorter than an average lifetime?

The members of The Tap Tap, a music band made up of physically disabled - or rather crippled as they would call themselves - students of Jedlicka Institute in Prague, answer the question with their pretty clear idea: They want to live and enjoy every single minute of it.

The Tap Tap shows how to confront difficulties and obstacles, and above all, how to have fun in your life. The members of the band are strong personalities with a direct attitude toward life. They smoke, curse and love, as long as they enjoy it.

“Two Roads” has been selected to be screened in World’s Best, a section of the major Iranian documentary festival that will feature a selection of documentaries acclaimed at



The Tap Tap band in Czech filmmaker Radovan Sibrt’s documentary “Two Roads”.

2020 international events across the world.

The 23rd edition of the Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival in Czech honored the film with its audience award.

Iranian bookstores offer “Red Clocks” by Leni Zumas

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of Leni Zumas’s “Red Clocks” has recently been published by Flamingo Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Kambiz Manuchehrian.

In this ferociously imaginative novel, abortion is once again illegal in America, in-vitro fertilization is banned, and the Personhood Amendment grants rights of life, liberty and property to every embryo.

In a small Oregon fishing town, five very different women navigate these new barriers alongside age-old questions surrounding motherhood, identity and freedom. Ro, a single high-school teacher, is trying to have a baby on her own, while also writing a biography of Eivor, a little-known 19th-century female polar explorer.

Susan is a frustrated mother of two,

trapped in a crumbling marriage. Mattie is the adopted daughter of doting parents and one of Ro’s best students, who finds herself pregnant with nowhere to turn. And Gin is the gifted, forest-dwelling herbalist, or “mender”, who brings all their fates together when she’s arrested and put on trial in a frenzied modern-day witch hunt.

“Red Clocks” is at once a riveting drama, whose mysteries unfold with magnetic energy, and a shattering novel of ideas. In the vein of Margaret Atwood and Eileen Myles, Zumas fearlessly explores the contours of female experience, evoking “The Handmaid’s Tale” for a new millennium. This is a story of resilience, transformation and hope in tumultuous, even frightening, times.

Zumas’s national bestselling novel “Red Clocks” won the 2019 Oregon Book Award



Cover of the Persian translation of Leni Zumas’s “Red Clocks”.

for Fiction and was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize for Political Fiction and the Neukom Award for Speculative Fiction. The novel was a New York Times Book Review Editors’ Choice and was named a Best Book of 2018 by The Atlantic,

the Washington Post, the Huffington Post, Entropy and the New York Public Library. Vulture called it one of the 100 Most Important Books of the 21st Century So Far. “Red Clocks” has been translated into several languages.

Zumas is also the author of “Farewell Navigator: Stories” and “The Listeners”. Her stories, essays and interviews have appeared in Granta, The Times Literary Supplement, Guernica, BOMB, The Cut, Portland Monthly, Tin House and elsewhere.

She has received grants and fellowships from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, the Regional Arts & Culture Council and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Zumas lives in Oregon and teaches in the creative writing program at Portland State University.