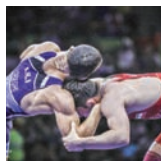
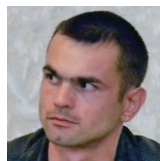




Individuals linked with Fakhrazadeh assassination identified *Page 2*



Wrestling teams invited to Henri Deglane Grand Prix *Page 3*



The hands of Israel in the blood of the Iranian scientist *Page 5*



Make Yalda memorable night for children under threat of pandemic depression *Page 8*

Ground-breaking step towards reducing statelessness



© File photo

Fatemeh and Fariba are two Afghan girls who live in Birjand, Iran. Their families have fled the war in Afghanistan.

Citizenship is granted to children born to Iranian mothers and foreign fathers

See page 7

VP submits \$579.9b budget bill to Majlis

TEHRAN - Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs Hossein-Ali Amiri submitted the administration's draft of the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1400, which starts on March 21, 2021, to the Majlis on Wednesday, IRNA reported. The proposed budget amounted to about 24.357 quadrillion rials (about \$579.928 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), with a 20-percent rise from the current year's approved budget.

The bill has envisaged public resources and expenditures, the budget of state-owned companies as well as the budget for various government bodies. Supplying basic goods, treatment, and medical equipment; securing livelihood; supporting production and employment; promoting and supporting non-oil exports and knowledge-based companies are the focal points of the bill.

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Israel legitimized assassination of officials by targeting Fakhrazadeh: expert

BY ABBAS DEHGHANIFARD
TEHRAN – Amir Mousavi, a former Iranian diplomat and an expert on West Asia, has said that Israel set a precedent for assassinating government officials by targeting prominent Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh. In an interview with the Tehran Times, Mousavi said Israel took pride in the assassination of the Iranian scientist and that Iran should give an appropriate response to it.

Fakhrazadeh 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.

Continued on page 3

Iranian film producers urge UN to condemn assassination of Fakhrazadeh

TEHRAN – The Film Producers Guild of Iran has sent a letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres urging the organization to condemn the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh. In the letter published on Wednesday, the association has also asked the UN to assign a committee the task of revealing the country or countries that were in charge

of the terrorist attack. "Today, we are waiting for a clear response from the UN to this terrorist attack," the producers wrote in the letter. "Iran is seeking stability and peace for the region and this cruel terrorist attack can threaten the stability of the region, and the U.S. support for Israeli terrorism can increase the instability of the region," they added.

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Law of persons with disabilities should be truly protective

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI
For the first time in a decade, a law was passed in 2018 to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, however, the question is, has it been effective and fully enforced by the related bodies? The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is annually observed on December 3, to promote the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities and to take action for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development. This year, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities will be commemorated on November 30-December 4, in conjunction with the 13th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The theme this year is "Building Back Better: toward a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 World". In Iran, Majlis [the parliament] approved both general outlines and details of a bill on the rights of persons with disabilities in January 2018. Development of disability-friendly cities, free transportation, health insurance, free education, job creation, housing loans, and fewer working hours are some of the articles of the law.

Since the approval of the law, education for students with disabilities have been provided in universities, subsidies for patients with spinal cord injury as well as disability care centers have been increased, he stated, adding, 1,057 residential units will be provided to families having members with disabilities next week. Two years ago, a budget of 120 trillion rials (nearly \$2.8 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) was proposed to fully implement the law, however, only 11 trillion rials (nearly \$260 million) was allocated. Asghar Shirzadi, chairman of the board of the Iranian association of the disabled, said that it still seems that the related organizations are not very willing to implement the law. Referring to the employment or livelihood assistance for the disabled, he said that based on the law, state-run organizations were obliged to allocate 3 percent of their job vacancies to the disabled people, or the government pays a living allowance at the rate set by the Ministry of Labor. However, these rules were never enforced.

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Pompeo visited West Bank, Golan Heights because he plans to run for president in 2024: activist

BY M.A. SAKI
As a preface to my answers, I'd like to state the following: *Mike Pompeo is an evangelical Christian and proudly proclaims his support for the genocidal state of Israel. He does this for two reasons: 1. He seems to believe the nonsense of evangelical 'prophecy' that all Jews will be rounded up and sent to the Holy Land to be killed or converted, so Jesus can return. He is actually one of the worst anti-Semites in the U.S. government, but Israel will use him and, by default, use Donald Trump as well, to get what it wants. What does Israel actually want? All of Palestine with no Palestinians in it. So they will make deals with the devil if necessary to reach that conclusion. They are also the only country in the Middle East that has invaded its neighbors, murdered its neighbors and confiscated land and resources from its neighbors.*

And it will continue to do so if people like Mike Pompeo remain in power. 2. He appears to be running for President in 2024. Following is the text of Tehran Times' interview with Greta Berlin: **On November 19, Mike Pompeo toured the West Bank and the Golan Heights. How do you analyze the visits to these two occupied lands?** A: Mike Pompeo is running for office, even though he doesn't say he is. He bows to his base in the U.S., evangelical Christians, and Zionist Jews in the hope they don't forget he's their friend and supporter. Therefore, he is willing to forgo international law (which clearly states that Israel is an occupying force in the West Bank and Golan Heights). He does this because he can. And incoming President Biden is probably not going to risk his Presidency by challenging Israel. We'll have to wait and see.

Continued on page 5

U.S. protests: Reopen NJ rally organizers prevented from protesting outside governor's house

More than a hundred New Jersey residents gathered near Gov. Phil Murphy's house Saturday to voice their frustration over the state's tightening COVID-19 restrictions. What began as a pro-Trump #StopTheSteal rally turned into a protest against the Democrat's statewide guidelines put in place to curb the spread of COVID-19. David Winkler, a Republican running for state Senate, attended the rally and told Fox News its purpose was "to get Gov. Murphy to listen to the people." "Listen to them," continued Winkler, speaking directly to Murphy. "You're a leader. You're supposed to be a representative that is for and by the people. You need to start acting like it." As the demonstrators made their way toward the governor's house, they were met by barricades as well as state and local police officers, who blocked them from entering the street. According to Win-

kler, the local police claimed the barricades were due to an EPW (Environmental and Public Works) matter that involved "cleaning up leaves." Rallygoers doubted that explanation, convinced Murphy ordered the police to stop the protesters from gathering outside his home. They can be heard screaming "let us in" and "peaceful assembly" in a video taken by Winkler. Middletown police did not respond to requests for comment. According to Winkler, the economic devastation and social isolation resulting from Murphy's "un-constitutional" mandates are a deadly combination. "If you have no economy, you have no New Jersey," he said. "These people had to take out loans just to keep their places open. They're not going to survive here." On Monday, Murphy announced the suspension of indoor high school and youth sports for the rest of 2020, along with a new limit on outdoor gatherings.

Organizing automotive industry through offering cars in commodity exchange

BY MAHNAZ ABDI
In recent months, the price of cars in the free market has become significantly different from the factory price. While this gap has led to a massive influx of people and professional dealers to buy cars from the factory, it did not benefit the automotive industry and those active in this sector, as the automakers sold their products at prices set by the Competition Council. As a result, the car industry suffered losses and

the profit of price gaps went to the pockets of dealers. To tackle the problem, the offering of cars in the commodity exchange has been a top issue under discussion in recent months, and different views have been expressed by officials and related organizations. However, after contradictory comments, the plan to organize the automotive industry, the most important axis of which is the offering of cars in the stock market, was approved in a recent meeting of the Industries Committee of

the parliament. Talking about the offering of cars in the commodity exchange and discovering the price of this product is in a situation when just some time ago car was a consumer product and not an investment. But the situation in the country these days has turned the car into a commodity for investment, and in the meantime, the lack of a transparent market for pricing has caused a sharp rise in car prices in Iran.

Continued on page 4



© Mehr

Rescue, relief in flood-hit Ahvaz

The Iranian Red Crescent Society has dispatched forces to provide assistance to families affected by a recent flood in the southwestern city of Ahvaz. Over the past couple of day, heavy rain has inundated many streets and houses across the city, causing great distress for a lot of families.

Biden will continue 'record arms sales to the region': Georgetown University professor

BY JAVAD HEIRANNIA
TEHRAN - Director of the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar says the incoming Biden administration will continue "close relations and cooperation" with Israel, the Persian Gulf Arab states and maintain "record arms sales to the region". Mehran Kamrava also says, "If Tehran indicates that it is willing to observe Iran's commitments under the JCPOA, then that would strengthen the position of those in the new U.S. administration who would like to see a resumption of the nuclear deal." Kamrava also predicts there would be "less overt hostility toward Iran" during the Biden administration. Following is the text of the interview: **Biden has introduced his foreign policy team. Antony Blinken is named secretary of state and Jake Sullivan national security advisor. What is your assessment of the team?** A: This team is made up of diplomats and figures long associated with the Democratic party establishment. They have had considerable experience in the Obama administration and appear to share the views that the United States has a right and a responsibility to intervene in conflict areas around the world to spread its liberal values. As such, they are likely to be liberal interventionists. **What will be the approach of Biden's foreign policy team toward West Asia?**

Continued on page 2

Individuals linked with Fakhrizadeh assassination identified: Iran

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN – Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Wednesday that the individuals linked with the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a prominent Iranian scientist who was martyred on Friday in a terrorist attack, have been identified.

“The Intelligence Ministry has identified individuals linked with the assassination of Martyr Fakhrizadeh and all aspects of the case are under investigation,” Rabiei said, according to Mehr.



He said the attack will be met with Iran’s proportionate response.

Fakhrizadeh, 59, was assassinated in a terrorist attack at a small city east of Tehran on November 27. The attack involved an explosion and small fire.

In a message after the incident, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called on all relevant administrators to “investigate this crime and firmly prosecute its perpetrators and its commanders” and “to continue the martyr’s scientific and technological efforts in all

the sectors where he was active.”

Rabiei pointed to the Leader’s remarks, saying the country’s scientific progress will not be hindered by such acts of terror.

In remarks on Monday, Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said numerous clues have been found with regard to the assassination.

“Following the assassination of Martyr Fakhrizadeh, my colleagues in the Intelligence Ministry have started following up on this incident in all aspects and have so far obtained many clues,” Alavi said on the sidelines of the scientist’s funeral procession.

“Due to its security aspects, it is not possible to inform the public until all its dimensions are clarified, but as soon as the dimensions of this issue are clarified, the dear nation of Iran will be informed,” he added.

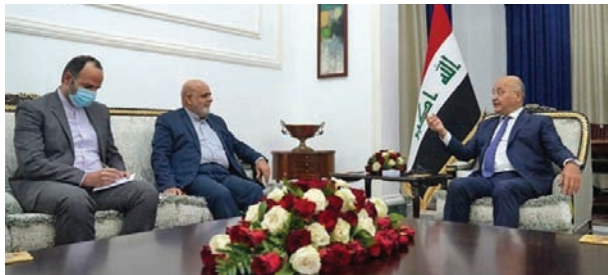
Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said on Monday that no hit man was involved in the assassination, adding that the distinguished figure was killed in a complicated operation that involved electronic equipment without any assassin at the scene.

“Unfortunately, the operation was a very complicated one. It took place with the employment of electronic equipment. No person (assassin) was present at the scene,” he explained.

Belgium, Iraq, South Korea denounce assassination of Iranian scientist

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN – Belgium, Iraq and South Korea have deplored the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

The condemnation by Belgium came after the country’s Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sophie Wilmes talked to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on the phone on Wednesday.



Iraqi President Barham Salih (R) talking to Iranian Ambassador Iraj Masjedi (C)

During a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi on Wednesday, Iraqi President Barham Salih also said his country denounces any violence and aggression which endangers the countries and their citizens’ security, the Iraqi president remarked, according to Fars.

Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh’s car was targeted by an explosion and machinegun fire in a small city 40 kilometers northeast of Tehran on Friday. The scientist and one of his companions were immediately taken to a nearby hospital but he succumbed to his injuries.

Also, South Korea on Wednesday denounced the assassination of the leading nuclear scientist as a criminal act that does not help bring stability and peace in the region.

“We stress that this kind of violent criminal act is not conducive to stability and peace in the Middle Eastern region,” ministry spokesperson Choi Young-sam said in a commentary.

“Given the uncertainties surrounding the situation in the Middle East, our government opposes any act that amplifies tensions and affects regional stability,” Choi said, According Yonhap.

Immediately after the terrorist attack, Foreign Minister Zarif tweeted that the assassination bears all the hallmarks of the Israeli regime.

An informed source told Press TV on Monday that the remains of the weapon used in the Friday assassination of senior nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh show that it was made in Israel.

The history of Tel Aviv’s sabotage targeting Iran’s nuclear energy program is as old as the program itself.

Many observers believe Israel is not able to carry out such dangerous operations without the prior information and support of the United States which left a landmark nuclear deal with Iran in 2015.

Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani said that electronic equipment has been used in the “highly complicated” assassination of Fakhrizadeh, and further underlined the role of Israel and the anti-Iran Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO, also known as the MEK, PMOI and NCRI) in the terror attack.

“Unfortunately, the operation was very complicated and was carried out by using electronic equipment and no one (terrorist) was present on the scene. But some clues are available, and the identity and records of the designer of the operation has been discovered by us,” Shamkhani said on Monday.

“Certainly, Monafeqin (hypocrites as MKO members are called in Iran) have played a role and certainly, the Zionist regime and Mossad are the criminal mastermind of this incident,” he added.

Early in 2018, the Israeli sources had acknowledged that Mossad had tried to assassinate an Iranian nuclear scientist, but its operation failed.

Rouhani raps Israel’s inhumane acts against Palestinians

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani has reaffirmed the Islamic Republic’s support for the Palestinian cause, urging the world to stand up to the inhumane policies adopted by the Israeli regime.

“On the occasion of the International Day of solidarity with the Palestinian people, I would like to express, on behalf of the People and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, our strong and everlasting support for the Palestinian people in the achievement of their legitimate aspirations,” Rouhani stated.

He made the remarks in a message to the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

“November 29th marks more than seven decades of the Zionist regime’s occupation of Palestinian land, and more than seven decades of continued suffering, subjugation and injustice against the oppressed Palestinian people,” he said, according to IRNA.

“Over the course of this occupation, we have witnessed the intensification of the aggressive and racist policies as well as organized crimes of this regime against the Palestinian people that occur on a daily basis, including through the implementation of annexation plan, the killing of innocent Palestinian people, the continuation of anti-human rights sanctions against the people of Gaza in the time of the coronavirus pandemic and their deprivation from accessing minimum basic medical requirements and health assistance,” the president added.

He named the existence of more than five million Palestinian refugees, the expansion of occupation through new settlement activities in the West Bank and Al-Quds-al-Sharif, the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians and the cruel blockade on Gaza as some of the tragic consequences of the occupation of Palestine.

In this regard, Rouhani continued, extensive measures taken by the Zionist regime in Judaizing al-Quds-al-Sharif, changing



its demographic and geographical nature, supporting the Zionist extremists in violating the rights of Palestinians are all actions that occur at a time when illegal settlement expansion and forcible eviction of non-Jewish people have already endangered the situation in the region.

“In fact, such an approach aims at Judaizing al-Quds-al Sharif and destroying all of its historical and Islamic characteristics, with the goal to fully occupy Palestinian lands in order to prevent Palestinians from returning to their homeland which once again reveals the racially-charged intentions of this regime in occupying even more Palestinian territories and ignoring their inalienable rights,” he noted.

The president also explained that the Islamic Republic of Iran believes these measures not only drastically deteriorate the situation in the occupied territories, but also have grave regional and international security consequences.

“Unfortunately, all of these actions take place while the international community has not taken any effective measures to

end this tragedy and restore the rights of defenseless Palestine people,” he lamented.

Rouhani argued that due to the support provided by a few members of the Security Council, the Zionist regime has actually increased its inhumane actions against the Palestinians.

He warned that by adopting such aggressive actions and policies in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Lebanon, and advancing a secret production of weapons of mass destruction, the Israeli regime has seriously endangered peace and stability in the whole region.

“Emphasizing its continued full support for the humanitarian and emancipatory ideal of the Palestinian people, and for honoring their admirable and legitimate resistance against the Zionist regime’s aggression and occupation, the Islamic Republic of Iran urges the international community to take action against such illegal measures taken by the child-killer regime of Israel which flagrantly violates human rights as well as the resolutions of the United Nations,” he stated.

Iran’s enemies cannot hamper its scientific progress, says Russian scholar

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN – The enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran cannot prevent scientific and technological developments by assassinating scholars and scientific figures, a Russian scholar said on Tuesday.

In an interview with IRNA on Tuesday, Vadim Khomenkov condemned the terrorist attack that killed Iran’s top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, saying the assassination was a sign of the weakness of Iran’s enemies.

Khomenkov, the deputy director of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Republic of Tatarstan, said Iran has taken strong steps in the field of science and technology in recent decades and it is quite clear that the enemies of this country, especially the U.S. and Israel, are worried about its progress.

He added that the assassination of Fakhrizadeh showed that the enemies of Iran do any action to stop Iran from making advances in scientific fields.

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

Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel,

which has carried out 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”.

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.

Over the past years Israel assassinated five other Iranian nuclear scientists. It killed Masoud Alimohammadi, Majid Shahriari, Darioush Rezaeinejad, and Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan. Israel also attempted to assassinate Fereydon Abbassi, Iran’s head of the Atomic Agency, but it failed.

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.

“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.

Saudi Arabia angered by Zarif’s remarks about assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists

TEHRAN (Press TV) – The Saudi minister of state for foreign affairs has hit out at Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif of Iran after the latter implicated Riyadh – along with Israel and the U.S. – in an anti-Iran psychological operation that led up to the assassination of senior nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Adel al-Jubeir, in a post published on his Twitter page on Tuesday, claimed that the chief diplomat was “desperate” to blame the Riyadh regime in anything negative that happened in Iran.

“Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif is desperate to blame the Kingdom for anything negative that happens in Iran. Will he blame us for the next earthquake or flood?” Jubeir wrote.

The Saudi minister’s rant came after Zarif said in an Instagram post on Monday night that U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s recent tour of the region, his tripartite meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as



well as Netanyahu’s recent remarks were signs of yet another conspiracy against the Islamic Republic, which unfortunately came to light with Fakhrizadeh’s assassination.

“A counter-intelligence campaign and purposeful psychological warfare were launched in tandem with this terrorist act, in the delusive hope that the evil plans of Pompeo, Netanyahu and bin Salman to create tensions would materialize,” Zarif’s post read.

Fakhrizadeh, who headed the Iranian Defense Ministry’s Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (known by its acronym SPND), was targeted on November 27 in a multi-pronged attack by suspected

Israeli-tied terrorists.

Unlike other regional countries, including its allies at the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Saudi Arabia has refused to condemn the assassination of the senior Iranian physicist.

Abdallah al-Mouallimi, permanent representative of the kingdom to the United Nations, however, claimed during an interview with Russian RT television news network on Tuesday that his country “did not support the policy of assassinations at all.” It is not the first time that the Islamic Republic finds Saudi Arabia’s footprints in terrorist operations on Iranian soil.

Back on June 10, Denmark called in the Saudi ambassador to Copenhagen to protest the kingdom’s support for a terrorist group behind a 2018 deadly attack in Iran’s southwestern city of Ahvaz, among its other terrorist crimes against Iranians.

Riyadh’s envoy was summoned after terrorism charges were leveled against three leaders of the anti-Iran al-Ahvaziya terror group based in Denmark.

In September 2018, the Saudi-backed terror outfit claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on a military parade in Ahvaz, Khuzestan’s provincial capital. The assault killed 25 people, including members of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and civilian bystanders, and injured 70 others.

Shortly after the attack, the London-based “Iran International” television channel funded by Saudi Arabia allowed the al-Ahvaziya spokesman to go live on air to defend the bloodshed.

Iran recently arrested the mastermind of that attack, Farajollah Chaab, on the back of a complicated intelligence operation.

Following his arrest, the terrorist, who had planned several abortive terrorist operations in Iranian cities, confessed to cooperation with the Saudi intelligence service.

The regime in Riyadh has also been a major supporter of the so-called Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO), a notorious terrorist outfit that has the blood of thousands of Iranians on its hands.

‘Criminal’ assassination of Iranian scientist won’t solve issues: EU’s Borrell

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell says the “criminal” assassination of Iranian physicist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh will not help solve issues pertaining to the country’s nuclear program.

“This (the assassination) was a criminal act ... I am sorry to say but this is not the way you are solving problems,” Borrell said at an online debate with his predecessors, Federica

Mogherini and Javier Solana, dubbed “The EU in a changing world” on Tuesday.

Fakhrizadeh, the head of the Iranian Defense Ministry’s Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research, was targeted in a multi-pronged terrorist attack by a number of assailants in a small city near Tehran on Friday.

Iranian government officials and military commanders

have hinted that the Israeli regime was behind the terror attack, vowing harsh revenge against all the criminals involved.

An informed source told Press TV on Monday that the remains of the weapon used in the Friday assassination show that it was made in Israel, adding that the weapon collected from the site of the terrorist act bears the logo and specifications of the Israeli military industry.

Israel legitimized assassination of government officials by targeting Fakhrizadeh: expert

1→ They vowed to take revenge against it in due time. Iranian officials publicly accused Israel of targeting Fakhrizadeh.

On the other hand, Israel did nothing to deny the charge. Instead, Israeli officials have even implied that Israel was behind the attack on the Iranian scientist. Moreover, several leading American news organizations such as The New York Times and CNN reported that Israel was behind the attack.

“Trump and the Zionists have legitimized the assassination of political and security officials and scientists. Since they took pride in such assassinations, I think Iran should respond in a similar way,” the former diplomat told the Tehran Times.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ As you know, the debate over how to respond to the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh is ongoing. One of the issues that was raised in this regard is a parliamentary bill dubbed “Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions.” Do you think that this response can be a substitute for a military one?

A: The parliamentary bill is effective. I think being hit with missiles is more tolerable to Israel than to have Iran increase uranium enrichment level to 20%. Israel would accept Haifa being hit with missiles but the implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) does not stop. Because the guarantees that this protocol provided were really unique for the Zionist regime.

Therefore, The Parliament’s move is very courageous, strong, and crushing. I think the bill if passed and finalized, would come over the Zionists like a lightning strike. But with respect to responding to criminals and Zionist terrorists, I think there should not be any military response. Instead, Iran should act in accordance with the principle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. In other words, Iran should respond in a similar manner.

Look, Trump and the Zionists have legitimized the assassination of political and security officials and scientists. Since they took pride in such assassinations, I think Iran should respond in a similar way. Because they boasted that they carried out an assassination operation. They assassinate officials from Iran and the Resistance Axis and publicly take pride in that and laugh and congratulate each other.



Now, we have seen a Zionist official announced that the world should thank the Zionist regime [Israel] for assassinating the Iranian scientist. Therefore, Iran should also do a job so that the world thanks it. Iran should take painful revenge against this malign entity. And this revenge cannot be only militarily. There are various ways to surprise the Zionist regime. I am astonished by the patience and tolerance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is really capable of taking reciprocal steps.

A: Do you think Iran should respond or continue to exercise restraint?

■ I think Iran has the upper hand. The country’s security apparatus has the upper hand against the United States and Israel as well as Arab countries, which probably were involved in the assassination of Fakhrizadeh. They are roaming around the world, and that they should not feel secure. They should not be able to commit crimes and get away with it. Iran should put aside moral issues. Because they have embarked on a dangerous policy.

Fakhrizadeh is our country’s fifth scientist that was assassinated in a terrorist attack. He was a precious man and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian nation have lost a treasure. Therefore, this crime should not go unanswered. At the end of the day, Iran has a lot of options to punish the Zionist regime and make it regret killing the Iranian scientist.

I hope the relevant officials take this issue more seriously, otherwise, the enemies will not stop. The Zionists have a list of at least 26 people. They assassinated five people. This means that they are after assassinating the remaining people. Is it the right policy to sit idly by until they assassinate all these people? No, it’s not the right policy. There is a need to do something. Iran should not care about what the world would say.

The world urges restraint. What does it mean to exercise restraint? Who must exercise restraint? Zionists and America are going their own way. Therefore, they mean that we should exercise restraint until the list ends and then mourn and weep. No, this is not acceptable. There should be a serious response. While they announce their list, why we should wait.

A: Does the IAEA have anything to do with the assassination of Fakhrizadeh?

■ On the other hand, we need to forcefully deal with the IAEA because whatever information we gave it, the IAEA passed the information on to the Zionists. Even the address and the whereabouts and of the scientists were passed on to the Zionists. And this means that the IAEA is really spying on Iran.

In my point of view, our country’s security apparatus and other relevant authorities should respond to the IAEA. It doesn’t make sense that we fully cooperate with the IAEA

within the framework of the Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) while the IAEA passes the information on to the Zionists. The IAEA conducts one-on-one interviews with our scientists and experts and then gives the information it obtained to the enemies’ intelligence agencies whether it’s American or Zionist. This is unacceptable. I think the Islamic Republic of Iran is paying the price of this vague cooperation. Today, we see that we easily lose such a great scientist as Fakhrizadeh, whom Iran can raise with great difficulty.

A: What do Iran’s allies expect Iran to do on the issue of the Fakhrizadeh assassination?

■ We hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran gives a crushing response to the perpetrators. The supporters of the Islamic Republic of Iran are really upset now. Our people are also upset. It is obvious on social media platforms that all are unhappy with the assassination of Fakhrizadeh. The friends of the Resistance Axis, Arab and Muslim countries, and free people in Latin America and other places are sending messages that why Iran exercising restraint. They say Iran is going through successive assassination attacks. They say why the Islamic Republic of Iran does not respond. The Islamic Republic of Iran is now under pressure.

Relevant authorities and forces can make these people, the Iranian nation, and the Resistance Axis happy once again. They should not allow the enemies to rejoice at Iran’s misfortune. You know, schadenfreude is bad. The assassination of Fakhrizadeh has created a moment of schadenfreude for the enemies.

The enemies are gloating that Iran can’t respond. Even the Zionists say on social media that if Israel was behind the assassination then why Iran does not strike it. This is very bad. So, there is a need to do something. The Islamic Republic of Iran is very strong and it can do a lot of things. It’s not only missiles. Iran has other options. Iran can also respond by acting like enemies. In fact, Israel has now green-lighted this modus operandi. Therefore, Iran can respond by using indirect ways and make the Zionists and the U.S. regret it. Iran should respond in such a way that inflicts costs on the enemies and makes them understand that assassinating an Iranian scientist or targeting Iran will have costs.

UN Security Council to hold session on JCPOA in December

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — The United Nations Security Council will hold a briefing session on the latest development in the West Asia region, including the situation around the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

“Before the Christmas break, the Council will hear briefings on the Middle East [West Asia] peace process, including the question of Palestine, and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran’s nuclear program,” the UN said in a statement on Tuesday.

Council President Jerry Matthews Matjila said the Council will not discuss the recent assassination of prominent Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh because the 15-member UN body has not received any request concerning the assassination.

“As for the recent killing of an Iranian nuclear scientist, he said the Council has not received any request to act on that matter, but the meeting on Iran’s nuclear program later this month will be held in ‘a new global environment,’” the UN statement said.

Fakhrizadeh 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, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Tel Aviv was behind the assassination of Fakhrizadeh.

“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 said on Saturday, a



day after the assassination.

American news organizations confirmed that Israel was behind the assassination of Fakhrizadeh. The New York Times and CNN both reported that Israel was responsible for the assassination. Citing a U.S. official, CNN Arabic said on Wednesday that Israel was behind the assassination of Fakhrizadeh.

The official said that Israel usually informs the U.S. administration of information about its targets and the operations it intends to carry out prior to carrying out, but he refused to confirm whether the Israeli government had done so this time.

“Fakhrizadeh has long been one of Israel’s targets,” the U.S. official remarked.

The official also pointed to the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, saying that the U.S. intelligence is monitoring the situation, because, according to CNN Arabic, the Americans believe that Iran has not taken revenge for the assassination of General Soleimani yet.

The American news network also said that the U.S. administration expects that Iran will retaliate for the assassination of

Soleimani as the anniversary of his death in Iraq approaches. The general was assassinated in an American drone strike on January 3 near Baghdad’s international airport.

The official stressed that Iran’s retaliatory step against the Americans will make Biden’s job difficult regarding lifting sanctions on Tehran and launching the diplomatic process.

According to the American official, additional sanctions will be imposed on Tehran within the next week and the following, as Trump has given Pompeo a “Carte Blanche” to continue imposing a policy of maximum pressure on Tehran over the next two months.

But slapping new sanctions on Iran could ratchet up tensions in the region especially after the assassination of the Iranian nuclear scientist significantly raised the tension in the region.

The UN has called for restraint hours after the assassination of Fakhrizadeh.

“We have noted the reports that an Iranian nuclear scientist has been assassinated near Tehran today. We urge restraint and the need to avoid any actions that could lead to an escalation of tensions in the region,” Farhan Haq, the deputy spokesman for the UN secretary-general, said on late Friday.

Also on Friday, Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi sent a letter to the UN secretary-general and Security Council, warning against any “adventuristic” steps by the U.S. and Israel against Iran in the waning days of the Trump administration.

Warning against any adventuristic measures by the United States and Israel against my country, particularly during the remaining period of the current administration of the United States in office, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its rights to take all necessary measures to defend its people and secure its interests,” Ravanchi said in the letter.

SPORTS

Wrestling teams invited to Henri Deglane Grand Prix

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN — Iranian freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling teams have been invited to the 47th edition of the Grand Prix de France Henri Deglane.



The tournament will be held in Nice, France from Jan. 15 to 17.

The French Wrestling Federation has invited the Iranian teams to participate in the event which will be held in 10 weight classes.

The tournament is named after Deglane, who won Olympic gold for France in the heavyweight category at their home Paris Games in 1924.

Deglane also won world and European titles and died at the age of 73 in 1975.

IPL: Tractor edge Mes Rafsanjan

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN — Tractor football team earned a hard-fought 1-0 win over Mes Rafsanjan in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Wednesday.

Newly-promoted Mes created several chances in the match but their strikers lacked the cutting edge.

In the 86th minute, Mohammad Abbaszadeh, who came off the bench, found the back of the net with a powerful strike from the right of the area.

Tractor earned a win after four matches.

Tractor moved up to 10th place with five points.

“We are very happy because Mes Rafsanjan are a young and strong team. Two teams played well but we benefited from Abbaszadeh’s experience,” Tractor coach Alireza Mansourian said in the post-match news conference.

Gol Gohar are top of the table with 10 points, followed by Persepolis and Nassaji.

Syria coach Salerno satisfied with beating Iran basketball team

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN — Syria head coach Joe Salerno is very happy to beat Iran basketball team 77-70 in the second window of FIBA Asia Cup.

The American was just as ecstatic as his team, who was already rushing the court to passionately celebrate its historic win, even if he didn’t express it in the same manner.

He knew what this victory meant. Even though he had only joined the team not long ago, he was well aware how important it was to beat Iran. Not only for the players. Not only for the national team program. But for the entire nation, who hungry for a big win on the hardwood, fiba.basketball.com reported.

“I’m just so happy for everybody in Syria,” he said in the postgame press conference. “Really every person I’ve met there since I’ve been with the team has just been wonderful, so I’m just happy that I could help provide them with this win.”

“I mean, Iran is a tremendous basketball team and it has been for a long time,” said coach Salerno.

“For us to get this type of win, it has to come from this type of confidence. I look at Iran and they’re one of the top 25 teams in the world, so for us to come out and beat them proves that we can also be a great team.”

“This win will carry on for us through the next window. We’ve shown ourselves, our players, our people at home who are in Syria that we can do this. We can accomplish this, so we’re just looking forward to here on out and we’re just looking forward to get better,” he concluded.

AFC may postpone 2021 Champions League: report

PLDC — The Asian Football Confederation is reportedly mulling over postponing the 2021 AFC Champions League to not intervene with the 2020 FIFA Club World Cup.

According to the previous decision of the Confederation, the 2021 ACL is slated to start on January 2021, however, the 2020 FIFA Club World Cup is also going to be staged in February in Qatar, and this has made AFC officials rethink the schedule, UAE-based Al-Ittihad newspaper reported.

According to the daily, the AFC may re-schedule the Champions League for April 2021. Meanwhile, the format of holding the 2021 ACL is not final yet as the COVID-19 pandemic is still affecting the world.

Earlier, Qatari media had reported that the next edition of the event will also be held in one country and that there will be no home and away matches in the knock-out stages. Also, the fact that the number of participating teams in the ACL increases from 32 to 40 may further complicate the situation.

The news about the 2021 AFC Champions League comes as the winner of the 2020 edition is yet to be determined. Persepolis of Iran has already won the West Zone and is waiting for the winner of the East Zone in the final of the event which is slated to be held on December 19 in Qatar’s Doha.

Biden reaffirms support for JCPOA, vows to engage Iran

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Joe Biden has said that he still stands by his views on the 2015 Iran nuclear deal that were articulated in a mid-September op-ed, but a U.S. return to the deal would be “hard”.

In an interview with The New York Times’ columnist Thomas Friedman, Biden addressed a variety of domestic and foreign policy issues, including the Iran nuclear deal, which President Donald Trump quit on May 8, 2018.

Asked whether he still stands by his views on the Iran deal that he expressed in a September 13 op-ed for CNN, Biden answered, “It’s going to be hard, but yeah.”

This is the first statement by Biden on Iran since he was widely projected to win the U.S. presidential election in early November.

Biden said in the op-ed that he will return to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“I will offer Tehran a credible path back to diplomacy. If Iran returns to strict compliance with the nuclear deal, the United States would

rejoin the agreement as a starting point for follow-on negotiations. With our allies, we will work to strengthen and extend the nuclear deal’s provisions, while also addressing other issues of concern,” then-presidential candidate Biden said.

According to Friedman, the view of Biden and his national security team is that once the deal is restored by both sides, there will have to be, in very short order, a round of negotiations to seek to lengthen the duration of the restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program — originally 15 years — as well as to address Iran’s regional activities.

The columnist also said that the Biden team may involve Iran’s Arab neighbors, namely Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, in follow-on negotiations on Iran’s regional activities.

“Ideally, the Biden team would like to see that follow-on negotiation include not only the original signatories to the deal — Iran, the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France, Germany and the European Union — but also Iran’s Arab neighbors, particularly

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates,” wrote Friedman.

A few days ago, Friedman wrote a column urging a Biden administration to address Iran’s precision-guided missile before restoring the JCPOA. But this column seems to have failed to influence the Biden team. “But for now they insist that America’s overwhelming national interest is to get Iran’s nuclear program back under control and fully inspected,” Friedman admittedly said.

Biden himself expressed less enthusiasm about addressing Iran’s missiles. “Look, there’s a lot of talk about precision missiles and all range of other things that are destabilizing the region,” Biden noted, adding that “the best way to achieve getting some stability in the region” is to deal “with the nuclear program.”

If Iran gets a nuclear bomb, Biden claimed, it puts enormous pressure on the Saudis, Turkey, Egypt and others to get nuclear weapons themselves. “And the last goddamn thing we need in that part of the world is a buildup of



nuclear capability.”

Then, Biden said, “In consultation with our allies and partners, we’re going to engage in negotiations and follow-on agreements to tighten and lengthen Iran’s nuclear constraints, as well as address the missile program.” The U.S. always has the option to snap back sanctions if need be, and Iran knows that, he added.

It’s worth noting that Iran has always said that it is not seeking to develop a nuclear bomb, and it even considers this kind of bomb religiously indecent.

Organizing automotive industry through offering cars in commodity exchange

1 → Before talking about the plan to organize the automotive industry, it should be noted that mandatory pricing in the commodity exchange is prohibited and the discovery of real prices must be accepted.

In fact, selling a car in a commodity exchange means moving away from orderly pricing, and the car is available to the public at more reasonable prices.

With the sale of cars in the commodity exchange, car pricing is not done by the Consumers and Producers Protection Organization and the Competition Council. Rather, prices are determined by supply and demand.

The plan to organize the automotive industry seeks to balance supply and demand as well as turn the car into a consumer good.

This plan has been recently revised, and in the revised plan, the Competition Council determines which cars should be offered in the commodity exchange.

In fact, in the revised plan, which is based on the regulated supply of cars in the stock exchange, the Competition Council is obliged to determine the cars subject to this plan every six months according to indicators such as inflation, factory-market price gap, number of manufactured cars and impact on the market.

Iran-Austria Joint Economic Committee’s meeting to be held in near future

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s ambassador to Vienna said that the next meeting of Iran-Austria Joint Economic Committee is planned to be held in near future.

Making the remarks in an online meeting of Iran-Austria Joint Chamber of Commerce, attended also by Austria’s ambassador to Tehran, Abbas Baqerpour Ardakani said the ninth meeting of the two countries’ Joint Economic Committee was held in Vienna, and the tenth meeting is planned to be held soon.

The envoy said Iran is among the four countries that have a joint economic committee with Austria.

In an online meeting between Head of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum and Austrian Deputy Economy Minister for Economic Affairs, Innovation and International Policy Florian Frauscher, in early September, the officials had discussed holding the next meeting of the two countries’ joint economic committee.

They also discussed the roadmap for economic cooperation between the two sides.

In the meeting, Zadboum referred to the positive progress of the cooperation agreements and memorandums signed within the economic roadmap of the two countries, and said: “Despite the sanctions and their effects on Iran’s trade, there are still favorable conditions for the development of economic relations between the two countries.”

The TPO head also stressed the need to make some changes in the two sides’ joint working groups for the 2020-2021 period and stated: “We welcome any proposals or opinions from the Austrian side and we hope that a document will be signed for the new period by the end of this year.”

Frauscher for her part underlined the satisfactory performance of the two countries’ economic working groups and stressed the need for constant evaluation of these working groups in parallel by both Iran and Austria.

At the end of the virtual meeting, the two sides expressed hope for the elimination of the problems caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and the U.S. sanctions, and announced their readiness to hold the next physical meeting of the two countries’ Joint Economic Committee in the first half of the next year.

IMIDRO to make investment on development of mines in West Azarbaijan

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Based on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) and the governorate of West Azarbaijan Province, in northwest of Iran, IMIDRO will make investment for development of mines in the province.

The MOU was signed by IMIDRO Head Khodadad Gharibpour, and West Azarbaijan Governor-General Mohammad-Mehdi Shahriari, according to it, conducting exploration activities, participation in large-scale mining projects, exploration of precious and semi-precious stones, construction of access roads and power supply network to a number of mines will be involved.

As previously announced by Parisa Abedpour, the deputy head of the province’s Industry, Mining and Trade Department for mines and mining industries, investment making in the mines of West Azarbaijan has increased 15 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21).

According to Abedpour, exploration permits were issued for 19 zones during the six-month period of this year, indicating a 46-percent growth year on year.

In mid-October, the head of Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran (GSI) said 60 new areas are going to be opened and awarded to the private sector for mining exploration.

“In line with the organization’s new approach regarding the contribution of the private sector in the country’s large-scale exploration activities, we are planning to award new areas for mining exploration, so that the private sector would be able to enter mining activities in a fair and transparent environment,” Alireza Shahidi stated.

According to the official, the mentioned areas include some new sites which haven’t been opened for exploration before, as well as some sites in which information-gathering and prospecting operations have been already carried out and they will be handed over to domestic contractors.

“Existence of valuable minerals such as gold, copper, iron, lead, zinc and other rare minerals has been confirmed in these areas [those prospected] and necessary licenses and certifications for discovery are being issued,” Shahidi said.

Back in August, the head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization announced that exploration operations were started in 300,000 square meters of land across the country.

According to Khodadad Gharibpour, the country’s private sector has invested 11.3 trillion rials (about \$269.04 million) in the mining sector from last December up to August.

“This amount of investment is a turning point in the private sector’s contribution to the development of the country’s mining industries,” Gharibpour said in an IMIDRO deputies meeting.

VP submits \$579.9b budget bill to Majlis

1 → The bill has estimated the government’s budget at 9.298 quadrillion rials (about \$221.38 billion), with an increase of 47 percent from the figure of the current year.

It has envisaged 3.175 quadrillion rials (about \$75.595 billion) of incomes, while 6.37 quadrillion rials (about \$151.666 billion) of expenses.

Revenues from exporting oil, gas and gas condensate are estimated at 1.199 quadrillion rials (about \$10.83 billion), up 323 percent from 454.9 trillion rials (about \$10.83 billion), approved in the current year’s budget.

The bill estimates the oil presales of 700 trillion rials (about \$16.666 billion).

The Oil Ministry will be authorized to issue \$3 billion in Islamic oil bonds.

Like the current year’s budget, the next year’s proposed budget requires the government to pay 20 percent of its oil, gas, and gas condensate revenues to National Development Fund (NDF).

The submitted bill has envisaged allocation of €100 million from the NDF reserves to the implementation of projects for drinking-water supply to the rural areas.

It has also allocated 15 trillion rials (about \$357 million) to supplying gas to the rural



regions and completing the semi-finished gas-supply projects.

The bill has allocated 50 trillion rials (about \$1.19 billion) to the competition of housing projects.

Tax incomes are predicted to be 2.47 quadrillion rials (about \$58.809 billion), rising from 1.95 quadrillion rials (about \$46.42 billion) envisaged in the present

year’s budget.

The budget bill for the year 1400 is printed and distributed among the members of the parliament after its presentation and they will have 10 days to submit their proposals and reviews on the budget to relevant specialized committees.

Specialized committees will also have 15 days to submit their reviews to a parliament

TEDPIX expected to reach 1.6m points by late December: expert

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), is expected to resume its upward trend and reach 1.6 million points by the end of the current Iranian calendar month (December 20), a market analyst told IRNA.

The TSE index will continue its upward trend until the end of the current year (March 20, 2021) and is expected to reach 1.8 million points by the end of the year, Ahmad Eshtiaqi said.

Referring to the return of the uptrend to the stock market, Eshtiaqi said: “One of the factors affecting the uptrend in the stock market is the sharp correction of the index and stock prices in the market, which has once again motivated

investors to re-enter the stock market.”

Eshtiaqi stated that the lack of increase in bank interest rates is one of the influential factors in the return of growth to the stock market and said: “Initially, there were rumors about an increase in bank interest rates in the market, which strongly affected the market trading process and accelerated the downward trend of the stock market index, but with the news of the stabilization of bank interest rates, we have witnessed a positive impact on the market in the form of the resumption of liquidity inflow.”

“The market is not facing any fundamental issues currently, but shareholders should not be expecting surprising growth

like what we saw in the first few months of this year,” he said.

He further noted that other than some political issues like the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), no external factor is threatening the stability of the country’s stock market in near future.

After months of falling, TEDPIX once again resumed its upward trend in the past few weeks so that the index passed 1.4 million points in late November.

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

Shourijeh facility’s stored natural gas up 22%

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The volume of natural gas stored in Iran’s Shourijeh storage since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) has reached 1.885 billion cubic meters (bcm), registering a 22-percent rise compared to the same period last year, a gas official said on Wednesday.

According to Yahya Feizi, this volume of gas is enough for a sustained supply of gas to the northeastern provinces during the cold season, IRNA reported.

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



the colder months of the year.

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

As one of the world’s top gas producers,

Iran is planning to expand its underground natural gas storage capacity to ensure that enough natural gas is available during peak demand periods to avoid electricity supply shortfalls in the future.

According to NIGC plans, the capacity of the two storage facilities, Sarajeh and Shourijeh, is planned to increase to over seven billion cubic meters in near future.

Back in November, the managing director of Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC) announced that the volume of natural gas stored in Iran’s storage facilities reached 2.87 bcm.

“This year, 1.856 million cubic meters of gas has been injected into Shourijeh storage, while 1.014 billion cubic meters has also

been injected into Sarajeh storage, which is a new record,” Shana quoted Ramin Hatami as saying.

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

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

Q2 non-oil GDP growth stands at 0.2%: SCI

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s gross domestic product (GDP) excluding oil grew 0.2 percent in the second quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (June 21 – September 21) compared to the same period last year, according to the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI).

The figure including oil fell 0.2 percent, IRI reported.

Based on the SCI data, the country’s non-oil GDP fell 1.3 percent in the first six months of the current fiscal year (March 21-September 21), while the figure declined 1.9 percent with oil included.

The non-oil GDP reached 3 quadrillion rials (about \$71.4 billion) in the mentioned six months, while the figure stood at 3.434 quadrillion rials (about \$81.7 billion) with oil included.

The data indicate that in H1, the production by the agricultural sector increased by 1.7 percent, the industries and mines by -0.7 percent, and the service group by -3.5 percent compared to the same period of the previous year.

According to SCI, the country’s non-oil GDP fell 0.6



percent in the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19), while with the oil included, the decline was seven percent.

Iran’s GDP excluding oil had fallen 1.7 percent in the first

Commodities worth \$104m exported from Fars Province in 8 months

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Over 267,000 tons of commodities valued at \$104.095 million have been exported from Fars Province, in the center of Iran, during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), according to a provincial official.

Khodadad Rahimi, director-general of the province’s customs department, mentioned dairy products, aluminum, and tomato paste as the major products exported to 48 countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Kuwait, Germany, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Vietnam, and India.

The official also announced that 23,306

tons of commodities worth \$97.531 million have been imported to the province during the eight-month period, and mentioned China, Brazil, South Korea, Italy, Turkey, Spain, Germany, Indonesia, and India as the main sources of import.

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 esti-

mated 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.

India looks to resume oil imports from Iran under Biden

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Indian Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said that his country wants to diversify its oil imports, including the resumption of supplies from Iran, after U.S. President-elect Joe Biden takes office, Reuters reported.

India was the key buyer of Iranian oil before slashing purchases after President Donald Trump imposed unilateral sanctions on the OPEC-member since taking office in 2017.

“As a buyer I would like to have more buying places. I

should have more destinations to go for purchasing (oil).” Pradhan said on Wednesday in response to a question if he wants the Biden administration to relax sanctions on Iran.

India, which used to be Iran’s biggest client after China, stopped buying oil from Tehran in May 2019.

The hands of Israel in the blood of the Iranian scientist

By Denis Korkodinov

Donald Trump, defeated in the presidential election, seeks by any means to prevent the new Joe Biden administration from renewing the nuclear deal with Iran. Moreover, on the eve of the day of the official transfer of presidential power in the United States on January 21, 2021, those countries that take a clearly anti-Iranian position in the international arena have noticeably intensified: Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, striving at all costs to prevent the establishment of neutral relations between Washington and Tehran.

When on November 12, 2020, Donald Trump at the White House asked his advisers about the consequences of a missile strike on the Iranian nuclear facility at Natanz, he was told that such an act of aggression would lead to the outbreak of a large-scale conflict, as a result of which the United States would be defeated. Meanwhile, the American leader's intention to unleash military action was not suppressed. As a result, it was decided to conduct a secret operation against Iran with minimal risks of exposure without the direct participation of Washington. Such a covert operation involved the destruction of the nuclear physicists who were at the origin of the Iranian nuclear program, as well as the theft of nuclear technology through cyberattacks on Iran's computer system. At the same time, Donald Trump had to act very quickly, since he had a little less than two months left before the transfer of all presidential powers to Joe Biden, and the new U.S. president is very determined to start the negotiation process with Tehran.

The target in Iran was determined promptly. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was already mentioned by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2018 during a report on the Iranian nuclear program. Then the head of the Israeli government said publicly: "Remember this name - Fakhrizadeh!" Donald



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Trump remembered this name well enough to order to kill him.

Of course, the assassination of an Iranian nuclear physicist by the hands of American intelligence services would be quite simple and would immediately cast a shadow of accusations on the Donald Trump administration. However, U.S. allies are ready to kill anyone who even admits the idea of reviving the nuclear deal with Iran.

It is worth noting that Mohsen Fakhrizadeh probably would not be the last victim. In any case, according to competent sources, another nuclear physicist living in Russia and collaborating with Iran is now under the threat of murder. Because of this, Tehran should significantly strengthen the protection

of not only its nuclear facilities, but also the scientists who helped Iran in the development of the country's nuclear potential.

On October 20, 2006, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, in response to information about the Iranian nuclear program, officially stated that "Iran must understand that if it refuses to compromise, it will have to pay for it." During his visit to the United States and meeting with George W. Bush on June 5, 2008, the head of the Israeli government made his statement more concrete, saying that he had a clear plan of action to force the Islamic Republic to abandon its nuclear ambitions. And even then, for the first time in the international arena, the name of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh

was sounded. Then Ehud Olmert gave the order to the Mossad special service to kill the Iranian nuclear physicist, but at the last moment the order was canceled. Meanwhile, Tel Aviv never gave up its intention to destroy the Iranian nuclear program. Therefore, with the coming to power of Benjamin Netanyahu, the order to kill Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was renewed. Israel had only to get Washington's consent to conduct a secret operation.

Britain, Russia, China, Germany and France have repeatedly come forward with the initiative to resume the nuclear deal with Iran, considering it the foundation of regional security. Therefore, the assassination of Fakhrizadeh significantly complicates their position in the negotiation process with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Thus, the reaction of these countries is undoubtedly connected with the condemnation of the main perpetrators of the murder of the Iranian scientist. However, it is unlikely that anyone from the leaders of the international community, other than Iran and its direct allies (Syria, Lebanon, northern Yemen, Iraq), will be able to officially accuse Israel and the United States of committing the attack. The problem is that many regional leaders rely on the fact that they will have to work closely with the new Joe Biden administration in the United States, in connection with which they do not want to spoil relations with him. In addition, the Israeli lobby can create great difficulties for the implementation of many state and international projects, as a result of which only its ardent enemies can blame Israel for anything.

However, Iran must respond to the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh Mahabadi. This response should be different from all those that have been implemented in relation to the United States, Saudi Arabia and Tel Aviv over the past 30-40 years. It has to be something completely new, unique, local and extremely effective.

Pompeo visited West Bank, Golan Heights because he plans to run for president in 2014: activist

Greta Berlin, co-founder of the "Free Gaza Movement", tells the Tehran Times that Pompeo "is actually one of the worst anti-Semites in the U.S. government"

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

A: The real cancer is the belief of people like Mike Pompeo who thinks all Jews should return to the Holy Land and be killed or converted, then Jesus will return. It's a dreadful philosophy and has partially been responsible for the ongoing genocides and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians, and Iraqis. The BDS movement is a non-violent response to the actions of Israel just as they were the non-violent response to the white supremacists in South Africa. It worked well for the South African blacks and it is working very well against the Israeli government. If BDS were not so successful, Israel and its supporters would not be trying to marginalize it.

■ Pompeo also called settlements "part of Israel" and "a recognition of the reality". While in the Golan Heights, Pompeo also said, "This is a part of Israel and a central part of Israel." How can such amazing words be uttered? What is the ulterior motives behind such remarks?

A: Pompeo's ulterior motive is to make sure Trump's base in the U.S., primarily made up of Christian evangelicals and Zionist Jews remember what he says, so when he runs for President in 2024, they will vote for him. He also knows that Trump is a lame-duck President right now and for the next two months, he and "The Donald" will try to do as much 'facts on the ground' as they can to thwart Biden. Very few people in the U.S. Congress are brave enough to challenge AIPAC and other pro-Israeli groups. My hope is that the young Democrats like Tlaib and Omar will be the new politicians in the U.S. with a more progressive point of view, but that is going to take some time. In the meantime, the people suffering the most are the Palestinians, Lebanese, and Iraqis. And Pompeo is doing his best to include the brave Iranians as well.

"The real cancer is the belief of people like Mike Pompeo who thinks all Jews should return to the Holy Land and be killed or converted, then Jesus will return."



"No one wants to step up and confront the U.S., the gorilla in the room"

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

A: Pompeo's remarks about occupied Palestine and Syria are being made so his base can hear him. In the U.S., people like Pompeo who have political ambitions, whether it's for the mayor of a city, governor of a state, Congress, or the presidency begin campaigning the moment the last campaign is done. So his primary motivation is for his American audience, and he really doesn't care what the rest of the world thinks. Since the UN has no teeth any longer and the EU doesn't do anything except write position papers about the occupation of Palestine, Pompeo knows he can get away with murder... literally.

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

A: Settlements are never going to be done in any way that is lawful and appropriate and proper. They are illegal. The squatters who live there, most of them Americans, are also illegal. But they can vote in the U.S. elections, and they do. <https://www.npr.org/2020/11/03/930472425/highly-motivated-in-israel-u-s-voters-lean-toward-trump> it's all about appeasing the voters in the U.S. and collecting massive amounts of money from those who we call "Israeli-firsters", and Pompeo believes he can say whatever he wants. I can't think of any international body that is going to step up and remove those settlements. They have now become 'facts

on the ground' and the only solution has become one-state with equal rights for all.

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

A: Pompeo became secretary of state in March 2018. Trump was already doing damage before Pompeo showed up on the scene. The U.S. removed itself from the Paris accords in 2017. And Trump removed the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018, shortly after Pompeo took over, but that had been talked about from the moment Trump took office. Trump may look like a spoiled, stupid baby, but don't underestimate his desire to undo everything Obama did. That has been Trump's agenda all along.

■ Don't you think that commitment to international law has had no place in the Trump administration?

A: The U.S. has never been a model of upholding international law. The U.S. has been the primary 'no-vote' in the UN on resolutions condemning Israel's war crimes and crimes against humanity. So it's difficult to see the U.S. taking any kind of lead to force international law on anything. The U.S. has vetoed 81 resolutions at the UN since 2000. Only Russia has vetoed more than the U.S.

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

I agree that the inaction of countries around the world as well as inaction from international bodies, from the UN to the ICC, have made it easy for the U.S. to flaunt international law. No one wants to step up and confront the U.S., the gorilla in the room. And Israel constantly says it will use the "Samson Option." (Its nuclear capability) if ever someone attacks it. What began as such hope after WW II and the advent of the Geneva Conventions has now turned to dust.

"He also knows that Trump is a lame-duck President right now and for the next two months, he and "The Donald" will try to do as much 'facts on the ground' as they can to thwart Biden."

UN given 'unimpeded' aid access to Ethiopia's Tigray

Ethiopia has granted the United Nations full access to deliver aid to the northern region of Tigray, following weeks of lobbying amid military operations there, according to an agreement seen Wednesday by AFP.

The agreement, signed by Ethiopia's peace minister, allows for "unimpeded, sustained and secure access for humanitarian personnel and services to vulnerable populations in [government]-administered areas in Tigray and bordering areas of Amhara and Afar regions".

This will allow the first food, medicines and other aid into the region of 6 million people that has been rising hunger during the fighting between the federal and Tigray regional governments. Each regards the other as illegal in a power struggle that has been months in the making.

For weeks, the UN and others have pleaded for access amid reports of supplies running desperately low for millions of people. A UN humanitarian spokesman, Saviano Abreu, said the first mission to carry out a needs

assessment would begin Wednesday.

"We are of course working to make sure assistance will be provided in the whole region and for every single person who needs it," he said. The UN and partners are committed to engaging with "all parties to the conflict" to ensure that aid to Tigray and the neighboring Amhara and Afar regions is "strictly based on needs."

Ethiopia's government did not immediately comment.

For weeks, aid-laden trucks have been blocked at Tigray's borders, and the UN and other humanitarian groups were increasingly anxious to reach Tigray as hunger grows and hospitals run out of basic supplies like gloves and body bags.

"We literally have staff reaching out to us to say they have no food for their children," one humanitarian worker told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation.

Trump considers 2024 campaign rally on Joe Biden's inauguration day

Donald Trump is said to be considering running for the White House again in 2024, with a campaign launch on the day Joe Biden is sworn in as the 46th U.S. president.

NBC claims that people familiar with the discussions say there is «preliminary planning» underway for a 20 January 2021 event and President Trump would miss the swearing in of his successor.

He is also said to have no plans to invite Joe Biden to the White House beforehand or even call him. For its part the Biden transition team says the lack of contact won't affect their plans.

Afghan govt, Taliban announce breakthrough deal to press on with peace talks

Afghan government and Taliban representatives said on Wednesday they had reached a preliminary deal to press on with peace talks, their first written agreement in 19 years of war.

The agreement lays out the way forward for further discussion but is considered a breakthrough because it will allow negotiators to move on to more substantive issues, including talks on a ceasefire.

"The procedure including its preamble of the negotiation has been finalized and from now on, the negotiation will begin on the agenda," Nader Nadery, a member of the Afghan government's negotiating team, told Reuters.

The Taliban spokesman confirmed the same on Twitter. The agreement comes after months of discussions in Doha, the capital of Qatar, in negotiations encouraged by the United States. In Afghanistan, the two sides are still at war, with Taliban attacks on government forces continuing unabated.

Taliban insurgents have refused to agree to a ceasefire during the preliminary stages of talks, despite calls from Western capitals and global bodies, saying that that would be taken up only when the way forward for talks was agreed upon.

UN envoy for Afghanistan Deborah Lyons welcomed the "positive development" on Twitter, adding that "this breakthrough should be a springboard to reach the peace wanted by all Afghans."

Maduro says ready to step down if opposition wins parliamentary polls

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said he was ready to step down if the country's opposition forces win the December 6 parliamentary elections.

"If the opposition wins, I will step down from the post of the president," Maduro said in a televised speech on Tuesday. He added that his fate was up to the Venezuelan people to decide.

Xi sends congratulations to UN meeting marking Int'l Day of Solidarity with Palestinian People

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message to a meeting held by the United Nations (UN) on Tuesday to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

In his message, Xi pointed out that the Palestinian issue, as a root problem in the Middle East, bears on regional peace and stability, on international equity and justice, and on human conscience and morality.

To realize peaceful coexistence as neighbors between Palestine and Israel is not only a dream of the Palestinian and Israeli people for generations, but also a sincere hope of all nations in the region as well as the international community, Xi said.

He suggested that the international community adhere to the right direction of the two-state solution and make efforts to promote the peace process in the Middle East on the basis of international consensus such as relevant UN resolutions and the "land for peace" principle.

Under current circumstances, he added, the international community should pay more attention to the grave challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic to Palestine and help the Palestinian people fight against the coronavirus disease.

Resistance News

'Deals with Israel exposed humiliation of compromisers'

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN — Bahrain's most prominent Shia cleric Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim has slammed Manama's "shameful" normalization deal with Israel, saying the humiliation of the regimes compromising with the occupying regime was exposed shortly after they signed the peace deals.

"It was clear from the beginning that normalization with the Zionist enemy would have dangerous and unfortunate results. The adverse outcomes started to come to light soon after and in quick succession," Sheikh Qassim said in a statement carried by Arabic-language Bahrain Mirror news website.

The top cleric then roundly denounced the Manama regime's signing of a normalization deal with Israel as "shameful," saying the move "was intended to kill the spirit of pride and independence in our nation, and to surrender to the leadership of an entity that is the bitter enemy of the [Bahraini] nation and humanity."

"The race has now become very frantic between old and new compromisers. It has turned into a scene for demonstration of greater fidelity to slavery," something which both U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu aspire, Sheikh Qassim said.

The spiritual leader of Bahrain's dissolved opposition bloc, the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, said the regimes compromising with the Tel Aviv regime have disowned their own nations and believe that their destiny hinges upon satisfaction of U.S. and Israeli desires.

Under U.S.-brokered deals, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) agreed to normalize relations with Israel after signing controversial agreements on September 15 at the White House.

According to Press TV, Sudan has also agreed to establish formal ties with Israel with U.S. mediation.

Seb Castle reigns magnificent again

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Seb Castle reigns magnificent again over an ancient Iranian village it is named after.

The castle, which is one of the biggest in the country, has recently undergone a round of reinforcement and restoration works, Abarkuh tourism chief announced on Wednesday.



Located in Abarkuh county of Yazd province, the mudbrick monument dates back to the Safavid era (1501–1736).

Abarkuh is famed for being home to a 4000-year-old cypress, which is inscribed on the National Heritage List. Venetian merchant and explorer Marco Polo described the tree as one of the most stunning cypress trees he had ever seen in Iran.

Historical relics recovered from smugglers in Kerman

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A total of 35 historical objects have recently been confiscated from smugglers in Kerman province, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage has said.

Some of the objects, which have been discovered from the counties of Jiroft, Kahnouj, Qalehganj, and Rabor are still under investigation by cultural heritage experts and archeologists, CHTN quoted Seyyed Ali Hosseini as saying on Wednesday.

The objects, which are estimated to date back from pre-historic to historic eras, include clay utensils and metal objects, the official added.



Qalehganj (also spelled Qale Ganj) has so far yielded tens of prehistorical sites and relics including a variety of ancient hills, archaeological sites, cemeteries, subterranean aqueducts, shrines, lithographs, kilns, caravanserais, and castles, many of which so far have been identified and documented.

Jiroft is one of the richest historical areas in the world, with ruins and artifacts dating back to the third millennium BC. Many Iranian and foreign experts see the findings in Jiroft as signs of a civilization as great as Sumer and ancient Mesopotamia.

Big and sprawling Kerman province is something of a cultural melting pot, blending various regional cultures over time. It is also home to rich tourist spots and historical sites including bazaars, mosques, caravanserais, and ruins of ancient urban areas.

Kerman province is bounded by the provinces of Fars on the west, Yazd on the north, South Khorasan on the northeast, Sistan-Baluchestan on the east, and Hormozgan on the south. It includes the southern part of the central Iranian desert, the Dasht-e Lut.

Webinar discusses bird-watching in Ardebil

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — An online seminar on bird-watching, the first of its kind in Ardebil province, was held in the northwestern Iranian province on Wednesday.

A group of bird enthusiasts, students, and researchers attended the event, which was organized by the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department in close collaboration with the Department of Environment, provincial tourism chief Soghra Farshi said on Wednesday.



The event, which was the first of its kind in Ardebil, was seeking to update the educational background of the participants, the official added.

So far, 550 bird species have been distinguished and registered across Iran.

Bird-watching, the observation of live birds in their natural habitat, is a popular pastime and scientific sport that developed almost entirely in the 20th century.

The south Caspian Sea retreats are amongst the most famed heavens for birdwatchers in Iran, usually being dominated by its northerly guests until about mid-May when the migration season comes to an end. In a wider scene, the mid-winter population of the migratory birds is estimated to exceed over a million in the whole southern sandy shorelines of the Caspian Sea that spans some 700km.

The northern provinces of Gilan, Golestan, and Mazandaran embrace a variety of freshwater lakes, wetlands, and lagoons, which are the main destinations for traveling pelicans, flamingos, ducks, swans, coots, and some other species.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardebil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

12 off-the-beaten-track destinations even Iranians don't know about

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN — Welcome to some hidden gems you never thought to visit, but really should if you're planning a trip across Iran.

The ancient country is home to thousands of historic and architectural beauties on offer in famed cities like Isfahan and Shiraz, Tabriz, Kashan, Kerman, and Yazd in such a way that its diverse landscapes could be easily overlooked.

Here are twelve epic places that the average Iranian might not even know about.

● Mamraz Lake

Mamraz Lake offers visitors breathtaking sceneries with thousands of dried trees inside, which may seem scary at first glance.

Situated some 12 kilometers away from Noshahr city in Mazandaran province, the lake is 700 meters long and 300 meters wide and is listed as one of Iran's National Heritage sites.

Because of its horrific landscape and strange silence of the lake, it is known as "The Ghosts' Lake".

Next to the lake, a lush forest is located and there are many dry tree trunks in the water, known as dead trees. The water of this lake is very clear and the reflection of the trees' images on the lake adds to the beauty of the site. It is a pristine area and a spectacular natural attraction which is less known to tourists and adventurers.

● Pamenar

Pamenar is a captivating village in Dezful, located in the southern Khuzestan province. Tiny islands rich with vegetation and wildlife are surrounded by the clear waters of a lake formed by Dez Dam, persuading visitors to dive right in, but given the best time to travel is winter, the water may still be a bit chilly!

Enjoy the absolute silence at night and marvel at the stars above. Springtime travelers will be rewarded with mother nature's carpet of corn poppy flowers surrounding the lake, creating even more epic scenery.

● Shadegan Lagoon

Shadegan Lagoon, which is situated in the Khuzestan province, exemplifies the diversity of both Iranian geography and its people. The Arabic-speaking inhabitants earn their living through the production of meat and dairy products and, to a lesser degree, tourism.

A sense of calm and quiet may be broken by the sound of migrating waterfowl or the crashing of a water buffalo deciding to join alongside your boat. Further down the lagoon are Mozif inns; houses with round roofs made entirely of cane.

● Filband

The remote village of Filband, located in Mazandaran province, is known for its untouched nature and the sense of being lost above the clouds. You'll cherish every second in this rural idyll where chickens and hens roam freely and carefree locals tend to their daily chores, while enveloped in puffy white clouds.

Full of hillside meadows dotted with grazing sheep and cottages peeking out from behind the trees, a weekend here promises to quiet your mind and sweep away your troubles from big city life.

● Karshahi Fortress

Also known as Thieves' Castle, Karshahi



A cottage is seen in the scenic Dalikhani forest, northern Iran.

Fortress was once the operational center of a gang of robbers infamous for spreading fear and panic throughout the 19th century until the end of the Qajar dynasty.

This deteriorating adobe structure is adorned by five watchtowers and invites visitors to imagine the hustle and bustle of its heyday. Local legend has it that a maze of secret passageways exists under the fortress itself with three tunnels running to the mountains behind. The oasis of pomegranate trees tempts adventurers into a night of camping under a star-lit sky at the foot of this forgotten fortress.

● Shadegan Wetland

A rich habitat for wildlife, Shadegan Wetland is situated southwards of a town of the same name in Khuzestan province. This wetland illustrates the biodiversity of Iranian people and geography. Arab-speaking residents of the area produce meat and dairy products for a living and you will see houses with round ceilings made of sugar cane in this wetland.

Animal life in the Shadegan ponds consists of two species of amphibians, five species of reptiles, and some 150 species of birds. You will have the chance to observe pelicans and flamingos there. The area is also known for its birds of prey and an important spot for migratory birds. Shadegan is also home to 40 species of mammals, including Iranian wolf, river otter, jungle cat, and wild boar.



Thieves' Castle was once home to a gang of robbers infamous for spreading fear and panic in the 19th century.

● Raqaz Canyon

Located Fars province, Raqaz Canyon, which embraces countless waterfalls and natural pools, is one of the most breathtaking in Iran. The 2.5 km-long journey begins easily with short jumps down into crystal clear pools.

Trekking deeper into the canyon with its higher waterfalls, however, especially the highest at 65 meters, requires some technical equipment and a bit of experience. But whether you climb down or stay to plunge a few times in the easier parts, this canyon won't disappoint.

● Dalikhani Forest

Overlooking the southern shores of the Caspian Sea, Dalkhani Forest is one of the natural attractions of Ramsar city in Mazandaran province. This beautiful, semi-alpine forest, with a height of approximately 800 meters above the sea level, offers spectacular natural sceneries. Because of its height, Dalkhani could be a good choice for hikers and climbers and the thick fog in this forest create dreamy landscapes.

"The Corridor of Paradise" is the nickname given to this amazing forest due to its tall lush trees and pleasant climate. In mid-summer when the temperatures in the coastal cities of the Caspian Sea reach up to 35 degrees, the Dalkhani Forest can be a great option for escaping the heat. During the summer, the temperature in this forest is very cool (around 18 degrees). If you are visiting the forest during the cold season, be sure to bring warm clothes, blankets, and hot water to enjoy drinking tea or coffee.

● Kal-e Jenni Canyon

Jinni Canyon, or as local people say Kal-e Jenni, is one of the most mysterious and stunning valleys in the country situated in South Khorasan province.

Located some 30 kilometers north of the city of Tabas, a bunch of palm trees and marches in a wide valley, mark the scenic start of the journey, however, romance mixes with horror as the trip continues.

This name consists of two parts: Kal + Jinn. 'Kal' is referred to any valley which has been formed by a water stream in the long

run. And according to the Oxford Dictionary, 'Jinn' is "an intelligent spirit of lower rank than the angels, able to appear in human and animal forms and to possess humans."

There are many reasons to attribute this 16-kilometer-long valley to jinns. Firstly, many mysterious-looking arcs, columns, and walls in the canyon are made by erosion but local people could not find a better constructor than jinn for them.

The next reason is related to wind. When the wind sweeps through the valley, it makes strange sounds due to the structure of walls which can make you think that supernatural entities are living around. Also, pebbles will hit your face as you walk in the valley in windy weather; locals believed that jinns are throwing the pebbles to defend their territory.

● Dareh Haft Ghar (Seven Caves Valley)

Dareh Haft Ghar (which literary means "Seven Caves Valley") is a spectacular wonder of nature in the northwestern city of Neyshabur, northeast Iran.

As the name implies, visitors must hike through about seven rocky caves before reaching the site of a natural spring.

In his most famous work Conference of the Birds, the poet Attar, a native of Neyshabur, describes each of the seven stages of spirituality as a valley. It's rather befitting, then, that this cave is located in his hometown.

The name sends a chill down one's spine and the sight of it a few more. Ghost Lake in the Mazandaran province is full of dead trees reaching out from beneath the water giving it a super creepy vibe. Although residents don't believe that it's haunted now, they do believe that their ancestors named it as such for a reason. Those into a good ghost story may be able to dig something up!

● Loveh Waterfall

Despite the fact that majority of the Iranian soil is classified as arid or semi-arid, there's no shortage of waterfalls in the country, and you're bound to be delighted by whichever one you visit.

One that has seemed to fly under the radar, though, is Loveh Waterfall, sitting on the edge of Golestan National Park in the Golestan province. Visitors will find this a conducive spot to meditate or clear their heads as they are ensconced in thick trees and moss-covered rocks with nothing but the sound of flowing water.

● Rainbow Valley

Situated within Hormuz Island in the Persian Gulf, Rainbow Valley is a geologist's dream and an inspiration for artists and nature enthusiasts. Imagine a narrow valley with multi-hued earth and sand and colorful mountains in shades of red, purple, yellow, ochre, and blue – the result of the uneven cooling of molten rock. On all sides, patches of color form geometric patterns. This awesomely photogenic natural site is at its best in the late afternoon.

The entire of southernmost island is made of Rainbow Mountains and you can freely walk through most of the middle of it. But this spot is a good place to stop and check out all the colors. In close vicinity of Silence Valley, lies the mesmerizing valley of more than 70 shades of minerals, rendering the valley a perfect subject of Geology studies.

Former customs to be turned into museum near Persian Gulf

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — An old customs building, located in the southern port city of Bandar Khamir near the Persian Gulf, will be repurposed into a museum after being restored entirely.

The former customs office along with the pier is planned to be turned into a museum of customs and maritime documents, and a top tourist destination as well, provincial tourism chief Reza Borumand said on Wednesday.

The project is being implemented by Hormozgan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department in collaboration with an indigenous customs administration, the official added.

Known as the province of islands, Hormozgan is located on the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf. It embraces scenic islands among which Kish, Hormuz, Hengam, and Qeshm are the most beautiful ones and top tourist destinations in southern Iran.

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

Hormuz, which is mostly barren and hilly, is situated some eight kilometers off the coast on the Strait of Hormuz, which attracts many tourists by its colorful mountains, silver sand shores, and great local people.

Hengam Island has scenery rocky shores, serene sunset, and kind natives, which can attract travelers who enjoy a relaxing trip by spending time on this tranquil island.

Qeshm Island is a heaven for eco-tourists as it embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines. The island also features geologically eye-catching canyons, hills, caves, and valleys, most of which are protected as



part of the UNESCO-tagged Qeshm Island Geopark, itself a haven for nature-lovers.

History's first superpower sprang from ancient Iran

Part (3/5)

From this moment, Herodotus recounts, the Persians and Medes were united under Cyrus II, soon to be known as Cyrus the Great. With Ecbatana under his belt, Cyrus turned his attentions to the kingdom of Lydia, in modern-day Turkey. Lydia was certainly a tempting prize: Renowned for commerce, the Lydians invented the basis for the metal coinage system still in use today.

In 547 BC, the Lydian king Croesus made incursions into Median territory, providing Cyrus with the perfect excuse for invasion. According to the Babylonian Chronicles—the Persian account of this period, later set down on clay tablets—Cyrus crossed the Tigris River, and marched to the Lydian capital, Sardis, along what would



Naqsh-e Rostam, near Persepolis in modern-day Iran, is a necropolis of mainly rock-cut tombs named for the Persian epic hero Rostam.

become the famous Royal Road, later built by Darius I to link Sardis with key cities

across the Persian Empire.

A first, indecisive clash with the Lydians took place at Pteria, in what is today northern Turkey. Following the battle, Croesus withdrew his troops to their winter barracks and urged his allies—the Spartans, the Egyptians, and the Babylonians—to send reinforcements in spring.

Cyrus, however, chose to risk an immediate attack on Croesus. His military commander, Harpagus, pulled off a stunning Persian victory, placing Sardis and its treasure into the hands of the Persian emperor. Shortly afterward, Cyrus extended his control over the Ionian Greek cities along the western coast of modern-day Turkey.

The next decade of Cyrus's reign was dedicated to expanding the eastern em-

pire. Placing this territory under his control gave Cyrus control over the caravan trading routes. His campaigns took him as far as Bactria in modern-day Afghanistan, eventually reaching Maracanda, today known as Samarkand, in Uzbekistan.

■ By the waters of Babylon

With operations successfully tied up in the east, Cyrus set his sights on the greatest prize of all: Babylon, capital of Mesopotamia. The internal politics of Babylon at this moment could not have been more favorable for the Persians to strike. Nabonidus, the Babylonian king, had lost the confidence of the priests of Marduk, the city's principal deity, because they believed that the king was denigrating the religious rites of the city.

Ground-breaking step towards reducing statelessness

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has said it welcomes Iran's move to give nationality to thousands of children born to Iranian mothers and non-Iranian fathers.

The first children, out of some 10,000 children whose citizenship applications have so far been accepted, received their Iranian identity card, known as a 'Shenasnameh', last month.

According to the Government of Iran, nearly 75,000 children at risk of becoming statelessness are eligible for Iranian citizenship under a new nationality law, which was amended in 2019 to allow children under 18 years to apply for identity documents.

According to article one of the law, children of Iranian women and non-Iranian men who were born before or after the law can be an Iranian citizen in case the Iranian mother requested if they have no security problem before the age of 18.

These children, after reaching the age of 18, can apply for Iranian citizenship if not requested by the mother, then will be granted Iranian citizenship in case of no security problem.

Although Iran is not a party to the UN Conventions on Statelessness, the Government of Iran is taking steps towards the prevention and reduction of statelessness in the country. While the law does not give



mothers and fathers equal rights to confer nationality to their children, it represents significant progress.

Around the world, stateless people can face a lifetime of exclusion and discrimination and are often denied access to education, health care, and job opportunities – making them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Worldwide, statelessness affects millions of people, leaving them without the basic rights and official recognition that most of us take for granted. Some 3.9 million stateless people appear in the reporting of 78 coun-

tries, but UNHCR believes the true total to be significantly higher.

"No child chooses to be stateless," said Ivo Freijsen, UNHCR Representative in Iran last year. "Without an identity and official documents, stateless people are often excluded from society. The Government of Iran is leading by example through its new law. It is a hugely positive move for these children and their families."

■ Situation of foreign nationals
Iran is host to one of the largest and most protracted urban refugee situations in the

world and has provided asylum to refugees for four decades.

The latest official government statistics in 2014, there are 951,142 Afghan refugees and 28,268 Iraqi refugees living in Iran. Many of the refugees living in Iran are the second and third generation, according to the 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.

There are 40,000 Afghan students in the country, according to the official report, 17,000 of them are graduated, while the unofficial report is estimated at 26,000.

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

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, undocumented Afghans who have access to free primary health services and similarly free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like nationals.

Electronic protection comes to Golestan National Park

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Golestan, the oldest national park in Iran, is struggling with environmental issues such as wildfire, so the Department of Environment (DOE) with the help of the Ministry of Communications, is trying to promote electronic protection through technological advances.

The national park is a unique refuge for wildlife that has been facing problems in recent years due to man-made damages.

Stretched to 87,402 hectares, it is home to one-seventh of Iran's plant species, one-third of all birds, and half of the country's mammals, hosting 1,350 plant species and 302 wildlife species. It has been listed as one of the top fifty ecosystems on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1930.

In January 2019, the DOE and the ICT have inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to contain natural disasters such as wildfires using modern technologies in Golestan National Park, northern Iran.

As per the MOU, such projects aiming at achieving environmental goals and sustainable development along with early detection and warning of natural disasters using modern technology will be implemented nationwide.

A project will be piloted in Golestan national park in the northern province of Golestan, using technological advances for the early detection of wildfire and floods.



Golestan National Park is facing the danger of wildfires every year, the agreement using Techs, IoT, and satellite imagery will prevent and fight wildfire; which is done by 70 percent.

There is a lack of forces to patrol the protected areas, for example, only 40 rangers protect the entire area of Golestan National Park, which does not correspond to the size of this habitat.

A total budget of 50 billion rials (nearly \$1.1 million at an official rate of 42,000 rials) was allocated in this regard.

Wildlife species living in the area include Persian Leopard, Brown bear, jackal, Persian ibex, wolves, wild cat, Caspian Red deer, wild boar, gazelle, mountain goat, fox, and coyote. And plant species growing in the region consists of several endemic ones such as Alma saffron, Persian Ironwood.

In the past, the Asiatic cheetah also lived in the area of Mirzabaylu plain, but the last cheetah was seen in the area at least 40 years ago. Of course, in October 2014, a cheetah was observed in this plain, but no one could photograph it.

Golestan National Park weather varies from very humid to semi-arid with precipitation of less than 200 to 1000 mm. Temperatures in Golestan National Park vary from -25 degrees to +35 degrees depending on the different months of the year. The highest absolute temperature reported in the park was 42 C in the southeast of the park.

So far, 150 species of birds have been identified in Golestan National Park. Golden Eagle, eastern imperial eagle, saker falcon, falcon, and bearded vulture are among the endangered birds of the park. Other birds of Golestan National Park include common pheasants, shrikes, griffon vulture, rosy starling, typical warblers, wheatears, finches, and common blackbirds.

The park holds a share of 3 species of amphibians and 24 species of reptiles.

Law of persons with disabilities should be truly protective

1 → Their living expenses are so high that it is really hard to afford. Besides, coronavirus has exacerbated the situation, he noted.

Although works have been done to make cities more accessible to people suffering from disabilities, the accessibility of the public transport fleet should have been completed years ago, while now only 25 percent has been adapted.

For example, the Municipality of Tehran appointed the disabled as consultants to assess the urban projects, through which no urban or construction project will be allowed to operate unless it is approved by consultants in terms of being accessible for the disabled, he explained.

And senior managers of ministries, governorates, and state-run organizations have thought of following the same procedure, he added.

As per another article of the law, eligible individuals can receive free education both at public and even Azad universities, but the related organizations are reluctant to follow the rule, he lamented.

The law on pensions for the disabled was not implemented by the Social Security Organization, he said, adding, for example, based on the agreement between the Welfare and the Social Security organizations, it was decided to pay the insurance share of the disabled instead of the employers who hired them. But

this law is also left undone.

All responsible organizations should be obligated to implement the law, and the Welfare Organization also must ensure the enforcement, he concluded.

Pirouz Hanachi the mayor of Tehran said last year that over 1.3 million people suffering from disabilities live in the country and the figure rises by 50,000 every year.

■ Disability prevalence worldwide
About 15 percent of the world's population lives with some form of disability, of whom 2-4 percent experience significant difficulties in functioning.

The global disability prevalence is higher than previous WHO estimates, which date from the 1970s and suggested a figure of



around 10 percent. This global estimate for disability is on the rise due to population aging and the rapid spread of chronic diseases, as well as improvements in the methodologies used to measure disability.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

Motorcyclists responsible for 63% of accidents in Tehran

Motorcycle riders are the highest contributors to road fatality being responsible for 63 percent of the accidents happened in the Iranian capital in the first 10 months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (starting on March 21, 2018), head of accidents department of Tehran Traffic Police has said.

Unfortunately, motorcycle users represent over 38 percent of the total traffic fatalities happened in the aforementioned period, Tasnim quoted Ehsan Momeni as saying on Tuesday.

As per the figures revealed by forensics, young motorcyclists aged 18-28 years constituted 33 percent of the fatal crashes resulted in their deaths, while being blamed for over 63 percent of the total accidents, he lamented.

راکبان موتورسیکت در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات تهران مقصر بودند

رئیس اداره تصادفات پلیس راهور تهران بزرگ گفت: در ده ماهه نخست سال ۹۷ راکبان موتورسیکت در تهران در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات به عنوان مقصر حادثه شناخته شده‌اند.

به گزارش روز سه شنبه خبرگزاری تسنیم؛ سرهنگ احسان مؤمنی در تشریح تصادفات منجر به فوت شهر تهران گفت: ۳۸ درصد کل متوفیان حوادث رانندگی مربوط به موتورسیکت سواران بوده است.

وی اظهار کرد: با توجه به آمار پزشکی قانونی ۳۳ درصد راکبان موتورسیکت فوتی ۱۸ تا ۲۸ سال سن داشته‌اند و در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات به عنوان مقصر حادثه شناخته شده‌اند.

Air pollution risk factor for Alzheimer's, study finds

Air pollution from cars, factories and forest fires is a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease, according to a sweeping new study.

The findings, based on data from thousands of American seniors with cognitive impairment, found that if they lived in a neighborhood with higher levels of pollution, they had an increased likelihood of amyloid plaques in the brain.

The plaques are a hallmark of Alzheimer's, the most common type of dementia which causes memory loss and affects behavior and cognitive ability, the Independent reported.



The study, led by the University of California, San Francisco, was published on Monday in JAMA Neurology, the peer-reviewed journal of the American Medical Association.

The team looked at brain scans of more than 18,000 older Americans, from zip codes across the US, who were an average age of 75. All those who took part in the study had dementia or mild cognitive impairment.

Those who lived in the most polluted areas had a 10 percent increased probability of a scan which revealed amyloid plaques compared with those who lived in areas with cleaner air.

As nearly 6 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, it suggests that air pollution may be implicated in tens of thousands of cases.

A total of 18,178 individuals took part in the "IDEAS" study (Imaging Dementia - Evidence for Amyloid Scanning). Some 40 per cent of participants showed no evidence of the plaques on scans which suggested they had a different type of dementia.

Data from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was used to estimate the air pollution in the neighborhood of each participant.

The team looked at ground-level ozone - a dangerous air pollutant which largely makes up what is known as "smog". They also examined PM2.5, tiny particle pollution that 40 times smaller than the width of a human hair. PM2.5 comes from vehicle exhausts, the burning of fossil fuels, along with forest and grass fires.

As the concentrations of these pollutants increased, the likelihood of a positive PET scan rose progressively, the study found.

Dr Gil Rabinovic, who was part of the study from UCSF's Memory and Aging Center, said that overall concentrations of PM2.5 would not be considered very high to be linked with the plaques, amounting to annual averages in San Francisco while the study was taking place.

"I think it's very appropriate that air pollution has been added to the modifiable risk factors highlighted by the Lancet Commission on dementia," Dr Rabinovic said. The Lancet, one of the world's oldest and best known medical journals, decided in 2020 to include air pollution, along with excessive alcohol intake and traumatic brain injury, in a list of risk factors.

Studies from other parts of the world have shown similar findings on air pollution and cognitive impairment, dementia, and Alzheimer's.

A 2018 study in China linked long-term exposure to air pollution with poor scores in verbal and math tests. Another 2018 study, published in the British Medical Journal, found evidence of a link between residential levels of air pollution across London and being diagnosed with dementia.

And as with climate change and other forms of environmental pollution, not all are affected equally.

A 2017 report by the NAACP and the Clean Air Task Force, titled "Fumes Across the Fence-Line", revealed that Black Americans are 75 per cent more likely than other Americans to live close to oil and gas facilities that spew toxic pollutants.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 73)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

جُمْلَه‌ی شَرْطِیّی ← کتاب کار Conditional Sentence

Conditional sentences are mostly introduced by اگر with the if - clause normally preceding the result clause.

حَالِ الْتِزَامِی + حَالِ إِخْبَارِی

If I go I will buy it.

اگر بروم آن را می‌خرم.

● تمرین ۳. جمله‌ها را با حال التزمی + حال اخباری شرطی کنید:

- می‌آیم تا او را ببینم. اگر بیایم او را می‌بینم.
۱. زود می‌روم تا با هم کار کنیم.
۲. درس می‌خواند تا قبول شود.
۳. می‌خواهیم اینجا ناهار بخوریم.
۴. می‌نشیم تا کمی صحبت کنیم.
۵. با مترو می‌روند تا زود برسند.
۶. غذا می‌خورن تا بزرگ شوی.

درک

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

۱. () کار دانشجوها در رستوران خندیدن است.
۲. () وقت خوردن ناهار شب‌هاست.
۳. () دانشجوها سینی برمی‌دارند و غذا می‌گیرند.
۴. () آنها در سینی سوپ و سالاد هم می‌گذارند.
۵. () ساتوشی خیلی دیر به رستوران می‌رود.
۶. () او بعد از ناهار با دوستانش صحبت می‌کند.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When two persons are together, two of them must not whisper to each other, without letting the third hear; because it would hurt him.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Art Bureau to produce teleplays on nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — The Art Bureau’s Center for Dramatic Arts plans to produce several short teleplays on nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who was assassinated in a terrorist attack on Friday.

The plan has been adopted to help introduce the top scientist, the director of the center, Kurosh Zarei told the Persian service of MNA on Wednesday.



A portrait of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh by Komeil Karimi.

“There is still not enough information about the life and character of Martyr Fakhrizadeh because of his position and we cannot produce long plays, and we are waiting to collect more complete information,” he added.

“We will be negotiating with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) to broadcast the teleplays, or else we will stream them on different platforms,” he noted.

“This will be a tribute to the martyr before we can collect more information. According to some friends of the martyr, Fakhrizadeh was an art aficionado and used to attend poetry nights of the bureau for several years, while he used to hold poetry nights,” he concluded.

The Art Bureau has also launched a website to promote artworks on Fakhrizadeh.

The website features posters, poems and other artworks on Fakhrizadeh. The art bureau has also asked artists to send their artworks for publication on the website that can be found at www.shahidfakhrizadeh.com.

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.”

Global Film Festival honors Puran Derakhshandeh with lifetime achievement award

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Iranian filmmaker Puran Derakhshandeh has been honored with a lifetime achievement award at the Global International Film Festival in India.

Derkshandeh received the award for her sincere contribution towards promotion of cinema. Sandeep Marwah, president of the festival, which took place in Noida from November 26 to 28, said during the closing ceremony of the event.

Derakhshandeh is mostly known for her great attention to major social problems in Iranian society.

She is a graduate of filmmaking from the Advanced School of Television and Cinema in Tehran. She started her professional career by making documentary films for IRIB channels in Kermanshah and Tehran.

“Hush! Girls Don’t Scream”, “Under the Smokey Roof”, “Eternal Children” and “Serial Dream” are among her noteworthy credits.

The 19th Dhaka International Film Festival will hold a retrospective of Derakhshandeh in January 2021. She is scheduled to attend question and answer sessions that will be held after each screening.

The 10th edition of the Jagran Film Festival (JFF) in New Delhi also held a retrospective of Derakhshandeh in July 2019.

A number of her award-winning movies, including “Hush! Girls Don’t Scream”, “Under the Smokey Roof”, “Eternal Children” and “Wet Dream”, were reviewed during the festival.

Iranian film producers urge UN to condemn assassination of Fakhrizadeh

→ “The world community needs to produce an appropriate response to the assassination of Martyr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh,” the letter concluded.

Fakhrizadeh, a senior Iranian expert who specialized in nuclear technology, was assassinated in a terrorist attack on Friday afternoon in the Abe-Sard region of Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of Tehran.

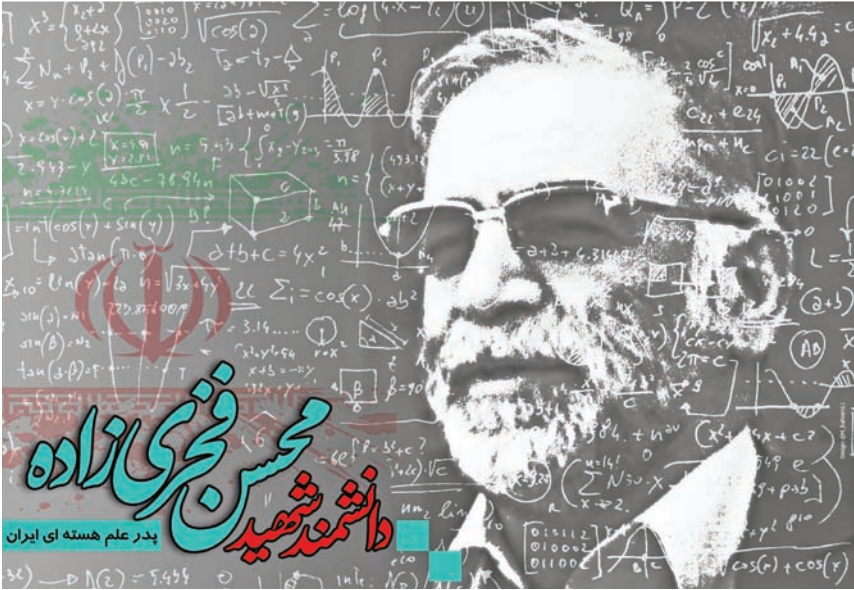
Iran has pointed the finger at the Zionist regime, while implying the killing has been carried out with support from U.S. President Donald Trump.

Iranian cultural figures, including cineastes and stage artists, have earlier issued statements, expressing their grief and regret over the assassination of Fakhrizadeh.

A statement signed by 34 cineastes begins with the phrase, “To you whom I didn’t know.”

“We heard the news of your cruel assassination and regretted why we didn’t know you as well as the enemies of our country.

“It’s a little bit late, but we are really proud of you for the scientific endeavors that you



A portrait of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

made anonymously and willingly in honor of our beloved country.”

Among the cineastes is the Oscar-nominated filmmaker Majid Majidi and Hassan Barzideh, director of the drama “Mazar-i-Sharif” about Taliban terrorism in Afghanistan.

The statement was signed by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian, the director of the anti-terror dramas “Walnut Tree”, “The Midday Event” and “Trace of Blood”.

Filmmakers Ebrahim Hatamikia, Narges Abyara, Kamal Tabrizi, Maziar Miri and Reza Mirkarimi, and actors Parviz Parastui and Atila Pesyani are also among the artists who signed the statement.

The General Office for Dramatic Arts and groups of stage artists also condemned the terrorist attack in statements.

In addition, members of the Media Managers Guild also condemned the terrorist attack in a statement published on Sunday.

They also called on the international media and human rights organizations to censure terrorism and support Iran as a victim of terrorism.

Make Yalda memorable night for children under threat of pandemic depression: writers



Children along with grandmothers celebrate Yald Night at a kindergarten in the town of Fereidunshahr, Isfahan Province, on December 20, 2016. (Ehsan Jadidi/file photo)

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Dozens of Iranian children’s writers have asked families to make Yalda Night memorable for children as they are under the threat of depression as a result of home quarantine caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a statement published by the Persian service of ISNA

on Wednesday, the authors wrote, “Children in Iran and across the world are spending hard days. Coronavirus and the economic and social condition have resulted in ignoring the children more than before, and our children are suffering from adversity, depression and boredom more than ever.

“The Yalda Night celebration is one of our beautiful traditions, which has always been closely connected with art, poetry and storytelling. Let’s try to make a happy and different memory of this year’s Yalda Night for our children.

“Let’s present them with books, tell them stories, play with them. Let’s make them familiar with the roots of their own profound, native culture and make them hopeful about a bright, humanistic, fair, happy and peaceful tomorrow.”

Tahereh Ibod, the writer of the bestsellers “Sea Tales of Liya Sand Maris” and “The Family of Mr. Charkhesi”, is one of the authors.

Also among the writers is Farhad Hassanzadeh, the author of the acclaimed books “Kuti Kuti Stories”, “The Backyard”, “The 7th Bench by the Lake”, “Bambak’s Scorpions” and “Watermelon with Love”. He has been nominated for the Hans Christian Andersen Award several times.

The big names such as Gholamreza Emami, Sahar

Tarhandeh, Ebrahim Hassanbeigi, Nushafarin Ansari and Jafar Ebrahimi-Shahed are also seen.

Yalda, the last evening of autumn and the beginning of winter, is a ceremonious, auspicious time for Iranians and lovers of Iranian traditions everywhere on the earth.

Nationally called “Shab-e Yalda” or “Shab-e-Chelleh”, it literally means the night of the forty. This refers to the first forty days of winter that are often the coldest and toughest to bear.

The story of Yalda may perhaps be interpreted as a tale of courage and effort during darkness, a triumph of light and human warmth that ultimately causes the spring to bloom in our hearts.

People on Yalda Night are usually served with fresh fruits and a mixture of dry fruits, seeds and nuts in floral bowls. To Iranians, fruits are reminders of abundance in summer. Watermelon and pomegranates, as symbols of bounty, are the traditional fresh fruits of this night. It is believed that eating watermelon before the arrival of winter can immunize the body against illnesses.

Following a hot dinner, many people often recite poetry, narrate stories, chant, play musical instruments or just chat cozily until midnight or so.

Pandemic postpones Iran’s Cinéma Vérité festival

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — The pandemic in Tehran has pushed back the start of the 14th edition of the Cinéma Vérité festival, Iran’s major international festival for documentary films, one week to December 15.

The festival will be running totally online from December 15 to 22.

“The delay will help the organizers have a better chance to arrange the programs, and will give the filmmakers more time to submit their works,” the director of the festival, Mohammad Hamidi-Moqaddam, said in an online press conference held on Wednesday.

“After the spread of the coronavirus in the world, many festivals were canceled, but after several months, the world’s big festivals were determined to keep their festivals going,” he said.

“And we at the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), which is the main organizer of the festival, decided



Cinéma Vérité president Mohammad Hamidi-Moqaddam (R) and his colleague Shahnam Safaju unveil the poster for the 14th edition of the festival in Tehran on December 2, 2020. (DEFC)

to hold the festival totally online,” added Hamidi-Moqaddam who is also the director of the DEFC.

“In the international section, we decided to screen and review a selection of documentaries acclaimed at 2020 international events across the world in a

section named ‘World’s Best’,” he noted.

“We also lost a number of beloved filmmakers over the past year and we will dedicate each day to pay tribute to one of them including Khosro Sinai, Akbar Alemi, Hamid Soheili and Manuchehr Tayyab during the festival,” he explained.

“While we will also honor filmmakers Kamran Shirdel, Mahvash Sheikholslami and Farshad Fadaian,” he added.

He later noted that the films will stream online on different platforms of Filimo, TVA, and Hashure, the Iranian platforms providing video on demand (VOD) service for films.

A lineup of 30 documentaries will be competing for the Avini Awards during the festival.

The award has been established by DEFC to commemorate martyr Morteza Avini, the writer and documentarian who chronicled the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war known as the Sacred Defense in Iran.

Documentaries on the Islamic Revolution,

the Sacred Defense and resistance in the region will be competing for the award.

Twenty-five films on COVID-19 will also be competing in Cinéma Vérité in the special category set up this year to attract attention to this disastrous disease.

A number of top Iranian and international documentarians and critics will be holding online workshops and panel discussions during the festival.

Participating international figures include Betsy A. McLane, Bill Nichols and James Bertrand Longley in addition to famous Iranian documentarians Mehrdad Oskui and Farhad Varahram.

In addition, Cinéma Vérité will review the Chilean documentary cinema during a special program named “Chilean Films Panorama”.

A number of acclaimed documentaries by Chilean filmmakers, including Francisco Bermejo’s documentary “The Other One”, will be screened in this section.

Iranian films competing in Norwegian festival

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Movies by Iranian directors are competing in the 30th Films from the South Festival (FFSF), which currently underway in the Norwegian capital of Oslo.

“Son-Mother” directed by Mahnaz Mohammadi is one of the films. It is about Leila, a single mother who lives in the poverty of today’s Iran. The factory where she works is facing a crisis and jobs are in danger. Kazem, the factory bus driver, proposes to Leila, but only under certain conditions. When Leila loses her job, she must face a difficult decision – whether to accept Kazem’s proposal, which would save her from poverty, but would also force her to abandon her son. In the end, it will be him who will have to decide.

The film received the special jury award at the Alice nella Città section of the 14th Rome Film Fest.

Another one is Manijeh Hekmat’s road movie “Bandar Band”, which is a co-production between Iran and Germany.



“Son-Mother” by Mahnaz Mohammadi.

It takes us on a journey through the southwestern Iranian province of Khuzestan. The whole area is flooded, and we

“Arriving at Your Own Door” appears in Persian

C U L T U R E d e s k TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Jon Kabat-Zinn’s book “Arriving at Your Own Door: 108 Lessons in Mindfulness” has recently been published by Arjmand Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Sahar Tahbaz and Amir-Hossein Imani.

On the surface this book may appear to be merely another offering in the genre of daily readings. But deep within these 108 selections lie messages of profound wisdom in a contemporary and practical form that can lead to both healing and transformation.

Mindfulness opens us up to the possibility of being fully human as we are, and of

expressing the humane in our way of being. Mindlessness de facto closes us up and denies us the fullness of our being alive.

We so urgently need to rotate in consciousness in order to safeguard what precious sanity is available to us on this planet. How we carry ourselves will determine the direction the world takes because, in a very real way, we are the world we inhabit. Our world is continuously being shaped by our participation in everything around us and within us through mindfulness. This is the great work of awareness. Welcome to the threshold, to the fullness of arriving at your own door!

Kabat-Zinn is the executive director of the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine,



Front cover of the Persian translation of Jon Kabat-Zinn’s “Arriving at Your Own Door: 108 Lessons in Mindfulness”.

Health Care and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. He is also

the founding director of its renowned Stress Reduction Clinic and professor of medicine emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

He is the author of numerous bestselling books about mindfulness and meditation, including “Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness”, “Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life” and “Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness”.

He is also co-author, with his wife Myla, of “Everyday Blessings: The Inner Work of Mindful Parenting”. His books have been translated into over thirty languages.