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Social work's vital role in fight against pandemic

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI
With the outbreak of coronavirus, many people globally faced fear, stress, and depression after being isolated and dealing with an invisible virus, so that social work's importance is becoming increasingly apparent.

In many countries, social workers are supporting communities that are affected or fearful of the COVID-19. Social work has an essential frontline role in the fight against the virus through supporting communities through physical distancing and social solidarity.

Key functions of social work include ensuring that the most vulnerable are included in planning and response, organizing communities to ensure that essentials such as food and clean water are available; advocating within social services and in policy environments that services adapt, remain open and pro-active in supporting communities and vulnerable populations.

As a profession, advocating for the advancement and strengthening of health and social services is essential protection against the virus, inequality, and the consequent social and economic challenges.

Strengthening social solidarity and global connectedness

World Social Work Day is celebrated annually on the third Tuesday of each March.

In 2021, it will be held on March 16. It is the key day in the year that social workers worldwide stand together to advance a common message globally. The 2021 World Social Day highlights Ubuntu: I am Because We Are. This is the first theme of 2020 to 2030 Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development.

At a time when global politics has retreated into nationalism, Ubuntu is a powerful message on the need for solidarity at all levels: within communities, societies, and globally. It is a message that all people are interconnected and that our future is dependent on recognizing all people's involvement in co-building a sustainable, fair, and socially just future.

Dealing with pandemic through psycho-social support

In Iran, the social work scientific association has made efforts to prepare a program for psycho-social support of people in dealing with the pandemic through offering consulting services; in addition to producing content on maintaining mental health during quarantine or long stay at home.

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Yemeni missiles changing the equation in West Asia

BY REZA MOSHFEGH

While certain Arab regimes in the Persian Gulf region are rushing to normalize ties with Israel to enjoy the military and security support of the U.S. and the Zionist regime, Tel Aviv itself is concerned about the missile capability of resistance groups from Palestine to Yemen, especially since Ansarullah attacked the Saudi Aramco in Jeddah, destroying a large part of the facility.

After the Abraham Accord it was revealed that some Arab countries are betting on Israel to protect their security, especially those who follow Washington's policies in the region. These monarchical regimes are moving towards establishing relations with Israel while the latter is not able to defend itself without U.S. support.

Israelis know well that they failed to win any of their wars since June 1967.

In their statements, Israeli officials emphasize that their most dangerous enemy is Hezbollah

in Lebanon, then Iran and Hamas, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli War Minister Benny Gantz are distorting the facts and underestimating the missile power of the resistance front and acknowledged the development of Hamas missile power.

According to Israeli intelligence agencies, Hamas has upgraded its missile and naval capabilities, and has shoulder-fired weapons that can shoot down Israeli helicopters and military aircraft.

These capacities were seen in the recent rocket attacks from Gaza on Israel, especially when resistance groups targeted Ashkelon in the occupied Palestine, where the Zionists authorities couldn't respond effectively for their fear of next possible attacks. They are well concerned that areas such as Tel Aviv, Ashkelon and even Haifa will be targeted by the Palestinian missiles.

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Security vulnerability deep inside Israeli infrastructure

In recent days Israel has suffered information failures in different areas.

The Israel National Cyber Directorate (INCD) on Sunday announced that victims of last week's hack of the giant insurance company Shirbit should consider obtaining new identity cards and driver's licenses.

According to the INCD, other aspects of information gained by the hack are less problematic in the future, but hacked ID cards and driver's licenses could expose

victims to identity theft and other impersonation schemes.

The Jerusalem Post has also learned that there is no imminent sense of any government authority being able to step in to take back the stolen information, to pay the ransomware group Black Shadow or to use any kind of offensive capabilities against the group before it can publicize more private information.

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Agricultural exports increase 13% in 8 months

TEHRAN—The value of Iran's agricultural products export has risen 13 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Mehrdad Jamal Orounaqi, the IRICA deputy head for technical and customs affairs, put the value of exported products at \$3.842 billion in the eight-month pe-

riod of the present year, IRNA reported.

The official said the weight of agricultural products exported in the mentioned period has risen 27 percent to stand at 5.450 million tons.

Orounaqi pointed out that pistachios, tomatoes, watermelons, tomato paste, pistachio kernels, and apples were the main export items in the mentioned period, noting that the total weight of these items was 1,518,000 tons worth \$1.312 billion.

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Amazon Prime Video streams Iranian black comedy "I'm not Trump"

TEHRAN – Amazon Prime Video is streaming "I'm not Trump", a video of an Iranian black comedy play satirizing U.S. President Donald Trump's character under the pressure of the 2020 election.

The English-language play written by Ali Mohammad-Rahimi and Behzad Sediqi is the first Iranian play being streamed by Prime Video, an American subscription

video-on-demand over-the-top streaming and rental service of Amazon.com, Inc., offered as a standalone service or as part of Amazon's Prime subscription.

Reza Fayyazi stars as Trump in the play directed by Reza Khorram during October. Sirus Kahurinejad, and Sorush Taheri are other members of the cast.

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Trump's armed supporters threaten Michigan secretary of state over election result

Armed Donald Trump supporters have gathered outside the home of Michigan's secretary of state in a campaign of intimidation linked to the president's continued false claims of election fraud.

The group chanted "Stop the steal" as Jocelyn Benson and her family tried to watch a Christmas film, the secretary of state, who is also the chief election officer, said in a statement.

Ms. Benson described the supporters' demands as "loud and threatening". She also accused Trump of an "unprecedented, dangerous, egregious campaign to erode the public's confidence in the results of one of the most secure, accessible and transparent elections in our state's history".

Meanwhile, armed Trump supporters wielding assault rifles and crucifixes protested across America over the weekend in growing support for the President's claim the election was stolen.

Hundreds rallied with their MAGA flags in downtown Phoenix on Saturday, claiming that Joe Biden had conspired with the media to seize the White House.

The Trump campaign lent support to protests questioning the current vote tally, filing a lawsuit in Arizona Saturday over rejected ballots that Arizona's Secretary of State said was 'grasping at straws.'

Furious 'Stop the Steal Rallies' have also taken place in Michigan, Georgia, North Dakota and Pennsylvania.

It comes as Donald Trump saddles up for a series of 'campaign-style' rallies at which he will show obituaries of people who were registered to vote fraudulently.

Trump has made it clear that he does not intend to concede, despite analysts who say that there is too much ground to make up, irrespective of the alleged fraud.

Iran cannot trust U.S. after Trump's JCPO exit: ex-Senate candidate

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – Mark Dankof, a former U.S. Senate candidate, says Iran possibly cannot be expected to trust Washington once again after Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the JCPOA, the official name for the 2015 nuclear agreement.

"Iran cannot possibly be expected to trust the United States again after the unilateral withdrawal of the Trump Administration from the JCPOA P5+1 nuclear deal," Mark Dankof tells the Tehran Times.

Trump launched relentless attack against the JCPOA in his 2016 presidential campaign. Elected to the White House, he slapped sweeping sanctions against that went much beyond the pre-JCPOA deal.

Mark Dankof calls sanctions against Iran "war time economic sanction" but the Trump administration has prevented Iran from buying medicine and other humanitarian goods which are allowed during war.

Foreign Minister Zarif has called sanc-

tions within the "maximum pressure" strategy, including medical sanctions during the coronavirus pandemic, an instance of war crime.

To make matters worse, the assassination of top Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh may hinder revitalization of the JCPOA as Joe Biden, who served as vice president under President Obama, is going to take the helm at the White House from January 20.

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Mehr/Mohammadreza Abbasi

Zarif meets new Syrian FM, says Tehran backs Astana process

TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Javad Zarif who held talks with new Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad in Tehran on Monday expressed happiness over the continuation of political process in Syria and said Iran backs the Astana format for ending the long-running conflict in Syria.

Mekdad was appointed on November 22 as Syria's foreign minister after the death of the country's foreign minister Walid al-Muallem.

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Ex-ambassador calls for closer ties with Kazakhstan

TEHRAN – Former Iranian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Ramin Mehanparast has called for closer relations between Tehran and Nur-Sultan, describing Kazakhstan as the most important country in Central Asia.

"We can have closer cooperation with Kazakhstan, as it is the most important country in Central Asia and it is located in the Eurasia region," Mehanparast said in an interview with the Tehran Times.

"That country has a great growth potential and we also have many commonalities with that country," he said. "One of our main commonalities that needs to be discussed more is historical and cultural commonalities. Parts of Kazakhstan are heavily influenced by Iranian civilization and culture. The biggest Kazakh character who they are proud of is Farabi. They have named their most famous street and university after him."

He said these points show how influential the Iranian culture is in Kazakhstan, pointing out that there are three thousand Persian words in the Kazakh language and that many of the Kazakh people's names are Persian.

The former diplomat said students are studying Persian language in Kazakhstan and the country's Persian language professors are very fluent in Persian.

"One of the most famous and prominent Persian language professors in the world is Dr. Safar Abdullah. Although he was born in Tajikistan, he has lived in Kazakhstan all his life and studied at the Moscow University (before the collapse of the Soviet Union) and was granted Kazakh citizenship," the former ambassador explained.

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AI technology used in online-controlled assassination of Fakhrizadeh: general

POLITICAL TEHRAN – The machine gun that targeted martyr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was controlled online and artificial intelligence technology was used in it, the Deputy Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has said.

“The satellite machine gun was controlled online and there were no terrorists at the scene,” Brigadier General Ali Fadavi said while addressing a commemoration ceremony for the assassinated scientist on Sunday.



“13 bullets were fired from the machine gun and it was zoomed in on Martyr Fakhrizadeh’s face with an advanced camera, and it was equipped with artificial intelligence technology,” Fadavi explained, according to Mehr.

Fakhrizadeh, a senior nuclear and defense scientist, was assassinated in a small city east of Tehran on November 27.

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.

Iran has blamed Israel, which has carried out assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade. Immediately after the assassination, Foreign Minister Zarif said in a tweet that the attack was carried out with “serious indications of Israeli role”.

Over the past years Israel has 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, former head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and now the chairman of the Parliament Energy Committee, but it failed.

Fadavi said Fakhrizadeh was accompanied by 11 guards and his wife. While 4 or 5 bullets hit Fakhrizadeh, his wife was not shot at all.

The head of Martyr Fakhrizadeh’s guards was hit with four bullets because he had thrown himself on Fakhrizadeh, and other guards were not targeted by the machine gun, he added.

In remarks on November 30, 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.

Meanwhile, President Hassan Rouhani has said Iran is entitled to take revenge for the assassination of Fakhrizadeh.

“Iran’s government is entitled to take retaliation from the elements behind the assassination of the martyr,” Rouhani said on Thursday.

He said the terrorist attack showed that Iran’s enemies are desperate in the face of Iranian scientists’ scientific progress.

“For us, it is completely clear who has committed this act of terror and what method was adopted to perpetrate this atrocity,” the president added.

Zarif meets new Syrian FM, says Tehran backs Astana process

1 → In Monday talks, Zarif and Mekdad held talks on series of issues, exchanging views about mutual issues, regional and international developments as well as joint campaign against terrorism.

Pointing to the extensive and strategic ties between Iran and Syria, the two foreign ministers also held discussions over mutual and multilateral economic cooperation.

Zarif also cherished the memory of al-Muallem, and announced his readiness to cooperate with the new Syrian foreign minister.

Zarif also assessed as positive the convention of a conference on the return of the displaced Syrian people.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif said the recent developments in the region entail a sharing of ideas between Iran, Syria and other countries more than ever.

For his part, Mekdad conveyed message of condolences from President Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian government and nation over the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh on November 27 and also General



Qassem Soleimani to the Iranian nation earlier this year.

Mekdad also thanked Iran for its unwavering support for Damascus in the war against terrorism and extremism. He also pointed to the malign activities of the U.S. in the region, saying such acts have led to an intensification of tensions.

Such malicious behaviors which are in line with the plots of the Zionist regime show that the interests of Israel stand above those of the U.S., the Syrian foreign minister commented.

The chief diplomat added Syria is firm in its campaign against terrorism and that cooperation between Iran and Syria is very important in restoring peace and security in Syria.

Mekdad arrived in Tehran for a two-day visit on Monday morning. He also planned to hold meeting with President Rouhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council and other senior Iranian officials.

Tehran urges Europe to prove goodwill by fulfilling JCPOA commitments

“Iran’s stances regarding JCPOA is fixed and unchanged,” Foreign Ministry tells German FM

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has called on European parties to the Iran nuclear deal to prove their goodwill by fulfilling their commitments under the 2015 deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“A new opportunity has been created to continue the previous correct path,” Khatibzadeh said in an online press conference, making a vague reference to the election of Joe Biden as the new president of the United States.

“The other side should return to the fulfillment of its obligations and Iran too will fulfill its obligations as it has announced,” he said.

The JCPOA was signed between Iran, six world powers - the U.S., the UK, France, Russia, China, Germany - and the European Union in July 2015. The pact was ditched by U.S. President Donald Trump in 2018 in pursuit of a “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran.

Trump’s withdrawal came while Iran was in full compliance with the treaty. All other parties to the deal have repeatedly criticized the Trump administration’s policy toward Iran.

Biden’s victory in the November 3



presidential election raised hopes over the prospects of a re-entry into the JCPOA by the incoming administration.

During his Monday presser, Khatibzadeh asked to comment on recent remarks by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, who called for negotiations with Iran to conclude a broader nuclear deal next year.

“Iran’s stances regarding Barjam

(JCPOA) is fixed and unchanged,” said Khatibzadeh.

He said the nuclear accord has already been negotiated, signed and inserted into the UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Iran will not renegotiate something that has already been negotiated, he added.

Earlier this month, Maas told weekly Der Spiegel that it was in the interest of

the U.S. and Europeans to reach a broader agreement with Tehran.

“A return to the previous agreement will not be adequate in any case,” he said, referring to the 2015 nuclear agreement.

“There should be a kind of a ‘nuclear agreement plus’ deal, which is also in the interest of us,” Maas added.

Maas expressed hope that Biden would change Washington’s policy on Iran after taking office next month, and pave the way for talks on the nuclear deal.

“It is important to send out a signal, which would be decisive, on whether or not the United States would relax economic sanctions on Iran. Both sides should move forward, come closer. Time is running out because Iran will have presidential elections next year,” he said.

Khatibzadeh said the European parties to the deal, including France, Britain and Germany, have not fulfilled their commitments under the JCPOA.

The spokesman asserted that Iran will neither negotiate nor compromise on issues relating to its national security, stressing that Iran’s is fully aware of its rights and duties as well as those of the other sides.

“What was not achieved through maximum pressure will not be achieved through other approaches,” he added.

Parliament determined to harden Iran’s defense power, says senior MP

POLITICAL TEHRAN – The Parliament is determined to strengthen Iran’s defense power, the chairman of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has said.

“The defense sector is the most important pillar of the country, and we should not allow the issue of defense in the country to be undermined,” Mehr on Monday quoted Mojtaba Zonnour as saying.

The statement by the top legislator comes as Iran has decided to increase by two times its defense projects following the November 27 assassination of Iranian nuclear and defense scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh. Israel is the prime suspect for the assassination.

Zonnour said the Majlis (Parliament) has focused on improving and promoting defense capabilities at the highest level.

Highlighting the need for paying serious attention to the defense budget, he said the country’s defense budget is of paramount importance and the Parliament is following up this issue firmly and decisively.

“We believe that defense sector in the country should

be strengthened optimally and this issue will be taken into serious consideration in next year’s budget bill (2021 budget bill),” Zonnour added.

Last week, Defense Minister Amir Hatami warned the enemies that no atrocity, terror or stupid act will go unanswered.

“We will pursue the perpetrators till the end and we will follow the order of the Commander-in-Chief (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei),” Hatami said on November 30 during the funeral procession for Fakhrizadeh.

“I sincerely thank all the nations and governments that sympathized with Iran for this incident and expressed their disgust with the assassination,” Hatami said.

General Hatami warned the countries that sponsor terrorism that the Islamic Republic has always dealt with terrorists “as we did in the region in Syria and Iraq, along with the governments and nations and the armed forces of those countries.”

“We will do it again,” he said. “We will be proud and dignified, and whoever bows down to the terrorists will surely be ashamed.”



The minister said the budget for defense projects will double in the next Iranian fiscal year.

“The first step to continue the path of Martyr Fakhrizadeh was taken yesterday in the cabinet,” Hatami said, adding, “While the budget of the Research and Innovation Organization of the Defense Ministry was increased for 1400 (2020-2021), yesterday we decided to double this budget.”

Ex-ambassador calls for closer ties with Kazakhstan

1 → He said Dr. Abdullah is very well-known in Iran and all prominent Iranian professors of Persian literature know him.

“He is very active and has offered great contributions to Iran,” Mehmanparast said. “He was the main translator in our embassy in Kazakhstan for many years, but he currently only does academic works.”

According to the former envoy, the Kazakhs are seeking historical identity and most of the sources that can help them in this path are in Persian.

“This is another reason for cooperation,” said Mehmanparast. “In some libraries in Kazakhstan, the reference books are in Persian. Perhaps in depicting their history, Iran’s sources can be a good help. We can cooperate in these fields. These are the fundamental levels that can lead to the establishment of closer ties and cooperation.”

He further explained that Kazakhstan is a majority Muslim country and Muslims mostly live in southern areas, adding that Kazakhstan is a very big country with a small population, and therefore, there is a good opportunity for Iran to carry out technical and engineering projects there.

Therefore, he went on, “we can cooperate in different projects.”

“In the south of Kazakhstan, we see more mobility of the Islamic population, and a special tendency towards Islam was formed among their youth,” he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mehmanparast, who has also served as Iran’s ambassador to Poland and Lithuania, said two areas in



Kazakhstan are very important to Iran economically.

“Kazakhstan is one of the five countries bordering the Caspian Sea. For this reason, the port of Aktau in this country is very important to us. A significant part of Kazakhstan’s imports and exports go through this port. We are also active in this sector. We could have had many projects in this area to be in a better position,” he said.

The ambassador told the Tehran Times that when he was the ambassador to Kazakhstan “we had talked to the governor of the region to allocate a piece of land and a private wharf for Iranian ships, and they welcomed it, but unfortunately, the Iranian side did not take it very seriously and a golden opportunity was missed.”

The other area is Shymkent in Kazakhstan’s south, neighboring Uzbekistan, he said, explaining that Iranians were engaged in trade activities in that area. “We could have done good work in Shymkent as well.”

He went on to say that there was no consistent policy on the Iranian part, and pres-

sure from the Americans did not allow the formation of effective cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan, particularly in oil and banking sectors.

“Kazakhstan can be a good opportunity to cooperate in this field due to its huge oil and gas resources. There were proposals at the time, such as the establishment of a joint refinery in northern Iran. That is, we were supposed to import their oil to our own refinery and export Kazakh oil in the south instead,” he stated.

According to Mehmanparast, another case is joint investment of the parties in the field of oil and gas transmission lines, including a project which was to be carried out to build a pipeline from Amirabad to the port of Jask.

“I think some work is being done now, but at that time it was supposed to transport one million barrels of oil a day. This was extremely important for Kazakhstan. These were important oil and gas projects we could have with Kazakhstan,” he added.

Mehmanparast said Iran can create good opportunities through medical tourism. “In this field, for example, if we had medical tourism on the agenda and pursued it seriously, we could have attracted a lot of people from Kazakhstan. They can easily enter Iran.”

“This is also a field of serious cooperation,” he added.

Pointing to technical and engineering projects, he said Iranian companies have a good track record in road construction in Kazakhstan.

Since Kazakhstan is a very big country,

it needs communication infrastructure, he said, adding, “We can be very active in this area. Kazakhstan has a lot of potential in the steel field. There is also the possibility of cooperation in this sector.”

“At the same time, the country is very rich in terms of minerals, and in this area, we can have bilateral or trilateral cooperation. There have already been discussions about tripartite cooperation,” he explained.

Mehmanparast further explained that there are many opportunities in the economic sector to cooperate with Kazakhstan. “In the political sphere, too, the Kazakhs try to have a balanced policy and maintain relations with all countries. They give a special place to Iran. They took advantage of this opportunity and tried to pursue economic growth and development rapidly,” he remarked.

The ambassador hailed the role of former Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in the formation of Kazakhstan in the aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union.

He also said Kazakhstan’s current president, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, has a very good view toward Iran, adding that such potential can be used to expand bilateral ties.

“At the time I was Iran’s ambassador in Kazakhstan, Mr. Tokayev was Kazakhstan’s foreign minister, and a very good relationship was established between the two countries at that time.”

Concluding his remarks, Mehmanparast reiterated that Iran needs to have more trade and political relations with Kazakhstan.

Iran Judiciary chief backs Parliament’s strategic action bill

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran’s Judiciary Chief Seyed Ebrahim Raisi hailed a parliamentary bill on strategic action for lifting of the sanctions and safeguarding national interests, saying more components of power would increase the enemy’s cost of hostility.

In comments at a Judiciary meeting on Monday, the top judge lauded the Iranian lawmakers for ratifying the strategic action bill and “forcing the enemy to carry out commitments to the international agreements and treaties.”

The outsiders must bear in mind that they ought to pay the cost of pressures on Iran, the Judiciary chief underlined, adding, “The more leverages and components of power we have, the higher the enemy’s costs of hostility and pressure on the (Iranian) nation will be.”

Raisi further called on Iranian officials to adopt unified and



revolutionary stances based on the realities on the ground, not personal and political views.

The Islamic Republic’s resistance should come with the generation of power in the economic, scientific, security and

defense spheres, the top judge added.

Following disagreements between the administration and the Parliament on the strategic action bill, the Supreme National Security Council said on Saturday that the newly-ratified law would not cause any harm to the country’s national interests.

The SNSC said what are harmful to the national interests as a source of concern are the controversies that may undermine the authority of domestic institutions and damage national unity, calling on all parties to end the futile debate.

The cabinet of President Hassan Rouhani has opposed the parliamentary bill that requires the government to halt voluntary implementation of the NPT if the European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal keep failing to honor their commitments.

Rouhani: Trump failed to cut Iran's oil exports to zero

POLITICAL TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has said that U.S. President Donald Trump has failed to drive Iran's oil export to zero.

Speaking at an official meeting on Sunday, the president said, "Donald Trump's dream of reducing Iran's oil exports to zero has never come true and he will take that dream with him."

Rouhani noted that the economic war has caused many problems for the Iranian oil and petrochemical exports, but Trump failed to zero out Iran's oil exports.

Trump, a hawkish critic of the landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), unilaterally withdrew Washington from the agreement in May 2018, and unleashed the "toughest ever" sanctions against the Islamic Republic in defiance of global criticism, Press TV reported.

Following its much-criticized exit, Washington has been attempting to prevent the remaining signatories from abiding by their commitments and thus kill the historic agree-



ment, which is widely viewed as a fruit of international diplomacy.

On October 26, the U.S. administration imposed a fresh round of sanctions on a number of Iranian individuals and entities

affiliated with the Islamic Republic's oil sector, including Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zanganeh.

Zanganeh said on November 9 that the latest wave of sanctions imposed by the

Trump administration, which targets the oil sector, has no practical effect and stems from Washington's grudge toward Tehran.

Zanganeh said, "In his final days at the White House, Mr. Trump imposed sanctions on a number of high-ranking oil sector officials of Iran under the pretext of their alleged support for terrorism."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani emphasized the necessity of working to up the Iranian oil output, saying, "Due to sanctions imposed on Iran before the conclusion of the JCPOA, the production and sale of oil became limited."

"However, following the implementation of the JCPOA and lifting of sanctions, we managed in a short period of time to increase oil sales to more than two million barrels per day ... and today we are ready to further increase that capacity," Iran's president said.

Iran's Ministry of Petroleum, he added, will take all necessary measures to prepare the oil industry equipment and facilities to boost Iran's oil export and sales within the next three months.

Iran to give 'wise' response to Fakhrizadeh assassination: top general

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi, the deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), has said that Iran will respond to any action taken by the enemy with enough power and wise movement.

"Iran will respond to any action of the enemies with enough power and wise movement," the IRGC deputy chief told Iran Press.

According to the general, the Islamic Republic of Iran's enemies, on top of them the United States, has not halted their plots for nearly 41 years.

Referring to martyr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, Fadavi pointed out that Fakhrizadeh dedicated his life to science and we

will respond to the enemy who assassinated him.

On November 27 at 14:30, nearly 10 people attacked the convoy of Fakhrizadeh on a highway in the small city of Absard in Damavand County, about 40 kilometers east of the capital Tehran. The scientist lost his life during the attack while his bodyguards were severely injured. Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel, which has carried out many assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on the day of the assassination that the attack was carried out with "serious indications of Israeli role." Since then, several Iranian offi-

cial have vowed to take revenge against Israel.

Iranian officials vowed to take revenge against Israel in due time. While Israeli officials kept silent about the assassination, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Tel Aviv was behind the assassination of Fakhrizadeh.

But at the same time, Rouhani described the terror attack as a trap set by Israel for Iran. "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 noted.

The West's true colors

Europeans push for new deal while U.S. remains silent

POLITICAL TEHRAN — European countries signatory to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal have expressed concerns over Tehran's nuclear program, but a former Iranian diplomat tells the Tehran Times that these countries are not genuinely worried about Iran's nuclear activities. Instead, he said, they are worried about the Islamic Republic getting stronger over time.

While Iran continues to coordinate all its nuclear activities with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), European parties to the Iran nuclear deal — France, Germany and the UK (E3) — have once again voiced concerns over Iran's nuclear activities at a time when their compliance with the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is in doubt, at least from Iran's point of view.

In a statement on Monday, the E3 said, "Iran's recent announcement to the IAEA that it intends to install an additional three cascades of advanced centrifuges at the Fuel Enrichment Plant in Natanz is contrary to the JCPOA and deeply worrying."

The statement came after Reuters, in a move that irked Iran, published details of a confidential IAEA report, which said Iran plans to install three more cascades, or clusters, of advanced IR-2m centrifuges in the underground plant at Natanz.

"In a letter dated 2 December 2020, Iran informed the Agency that the operator of the Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) at Natanz 'intends to start installation of three cascades of IR-2m centrifuge machines' at FEP," the IAEA report to its member states said.

The leakage of the report, for which the E3 is to blame, has drawn strong criticism from Iran. Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has said Tehran will soon legally pursue the leakage of the report by the IAEA.

"Iran's objections and legal proceedings against the Agency in the field of protecting confidential information have a history of more than two decades," Kazem Gharibabadi said in an interview with IRINN on Saturday. He further explained that for a long time "the Agency's safeguard reports, which were also very detailed, were prepared and distributed among the members, and in the last five years, the reports on Barjam (nuclear deal) have been replaced."

He added that there are two problems along the way, namely the extent of details of safeguards activities that should be reflected in these reports, and the flawed mechanism for informing the members of the Agency.

"These reports are leaked to the media before they are declassified," Gharibabadi lamented.

The leakage of the IAEA report has raised suspicions that the E3 might have sought to exert pressure on Iran by helping leak the report to the press. The Monday statement by E3 further fueled these suspicions.

The statement also expressed concern over the recent nuclear law passed by Iran's Parliament.

"Furthermore, we have taken note, with great concern, of the recent law passed by the Iranian Parliament, which - if implemented - would substantially expand Iran's nuclear program and limit IAEA monitoring access. The measures would be incompatible with the JCPOA and Iran's wider nuclear commitments," the statement said.

The Iranian Parliament has recently passed a law that compels the government of Hassan Rouhani to substantially step up the country's nuclear activities such as installing new, advanced uranium-enriching centrifuges and increasing uranium enrichment level to 20% if the other parties to the JCPOA failed to honor their commitments under the nuclear deal.

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

The law, officially called "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect Nation's Rights," is part of a broader strategy that aims to lift the United States sanctions on Iran and was put forward by the lawmakers in early November. It aims to force the United States into lifting sanctions on Iran by doubling down on nuclear activities.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said last week that this law will revive the country's nuclear industry and create deterrence against enemies.

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

The European concerns over the law came at a time when Iran said the law is part of a broader strategy that aims to counter the United States sanctions.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, and reimposed sweeping economic sanc-

tions on Iran within the so-called "maximum pressure" campaign. Over the past few years, Iran has mainly remained committed to the nuclear deal despite the U.S. constantly slapping sanctions on Iran. Meanwhile, the E3 have failed to honor their commitments under the deal.

But now that they feel there would be a more cooperative administration in the U.S., the E3 have taken steps to turn up the heat on Iran by calling for replacing the JCPOA with a broader deal that includes Iran's missile program and its regional activities. They even seem to be conditioning Joe Biden's possible return to the JCPOA on Iran refraining from implementing the nuclear law.

"If Iran is serious about preserving a space for diplomacy, it must not implement these steps. Such a move would jeopardize our shared efforts to preserve the JCPOA and risks compromising the important opportunity for a return to diplomacy with the incoming US Administration. A return to the JCPOA would also be beneficial for Iran," the E3 statement said.

The Europeans also said that they would welcome a diplomatic path to address other concerns with Iran, an apparent reference to thorny issues such as Iran's defensive missile program and regional influence.

The Europeans noted, "We will address Iran's non-compliance within the framework of the JCPOA. We welcome the statements by President-elect Biden on the JCPOA and a diplomatic path to address wider concerns with Iran. This is in all our interests."

Over the past weeks, particularly after Biden won the presidential election in November, the EU have expressed concerns over Iran's defensive missiles and called for a broader deal with Iran.

But some observers believe that these concerns are not genuine and represent other concerns that the E3 rarely express: an apprehension about Iran's scientific progress, according to Alireza Sheikh Attar, Iran's former ambassador to Germany.

"The Europeans are neither worried about the JCPOA nor Iran's nuclear program. Instead, they are worried about the Islamic Republic getting stronger. They are concerned about increasing Iran's scientific progress because they know that Iran has made progress over the past 40 years despite pressures," the former diplomat told the Tehran Times.

The Europeans have recently said that the missile and regional issues should also be included in any new deal with Iran. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has explicitly pushed for such a deal in his recent interview

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Jeyhun Bayramov, the foreign minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan, plans to pay a visit to Iran on Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh announced on Monday.

Speaking at his weekly press briefing on Monday, the spokesman said that the chief Azerbaijani diplomat will arrive in Tehran on Wednesday at the official invitation of Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

According to the spokesman, Bayramov is scheduled to hold meetings with Iran's top officials, including President Hassan Rouhani, the Speaker of the Parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani.

SPORTS

Esteghlal, Sanat Naft share spoils in Tehran

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Esteghlal and Sanat Naft football teams missed a chance to go top of Iran Professional League (IPL) after they shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw here at the Azadi Stadium on Monday.

The Blues were determined to get the three points in their home match but plucky Sanat Naft fought hard to earn a draw in their away match. The Yellows could have won more the match but their strikers wasted their chances.

Ahmad Mousavi found the back of Sanat Naft's net in the 50th minute after Hamed Fallahzadeh failed to clear Mehdi Ghaedi's strike and he scored the loose ball.

With eight minutes remaining, Mohammad Tayebi leveled the score from a cross.

In Tabriz, Tractor and Foolad played out a goalless draw in a controversial match.

Saipa earned a draw for the fourth time in five matches after they were held to a 0-0 draw by Mes Rafsanjan.

Aluminum made the splash with a 4-1 win over Machine Sazi in Arak.

IPL leader Gol Gohar lost to Paykan 2-1 in Sirjan but still remain top of the league with 10 points, two points above Persepolis.

All IPL Matchday 5 began with a minute's silence in honor of Argentine football great Diego Maradona, who passed away on Nov. 25 after suffering a heart attack.

Alekno can make our dreams come true: Karkhaneh

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Mostafa Karkhaneh, the Iranian volleyball expert and current head coach of the Saipa volleyball team, supports Vladimir Alekno as the new head coach of the Iran national volleyball team.

Some Iranian volleyball figures believe that the Russian coach has a coaching style that is not suitable for Iran's volleyball national team due to the players' qualities, who are more technical rather than physical.

However, Karkhaneh, the former head coach of the Iran national team, believes that a great coach with a decorated career as Alekno can get the best out of the players.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Karkhaneh supported the Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) to appoint Alekno as the country's national team manager.

"He has achieved all the successes that every coach wants to achieve them. Alekno got the bronze and gold medals in the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games respectively with the Russian national team and is one the best managers in the world," Karkhaneh said.

"Our national team will play at the Olympic Games and it's so important for us to appoint a great head coach who has experienced the Olympics. We have not a lot of time to prepare the team, but a coach of Alekno's caliber can make the best use of the qualities of the Iranian players in a short time plan," he added.

Mostafa Karkhaneh is known for his successful career as a coach in Iran, building the Iranian national volleyball team into an international contender. He managed all national Iranian volleyball teams throughout his career, including the youth, junior, and senior teams, helping many young players develop their skills.

He believes that Iran national team have raised the expectations with their formidable performance, especially at the FIVB Volleyball World League games.

"The International Volleyball Federation has accepted Iran as one the world's volleyball powers. Therefore, Iran's federation needs to spend money to keep our country's volleyball at this level. Winning a medal in the Olympics is one of the honors that we have not experienced yet. Alekno can make our dreams come true," Karkhaneh concluded.

Qatari sports officials meet Iran's NOC president

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Qatar Olympic Committee officials met Iran's National Olympic Committee (NOC) president Reza Salehi Amiri on Sunday to discuss about 2030 Asian Games.

A 12-man delegation, headed by Qatar Olympic Committee secretary general Jassim Rashid Albuainain, traveled to Tehran in a one-day meeting to seek support for hosting rights of the 2030 Asian Games.

Dahlan Jumaan al-Hamad, President of the Asian Athletics Association (AAA), and Mohammed Yousef Al-Mana, President of Asian Weightlifting Federation, also attended the meeting to unveil their plans regarding the arrangements and facilities for the Games.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Qataris high-ranked delegation was welcomed by Iran's NOC secretary general Keykavous Saedi in NOC's headquarters in Tehran.

Then, the delegation met with Salehi Amiri and discussed about expanding the relations in sports area.

"Iran-Qatar's relations have always been based on mutual respect. Qatar is a good neighbor and we have to expand our sporting relations," Salehi Amiri said.

"Two countries can hold the joint training camps because we've become preeminent in some sports and Qatar is also outstanding in some other sports. Iran is a four-season country and it helps two sides arrange training camps," he added.

"Iran and Qatar will have to ink a Memorandum of Understanding to exchange coaches and share experience and knowledge," Salehi Amiri stated.

Albuainain also said they are ready to host more tournaments since the country has good infrastructure.

"Qatar has a great experience to host sports events since we've hosted many tournaments in the previous years. The Emir of Qatar has backed us to host the Asian Games 2030 as well and we have to work together to promote our sports. We also welcome the signing a MoU with Iran on bilateral cooperation," Albuainain said.

Qatar faces opposition from bitter political rival Saudi Arabia for the hosting rights of the 2030 Asian Games.

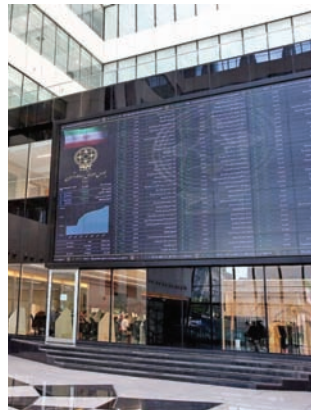
The country has already staged the Asian Games in 2006 and is going to host the prestigious Games once again, while Saudi Arabia has never staged the Asian Games before.

The two rivals are also among the nations bidding for the Asian Football Confederation's 2027 Asian Cup.

62 companies listed on TSE since late March

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The director for listing companies on the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) said 62 companies have been listed on this stock exchange since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Mohammad Qahremani said the TSE's Listing Board held 31 sessions to list new companies on the stock exchange since the year start.



Of the mentioned 62 companies, 30 are provincial investment companies, and 32 are commercial companies, he mentioned.

TSE is the major stock exchange of Iran.

TEDPIX, the main index of TSE, which had been experiencing a surprisingly rising trend since the last days of the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), hit the record high of two million points on August 2, but then it began to drop, coming down to 1.2 million points.

After a period of correction, the index has been recently climbing, and now exceeds 1.5 million points.

A market analyst told IRNA on Wednesday (December 2) that the index is expected to resume its upward trend and reach 1.6 million points by the end of the current Iranian calendar month (December 20).

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.

Mazandaran Province exports commodities to 31 countries

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Over 472,000 tons of commodities have been exported from Mazandaran Province, in north of Iran, to 31 countries during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), according to a provincial official.

Ali Yousefi, an official with the customs department of Mazandaran, put the value of exported commodities at \$124.03 million.

He named Iraq, Russia, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkmenistan, Syria, and Romania as the top export destinations of the products in the mentioned time span.



The official further announced that 1.796 million tons of commodities worth \$586.97 million have been imported to the province in the first eight months of this year, and mentioned Russia, the UAE, Turkey, Germany, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Oman as the main countries exporting goods to the province.

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

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

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

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

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

Noting the downward trend of the country's foreign trade is ending and the trade is getting back to normal, the official said: "As we announced in previous months, fortunately, the downward trend of our country's exports is approaching normal conditions month by month, and we hope to have better conditions in terms of exports by the end of the year."

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

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

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

Agricultural exports increase 13% in 8 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — According to the official, 1.417 million tons of the mentioned products worth one billion had been exported during the first eight months of the previous year, that shows that this year's export has risen 30 percent in terms of value and seven percent in terms of weight.

Regarding the export of pistachio, the deputy minister said: "The export of this commodity this year was 109,000 tons worth \$675 million, which has increased by 82 percent in terms of value compared to last year."

Iran exported over \$5.8 billion worth of agricultural and foodstuff products in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the Head of Agriculture Ministry's Planning and Economic Affairs Department Shahrokh Shajari has announced.

According to the official, about 7.104 million tons of such products worth \$5.821 billion were exported to foreign destinations last year.

In the mentioned period, over 6.941 million tons of agricultural and foodstuff



products worth \$6.392 billion were also imported into the country, according to Shajari.

Watermelons, apples, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and shallots were the

top five exported products in the previous year in terms of weight, while in terms of value, pistachios, apples, tomatoes, pistachio kernels, and watermelons were the five major exported items.

ICCIMA calls on govt. to choose commercial attachés from private sector

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) called on the government to choose the country's commercial attachés from the private sector representatives.

Gholam-Hossein Shafeie made the remarks at a meeting with the First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri on Sunday, ICCIMA portal reported.

Pointing to the potentials of joint chambers of commerce in developing the country's foreign trade, especially with Europe and the countries in the region, the official stressed the need to select business advisers from private sector representatives.

The meeting was attended by ICCIMA Deputy Head Mohammadreza Ansari, Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum, the ICCIMA Deputy Head for International Affairs Mohammad-Reza Karbasi, and some of the heads of the country's joint chambers of commerce.

Speaking at the event, Shafeie mentioned some of



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie

the most important obstacles to the development of trade with other countries and called for attention to be paid to the views of the private sector in the

decision-making processes in this regard.

Facilitating trade relations with European and regional countries by resolving banking and financial problems was another issue that Shafeie focused on at the meeting and stressed that the proposals of the private sector to solve these problems would be very helpful.

The first vice president for his part praised the positive performance of the private sector in the face of the sanctions, saying: "By relying on the strategy of resistance emphasized by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the private sector performed well and was able to defeat the U.S. policy of maximum pressure."

Jahangiri stressed the importance of supporting the private sector through appropriate cultural policies, noting that the country's economy will not prosper without the presence of the private sector, and for this purpose, it is necessary to implement appropriate policies to benefit from the significant capacities of the private sector.

2.6m tons of rice produced since late March

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian farmers produced 2.6 million tons of rice during the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20), according to Director-General of the Agriculture Ministry's Grains and Essential Goods Department Faramak Aziz-Karimi.

The mentioned production was cultivated in 800,000 hectares of land across the country.

He put the country's total annual demand for rice at about three million tons and said: "Considering the level of cultivation this year, domestic production meets about 85 percent of the country's needs."



According to the official, this year, mechanized harvesting was carried out on about 690,000 hectares of land, which

shows a 10 percent increase compared to the previous year.

Aziz-Karimi had previously said that the average area under rice cultivation in the country in the past three years was about 605,000 hectares, of which 70 percent is concentrated in Gilan and Mazandaran provinces (about 427,000 hectares).

Iran produced 2.9 million tons of rice during the past Iranian calendar year of 1398 (ended on March 19).

In October 2019, Deputy Agriculture Minister Abdolmehdi Bakhshandeh had announced, "Iran has become complete-

ly self-sufficient in rice production as it plans to cut up to two million tons of imports a year."

The Statistical Center of Iran estimates that Iranians consume approximately 35 kilograms of rice per person each year. That would mean a domestic demand of nearly three million tons for a country of 83 million people.

Bakhshandeh said rice self-sufficiency would save Iran more than \$1.1 billion in imports, adding that it would also be a major success amid efforts to minimize the impacts of the American sanctions on food security in the country.

Jafari appointed as new IMIDRO head

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Vajihollah Jafari is appointed as the new head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), IRNA reported.

Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini appointed Jafari to the post replacing Khodadad Qaribpour which headed the organization since December 2018.

Jafari previously served as the head of Iran Minerals Production and Supply Company (IMPASCO).

IMIDRO is a major state-owned holding company active in the mining sector in Iran. It has eight major companies and 55 operational subsidiaries active in steel, aluminum, copper, cement and mineral exploitation fields.

One of the important measures that IMIDRO has taken over the past few years has been the development of an exploration program under which so far 450,000 square kilometers of mining exploration has been carried out and great reserves have been identified.



Over \$180m invested to develop Golestan Province's industrial parks

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Some 7.575 trillion rials (about \$180.35 million) of investment has been made for the implementation of 57 projects in the industrial parks of Golestan Province, in the northeast of Iran, during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), according to a provincial official.

Hojjatollah Khalilzadeh, the managing director of Golestan Province's Industrial Parks Company, said the figure has been seven times more than that of the same period of time in the past year, adding that 983 billion rials (about \$23.4 million) had been invested for the implementation of 22 projects in the industrial parks of the province during the first eight months of the previous year.

Mentioning the government's attention to the establishment of infrastructures to materialize the motto of surge in production in all provinces including Golestan, the official further stated that the projects underway in the industrial parks of the province are estimated to create jobs for 1,379 persons.

31 idle industrial units revived in province since late March

Khalilzadeh further announced that 31 idle industrial units have been revived in the province since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).



He said that 19 idle units had been revived in the province during the same time span of the past year.

There are 24 industrial parks and zones, and one special economic zone in Golestan Province in the northeast of Iran.

As the acting head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) has announced, 991 idle industrial units have been revived in the country since the beginning of the current year.

Asghar Mosaheb said that reviving the mentioned units has created jobs for 17,090 persons.

The official said there are over 46,000 small and medium-sized industrial units in Iran's industrial parks and zones, of them about 9,200 units are inactive.

Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry was initially planning to revive 1,500 idle units in the current year, but then it revised its programs to revive 2,000 units. Bringing the mentioned 991 units back

to the production cycle, the plan for reviving such units in the present year has been completed by 66 percent.

According to Mosaheb, preventing from the inactive status of the industrial units is a major plan of ISIPO, while lack of liquidity, problems in terms of supplying raw materials and machinery, and absence of market are the main reasons making the units inactive.

ISIPO's Previous Head Mohsen Salehinia has said that providing liquidity is the main issue for many of the country's production units, so based on the arrangements made, these units can receive part of their needed liquidity through bank facilities.

"Currently, the share of the country's production and industrial units in receiving bank facilities is about 31 percent and it is necessary to allocate a larger share of banking facilities to the country's production and industry," he added.

Given the position of production in the country's economy and employment, and the fact that production units are facing lack of liquidity to supply raw materials and equipment, it is necessary to increase their share of bank facilities up to at least 40 percent, Salehinia stressed.

He further said: "Despite all the limitations, we are currently witnessing an increase in production in some units, for example those active in the field of home appliances; also, according to the

plans made and by solving the problems in the way of the production and industrial units, we will realize the motto of "Surge in Production" by the end of this year."

Strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.

To this end, the current Iranian calendar year has been named the year of "Surge in Production", and all governmental bodies as well as the private sector are moving in line with the materialization of this motto.

Regarding its significant role in the realization of the mentioned goal, the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has already defined its main programs for supporting the domestic production in the current year.

The ministry's seven main axes of the surge in production are going to be pursued under 40 major programs.

In this regard, the development of industrial parks and supporting the units located in these areas is one of the major programs underway by the ministry.

While this program is being seriously pursued, the lack of necessary infrastructure in the industrial parks is impeding their development, therefore, the creation of needed infrastructure in the industrial parks has been put on the agenda.

Iran cannot trust U.S. after Trump's JCPO exit: ex-Senate candidate

1 → The following is the text of the interview:

1. Do you expect the incoming Biden administration would make a fundamental shift in U.S. foreign policy? For example, can Biden neglect the benefits of arms deals with Saudi Arabia?

There will be no substantive change whatsoever in American foreign policy under Joe Biden. The proof of this is found in his historic Zionist connections, those same connections with his running mate Kamala Harris, and the foreign policy choices Biden has made or will make, beginning with Zionist Jew Anthony Blinken. Blinken is linked to Bill Clinton's NATO war crimes in bombing Serbia in 1999, and the Obama-Hillary Clinton war crimes involved in bombing 7 Islamic countries, including Libya and Syria, where NATO was illegally used in Libya and Gaddafi was assassinated with Hillary Clinton's mocking approval, and where the United States began using Sunni Wahabi extremists and terrorists from al-Qaeda and ISIS chapters to attempt overthrowing a sovereign government in Syria at the behest of Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. One can also add the ongoing attempts to encircle Putin's Russia via operations like the American facilitated overthrow of the Yanukovich regime in Ukraine in February of 2014. In this latter case, Hunter Biden's Burisma Board of Directors "career" was made possible by this coup, even as Joe Biden threatened to withhold a billion dollars in from the Ukrainian government in Western loans unless the Ukrainian prosecutor investigating the business dealings of the Bidens in that country was fired.

Your readers will be interested in a Guardian op-ed on the real Obama-Clinton-Biden foreign policy entitled "America dropped 26,171 bombs in 2016. What a bloody end to Obama's reign" by Medea Benjamin.

2. How can Iran trust the U.S. again as Trump ditched Iran's nuclear deal unilaterally? What would guarantee that the next U.S. administration won't behave like



the Trump administration?

Iran cannot possibly be expected to trust the United States again after the unilateral withdrawal of the Trump Administration from the JCPOA P5+1 nuclear deal, the subsequent American imposition of wartime economic sanctions on Iran, and obvious American involvement in and support for the Soleimani and Fakhri-zadeh Assassinations.

I believe the more recent Fakhri-zadeh murder, was undertaken by the Israeli Mossad and the MEK-MKO with full American connivance.

3. How has Israel been able to influence U.S. foreign policy for decades? The U.S. blindly supports the Israeli human rights violation in Palestine as Washington follows "Israel First" in its foreign policy. Please explain.

The United States has been the chief enabler and supporter of the criminal Zionist enterprise subsequent to the British issuance of the Balfour Declaration, followed by the withdrawal of Britain from Palestine after the bombing of the King

David Hotel in July of 1946.

The why of American support of the Zionist cause is mapped out in the Oded Yinon plan for both Palestine and the entire region.

What is truly remarkable is that the American public has not only tolerated the quagmire presented by the military involvements of the United States in the Middle East as a janissary force for Zionism with all of the attendant catastrophic costs involved politically, economically, and military for the American people, with no end in sight, but the clueless character of the public here regarding overt crimes committed by Israel against its chief benefactor.

I blame a Jewish-controlled and owned American Mainstream Media for the comatose character of the American electorate. Information about the Lavon Affair, the Ben Gurion-Meyer Lansky-Dimona link to the Kennedy Assassination, the USS Liberty attack in June of 1967, the NUMEC nuclear thefts, the PROMIS Affair, the Pollard Spy Case, and the Israeli link to 9-11 among many others.

I've sadly concluded that the American people will awaken only when their idiotic, immoral, and quixotic support of Israel results in the complete destruction of their own country, which I believe it will, courtesy of World War.

4. How do you measure the assassination of an Iranian nuclear scientist? Don't you think it would provoke Iran to pull out of the JCPOA completely?

The Fakhri-zadeh assassination is only the latest in a series of Zionist murders of Iranian scientists in Iran. I believe the total in the last decade is between 7 and 10. **The latest murder is designed to destroy any possibility of a rapprochement between Iran and the United States, involving JCPOA or anything else.** Phillip Giraldi explains this to all of us in his recent essay entitled "Another Killing in Iran: Who Profits by the Fakhri-zadeh Assassination?"

It is clear who benefits: Zionists, the global Zionist lobby, and their links to the American National Security establishment, the Saudis, the global armaments consortiums, and Western central banks among others.

5. How do you assess the U.S. and Israel's record in waging wars, especially in the Middle East? Is the U.S. entitled to meddle in the region under the pretext of peacekeeping?

From what we have already discussed, the American support of the Zionist state of Israel is the chief cause of catastrophe in the Middle East (West Asia). The governments of the United States and Israel have absolutely no credibility at all in "peacekeeping" in the region. The JCPOA withdrawal, the American economic sanctions, the Soleimani and Fakhri-zadeh assassinations, and ongoing Israel thefts of East Jerusalem and Occupied Territories even as the fraudulent "2 State Solution" supposedly remains as the basis of a settlement and final peace deal, make both countries the target of global animosity. I have no hope, as already stated, that anything but an eventual cataclysmic war lies ahead.

Yemeni missiles changing the equation in West Asia

1 → What worries Tel Aviv is that the resistance movement has achieved advanced missile technology, especially after Ansarullah's missile strike on the Saudi Aramco facility in Jeddah and the destruction of a large part of it.

This apprehension is most tangible among the Zionists when the Saudi Patriot missile system failed to intercept Ansarullah's missiles.

It means that the Iron Dome system, which failed to confront resistance missile attacks, won't be able to intercept missiles fired successfully at Saudi oil facilities in Aramco, Jeddah.

After failure of the Iron Dome to intercept the missiles fired from Gaza, Israeli Air Force chief Amikam Norkin admitted the inability of the defense system, revealing that Israel did not achieve the desired result and it will continue the investigation.

«We do our best to protect our airspace,» he said.

The Iron Dome system has repeatedly shown its inefficiency, while the Zionist regime has always referred to it as a strong defense option against attacks by resistance forces.

«In fact, the air defense system failed to intercept two missiles fired from Gaza at Israeli settlements,» said Alvin bin David, a senior defense correspondent at an Israeli TV (channel 13). «The first missile was fired at Ashdod and the siren didn't work because the radars showed that the missile was landing in the sea and then two missiles were fired to intercept it, which were unsuccessful and went wrong.»

Noting the investigations started by the Israeli air force in order to find the reasons for the inefficiency of the Iron Dome in intercepting the Palestinian missiles, bin David



said: "This investigation has not reached any result yet, but what should be said is that the Iron Dome system did not work well at all."

The Zionists are deeply concerned about the situation inside Israel, something that pushes them to conduct military exercises and allocate 30 billion shekels to the army to protect settlements against missile attacks whether from Gaza or the West Bank.

Amos Gilad, the former director of the Political-Military Affairs Bureau at Israel's Defense Ministry, has warned of a day of military conflict on the northern front, emphasizing that the threat from home front is very serious.

His warning is based on the fact that the resistance in the north threatens the security of Israel, especially Tel Aviv. That

is why Israeli army and its security agencies are on full alert.

Despite all the efforts made by the Zionist regime's officials to reassure their home front about the upcoming war with Hezbollah, according to Israeli media, the Israeli authorities do not trust their defense systems.

In the previous wars that Tel Aviv waged on the Arab armies, as well as in the wars against Hezbollah and Hamas, it relied on air force, which clearly is not enough to determine the fate of the war.

The Merkava, a main battle tank used by the Israel Defense Forces, turned from a safe armored fighting vehicle into a walking coffin during Israel's 2006 war on Lebanon. Before the war, Israeli soldiers were keener on serving in armored division because they thought they were safer inside the Merkava, but after the war, Zionist commanders forced their troops to serve in this division because they saw how these tanks were targeted easily by Hezbollah.

So it seems that those Arab regimes which are rushing to normalize ties with Israel are indeed making themselves dependent on a regime that is unable to protect itself. In addition, this regime will face serious challenges without U.S. support.

The recent aggression by Israel on Gaza showed the Zionist regime's weakness and vulnerability, as the world witnessed ineffectiveness of the Iron Dome.

In a word, Israel faces a desperate deadlock in face of resistance missiles, from Gaza to Sana'a as Zionist authorities acknowledge this fact and are concerned about their future.

Macron says France will sell arms to Egypt irrespective of human rights

Emmanuel Macron said on Monday he would not condition the future sale of French arms to Egypt on human rights because he did not want to weaken Cairo's ability to counter terrorism in the region.

"I will not condition matters of defense and economic cooperation on these disagreements (over human rights)," Macron said during a joint press conference with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi after the two leaders held talks in the Elysee Palace, Reuters

reported.

"It is more effective to have a policy of demanding dialogue than a boycott which would only reduce the effectiveness of one our partners in the fight against terrorism," he added.

Macron also said that he had spoken frankly to Sisi about matters of human rights in the North African country, though he gave few details.

Macron made his remarks at a press conference with Sisi after the two leaders held talks at the Elysee Palace.

China's senior diplomat hopes U.S. policy on China can 'return to objectivity'

China's senior diplomat Wang Yi said on Monday he hoped and believed that U.S. policy on China could eventually "return to objectivity and rationality".

China's relations with the United States hit rock bottom during the Trump administration, which is set to be replaced by new leadership when President-elect Joe Biden takes office in January.

Speaking to a group of business leaders from U.S. firms, Wang, who is China's state councillor and foreign minister, said both countries should respect each other's his-

tory, core interests and "the systems and paths chosen by our people" when managing differences and conflicts, Reuters reported.

"China and the U.S. can totally cooperate on areas such as managing the pandemic, economy recovery and climate change," Wang added.

It is up to the U.S. to "make the correct decision" on future relations, he said.

Wang called for both countries to resume dialogues at all levels and to encourage friendly exchanges between legislatures, think tanks, business communities and the media.

Saudi regime forces detain senior Shia scholar in Eastern Province

Saudi security forces have reportedly arrested a distinguished Shia scholar in the country's Shia-populated and oil-rich Eastern Province as the Riyadh regime keeps its clampdown against members of the Shia community in the kingdom.

The London-based and Arabic-language Nabaa television news network, citing local sources, reported that members of the General Intelligence Presidency cordoned off the area around the house of Hashim Muhammad al-Shakhs in the city of al-Ahsa on Monday, before breaking in and arresting the cleric.

The sources added that the Saudi regime forces ransacked the house, terrorizing the entire family. They then took away the Shia scholar to an unknown location at gunpoint.

Saudi Arabia razes Shia mosque to ground in Qatif region Also on Monday, Saudi forces leveled to the ground a Shia Muslim mosque south of al-Awamiyah town in Qatif region, located more than 420 kilometers (260 miles) east



of the capital, Riyadh.

Locals said forces demolished Imam al-Hussein (PBUH) Mosque in al-Zarah neighborhood without any prior notice, after forming a cordon around the site in the morning,

Lebanon's Arabic-language al-Ahed news website reported.

Eastern Province has been the scene of peaceful demonstrations since February 2011. Protesters have been demanding reforms, freedom of expression, the release of political prisoners, and an end to economic and religious discrimination against the oil-rich region.

The protests have been met with a heavy-handed crackdown by the regime. Security forces have increased security measures across the province.

Ever since Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman became Saudi Arabia's de facto leader in 2017, the kingdom has intensified its crackdown on dissent despite international condemnations.

Muslim scholars have been executed, women's rights campaigners have been put behind bars and tortured, and freedom of expression, association and belief continue to be denied. (Source: Press TV)

Security vulnerability deep inside Israeli infrastructure

Major spike in cyberattacks on Israeli companies

1 → Rather, the overall feel is that "the horses have left the stable," that the damage is irreparable and any positive that can come from the current event is dissecting it so as to avoid future similar events.

As of Sunday morning, the Black Shadow group behind the cyberattack against Shirbit last week leaked a third round of the company's data after Shirbit declined to pay the ransom demand by 9 a.m.

In addition, the group leaked messages from alleged persons interested in purchasing the stolen Shirbit data for their own purposes.

There was no way to confirm the identities or truth of the alleged purchasers and some of the messages had grammatical errors, which could signify messages forged by Black Shadow personnel who may not be native English speakers.

The Israel Privacy Authority also issued a warning to the private sector on Sunday that many companies are not up to legal standards for defending their clients' private information.

The latest events came just a day after the group had already released more documents containing the personal information of Shirbit employees and customers over the weekend, as the company had initially refused to pay the ransom demanded.

Included in the released documents are screenshots of WhatsApp conversations, ID cards, marriage certificates and financial documents.

On Friday afternoon, Black Shadow released screenshots of negotiations held between a Shirbit representative and the hacker group. The negotiations did not end with a resolution and the hackers released more data later in the day.

That same morning, Shirbit announced that it does not intend to meet the hacker group's demand for payment, Israeli media reported.

■ Cyber-attacks on Israel water systems

On May 2020, Israel water systems come under cyber-attacks. According to DW, one of that attacks was a "synchronized and organized" attempt at disrupting key national infrastructure, cyber chief Yigal Unna said in a video address to CyberechLive Asia, a digital international cyber conference.

■ Hezbollah reportedly launched drone near IDF base

Meanwhile, the Lebanese resistance group Hezbollah revealed on Friday that it had sent an unmanned aerial drone (UAV) into Israeli territory in October and even went so far as to near a major IDF base, all the while not being picked up by Israeli radar, according to Hezbollah-affiliated TV channel Al-Manar.

The recording shown by the UAV was broadcast on Al-Manar, and included footage of an IDF base in the North, Biranit, which is located close to the border and is the reportedly the command center for all IDF troops on the Lebanese border.

However, according to Hezbollah, the drone was also able to take pictures of a facility in Sheba'a Farms in the Golan Heights, though it is unclear if this is accurate.

The drone was launched in late October during the IDF's "Lethal Arrow" exercises in the North, which saw the army simulate a war with Hezbollah.

The drone returned to Lebanon without being exposed.

Maduro and allies win National Assembly poll

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's ruling party has won a sweeping victory in parliamentary elections, further consolidating his grip on the Latin American country's power institutions.

The opposition, led by U.S.-backed figure Juan Guaido, had urged their supporters to boycott the vote.

However, despite the partial boycott by the opposition bloc, Venezuelans turned out to vote for Maduro and his left-wing allies in Sunday's legislative elections.

National Electoral Council president Indira Alfonzo said Maduro and his ruling Socialist Party allies gained 67.7 percent of the vote with over 80 percent of the ballots counted.

The anti-Maduro opposition bloc, which broke the boycott, gained 18 percent of the vote.

With this victory, Maduro's ruling Socialist Party will consolidate its control over an expanded 227-seat National Assembly.

Maduro told reporters after casting his vote in Caracas that the time had come to end the opposition's domination of the National Assembly.

The Venezuelan president held the legislative body responsible for "the plague of sanctions, cruelty, pain and suffering" inflicted on the impoverished population of the country.

Maduro called on the opposition to join in "with one voice, to ask the new U.S. government of Joe Biden to lift all the sanctions."

Resistance News

Congresswoman slams fatal shooting of Palestinian kid

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — U.S. Congresswoman Betty DeSks McCollum has deplored the fatal shooting of a Palestinian child by Israeli forces in last Friday in the West Bank as a "grotesque state-sponsored killing."

In press remarks, McCollum called on the incoming U.S. administration of President-elect Joe Biden to investigate the incident.

"Yesterday's death of a 15-year-old Palestinian boy in the West Bank by an Israeli soldier who shot the child in the abdomen is a grotesque state-sponsored killing," the U.S. legislator said.

"This senseless incident must be condemned as a direct result of Israel's permanent military occupation of Palestine," she added.

"I urge the incoming Biden Administration to fully investigate and verify to the American people that no U.S. taxpayer-funded military aid to Israel provided material assistance enabling this taking of a child's life," the Congresswoman underscored.

On Friday evening, 13-year-old Ali Ayman Abu Aliya succumbed to his wounds after he was shot with a live round in his stomach during a protest staged earlier in the afternoon in northern Ramallah.

The child was rushed in critical condition to a hospital in Ramallah, where he died after doctors tried for hours to save him.

The Israeli army on Friday afternoon violently attacked Palestinian citizens in al-Mughayir village as they were marching in protest at Israeli intents to build a new illegal settlement in the area, according to Mughayir mayor Amin Abu Aliya.

Ancient petroglyphs discovered in Iran's Lorestan

HERITAGE TEHRAN – Some ancient petroglyphs have recently been found on the outskirts of Aligudarz in Iran's western Lorestan province.

"A total of 20 hand-carved petroglyphs have been discovered in Aligudarz county," provincial tourism chief Seyyed Amin Qasemi announced on Monday.

"This newly discovered collection includes several carvings on the rocks and is of great archaeological and historical importance," he explained.



The petroglyphs bear various depictions with animal, human, and plant motifs.... And they offer valuable information for researchers in this field."

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period. Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

Restoration work exposes ancient brick flooring in garden

HERITAGE TEHRAN – Segments of an ancient brick flooring have been unearthed in a restoration project at the Golestan Garden of Khorramabad, western Iran. The Persian garden is situated adjacent to the Sassanid-era Falak-ol-Aflak Fortress in Lorestan province.

"Parts of an old brick flooring have been discovered during the restoration work on the boundaries of the fortress," Ramin Ebrahimi, the director of Falak-ol-Aflak historical site, announced on Monday.

"Golestan Garden was the residence of the rulers of Lorestan during the Qajar period... It was a beautiful place full of towering trees... the garden included a bathhouse, a mosque, an artillery place, an exterior and an interior residents, which gave it a special setting," he explained.



The Sassanid era (224–651) Falak-ol-Aflak is an unmissable eight-towered monument dominating the ancient city. And it seems particularly imposing and dramatic when floodlit at night, offering picturesque views of its encircling crenelated battlements.

The Sassanid era (224 CE–651) is of very high importance in Iranian history, under which Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance.

A peek into Iranian traditional houses, mansions

(Part 2/8)

HERITAGE TEHRAN – All in all, the architectural practice was not so much different than the art of architecture and people used to receive practical training and gain experience till they had reached high levels of professionalism in designing all types of spaces, according to an academic paper.

Although the profession of architecture had not been explicitly divided into separate and specialized majors, it is clear that a group of architects were more professional and skilled in certain fields such as designing and constructing Muqarnas and tended to work more in their own specialized field.

The decorations used in architecture were never separated from the religious believers of their surrounding environment. As a result, one of the signs of entering the dominant religious and mental realm of a society was the decorations which expressed their own meaning and concept. As many of the durable values in Iranian architecture were forgotten in the passage of time, reviving these concepts can be a major step in reforming current structures.

One of the neglected aspects in the Iranian architecture is utilization of decorations in the internal spaces of a building usually taken from the traditional principles of Iranian construction.

One of the tasks of internal designers is to refer to the records of this art in Iranian history and utilize its teachings in contemporary architecture. It is obvious that if the rules and principles governing original Iranian internal architecture replace decorations and ornaments borrowed from other countries, a part of the culture and customs of the people of this land will be revived.

Through a review of the literature and history of utilizing decorative arts, this paper seeks to investigate some aspects of application of this art in the Old Iranian architecture.

Survey reveals prehistorical links between Iran, Anatolia, Caucasus, and Mesopotamia

HERITAGE TEHRAN – A team of Iranian archaeologists have found what they say is an early cultural exchange between a northwestern Iranian site, Anatolia, Caucasus, and Mesopotamia during the Copper, New Stone ages.

"Chronological evidence and archaeological research reveals some cultural links once existed between Zab region [of Iran] and Caucasus, Turkey, and Mesopotamia during the Copper Age, and the New Stone Age," archaeologist Mahnaz Sharifi said on Monday.

The evidence comes from a 6,000 year-old archaeological mound, uncovered during an urban construction in the modern town of Gerd Ashvan, which is situated near Lake Urmia in West Azarbaijan province, according to the archaeologist who led the survey.

She noted that the [newly] unearthed cultural material, including potteries, and architectural relics, offer clues to discover the chronology of the region during the aforementioned eras.

"It seems that the archeological layers and sediments, which are added up to some nine meters, are the key site in the region, which its antiquity roots to the Copper, New Stone ages."

"The results of the research show the coexistence of communities and cultural commonalities between the residents of Gerd Ashvan and other regions of the northwest,



An aerial view of Gerd Ashvan, a prehistorical hill in northwest Iran.

north of Mesopotamia, the Caucasus and Anatolia."

The excavations on the mound will be continuing till untouched soil is reached, Sharifi added.

One of the cultural findings at the mound relates to giant clay urns being used as human tombs in the Copper, and the New Stone Age, which was a phenomenon solely practiced in Gerd Ashvan, and the same funeral services have not been reported from other parts of

northwestern Iran, she said.

"Gerd Ashvan pottery indicates that some common cultural traditions exist between northwestern regions [of Iran], Anatolia, Caucasus, Mesopotamia, and Syria,... although the geographical position of Gerd Ashvan, which is adjacent to the Caucasus, Turkey, and Mesopotamia, has not been ineffective in this regard."

Earlier this year, two ancient clay-jar tombs, embracing child corpses, were un-

earthed in Gerd Ashvan, which according to the archaeologist was a common tradition during the Copper and New Stone Ages.

"Burial of children in jars or large bowls was a widespread tradition in large areas from the Caucasus to northwestern Iran. And similar examples have been reported in Alchan Tappeh, Gara Hill in Mesopotamia, South Caucasus, amongst other places."

Jar-burial can be traced to various regions across the globe. It is noted to have been practiced as early as 900 BC, and as recent as 15 CE-17th centuries. The origin of this practice is considered to be the different concept of death held by these cultures. In such societies, death is held to involve a slow change, a passage from the visible society of the living to the invisible one of the dead.

Types of jars and additional components vary from location to culture. Different shapes of jars can indicate the prestige or societal level of the deceased, or it can be a commonplace jar. Funerary offerings are sometimes placed in or around the jars, thus revealing more information about the value different peoples have for certain items.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation in the Iranian plateau is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

Photo exhibit to resonate traditional glasswork

TOURISM TEHRAN – An online photo exhibit of traditional glasswork made by crafters in the city of Rey will be held on Thursday, Rey's cultural heritage department director has said.

Entitled "The Art of Blowing", the exhibit aims at reviving and promoting the field of handicrafts by showing its beauty to the visitors and encouraging them to buy the handmade products, Amir Mosayeb Rahimzadeh announced on Monday.

Handmade glasswork has been traditionally produced in Rey for centuries, which has made the city one of the main centers of this field of handicrafts, the official added.

Glasswork objects constitute a majority of Tehran province's exports of handicrafts, he said.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

In late January, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassembad were designated by the

WCC-Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

Shiraz was named a "world city of [diverse] handicrafts". Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a "world city of filigree". And Qassembad village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts. Chador Shab, a kind of homemade outer-garment for women, was, however, the main subject for the WCC assessment for the village.

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

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as



personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Fire inflicts no damage to UNESCO-tagged garden

TOURISM TEHRAN – A fire that broke out in the UNESCO site of Abbasabad Garden in the northern province of Mazandaran on Sunday has inflicted no damage to the plant life of the historical site.

An office building, which was added to the site in 2009, was engulfed in fire, which was prevented from spreading to the main and historical parts of the site, and was contained and successfully extinguished by firefighters, the director of the site Seyyed Rahim Musavi announced on Monday.

The cause of the fire is under investigation and a full report on the financial loss will be provided soon, the official added.



Abbasabad Garden is one of the nine gardens registered on UNESCO's World Heritage List under the title of Persian garden in 2011.

The Persian garden profile also includes the gardens of Pasargad and Eram in Fars

Province, Pahlevanpur and Dowlatabad in Yazd Province, Fin and Chehel Sotun in Isfahan Province, Akbarieh Garden in South Khorasan province, and Shahzadeh Mahan (also known as Shazdeh) in Kerman Province.

These gardens exemplify the diversity of Persian garden designs that evolved and adapted to different climatic conditions while retaining principles that have their roots in the times of the Persian king Cyrus the Great (r. 559–530 BC).

The Persian garden was conceived to symbolize Eden and the four Zoroastrian elements of sky, earth, water, and plants. Water plays an important role in the ornamentation of the gardens.

Dating back to different periods, the gardens consist of buildings, pavilions, and walls, as well as having sophisticated irrigation systems. They have influenced the art of garden design as far away as India and Spain.

Stretched along the Caspian Sea and Alborz mountain range, Mazandaran is a popular destination for domestic holidaymakers, while it is home to more than 3500 villages and rural areas.

Having an opulent tourist circuit with 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites, of which the vast Hyrcanian Forest and Lut Desert are among the natural properties, Iran seeks to acquire a greater share of the global tourism industry by 2025.

Experts restore historical cistern surmounted by windcatchers

TOURISM TEHRAN – Cultural heritage experts in Yazd have begun work to restore a historical Ab-Anbar (cistern) which is surmounted by two windcatchers, the city's tourism chief announced on Monday.

The restoration project involves removing debris, cleaning the surrounding area, strengthening the walls using thatch material as well as repairing its windcatchers (also called wind towers), Mohammadreza Falahati said.

Made of stones, bricks, and mortar, the 19th-century cistern dates back to the Qajar era, and it is located in the historical neighborhood of Sarsang, next to an old mosque, which has been inscribed on the National Heritage list, he said.

A windcatcher is a traditional architectural element used to create natural ventilation and passive cooling in buildings.

The term Ab-Anbar is common throughout Iran as a designation for roofed underground water cisterns. It associates with water management systems in arid areas that are reliant on permanent springs or seasonal rainwater.



Such underground reservoirs or Ab-Anbars are parts of the iconic qanat systems, which rely on snow-fed streams

flowing down from surrounding mountains.

Qanats, according to UNESCO, provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.

With its winding lanes, a forest of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, being referred to as a "don't miss" destination by almost all travel associates in the region. The oasis city is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains.

The province has an interesting mix of people as well, some 10 percent of whom follow the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism.

Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.

Golestan Palace to showcase precious properties online

TOURISM TEHRAN – A selection of exquisite historical artworks, being kept in the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace in Tehran, will be put on show today in an online exhibition.

The moveable properties, which have recently been inscribed on the National Heritage list, can be visited on the official Instagram page of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Afarin Emami, the director of Golestan Palace announced on Monday.

The exhibit will display twelve manuscripts and calligraphy works by Qajar-era (1789–1925) masters as well as five precious

paintings dating back to the same era, the official added.

A destination for domestic and international travelers, Golestan Palace is located in the heart and historic core of the Iranian capital. It was originally built during the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) in the historic walled city.

Following extensions and additions, the palace complex received its most characteristic features in the 19th century, when it was selected as the royal residence and seat of power by the Qajar ruling family.

It was not only used as the governing base of the Qajar Kings but also functioned

as a recreational and residential compound and a center of artistic production in the 19th century.

At present, the Golestan Palace complex consists of eight key palace structures mostly used as museums and the eponymous gardens, a green shared center of the complex, surrounded by an outer wall with gates. UNESCO has it that the complex exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar era including the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.

Golestan Palace features some 82,000 historical objects -such as royal utensils,



vessels and jewelry pieces, carpets, and rugs- inside its many museums that add up to its charm.

Special support for women on agenda

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The national budget bill for the next [Iranian calendar] year (March 2021-March 2022) has been prepared in a way to support and pay special attention to women, especially female heads of households, rural women, and artisans.

The proposed national budget amounted to about 24.357 quadrillion rials (about \$580 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), with a 20-percent rise from the current year's approved budget.

Vice President Masoumeh Ebtekar has said the budget for women's and family affairs has increased by 33 percent, reaching up to 320 billion rials (nearly \$7.6 million), with remarks suggesting special support for women.

One of these remarks refers to special financial support for rural households and the other to the issue of childbearing, as families whose third child is born this year or next year will receive low-interest housing loans.

Attention is paid to the insurance of women heads of households and the insurance of handicraftsmen and carpet weavers, in which women play a prominent role.

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.

Major steps taken

In Iran, there are 3 million women headed households (WHH), out of a total of 22 million families, and most of the WHH can be found in less developed areas of the country, according to the UNDP office in Iran.

COVID-19 adds additional challenges for economically empowering WHH in Iran, meaning that innovative strategies are needed.

Ebtekar said in October that the government has taken major steps for the advancement of women and family in Iran. "Through an inter-sectoral process, we developed national indicators for gender equity, which laid the ground for the first result based Plan for Women and Family Advancement

in 31 provinces and we recently launched the dashboard for monitoring indicators on gender equity and family prosperity."

"Based on our review of legislation on women and family, we have proposed 10 new bills including the bill on the Protection of Women's Security Against Violence and several new laws," the vice president added.

"At least 2700 women-focused NGOs are active in Iran and we have plans for the empowerment of civil society activities, we have successfully implemented schemes like enhancing social resiliency, also the economic empowerment of thousands of women heads of the household through micro-credit Funds and Cooperatives," she added.

She went on to highlight that the family is the cornerstone of human development, through the National Family Dialogue scheme. "We have taken an initiative to empower civil society in dialogue skills to enable family and social cohesiveness. The International Center for Family Dialogue has been recently launched in Tehran."

In the field of legislation, finalizing the bill to ensure the security of women against violence, which can play an important role in combating domestic violence, the implementation of the plan granting Iranian citizenship to children born to Iranian women and non-Iranian men, and the bill banning the marriage of girls under 13, has been among the government's efforts, she concluded.

\$911m allocated to Family Physician program

SOCIETY TEHRAN — A total of 38 trillion rials (around \$911 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been earmarked to the implementation of the Family Physician program in rural areas across the country over the current [Iranian calendar] year (began on March 21).

The program started in 2005, targeting almost 25 million citizens residing in rural areas.

Based on the program, a physician and a midwife offer services in rural areas, every 3,300 villagers have a physician and there is a midwife per 5,200 people in villages.

The plan helped reduce treatment costs and public spending on healthcare services, as the physician is aware of the person's health background, so that it prevents many unnecessary diagnostic processes, like scans.

Currently, 28 million people in the country are covered by urban and rural family physicians, deputy head of Health Insurance Organization, Mehdi Rezaei, said.

Some 12 services are provided in the villages, including



doctor visits, pharmaceutical, paraclinical, laboratories, radiology, drug supplements, management of technical programs, and construction, he noted.

In recent years, the budget was partially paid by the Ministry of Health and Health Insurance Organization, he stated.

Currently, 7,000 physicians, 5,600 midwives, and over 2,000 dentists are providing services in 4,112 rural centers, he concluded.

Mohammad Shariati, associate professor at the Tehran University of Medical Sciences and former director of the national health network told the Tehran Times in August that "because of the variety of medical services, a family physician can provide a broad scope of expertise much less expensive than a specialty doctor. If a specialty doctor is necessary, family physicians can consult with a specialist."

Part of a family physician's job is helping the patients navigate the increasingly more complicated healthcare industry. When family physicians are covering the societies, hospital visits, emergency rooms, and surgical hospital visits are all lowered, which can help lower the cost of medical care within the communities.

Their preventive, as well as chronic care, can cause health growth in the country."

More than 61,000 koalas among 3 billion animals affected by bushfire crisis

More than 61,000 koalas and almost 143 million other native mammals were likely in the path of the Australian bushfires of late 2019 and early 2020, according to a major assessment of the ecological toll of the "black summer" blazes.

The estimate from 10 researchers and scientists, contained in a report commissioned by environmental group WWF-Australia, recounts the devastating losses in habitats across the country.

Almost 3 billion animals, including 2.46 billion reptiles, were in the path of the flames, the report says — the same number the team calculated in an interim report, revealed in July by the Guardian.

Dermot O'Gorman, chief executive of WWF-Australia, says in a foreword that the report shows the fires were "one of the worst wildlife disasters in modern history".

Prof Chris Dickman, a University of Sydney ecologist who helped guide the project, told the Guardian: "The numbers [of animals affected] are absolutely huge. It's really a call to arms to try and do something because under climate change these fires will happen again."

Some 181 million birds and 51 million frogs also lived in habitats inside the burned areas, which covered 12.6m hectares — an area almost the size of England, the Guardian reported.

Among the 143 million mammals affected were one million wombats, 5 million kangaroos and wallabies, 5 million bats, 39 million possums and gliders and 50

million native mice and rats.

About 5½ million bettongs, bandicoots, quokkas and potoros were also affected.

The team wrote that because of a lack of data and knowledge of how species might survive, as well as uncertainties with how fire interacted with other threats, they couldn't be sure how many of the 3 billion animals died.

"Even if resident animals were not killed outright by fires and managed to escape, they will surely have experienced higher subsequent risk of death as a result of injuries or later stress and deprivation of key resources," the report says.

An estimated 61,353 koalas were affected, and O'Gorman wrote: "That is a devastating number for a species that was already sliding towards extinction in eastern Australia. We cannot afford to lose koalas on our watch."

Between 43,261 and 95,180 koalas had been affected, with a middle estimate of 61,353.

In November, environment minister Susan Ley announced a national census of the marsupial to address "a serious lack of data about where populations actually are".

In NSW, a parliamentary inquiry has found koalas would be extinct in the state by 2050 without action to save habitat.

The WWF-Australia report says the fires affected as many as 14,736 koalas in the state.

Worst hit was Kangaroo Island in South Australia, where about 41,230 koalas were likely in the path of the fires that burned

about half the island.

Dickman said the report was important because it documented impacts on Australian icons such as kangaroos and koalas alongside lesser-known, but unique and important wildlife.

"If you work in the forest environment then you know there's a lot more animals living in these areas that don't get the publicity — other fantastic charismatic animals like gliders that live alongside them and are being whittled away as well."

A range of techniques and sources were used to estimate the impacts on different species. Estimates for mammals were based on available data on the densities of species in different areas.

Reptile impacts were modelled and for birds, more than 100,000 surveys for BirdLife Australia were accessed. Some 67 frog species were mapped and their densities were estimated using previous research.

But large numbers of other species were likely to have been affected by the fires but were not included in the report.

The report says freshwater fish and crayfish are known to have been badly hit but could not be reliably estimated.

Authorities reported hundreds of thousands of fish dead after bushfire ash and mud washed into rivers.

The assessment also could not include arthropods — a group that includes insects, spiders and other bugs — but pointed to other



research estimating trillions of these were likely affected.

The report includes 11 recommendations that call for better understanding of the impacts of bushfires, more research into species, where animals are, and better management of other threats.

"Alongside mortality caused by direct exposure to flames, smoke inhalation, heat, and sediment run-off, fire interacts with other stressors, exacerbating threats to the persistence of threatened species and ecosystems," the report says.

"Three of the greatest threats to Australian flora, fauna, and ecosystems are altered fire regimes, invasive species, and land clearing; all threats that interact with and compound one another."

Dickman, a fellow of the Australian Academy of Science, said: "A key step is to try and improve our monitoring of pretty much all the bioregions on the continent."

Seven dead as flooding hits southern Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Flood has killed seven people so far in the southern provinces of Bushehr and Hormozgan during the last few days.



Mehdi Valipour, head of the Red Crescent Society for Rescue and Relief, announced that 318 rescuers in 76 operational teams helped flood victims in 41 cities, villages, and nomadic areas, IRNA reported.

According to him, six provinces of Isfahan, Bushehr, Tehran, Fars, Hormozgan, and Yazd had been affected by flooding.

During that time, 1,202 flood victims were rescued, 42 of whom were accommodated in temporary shelters in rescue stations, schools, and mosques.

Social work's vital role in fight against pandemic

1 → The International Federation of Social Workers has praised the actions of Iranian social workers in countering coronavirus in April.

Seyed Hassan Mousavi Chalak, head of the Iranian Social Workers Association, said that the Association reported the first phase of the activities of social workers during the coronavirus pandemic in the country to the International Federation of Social Workers.



The presence of social workers in medical centers, working with people with disabilities, women, children, addicts, the elderly, the homeless, the relief committee, etc. was described in this report.

Also, providing guidance to people, whether in social media, on phone conversation or in-person, preparing scientific content related to the coronavirus, compiling guidelines on socio-psychological support, identifying patients, attending convalescent centers, offering services in informal settlements, prisons, and judicial centers are another part of the measures of social workers in Iran mentioned in the report.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 77)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

تُرکی Turkish: اتاق، بشقاب، قاشق

مَنْغولی Mongolian: آقا، خانم، میز

چینی Chinese: چای، سینی

عَرَبی Arabic: استفاده، اسم، اغلب، بعد، بعضی، تاریخ، تخفیف، تعطیل، تکرار، تکلیف، جمعه، جمله، حاضر، حال، درس، دقیقه، ساعت، سلام، سؤال، شروع، شغل، صبح، صبحانه، صحبت، صحیح، صفحه، طبقه، ظهر، عمو، غذا، قبل، کافی، کامل، کتاب، کلمه، لازم، لذت، مثال، مکالمه، نظر، نوبت، وقت، یعنی

فَرانسوی و اِنگلیسی French and English: اتوبوس، اتومبیل، تاکسی، تلفن، دکتر، رستوران، سالاد، سوپ، فامیل، کارت، کلاس، مترو

□ Crossword Puzzle □

□ جَدْوَل □

۷	۶	۵	۴	۳	۲	۱

۱. در آنجا غذا می‌خوریم و پول می‌دهیم ...
۲. می‌بخشد به من و تو ...
۳. با لیوان می‌خوریم به در آن زندگی می‌کنیم (ن' ندارد) ...
۴. انگلیس و فرانسه در آنجاست ...
۵. من نشدم، تو نشدی، او هم ...
۶. ما بیدار شدیم، آنها ...
۷. این نه، ... پول ایرانی

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → C

Iran Association of Social Workers holds two seats in IFSW

Iran Association of Social Workers holds two seat in the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and has a great potential to become a role model for other countries, the association's head Seyed Hasan Mousavi Chalak has said.

Mousavi Chalak who is also Asia Pacific Regional Representative for the IFSW Global Committees and Ethics Committee went on to say that social services know no boundaries and Iran is capable of and willing to share its first-hand experience and achievements in this field. "60 years of social work in Iran" conference, held in Iran with 8 countries attending the event, was a chance to set the scene for fostering international cooperation, ISNA quoted Mousavi Chalak as saying on Sunday.

اختصاص دو کرسی به ایران در فدراسیون جهانی مددکاری اجتماعی

سید حسن موسوی چلک رئیس انجمن مددکاری اجتماعی ایران با تاکید بر اینکه ایران قادر است تا الگوی کشورهای دیگر در این عرصه باشد از اختصاص دو کرسی به ایران در فدراسیون جهانی مددکاری اجتماعی خبر داد. موسوی چلک که به عنوان کمیسر اخلاق و عضو هیئت رئیسه فدراسیون جهانی مددکاری اجتماعی در منطقه آسیا و اقیانوسیه در فدراسیون جهانی مددکاری اجتماعی انتخاب شده است همچنین گفت: گسترش خدمات اجتماعی نباید محدود به مرزهای جغرافیایی باشد، و ایران قادر و مایل است تا دستاوردها و تجربیات خود در این حوزه را در جهان ترویج کند. وی در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا گفت: کنگره بین المللی «60 سال مددکاری اجتماعی در ایران» با 8 کشور، منجر به افزایش تعاملات بین المللی ایران در این حوزه شده است.



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Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
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No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
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Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of human beings, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the sufferings of the injured.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Amazon Prime Video streams Iranian black comedy "I'm not Trump"

The play shows Trump in a sauna to help him relax from the pressures of the 2020 election. He secretly takes a bottle of scotch with him in the sauna, and, although there's no one else in the sauna just as he ordered, he still drinks the scotch secretly. He slowly becomes drunk and in his delusions, he meets with different people.



Reza Fayyazi portrays the U.S. president in "I'm not Trump".

Speaking to the Persian service of IRNA in an interview published on Monday, Khorram said that he first planned to stage the performance live in the United States and some European countries, but the pandemic forced him to record it for streaming through a platform providing video-on-demand service.

He said that there are few Iranian actors who can speak English fluently. Therefore, he hired an English voice actor to lend his voice to the character of Trump.

Khorram noted that the theatrical project is entirely independent and announced his plan to dub it for the Persian-speaking audience.

He pointed to Prime Video's strict rules and regulations and added, "I'm certain that by accepting all their strict rules and regulations, we get the maximum benefit to convey our message to a global audience through this play."

"TizRun", "KeepStep" receive nominations at GaLA 2020

TEHRAN — Iranian games "TizRun" and "KeepStep" have been nominated for an award in the Games and Learning Alliance Conference, which will open on Wednesday in France.

The games have received nominations in the Academic Serious Game Competition, in which category Kosmos Klikker GO developed at the Rudolf Berlin Center and the University of Amsterdam is also competing.



A scene from Iranian games "TizRun".

"TizRun" has been produced at Rayka Media with contributions from CARLab and the Tabriz Islamic Art University.

CARLab and the Tabriz Islamic Art University are also the developers of "KeepStep".

The two-day GaLA conference, which will take place virtually in the western French town of Laval, also hosts the GaLA Virtual Exhibition.

The two Iranian games will also be offered at the showcase. The competition winners will be announced in the Laval Virtual World on Thursday during the award ceremony at the Dance Hall.

The conference and exhibition are organized every year by the Serous Games Society, whose core purpose is to foster technological innovation and excellence in the field of serious games and game development for the benefit of all people.

The GaLA Exhibition is an opportunity for academic and industrial partners to disseminate their ideas, development proposals and innovative approaches, and discuss their design choices, and about the use and evaluation of serious games.

Cinéma Vérité unveils Special Screenings lineup

TEHRAN — Eight acclaimed documentaries by Iranian filmmakers are to be reviewed in a special program during the 14th edition of Cinéma Vérité, the major Iranian documentary film festival has announced in unveiling its lineup for the Special Screenings category.

"Coup 53" by Taqi Amirani is a highlight of the lineup.

While making a documentary about the Anglo-American coup in Iran in 1953, Amirani and editor Walter Murch find an extraordinary and never before seen archive. Documents and 16mm footage recount this story in unprecedented detail, with explosive revelations about secrets hidden for 66 years. From a historical documentary about four days in August 1953, the film becomes a living investigation that exposes the roots of Iran's volatile relationships with the United Kingdom and the USA.

"The Snow Calls" by Marjan Khosravi, which was screened at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam



"The Snow Calls" by Marjan Khosravi will be screened in the Special Screenings category of Cinéma Vérité.

(IDFA) this year, will go on screen in this category.

The documentary centers on Mina who, after bearing three daughters, has just one

more chance; her next child has to be a boy or her husband will marry another woman.

That's the tradition. The very pregnant Mina and her family live in southwestern Iran,

where the rules of the Bakhtiari tribe apply. This time, the expectant mother decides not to have an ultrasound scan, for fear of the result and the gossip that would ensue. She is already under enough pressure from her in-laws, although she does still have people on her side too.

Another entry to this section is "Sketches of Living in Quarantine" directed by Farshad Fadaian who gives an account of what happened over the five months after the first COVID-19 cases were detected in Iran.

The lineup also features "Life Story of Bolur" by Amir Farzollahi. The film is about the life story of Mohammad Boluri who is known as the father of Iran's investigative journalism.

"House of Silence" co-directed by Sahand Sarhadi and Farhad Qodsi, "Rex Cinema" by Mitra Mehtarian and Sadeq Dehqan, "The Champion" by Elham Qaderi and "Madness" by Sadra Alibek will also be reviewed in the category.

Due to the pandemic, this year's Cinéma Vérité will be organized entirely online from December 15 to 22.

"Pari" crowned best at Sydney Iranian film festival



"Pari" by Siamak Etemadi.

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — "Pari" by Siamak Etemadi won the Golden Gazelle for best feature at the 9th Persian International Film Festival in Sydney, Australia, the organizers announced on Sunday.

The film tells the story of an Iranian woman named Pari who arrives in Athens in search of her missing son as well as the hidden depths of her own self.

The festival's feature and short jury was composed of directors Pat Fiske and Peter Andrikidis, writer Romaine Moreton, and actors Rahel Romahn and Helana Sawires.

The jury's special mention went to "Son-Mother" by Mahnaz Mohammadi.

"Son-Mother" tells the story of 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 Golden Gazelle for best short went to "Exam" by Sonia Haddad, and the jury's special mention went to "Each Other" directed by Sarah Tabibzadeh.

A lineup of 16 Iranian movies went on screen in the official competition of the festival.

"The Badger" by Kazem Mollai, "The Slaughterhouse" by Abbas Amini and "A Hairy Tale" by Homayun Ghanizadeh were among the Iranian features.

"The Badger" is about Sudeh, a 40-year-old woman who faces a strange incident right before her second marriage. Sudeh and her son Matiar live in an old apartment. One day, she hires a pest control company to solve the termite problems in the apartment. While the pest control company is working, Matiar is recording the procedures, as this is his

hobby. The next day, Matiar gets kidnapped after school, and the kidnapper asks Sudeh to pay 10 Bitcoins for her son. Tremendous pressure is put on Sudeh, but the truth hidden beneath will surprise everyone.

In "A Hairy Tale", Danesh is in love with both cinema and Homa, a well-known actress. Kazem is in love with both the movie "Casablanca" and his barber shop's certificate. Shapur is in love with both canned tuna and politics. The city is full of beggars while an earthquake may happen soon. Every now and then, the body of a dead woman, with head shaved, is found near the sea. As Inspector Kiani says: It's a messy situation!

"The Slaughterhouse" directed by Abbas Amini tells the story of Amir, who has recently been released from jail and finds himself in a difficult situation when his father, who works at a slaughterhouse, calls him to help him cover up a crime that has happened there.

The festival also screened the documentaries "None of Your Business" by Kamran Heidari and "Sunless Shadows" by Mehrdad Oskui.

The short competition of the festival featured "Like a Good Kid" by Arian Vazirdaftari, "The Visit" by Azadeh Musavi, "Red Panda" by Ali Paknia, "Hedyeh" by Sahar Sotudeh, "Dilemma" by Omid Shams, "Each Other" by Sarah Tabibzadeh and "Funfair" by Kaveh Mazaheri.

Iran's "Morning" named best animation at Brazil children's filmfest

TEHRAN — "Morning" by Reyhaneh Kavosh won the award for best animation at the 19th Mostra de Cinema Infantil de Florianópolis, a children's film festival held in the Brazilian city last week.

"Morning" is a musical animation about the beauty of the beginning of a day in a city.

"3 Feet" by Colombian director Giselle Geney was also named the best fiction in the international section, and "Colmeia" by Karinna De Simone and "Napo" by Gustavo



"Morning" by Reyhaneh Kavosh.

Ribeiro were the winners of the national short films competition.

"3 Feet" tells the story of Gonzalo, a 10-year-old boy who lives in a city in the Colombian countryside and has to arrive with clean shoes at his school to avoid the worst punishment in the world, let your teacher remove your ball by the end of the year.

The winners were selected by popular vote during the event. The children identified a lot with all the winning films, pointed out the director of the festival Luiza Lins, who

announced, with great joy, the results of the vote.

"And this was a very special, intense and different show, all online, I hope everyone enjoyed it", he said at the closing ceremony.

Reyhaneh Kavosh took part in the festival with four animations: "Coward Ghost", "I Found out What to Do", "Namaki" and "Morning".

"Serok" by Zhivar Farajzadeh was another Iranian animation competing in the festival.

A lineup of 63 films from 12 countries was screened in the festival, which was organized online this year.

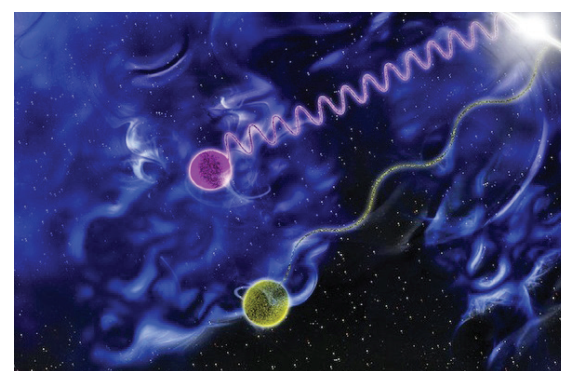
"Wave or Particle?" honored at Mediterranean Film Festival Cannes

TEHRAN — The short documentary "Wave or Particle?" by Alireza Rahmantalab received an honorable mention at the Mediterranean Film Festival Cannes last week.

The movie "Wave or Particle?" is a special documentary, which addresses a fundamental question: In the world we live in, do only humans have the power to understand the environment?

In answer to this question, we discover the intelligence of plants and are amazed by it. Then we go into the atoms and in this journey we encounter many wonders, each of which can amaze us. This search introduces us to the science of quantum physics, a science that has been able to change the world with its achievements; a science that everyone has heard the name of, but no one really knows what it is.

"Two Autumns in Paris" by Gibelys Coronado from



"Wave or Particle?" by Alireza Rahmantalab.

Venezuela was picked as best feature film, and the best short documentary award was given to "The Box: Out of the Impossible" by Ann Cabano from the U.S.

The Mediterranean Film Festival Cannes highlighted a selection of best films from around the world.

The festival aims to promote independent filmmakers and innovative work that take risks and move the frontiers from the boring and, most of the times, empty conventional to the artistic, initiating strong emotions and out of the box to exceptional.

It equally aims to give an opportunity to independent filmmakers to showcase their work free of commercial constraints.

The Iranian shorts "The Silk Earrings" by Nima Hassanbeigi, "Letter to My Mother" by Amin Maher and "Mermaid" by Saber Mostafapur were also screened at the festival.

Four Iranian movies nominated for New York FFTG Awards

TEHRAN — A lineup of four Iranian movies have been nominated for the FFTG Awards underway in New York.

FFTG stands for Film Festivals To Go, a New York-based film festival marketing and consulting company.

"A Trivial Thing!" by Morteza Sabzeqaba, "Cutstein" by Hamidreza Khosh-Bazan, "Bubble" by Mahmud Arib and "Ava's Silence" by Gholamreza Nematpur are the four films.

"A Trivial Thing!" is about Ardan, a young slightly deaf man, who is working in a movie theater as a janitor and an operator. He wishes to play in a movie and watch himself on the screen.

"Cutstein" is the life story of an editor who works for the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting and feels like Frankenstein, creating a monster. Imaging of all movie sequences has been done with a cell phone.

"Bubble" is a narrative of migration from

home to nowhere.

"Ava's Silence" is Ava, about a young girl who has to work in her father's auto shop as a mechanic because of her father's illness. She is looking forward to her brother returning from military service in a border area so she can get married to her fiancé Abbas.

The FFTG Awards aims to provide new independent filmmakers a chance to showcase and brand their films to get attention through a unique online film festival.

The nominated films are being screened on the FFTG Awards official channel during the festival dates for the Audience Choice Film of the Festival Award. The selection is divided into several categories, which include Quarantine Films, Mobile Films, Micro Short Films, Web Series, Screenplay Competition, Shorts and Feature Films in all genres.

Winners will be announced on December 13

Mitch Albom's "Human Touch" appears in Persian

TEHRAN — American author Mitch Albom's novel "Human Touch" has recently been published in Persian in Qom.

Ketabestan-e Marefat is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Fatemeh Madihi Bidgoli.

"Human Touch" is a fictional yet ripped-from-the-headlines story about how lives intersect in a small Michigan town amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

"Human Touch" is a story being told in real time, to be published in weekly installments. As the COVID-19 takes root in America, a once neighborly street corner of four families begins to fray. A tradition of Saturday gatherings unravels into mistrust and distance. Self-protection dominates over kindness.

Only eight-year-old Little Moses seems immune to what is happening around him, and continues to spread his own brand of joy and comfort. As people in the neighborhood become sick and begin to self-isolate, he secretly visits them, offering hugs and longed-for physical contact. When his mother reveals a long-held secret about him—that his blood somehow protects him against all illness, Little Moses draws quick attention from several sources, both good and bad. And then he disappears.

Albom is the author of numerous books of fiction and nonfiction, which have collectively sold more than forty million copies over forty-seven languages worldwide.

He has written seven number-one New York Times bestsellers, including "Tuesdays with Morrie", the bestselling

memoir of all time, which topped the list for four straight years, award-winning TV films, stage plays, screenplays, a nationally syndicated newspaper column, and a musical.

One of his most recent works is a return to nonfiction with the New York Times bestseller "Finding Chika", a memoir about a young Haitian orphan whose short life would forever change Albom's heart.

He founded and oversees SAY Detroit, a consortium of nine different charitable operations in his hometown, including a nonprofit dessert shop and food product line to fund programs for Detroit's most underserved citizens. He also operates an orphanage in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, which he visits monthly. He lives with his wife, Janine, in Michigan.